博士論文

Scandal, Ritual and Media in Postwar Japan
（戦後日本におけるスキャンダル、儀礼、メディア）

プルシャ　イゴール

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目　Scandal, Ritual and Media in Postwar Japan

戦後日本におけるスキャンダル、儀礼、メディア

氏名　PRUSA Igor

プルシャ　イゴール

While drawing on theoretical arguments from media studies and cultural sociology, this thesis addresses the role of scandal in postwar Japan. I present an outline of what can be labeled as scandalogy, and introduce the historical background of scandal in Japan and the West. Furthermore, I locate the social phenomena of transgression and scandal in a wider field of social practice, and provide a theoretical package for critical analysis of media scandal as framed narrative and spectacular (pseudo)event. While utilizing the scope of contemporary neofunctionalist thought, I approach the social function of scandal as social drama and performance, semantically located between ritual (motivated expressive behavior) and strategy (conscious strategic action). After addressing the role

of scandal, media and corruption in Japanese postwar society, I closely elaborate on three selected scandals: the Sakai Noriko celebrity scandal (2009), the Ozawa Ichirō political scandal (2009-12), and the corporate scandal of the Olympus Corporation (2011-12). Based on the output from these case studies, I offer theoretical implications for the scandal mediation process in contemporary Japan, while highlighting the *modi operandi* of the mainstream media, weekly tabloids, and other outside media as the key players in a scandal-network of collusion and collaboration. Furthermore, I develop a model of scandal mediation in Japan, during which the mainstream media, the power elites, the business circles, and other interdependent forces intersect in sociopolitical and journalistic fields of struggle. While approaching media scandal as a commercialized product of the journalistic rituals of objectivity, I also touch upon the performance of scandal as a mediatized ritual of pollution, purification through exclusion, and reintegration. My basic assumption is that scandal is a multifaceted social phenomenon: while simultaneously serving the interests of capitalistic media institutions, the scandal-rituals define social norms, reflect the values of society, and manage social transgression. If exposed, scandals often represent highly popular media commodities, but they do not seem to prevent future elite deviances, and they do not make the collusion of power structures in Japan more transparent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 4

LIST OF FIGURES 11

I. 12

GOALS, METHODS AND LITERATURE REVIEW 12

1. THE RITUALIZATION OF SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN 13
2. READING SCANDOLOGY: FROM THE ROOTS TO PRESENT RESEARCH 19
3. WIDENING THE SCOPE: APPROACHING SCANDAL AS SOCIAL RITUAL 32

II. 42

THE SOCIAL MEANING OF SCANDAL 42

1. TOWARD BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCANDAL 43
   - 1.1. Historical and Etymological Contexts of Scandal 43
   - 1.2. Contemporary Uses of Scandal Terminology 54
   - 1.3. Alternative Typology of Scandal Theory 58
   - 1.4. Defining Ideal-type Media Scandal 63

2. LOCATING TRANSGRESSION AND SCANDAL IN SOCIAL COLLECTIVITY 66

2.1. Maintaining the Sacredness of Social Collectivity 66

2.2. Transgression as Prelude to Scandal 73

2.3. Scandal as Sociological Phenomenon 77

3. THEORIZING SCANDAL AS TEXT 81

3.1. Media Scandal as Narrative 82

3.2. Media Scandal as Frame 90

3.3. Media Scandal as Event 95

3.4. Media Scandal as Spectacle 102

III. 105

APPROACHING SCANDAL AS RITUAL 105

1. SCANDAL AS SECULAR RITUAL WITH SACRED AMBITIONS 106

1.1. Scandal as Social Performance 106

1.2. Bridging Ritual and Scandal Theory 110

1.3. On the Japanese Sense of Ritual 117

2. PERFORMING THE RITUAL OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE 124

2.1. Confession and Apology 127

2.2. The Ritual of Exclusion 139

2.3. Toward Reintegration 143

3. ON HEGEMONIC USES OF THE SCANDAL-RITUAL 149

3.1. The Hegemonic Force of Media Scandals 149

3.2. Rendering Corruption as Human-Interest Story 156

3.3. Scapegoating and Attack-Politics 160

IV. 165

MEDIATING SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN 165

1. UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR QUALITIES OF JAPANESE SCANDAL 166

2. CORRUPTION AND SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN 172

2.1. Locating Corruption in Political Practice 173

2.2. Historical Observations of Political Corruption in Postwar Japan 178

2.3. Collusion and Competition of Power Circles in Japanese Scandal 184

3. SCANDAL CONSEQUENCES IN POSTWAR JAPAN 196

3.1. General Typology of Scandal Consequences 196

3.2. The Impact of Power Scandals in Postwar Japan 200

3.3. On the Nontransformativity of Japanese Scandal 210

4. THE JAPANESE PUBLIC AND SCANDAL RECEPTION 214

4.1. On Affective Attitudes of Scandal Audiences 214

4.2. Scandal Typology Based on Public Involvement 220

4.3. Scandal as Popular Media Commodity 226

5. SOME IDIOSYNCRASIES OF SCANDAL REPORTING IN JAPAN 229

5.1. Mediopolitical Background: Economic and Professional Structures 229

5.2. Political Journalism and the Use of Japanese Language 232

5.3. Bottom-up Mediation and the Role of Tabloids 237

6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCANDAL MEDIATION PROCESS IN JAPAN 249

6.1. Initiation Phase: Scoop Leak to the Media 252

6.2. Pre-scandal Phase: Data Processing 256

6.3. Scandal Proper: Transgression Going Public 259

6.4. Scandal Climax: Confessions and Damages 265

6.5. Post-scandal Phase: Return to Normality 267

6.6. Conclusion 270

V. 272

CASE STUDIES OF JAPANESE MEDIA SCANDAL 272

1. CELEBRITY SCANDAL: THE CASE OF SAKAI NORIKO 275

1.1. Introduction..........275

1.2. Who is Sakai Noriko? 278

1.3. Noriko Sakai: The Scandal Narrative..........280

1.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to Sakai Case 288

1.4.1. Socioculturally Located Meanings of Celebrity Discourse 288

1.4.2. Symbolic Transgression and Expectancy Violation..........292

1.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors..........295

1.5.1. The Morality Tale and its Hegemonic Aspects..........296

1.5.2. Performing the Orchestrated Patterns of Repentance 301

1.5.3. The Aftermath: Toward Purification and Reintegration 304

1.6. Conclusion 308

2. POLITICAL SCANDAL: THE CASE OF OZAWA ICHIRŌ 312

2.1. Introduction..312

2.2. Who is Ozawa Ichirō? 313

2.3. Ozawa Ichirō: The Scandal Narrative 317

2.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to Ozawa case 321

2.4.1. The Issue of Money Politics and Support Groups 322

2.4.2. The Issue of Prosecutorial Conduct in Scandal...............................325

2.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors.....................................329

2.5.1. Ozawa versus the Media 329

2.5.2. Ozawa versus the Public 336

2.5.3. The Performance of Ozawa 338

2.6. Conclusion 342

3. CORPORATE SCANDAL: THE CASE OF OLYMPUS 345

3.1. Introduction..345

3.2. Who is Michael Woodford? 347

3.3. Olympus versus Woodford: The Scandal Narrative 348

3.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to the Olympus Case 354

3.4.1. The Issue of Corporate Corruption 354

3.4.2. The Issue of Whistleblowing 358

3.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors 363

3.6. Olympus and Beyond 369

3.7. Conclusion 371

VI. 374

CONCLUSION 374

REFERENCES 403

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The basic structure of a scandal flow (ideal type).

Figure 2. The main features of scandal as media text.

Figure 3. General scandal narrative flow (ideal type).

Figure 4. Media framing based on internal and external pressures.

Figure 5. Media scandal as journalistic hybrid between ordinary news and media event.

Figure 6. Scandalization as transition from noumenal to phenomenal reality.

Figure 7. The symbolic polarized structuring during the scandal-ritual.

Figure 8. Scandal as mediatized ritual of exclusion and reintegration.

Figure 9. Japanese postwar prime ministers and their involvement in corruption.

Figure 10. Colluding and conflicting power during Japanese scandals.

Figure 11. Diagram of the scandal mediation process in Japan.

Figure 12. The Sakai Noriko scandal flow.

Figure 13. The Ozawa Ichirō scandal flow.

Figure 14. The Olympus scandal flow.

I.

GOALS, METHODS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1. THE RITUALIZATION OF SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN

There exist various interpretations of postwar Japan. One of them, which might appear marginal at first glance, is that of reading modern Japanese history as a history of scandal. In postwar Japan, hundreds of scandals were registered, while serious cases of high-profile political corruption occurred virtually every year, being followed by the public's decreasing confidence in government and growing political apathy. Ever since the 1976 Lockheed affair of the Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, media scandals became not only omnipresent components of Japanese social reality, but also a popular fixture in tabloids and the TV. Instead of any substantial attempt to ameliorate the situation, many high-profile scandals followed the case of Lockheed – most notably the 1988 Recruit Scandal (Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru being involved in insider stock deals), and the 1992 Sagawa Kyūbin Scandal (dozens of Japanese politicians accepting illegal donations from the parcel delivery company). Toward the end of the century, scandals became an emblematic – instead of deviant – form of Japan's political and corporate culture, where conflict is either avoided, or ritualized. The real scandal season was however about to begin: the whole post-Fukushima period was overabundant in scandal of literally all sorts. The corporate corruption of Olympus (2011), Takata (2013), Toshiba (2015), Asahi Kasei (2015), and most recently the Mitsubishi scandal were exposed one after another. Furthermore, since 2014 many key members of Abe Shinzo's cabinet (including Obuchi

Yūko, Shimomura Hakubun, or most recently Amari Akira) suffered scandals based on "financial irregularities" that led to four ministerial resignations. Moreover, major cases of plagiarism surfaced since 2014 as well: during the so-called STAP scandal, the female researcher Obokata Haruko became attacked over the authenticity of her work, the half-deaf music composer Samuragōchi Mamoru became demonized after it was revealed that a ghost-writer wrote his music, and the prominent designer Sano Kenjirō was accused of plagiarizing the Japanese Olympic logo. Simultaneously, the Japanese media were overfilled on weekly basis by the never-ending chain of sex/infidelity scandals of the female celebrities (e.g. Yaguchi Mari, Minegishi Minami, Becky) same as male politicians (e.g. Miyazaki Kensuke, Ototake Hirotada, Mutō Takaya). All these scandals were numerous, repetitive, short-lived, and lacking any transformative potential, which made them not only hard to notice, but also hard to define.

The Japanese news production today is unthinkable without scandal, and its enormous proliferation, same as the ritualized nature of scandal performances constitute the major puzzle of this thesis. My first academic encounter with this phenomenon occurred during the celebrity megascandal of Sakai Noriko in the summer of 2009. My initial impression was that more than pursuing social consensus based on conflict resolution, Japanese scandals rather portend outrage, disgrace, and humiliation. I also noticed that corrupted power elites are often treated rather benevolently, scheming their

comeback in a form of their own “purification”, whereas the insignificant moral disturbances of (mostly female) Japanese celebrities seems stand for a spectacular degradation of the moral “sacred signified”. The hypocritical cries of corruption, repetitive scandal frenzies, and the apathy of the Japanese public are often misunderstood by the foreign observers who naturally steer toward the tongue-in-cheek explanations of the inherent ridiculousness of Japanese scandals. These layman voices, combined with my own primary observations, established the central question for this thesis: what is the particular logic of Japanese media scandal, and how is the “scandal culture” constituted by the combination of a ritual-based performance of various scandal actors (most importantly the media institutions) on the backdrop of postwar Japanese history?

There exist various phenomena that should be examined in order make sense of the enormous proliferation of Japanese scandals today. Importantly for this research, the culture of scandal had been developing on the backdrop of interrelated changes in media technology, journalistic practice, and political habitus throughout the postwar Japan. Furthermore, the rise of scandal can be especially related to the 1970s where the tumultuous years of social upheaval and economic recovery were supplanted by commoditization and media saturation. Moreover, scandals became widespread in corporate and political world, but their omnipresence does not correlate with any dramatic increase in corruption (as a matter of fact, the corruption levels in Japan are comparable

to other countries, while some scholars add that Japanese corruption is not entirely "dysfunctional"). Besides, the ubiquitous celebrity scandals that can be based on any transgression imaginable, constitute an important subgroup of the Japanese popular culture as such. In both cases, elite deviances do not matter as much as does the *nature* of their mediation, including the biased overmagnification and spectacularization of scandal events, which makes up for an attractive media commodity.

While drawing on arguments from media studies and cultural sociology, the purpose of this thesis is to create a theoretical framework which would bridge media, ritual, and scandal. The starting point can be expressed by the neofunctionalist premise that scandal is a dramatic social performance *between ritual and strategy*. The "ritual part" of this argument points to the fact that Japanese scandal is always partly a cultural product which reflects social and moral conventions of the Japanese "civil religion" (*shimin shūkyō*). Here, the source of public symbolism during Japanese scandals derives less from private psychology, and more from the Japanese cultural code which is still integrated within the social structure of contemporary Japan. Consider for instance frequent tearful press conferences as performative rituals of confession and apologia that are conducted within prescribed patterns (*kata*), or the phenomenon of a "scapegoat suicide" as alternative means of handling responsibility in the wake of scandal. In other words, scandals are performed in a highly-ritualized manner, with designated scapegoats and pre-

scripted speeches that constitute emotionally tense "degradation ceremonies" (term by Garfinkel 1956). The "strategy part" of the aforementioned acumen relates less to cultural scripts, and more to mediopolitical pragmatism of scandals. In this understanding, scandals are structured into systems of production, rather than disrupting those systems. Nonetheless, even here the ritualized quality of a scandal reporting plays an important role, while scandals are utilized by capitalist media organizations that wholesale them as media commodities. Following the work-ideology, which differs based on each media outlet, Japanese journalists are not encouraged to do any deep investigative reporting, and instead they conduct the so-called rituals of objectivity (see Tuchman 1972) in order to save their face while maintaining the elite status quo. These media rituals include self-censorship based on informal agreements with the elites while being guided by the capitalist modes of production. The collusion and competition of various power circles in scandal forms a heterogeneous "actor-network" (Latour 2005) which becomes decisive in both soft-pedaling the coverage or fueling the media hype.

The thesis is divided into six sections, each dealing with interrelated aspects of scandal in general, and Japanese media scandal in particular. The structure of the thesis is as follows. After explaining my methodological framework and literature review of the so-called scandal studies in section I, I suggest an interdisciplinary theoretical framework which bridges media, ritual, and scandal on the historical backdrop of postwar Japan. The

section II presents a conceptual framework for interpreting the social meaning of scandal as such (including its etymology, terminology, and basic definitions). Furthermore, I locate scandal and transgression in a wider field of social practice and provide a theoretical package for a critical discursive analysis of (not only Japanese) media scandal. In section III, I approach scandal from the dramaturgical perspective, i.e. as a social ritual of purification through confession and temporary exclusion. In section IV, I offer some implications related to the role of the media in postwar Japan, including the issue of collusion and competition of the Japanese elite/power circles during major power scandals. In this section I also delineate the five basic stages of an ideal-type scandal mediation process in contemporary Japan. In order to illustrate the point of scandal as both ritual and strategy, I elaborate in section V upon three distinct case studies that occurred between 2009 and 2012: I focus on the world of entertainment (the 2009 celebrit scandal of the J-pop idol Sakai Noriko), the world of high politics (the 2009 scandal of the political heavyweight Ozawa Ichirō), and the corporate world within the economic sector (the 2011 accounting scandal of the Olympus Company). These case studies aim to illustrate the main aspects of scandal that I elaborate upon in theoretical discussion.[1]

---

[1] The sections II, IV and V of this thesis included some material that had been already published in its abridged version: "Media, Scandals, and Society: a theoretical introduction." in *Tōkyō Daigaku Daigakuin Jōhōgakkan Kiyō Jōhōgaku Kenkyū,* Vol. 88, February 2015, "Theorizing about scandals and their mediations: the case of Japan." in *Electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies*, March 2010, and "Mediating Scandal in Contemporary Japan." in *French Journal for Media Research* (Vol. 7, 2017). The case studies were published as "The Logic of Political Media Scandals in Japan and the Case Study of Ozawa Ichirō." in *Global Media Journal*, special edition, Vol. 2, No.

2. READING SCANDOLOGY: FROM THE ROOTS TO PRESENT RESEARCH

An increasing amount of scholarly literature on scandals, and a growing interest in academic discourse, which Anthony King (1985) proposed to call *scandology*, indicates that scandals do present certain qualities of constant social nature that are worth being put through a serious in-depth analysis. In this section, I review the academic literature related to media scandals. Simultaneously, this section aims to set up the historical context for the emergence of media scandal in Japan and the West.

Researching on scandal is not a new phenomenon in social sciences. We can trace certain indirect roots of academic curiosity about transgression, gossip, and scandal in classical sociology, social/cultural anthropology, and political sociology (Durkheim 1915; Garfinkel 1956; Goffman 1959; Gouldner, 1960; Gluckman 1963; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Hannerz 1967; Debord 1967; Merton 1968; Handelman 1973; Turner 1974; Lukes 1975; Bourdieu 1984; Baudrillard 1988; Girard 1996; Boltanski 2004). All these scholars had in common the interest in everyday methods we use in order to make sense of the everydayness, which is being made up during multifaceted social interactions. Their insights are informative especially for the segment of scandal research that does not

---

2, Autumn/Winter 2012, "Megaspectacle and Celebrity Transgression in Japan: the 2009 Media Scandal of Sakai Noriko." in *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, and "Corporate Scandal in Japan and the Case Study of Olympus/Woodford" in *Electronic journal of contemporary Japanese studies* (Vol. 16, Issue 3, 2016).

limit itself to scandal approached only as a mass media phenomenon.[2]

Regarding the emergence of media scandal, its roots can be traced to 19th century with the advent of yellow journalism. It became however even more significant during the 1950s, when the world conflict was temporarily concluded, the new media platforms were emerging, and television had been introduced as a mass medium. By 1960s, the media mass circulation increased worldwide along with further development of investigative journalism, and since 1968, scandals gained a new momentum in the West due to a new polarisation of politics and media (e.g. Bösch 2011). In the West, the historical watershed came with the Watergate affair in 1972 which served as a framework

---

[2] Emile Durkheim set the base for understanding the system of ideas that relate to the distinction of sacred versus profane and their role in maintaining societies as "civil religions" with occasional deviances representing "normal" phenomena. Max Gluckman, Don Handelman and Ulf Hannerz showed early anthropological interest in scandal and gossip when researching the tribal communities' involvement in gossip (Gluckman emphasized the positive function of gossip as a powerful social instrument in the maintenance of social unity and social control). Erving Goffman elaborated on the dramaturgical perspective in context of our everydayness which is constituted through staged performances and face-saving/face-threating activities (the scandal performance is also characteristic of staging while transgressors become stigmatized and temporarily exiled). Alvin Gouldner contributed to scandology by discussing the *norms of reciprocity* as a point for understanding the relationship of accountability between the scandal-tainted elites and the media audience. The social criticism of Guy Debord updated the scandal theory by emphasizing that many scandals are emblematic of a high degree of staged spectacularity. Steven Lukes, Rene Girard and Victor Turner expanded Durkheim's solidarity/ritual theory whereby using the notion of *social drama* and *scapegoat* for analyzing those episodes that manifest and manage social conflict. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann stressed that our social reality (including the routine news broadcast and non-routine scandal events) is in many regards a socially constructed, "purposive" phenomenon (this notion was further applied to journalism by Molotch and Lester, Gaye Tuchman, or Herbert Gans). Robert Merton is instructive with his notion of manifest/latent dysfunction, while Pierre Bourdieu enriches scandology with theorizing the journalistic *field* of struggle. Harold Garfinkel and Luc Boltanski touch upon the sentiments of moral indignation as the main source for degradative manifestations of punishment.

for the public discourse about scandals, generated a vast amount of original academic elaborations, and became the point of reference when judging political corruption.[3]

In Japan, the counterpart to Watergate became represented by the Lockheed corruption scandal, which climaxed in 1976 and involved the Japanese father of the so-called "money politics" (*kinken seiji*), Tanaka Kakuei. Same as Watergate, Lockheed became one of the biggest postwar corruption cases, attracting media coverage like no Japanese scandal did before.

Within the academic field of media studies, scandal came to be counted as a relatively new but important form of a media event worth serious academic attention (Yoshimi 2012). In 1980s, Anthony King proposed to divide scandals into three thematic categories (sex, money, power) while linking the issues of official misconduct to larger characteristics of political systems (King 1985). Despite frequent outbreaks of corruption in advanced democracies during 1980s, the events still did not spark any significant academic attention. Apart from scandal anthologies and insiders' accounts, there existed only few scholarly analytical works that would focus on the nature of scandal including its emergence, development, and consequences (for the list, see Thompson 1997). In

[3] The American imperatives of post-Watergate morality referred among others to revivified values of critical rationality, anti-authoritarianism, or civil solidarity when applied to group and interest conflicts. Apart from increased cynicism about institutions and bureaucracies, Watergate intensified investigative journalism, shifted orientation of reporting from description to prescription, and facilitated the media feeding frenzy (Szasz 1986; Alexander 1988; Markovits and Silverstein 1988; Sabato, Stencel and Lichter 2000; Schudson 2004; Adut 2008).

Japan, the emerging critical issues of media error, political deception and scandal emerged earlier within the discourse of mass media criticism (Yoshimi and Mizukoshi 1997), and they became a commonplace especially in the aftermath of the Recruit scandal in 1988.

In the same year, a new historical milestone was set in Europe: the end of Cold war and the subsequent new post-communist era stimulated interest in the mushrooming corruption. Since the 1990s, scandals have emerged widely in West European Countries – mainly as a consequence of the capitalist rules, new markets, and emerging mediopolitical competition. Finally, the horizontal and vertical media integration, and the expansion of cable/satellite TV and internet since early 1990s have dramatically changed the media environment in the media-saturated societies around the world, simultaneously impacting the production logic behind media scandal.[4]

Since the 1990s, media scandals were gradually placed less outside of a context concerning truth and morality, and more in various metanarratives concerning journalistic practices and media technologies. In their analysis of media events, many scholars (Szasz 1986; Dayan and Katz 1988; Alexander 1988; Schudson 2004) addressed the phenomenon of scandal while using the Watergate affair as an example for illuminating the relation of the scandal "ceremony" to both antecedent and subsequent events.

---

[4] The epitome of this new era in Europe (and a sort of counterpart to Rupert Murdoch in the US) was the Italian media tycoon, politician and businessman Silvio Berlusconi. Scholars worldwide have ever since criticized Berlusconi's extensive control over media, his corruption affairs, and conflicts of interest between politics and media ownership.

Furthermore, John B. Thompson (1995) touched upon the topic of scandal while relating the phenomenon to new technologies, media visibility and modernity, and developed his "interactional theory of scandal" (Thompson 1997) in David Lull and Steven Hinerman's acclaimed volume on scandals (Lull and Hinerman 1997). Three years later, Thompson published his comprehensive analysis of political scandal (Thompson 2000), further confirming that the scandal sensitivity depends on both the form of interaction, and its sociohistorical context. While drawing examples from the Anglo-American world, Thompson's main argument was that high-profile scandals are symptomatic of a profound transformation of the relations between public and private life, which is further related to the fact that technologies of communication are blurring the boundaries between public and private. Thompson further emphasized the role of increased mediated visibility being enabled by the development of communication media, triggering off a series of mediated events.[5]

In its early stages, scandal was giving certain impetus for changes of broader political culture (Thomspon 2000; Newton 2006), while challenging the dominant culture in most stable and powerful nations (Dayan and Katz 1992; Lull and Hinerman 1997). I claim that this impetus for change is rather rare in today's media culture, although the

[5] Within this transformation, there occurred one fundamental change in media environment especially after the 1998 Clinton-Lewinsky scandal – namely elimination of the traditional notion of gatekeeping (see Williams and Delli Carpini 2004; Bennett 2007; Castells 2009).

newest technology, and the participation of online communities is indeed changing the face of media scandal. Contemporary scandals are struggles over symbolic power in which reputation and trust are at stake, while the negative impact on the public (which originally lays in betrayal of social trust) strengthens voter skepticism and political cynicism.

In another seminal work on scandal, Ari Adut (2008) provided a general theory of scandal while combining phenomenological ("moral") and structural ("strategic") analyses (Adut 2008). Adut points out the diminishing confidence in politics and increased transparency, and shows that both the moral and the strategic are fused in scandal in the context of declining credibility of politicians since 1990s. According to Adut, scandals are "moral disturbances" that usually follow a predictable pattern: they reaffirm collective values by provoking a moral position-taking and dramatizing lines of difference. Adut however illustrates the "successful" provocations by mainly analysing scandals in art, which in the past led to cultural paradigm shifts. Adut however correctly notes that although the public feedback is indispensable for any scandal, the audiences remain largely bystanders – they stand for a forceful, performative fiction, fashioned in part by the media.

This critical insight is shared by another prominent scandal scholar, Johannes Ehrat (2011). While emphasizing the semiotic and pragmatic features of scandal and

public opinion, Ehrat approaches scandals as “interpretations of signs” rather than mere functional operations. While sharing Adut’s constructivist view, Ehrat claims that scandals are related to conducts, but they primarily stand for narrativized constructions, while the public opinion on scandals is being monopolized by the media. Furthermore, scandal narratives need “facts” for purposes that are at not necessarily justified from those texts, whereas scandal is always a product with “surplus value over and beyond facts” (Ehrat 2011, 25). While this resonates with Zizekian lament that “there are no facts, there is only ideology” (Zizek 2012), it is indeed not the facts themselves that justify sanction in scandal, but the fact that the leaked transgression is made to be publicly opined upon.

The western scandal scholars indicate that the Anglo-Saxon countries are inherently inclined to a libertarian philosophy where any exposure leads to a better system (both political and economic). This is deemed essentially “good”, albeit somewhat structurally perverted. These scholars believe that the anatomy of political scandal is the anatomy of modern society, while media politics automatically leads to scandal politics (e.g. Thompson 2000; Tumber and Waisbord 2004a; Esser and Hartung 2004; Liebes and Blum-Kulka 2004; Castells 2009). Furthermore, they associate scandal with liberal democratic regimes that are more vulnerable since moral opposition is systematically encouraged and the press is rather aggressive (Markovits and Silverstein 1988; Käsler 1991; Barker 1994; Sabato, Stencel and Lichter 2000; Schudson 2004; Neckel 2005;

Garrard and Newell 2006; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston 2007; Bulkow and Petersen 2011; Dagnes and Sachleben 2014).

Other European scandal scholars criticize media scandal as media(tized) construct while the political theater only surrounds it as an illusion of democracy. Global changes in the moral psychology of the business world, prevailing liberalism, free market, and deregulation are often seen as the main culprit in corporate scandals (Newton 2006). Especially the German scandal scholars produced a remarkable amount of critical interdisciplinary research on scandal (Holler and Wickstrom 1999; Luhmann 2000; Neckel 2005; Burkhardt 2011; Holldorf 2011; Poerksen and Detel 2014). Niklas Luhmann (2000) indicated that the politics of scandal is a complex and complicated system of decision-making agencies and processes, while the ultimate function of scandal is to maintain and reproduce the social body of the system. The French scholars tend to see scandals in a more positive light, i.e. as lessons that contribute to the improvement of rules and procedures while further improving a functioning society (Blic and Lemieux 2005; Champagne and Marchetti 2005; Marciano and Moureau 2013). Scandals in such perspective facilitate transparency and give rise to organizational reforms and new practices. Nonetheless, the general tendency is that scandals are on the rise (Thompson 2000; Tumber and Waisbord 2004a; Liebes and Blum-Kulka 2004), although it is not the corruption what has substantially increased, but the *publicity* of corruption (Mori 2004;

Bennett 2007; Adut 2008; Ehrat 2011). In other words, what really increases is the media attention to scandal, rather than corruption and crime.[6]

Sstudies of political/corporate scandal were usually connected to liberal democracies, but an effort to internationalize scandal theory is on the rise as well, demonstrating that not all Anglo-American theories can be fully applied to scandal in non-Western cultures. Owing to this academic segment, we discover that political scandal is rather absent in Argentina (Waisbord 2004) or Spain (Pujas 2002), while environmental scandals are rare in Germany (Esser and Hartung 2004). Furthermore, the political sleaze quickly became a feature of big newspapers in post-Soviet Russia (McNair 2000), while sex scandals are much more common in Great Britain or USA than in Germany, France or Italy (Tumber 2004; Adut 2008; Carlson 2013). Regarding the Asian mediascape, a certain significance was attributed to intense emotional responses to celebrity scandals in China (Jiang et al. 2011), Taiwan (Chen 2003; Shiau 2014), and Japan (West 2006; Prusa 2012a). Among many other findings, sex scandals in Japan emerge in principle only in tabloids (Carlson 2013), and despite the omnipresence of political scandal, the mainstream Japanese media does a poor job of treating governmental/corporate

[6] In a similar vein, the crime rates are in consistent decline, but crime news continues to rise, alarming public concern with crime (Alheide 2002). This media aggrandizement exists in Japan as well: statistically, Japan had the least number of homicides in 2015 year since the end of World War II, but the Japanese media often spread a "discourse of fear" (term by Altheide 2002) while emphasizing those alarming issues that are related to social insecurity (Hamai and Ellis 2006; Leonardsen 2006; Mori 2014).

corruption (McNeill 2016; Kingston 2016; Cucek 2016; Prusa 2017).[7]

While diverging from the original aim to focus primarily on sex, money and politics, other scholars introduced new interdisciplinary approaches to scandal in less traditional contexts. The scope of this academic segment ranges from applying critical social theory when analysing religious scandals (Bisbort 2008; Ehrat 2011; Senander 2012) to analyzing sports scandals (Rowe 1997; Laine 2006; Finley, Finley and Fountain 2008; Storm and Wagner 2011), and to scandals in history, art and literature (Stallybrass and White 1986; Cohen 1996; Mitchell 2002; Butler and Drakeford 2005; Miller 2008; Adut 2008; Bulkow and Petersen 2011; Rowley 2013).

Despite the omnipresence of scandal in postwar Japan, a complex research that would both analytically and empirically examine the nature of Japanese scandals is still missing. So far, the phenomenon of postwar Japanese scandal was seriously elaborated by Maggie Farley (1996), Laurie Freeman (1996) and Mark West (2006), who assert that Japan's sociohistorical idiosyncrasies (including the reporters' club, or *kisha kurabu)* deemphasize conflict and controversy while failing to develop the media-watchdog tradition in scandal. Furthermore, these authors remind us that biggest Japanese scandals

---

[7] The endeavor to internationalize scandalogy includes scandal case studies from Australia (Tiffen 1999; 2002; 2004), Germany (Käsler 1991; Giannakopoulos, Maras and Amano 2009; Bulkow and Petersen 2011), Austria (Nick and Sickinger 1989), France (Chalaby 2004; Adut 2008), Spain (Pujas 2002; Jimenez 2004), Great Britain (Tumber 2004), Argentina (Waisbord 2004), Finland (Laine 2006; Handstad 2008), Netherlands (Ruigrok 2007), Sweden (Jacobsson and Löfmarck 2008; Ekstrom and Johansson 2008) and Italy (Pujas 2002).

surfaced from sources outside the Japanese mainstream media (I elaborate on this point more closely in section IV, chapter 6). Furthermore, these authors touch upon the discrepancies between the Japanese mainstream press, which concentrates on stated principles and political façade (*tatemae*), and the weeklies that strive to capitalize on the reality behind it (*honne*). In both cases, the anti-governmental stance is rather superficial, while most important in scandal is the Japanese preference for private ordering by groups (West 2006). The media institutions are divided in the way they "search for truth" in scandal, while the importance lies in the location of the private-public line. Besides, their accounts indicated usefulness of the actor-network theory (Latour 2005) for understanding Japanese scandal, because there is always an interplay of heterogeneous forces (both media and non-media actors) that become involved in the scandalization process. Nonetheless, many authors were rather monothematic in their focus on organizational pathologies and sociolegal backgrounds while overlooking the fact that Japanese scandals are "meaningful" social performances and ritualized social dramas of "restorative justice" (*shūfukuteki seigi*) with little or no social impact at all.

There exist many accounts on political, bureaucratic and corporate corruption in Japan (e.g. Aritake 1970; Tachibana 1976; Johnson 1986; Nester 1990a; Mitchell 1995; Leggett 1995; Woodall 1996; Johnson 1997; Blechinger 1998; Pascha 1999; Giannakopoulos, Maras and Amano 2009; Berkofsky 2002; Kingston 2004; Bowen 2003;

Messersmith 2003; Sato 2005; Babb 2005; Pharr 2007; Gaunder 2007; Pontell and Geis 2008; Nyblade and Reed 2008; George Mulgan 2010; Herzog 2013; Maeda and Aoyagi 2013). Unfortunately, academic accounts on scandal reporting and investigative journalism in Japan are less frequent (e.g. Morikawa 1992; Farley 1996; Asano 2004; Gamble and Watanabe 2004; Uesugi 2012). Within this body of research, considerable academic attention was paid to the 1976 Lockheed scandal (Tachibana 1976; Blaker 1977; Johnson 1982; MacDougall 1988; Pharr 1996), the 1988 Recruit scandal (Rossett 1989; Ishikawa 1989; Yayama 1990; Nester 1990b; Kerbo and Inoue 1990), the 1996 HIV/blood scandal and other cover-ups (Miyamoto 1996; Feldman 1999; Kingston 2004), sports scandal (Ezawa 1999; Duggan and Levitt 2002; Tajima 2004; Kawai and McDonald 2012; Manzenreiter 2014), and most recently the 2011 Olympus scandal (Yamaguchi 2011; Maeda and Aoyagi 2013; Prusa 2016b).

Finally, various accounts on Japanese scandals can be found in secondary texts on corruption: there exists a plethora of opinional treatises, testimonies, and popular accounts written by people with varying degree of insider knowledge (e.g. Miyamoto 1996; Kerr 2001; Berkofsky 2002; Nashimoto 2009; Sakai 2010; Ezoe 2010; Wolferen 2011a; Sassa 2011; Yamaguchi 2012; Woodford 2012). The main limitation of these treatises lies in the subjectivity of authors that either criticize the system in a partisan/moralizing way (Miyamoto 1996; Nashimoto 2009; Wolferen 2011a), or they

were directly involved in a scandal, approaching the writing more as a sort of confessional auto-therapy with a certain commercial effect (Sakai 2010; Ezoe 2010; Woodford 2012; Ozawa 2015; Obokata 2016).

I believe that the limitations of previous literature can be overcome by steering the scandal research more toward the neofunctionalist train of thought, i.e. by systematically examining Japanese scandal as a ritualized social performance that resonates with some features of the culture's civil religion, and as a constructed pseudo-event that only seemingly rejuvenates or transforms social norms. The focus will then lie not only in narrative structures, but also in staged performances, their functions, and generally in the discursive practices of scandalization (Alexander 2011; Burkhardt 2011). Contrarily to large media events as analysed by Dayan and Katz (1992), media scandals in Japan are less natural in terms of their emergence. Furthermore, despite institutionalized attempts to reform and redress (i.e. orchestrating apologia, setting up committees, calling for reforms), media scandals are rather nontransformative in terms of dealing with elite deviance in society or making the collusion of power structures more transparent. On the contrary, an important aspect of Japanese scandal lies in its "hegemonic force", i.e. in legitimating and maintaining the status quo of the ruling elites without coercion while utilizing scandals as degradation ceremonies of soft social control (see section III, chapter 3).

3. WIDENING THE SCOPE: APPROACHING SCANDAL AS SOCIAL RITUAL

Making sense of an era in which scandals became an institutionalized part of our mediated everydayness requires combined tools of an updated social theory when analysing images, events, narratives, and performances. My aim is to knit together various subfields as they bear on scandal: following the interdisciplinary method of neofunctionalism and media studies, I integrate humanities (philosophy, metaethics, cultural studies) with social sciences (sociology, social/cultural anthropology, communication studies).

The overarching methodological frame of this thesis is neofunctionalism (sometimes also labelled as cultural pragmatism, cultural sociology, or conflict structuralism). Being popularized by Jeffrey Alexander, this discipline presupposes that every action, no matter how instrumental, reflexive, or coerced, is ritualized and embedded in a horizon of affect and meaning (Alexander 1989; 2003; 2011). Neofunctionalism draws upon Durkheim's ideas about the moral basis of society (Durkheim 1955), combined with Victor Turner's notions of social drama and ritual (Turner 1990). The main departure from Durkheimian functionalism lies in claiming that ritual does not symbolize only social solidarities, but perhaps more importantly social conflicts. Neofunctionalism takes its core analytic insights from semiotics and

structuralism while applying theories of dramaturgy and performativity.[8]

The neofunctionalist approach provides analytic concepts for common performative productions and receptions while extending the definition of scandal beyond the Durkheimian framework. It highlights that *any* social drama – including scandal – is inherently embedded in cultural contexts, framed narratives and power relations. Within this theoretical framework, culture is perceived as being structured and patterned through binary codes, within which the sacred/profane binary is of central importance. The sacred stands for the collective identity of a "good" social community based on a cognitive mode by which a community refers to itself in distinction to the sum of its individual members. On the contrary, the profane points at a representation of "impurity" constructed in direct relation to the sacred (i.e. the transgression threatens to pollute the sacred). In scandal, one's actions become often typified into general codes of sacred/profane, pure/impure, or democratic/antidemocratic.[9]

While further expanding the scope of neofunctionalism, I combine both the

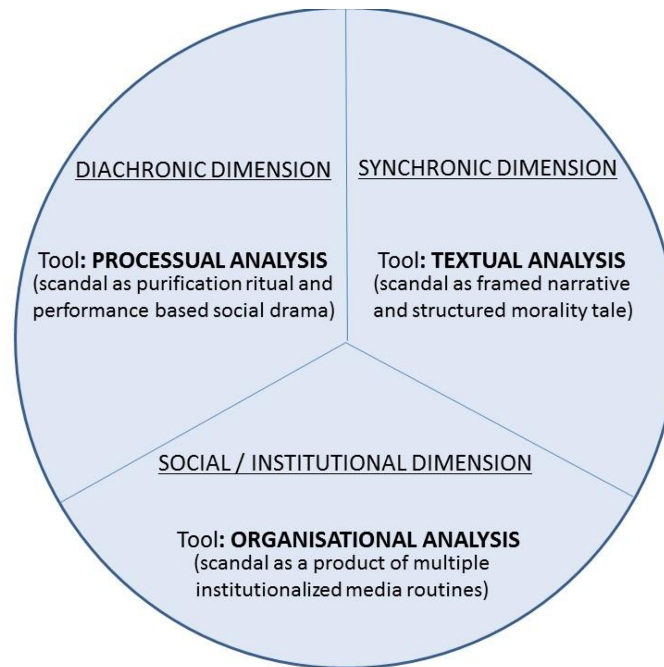
---

[8] In their interdisciplinary endeavor, the neofunctionalists draw upon cultural sociology (Simmel, Bourdieu), cultural anthropology (Geertz), dramaturgical sociology (Burke, Goffman), ritual theory (Turner), or speech acts theory (Searle, Austin). All these sources assert a link between institutional and discursive analyses of cultural phenomena, calling attention to the mutual influence of institutional environments and cultural scripts.

[9] Durkheim distinguished between the *positive* (redeeming, charismatic) force as the ultimate source of the cosmic order and identity, and the *demonic* force that aims at chaos, pollution and dissolution of order (Durkheim 1915). This dichotomy seems to parallel with Friedrich Nietzsche's *Apollonian ideal* of conduct, drawing and respecting boundaries and limits, worshipping the ethics of moderation and self-control, as opposed to the *Dionysian ideal*, driven toward dissolution of boundaries, transgression of limits, worshipping excess and ecstasy (Nietzsche 1999). In the light of this parallel, scandal can be conceptualized as a sudden outburst of the demonic/Dionysian in everyday social life.

constructivist and the objectivist view of scandal. The constructivist approach focuses on scandals as nonroutine form of social punishment, secular rituals of renewal, and media-framed pseudo-events that produce scapegoats. The objectivist approach relates transgression and corruption to organizational pathologies (structural issues, malfunctions of the system, the role of whistleblowing), and it focuses on how the media contribute to making (and unmaking) of scandals. The former approach uses the tools of sociocultural anthropology or narratological analysis, while the latter approach is grounded in critical media studies and journalism. I believe that the neofunctionalist framework allows to conflate these two perspectives while emphasizing the culturally-pragmatic aspect of scandal. To sum up, scandals will be in this thesis treated as social dramas with ritualized qualities (diachronic analysis), symbolic products of media institutions' *modi operandi* (social/institutional analysis), and commodified media texts (synchronic analysis). Thus, I will operate in three methodological dimensions, where I approach scandal as:

1. **social drama and secular ritual** (dimension: diachronic)
2. **product of media routines and biases** (dimension: institutional)
3. **narrated and framed text** (dimension: synchronic)



Ad 1: Scandal as Social Drama and Ritual

In neofunctionalist perspective, social collectivity (*kyōdōtai*) is approached as a cultural space which various actors performatively co-operate in constructing. If a conduct becomes revealed as transgressive or corrupted, scandals are the tools that aim to maintain the boundaries between the "good" (sacred) and "evil" (profane). While echoing both Emile Durkheim (1915) and Jeffrey Alexander (1988), I understand the ideal social function of scandals as narrativized and ritualized performances that follow major moral disturbances.

Durkheim emphasized the relationship between ritual behavior and the adherence to social order, while understanding collective veneration of the sacred as the key element of social solidarity. However, more than rejuvenating the solidarity of a

collective identity, modern Japanese scandals are pragmatic performances between ritual and strategy with hegemonic force. While being performatively punitive and shameful, these performances stand for "degradation ceremonies" of pollution and purification through exclusion. In Japan, the Durkheimian solidarity is often expressed dramatically as a polarization and tension between the sacred "inside" (*naibu/uchi*) and the profane "outside" (*gaibu/soto*). In all media-saturated societies, this sentiment of both solidarity and conflict is realized via the channels of mass communication, during which the audiences are made to believe that the media are at their society's imagined center (Shils 1975; Couldry 2003).

Finally, the production and dissemination of scandal can be illuminated by the actor-network theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005), where scandal represents a heterogeneous engineering and assemblage of various interrelated actors. In media reality, these social dramas are being given form and shape through complex struggles (both conflicts and collaborations) inside and outside the journalistic *field.* In such scandal-network, the scandal drama unfolds through interactions between various media/non-media actors (power elites, journalists, critics, whistleblowers, prosecutors) within their respective systems (the political discourse, the business circles, the world of entertainment). The outcome of what I call scandal is then a composite product of these interactions and performances.

Ad 2: Scandal as product of media routines

According to basic reporting principles, the media's interest in scandal is generally shaped by organizational news values, the way of media's self-understanding of their social role, and perhaps most importantly by the market forces (e.g. Galtung and Ruge 1965; McQuail 1994; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Hara 1997; Bennet 2007). The media as social institutions do have mechanisms at their disposal to both support the establishment and to challenge it (the latter is in the West accounted for by the media-watchdog theory, where the media as guardians of public standards provide visibility and accountability by turning the dealings of elite power groups into public knowledge). In reality, the media certainly are the key channels in displaying corruption, while scandal can be seen as the quintessence of professional journalism. However, the journalistic agenda in Japan and elsewhere has become largely commercially driven and susceptible to political pressures. Besides, the logic of Japanese scandal is always marked by interlocking mechanisms and informal contracts (see below).

Every transgression concerns specific rules of an organization. Scandals are non-routine media products of "ritualistic performance strategies" where professional journalists entail strategic rituals that justify a claim to "objectivity", and develop ritualized procedures in order to protect the system (and themselves) from eventual blame (Tuchman 1972). At this level of analysis, I utilize the diachronic approach in order to

illuminate how in Japan transgressions progress to the future state, giving a shape to a media scandal. My motivation for such analysis stems from the fact that scandals do not represent only evident "phenomenological" qualities (i.e. scandal as text), but equally importantly they represent a *social reality* in which scandals are commodified products of ritualized routines and biases.

At this level of method, I elaborate on the general process flow of scandal mediation in Japan. In this endeavor, I aim to offer a window into the interplay of those factors that typically define and shape Japanese scandals. Furthermore, in order to grasp the complexity of the scandal mediation process in Japan, I will suggest five consecutive stages of an ideal-type scandal mediation process: the scoop leak to the media, scandal data processing, transgression leak to the public, confessions and damages, and return to everydayness.

Ad 3: Scandal as media text

Scandal must be simultaneously seen as a continuous product of media routines, and it becomes fixed as a media *text*. Thus, at this methodological level I analyze the structure of scandal as text and approach scandals as framed narratives and mediated (pseudo)events that are conditioned by various ideological formations.[10]

---

[10] When approaching scandal as text I depart from conceptual assumptions shared by the contemporary cultural pragmatists, who were informed by the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur,

I was further inspired by Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) and its interdisciplinary applications (Jaworski and Coupland 1999). Importantly for scandals, the CDA emphasizes that a discourse is both *constituted* and *constitutive*. Scandals are also constituted (but not triggered) by the media, and they may become constitutive of a liminoid state upon which retributions and reforms may be applied. Equally importantly, the discourse at work conceptualizes scandals as "morality tales", where points of view and value systems are reflected in terms of what is morally appropriate and what is not.

In Japan and elsewhere, scandals are necessarily manufactured via the mass media channels. While conflating ordinary news and media events (Dayan and Katz 1992), the omnipresent Japanese scandals often turn into pre-scripted pseudo-events (Boorstin 1992) and media spectacles (Debord 1967; Kellner 2003) that are disseminated in a form of media commodity (the section III explains these theoretical concepts in detail).

Most of the material presented in this thesis will pertain to large-scale media scandals that have occurred since the outset of the Japanese postwar period. In my case studies, I focus on three social systems that represent the most frequently scandalized platforms in Japan: the world of entertainment (where illicit drug use among celebrities is considered a serious transgression), the world of high politics (which is emblematic of

---

where meaningful actions are considered as *texts*. They explore narratives and rituals in various institutional domains (e.g. Ricoeur 1983).

donation scandals and collusive practices within the power circles), and the world of Japanese corporate culture (with dubious accounting practices and internal cover-ups).

The celebrity scandal of Sakai Noriko was selected because in 2009 the event became a national obsession, major media spectacle, and the biggest Japanese celebrity scandal in years. The political donation scandal is represented by the case of Ozawa Ichirō – not only because his scandal occurred simultaneously with that of Sakai, but because Ozawa (whose mentor was Tanaka Kakuei, the “father” of money-politics) can be regarded as one of the epitomes of political corruption in postwar Japan. Finally, in my analysis of corporate/financial scandal I focus on the Olympus accounting fraud from 2011. The reason for this choice is that the Olympus scandal had developed into one of the biggest and longest-lived loss-concealing financial scandals in the history of corporate Japan. Equally importantly, it re-opened the discussion on whistleblowing in corporate Japan.

Each of these three case studies invite further discussion on various “pathological” phenomena that co-constitute the scandalization process. The celebrity scandal of Sakai Noriko points at the culture-specific phenomenon of *celebrity* in Japan, and the way the Japanese media and the entertainment agencies (*jimusho*) contribute to making and breaking of Japanese stars. The chain of political corruption scandals of Ozawa Ichirō brings to the fore the role of structural corruption in Japan (*kōzō oshoku*), but also the role

of prosecutors in power scandals, since their performance can dramatically change the course of scandal. Finally, the economic scandal of Olympus versus Woodford offers a discussion on some pathologies of Japanese corporate governance, including the role of whistleblowing in Japan.

I analyze these three scandal narratives based on a full-text coverage available through the mainstream media sources (newspaper articles from the big Japanese dailies such as *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Asahi Shinbun*), Japanese tabloids (sports magazines and semi-tabloids such as *Shūkan Shinchō* or *Shūkan Bunshun*), the foreign press (e.g. *The Japan Times*), and by evaluating transcripts of televised news reports, interviews, and press conferences related to each scandal. The screening period was identical with the duration of the scandal narratives since their outset, namely the years 2009-10 in the case of the Sakai Noriko scandal, the period of 2009-2012 in the case of the Ozawa Ichirō scandal, and the years 2011-12 in the case of the Olympus/Woodford scandal.

II.

THE SOCIAL MEANING OF SCANDAL

1. TOWARD BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCANDAL

This section offers a conceptual ground for interpreting scandal in media-saturated societies such as Japan. In the past, the western research on scandal was conducted from multiple academic perspectives. The fields of study worth mentioning are sociology, anthropology, history, rhetorical linguistics, narrative/semiotic analysis, comparative law, political science, research on media, communication and journalism studies. Nonetheless, in Japan the topic is still more common outside the formal scholarly discourse since it is viewed as too frivolous and fleeting to arouse serious academic attention. Yet, some scholars focusing on scandals in various contexts have so far produced a significant amount of theoretical accounts and definitions. Before introducing them, let me clarify the general terminology and etymology of scandal.

1.1. Historical and Etymological Contexts of Scandal

Having Indo-European origins (*skand* referred to "stumbling block"), the etymology of scandal in the West goes back to Early Greek, Latin, and Judeo-Christian history of thought. The Latin *scandalum* means "trap" or "obstacle", while the term *scandalon* ("sin") was used in a religious sense in Greek version of the Old Testament (Adut 2008;

Ehrat 2011; Senander 2012; Marciano and Moureau 2013). Scandal in its original sense had a different meaning because it was later recontextualized in the moralistic literature. According to the Christian theology, scandal (both in word and action) points to a moral offence, or even the "evil" itself (if only in appearance). An active scandal, seen by Christ as a mortal sin, occurs when a sinner orders, requests, or advises another to commit the sin, while the passive scandal is a sin which another commits in consequence of the active scandal (see Heeren 1912; Girard 1996).

The history of scandal in secular culture is dated similarly, going back to the 5th century BC. The first written account of scandal leads us back to the late period of Greek antiquity. The term *skandalēthron* appeared already in a comedy ascribed to Aristophanes (445-385 BC). Furthermore, the prominent Athenian commander Alcibiades is in the chronicles mentioned as creating a "scandal" during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC): he allegedly smashed in anger the faces of the stone images of the Athenian gods whereby defiling the symbols of collective belief, being consequently accused of sacrilege (Neckel 2005). The public displays of transgressivity were with us since the dawn of civilisation.[11]

---

[11] Already the so-called primitive societies of ancient times were through pre-literary categories (ritual, myth, and folk-tale) expressing and enjoying moments of transgressivity. In medieval and early modern periods of European civilization, there existed a long tradition of officially approved periodical venting of psychological pressures based on the magnetic antipathy between order and excess. Periodical escape from everydayness was made possible on a regular basis: starting with ancient festivals of the Roman Empire (*saturnalia*) and continuing the tradition in Middle Ages (*calendaria*), the lower classes were allowed to negotiate their identity via masks and

The traditional societies around the globe exhibited a certain taste for malicious gossip, which is an intimate form of communication being as old as language itself.[12] The real advent of denunciatory scandals is usually historically located in medieval and early modern Europe. The term *esclandre* appeared in English and Romance languages in the 16th century, and was used in two meanings: as an art of improper conduct leading to damage to reputation (including defamatory speech), and as a form of an obstacle which hinders religious belief. In early modern English, the words "scandal" and "slander" were synonymous, referring to defamatory gossip, or general comment injurious to reputation (Adut 2008). Particularly important for the scandal development were the disruptive events since 17th century England (i.e. the so-called war of pamphlets), the new literary genre of scandalous chronicles, which scrutinized private lives of the monarchs throughout the 18th century, and finally the emerging culture of political periodicals since

---

costumes. In order to "recreate" the working class, power holders were publicly demonstrating their benevolence and power by enabling the transgressive mode of upside down reality (carnival event is one example of such culturally allowed transgressivity). Even the religious medieval festivals were hedonistic, loud, and rich in visual spectacle, providing a platform for gossiping about those in power. Similarly, in medieval Japan the extravagant folk festivals (*matsuri*) served as a medium for re-creating subordinate classes in strictly hierarchical society, and were later prohibited in the name of decorum (Yanagita 1957). In both East and West, the local tradition of morally justifiable transgressivity was transformed into national forms of social banditry and anti-heroism (Hobsbawm 1969; Prusa 2016a).

[12] One of the oldest examples of gossip points to the Mesopotamian mayor's affair with a married woman, carved on a clay tablet as early as in 1500 BC. The ancient Greek poet Hesiod (around 700 BC) described gossip as "the wretched talk of mortals", while the Roman poet Virgil talked about the multiplicity of rumor (*fama*), which can be both good and bad. In Middle Ages, the term entered modern language as *gossib* in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and its contemporary version (*gossip*) was coined by William Shakespeare in *The Comedy of Errors* (Act V, Scene I).

the late 18th century (e.g. the British Journals such as *The Tatler* or *The Spectator*).

In Japan, same as in the West, the terminology of corruption and scandal was always involved in religious considerations and folk beliefs. In Christianity, corruption is characteristic of this sinful world, but the filth and decay of the Japanese term for corruption (*oshoku, fuhai, wairo*) similarly resonated with Buddhist and Shintoist implications (Mitchell 1996; Babb 2005). Moreover, some traditional concepts of the Japanese civil religion such as *hare, ke, kegare,* or *misogi* can be related to the neofunctionalist distinction between the sacred and the profane (see below).

Scandal took on a new meaning as a mediated event toward the end of the 19th century with the advent of mass printing. In Japan, the traditional media for incidents in daily life and gossip were the news pamphlets (*kawaraban*), followed by the "small newspapers" (*koshinbun*) that carried scandalous articles before they were absorbed into "industrial papers" (*shōgyō shinbun*) toward the end of 19th century. One of the first Japanese publications that directly espoused "scandal journalism" was *Yorozu Chōhō* (active in 1892-1940). Further proliferation of scandal in both Japan and the West occurred since the 1960s when new media technologies (most importantly the TV) offered the most potent merging of private and public spheres while transforming the notion of publicity (see below).

This was an important moment for the history of scandal, because many scandal stories fall in a broad zone *between* private and public. In the light of this transformation, scandal was rendered as private sin and public dishonesty (Ehrat 2011), or the means by which the private and the public worlds transgress each other (Holler and Wickstrom 1999). Especially in Japanese scandal, the collusive backstage relationships of the power elites typically blur the lines between individual income (private) and political funds (public). In any case, the symbolic separation of the private and public sphere is a cultural norm, and the limit between them seems to have absolute validity for any society.[13]

We can delineate three main changes that facilitated the growing prevalence of scandals in postwar Japan same as in the West:

---

[13] What is conventionally defined as private and public varies from one historical period to another, and from one culture to another. For instance, the old Greeks distinguished between the public (*bios politikos*) and the private (*oikos*). The former was a realm of freedom for both action, speech and the "space of appearance", while the latter was born out of necessity and needs for (re)producing human life (Arendt 1958; Holldorf 2011). In Japan, the notion of public versus private was largely defined under the influence of the Confucian ideology, and it was traditionally viewed in terms of broader communities (public) versus the narrow selfish interests (private) (Haley 2006). This distinction however was not clear, while the cultural norms of reciprocity between political authorities and citizens (including the role of gift-giving) were highly valued (Befu 1975; Rupp 2003; Chang and Chu 2006). A rather passive nature of the Japanese public sphere was a result of specific historical development. Until the end of World War II, the Japanese public was always more or less subjugated, based upon the authority of the feudal Tokugawa rule (1603-1868). Under Tokugawa, no clear distinction was made between public and private. After the Meiji restoration of the emperor system (1868), the term "public" (*ōyake,* or *kōkyō*) had strong associations with governmental authority (i.e. it referred to something given from above). Importantly for scandals, the conception of privacy points today more toward interpersonal dignity and respect (e.g. West 2006). The bourgeois public sphere in Europe emerged as a space in between the state and the private realm, just to be gradually undermined by the orientation toward entertainment and profit (Habermas 1989; Thompson 1995). The partial disappearance of public sphere became axiomatic for any consideration of 20th century life, while its absence in Japan was tied to the existence of the emperor system (Hanada 1997).

1. **changing technologies:** the enhanced visibility increases the likelihood of scandals that depend on technologies of recording, processing and transmitting information
2. **changing journalism:** investigative journalism became accepted part of journalistic activity, giving impetus for changes of broader political culture including scandals
3. **changing politics**: a growing competition among political organizations and the decline of class-based ideological politics at the expense of the competitive "politics of trust" in which scandal came to represent a credibility test.

Under the influence of these changes, authenticity became an attribute of the visual and spectacular (Debord 1967) and social consciousness became "mediated consciousness" (Meyrowitz 1986). The newly emerging technology required social elites to learn a new audiovisual vocabulary in order to maintain their status (see Corner 2003). In Japan, this phenomenon occurred since mid-1950s, when the popular weekly magazines (*shūkanshi*) dominated the media market. The sensationalist articles on corruption and scandal became the most important force before the spread of television (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986). During the 1960s, the electronic media supplanted the influence of print media, and in 1975 the television overtook newspapers as the prime medium for

advertising (Gordon 1993). The whole zeitgeist of 1970s was typical of a shift from the tumultuous years of economic recovery and social upheaval to consumption and commodification (Yoshimi 2009), while the media saturation and the "information fetishism" represented a fertile ground for media scandals. Besides, the growing influence of the Japanese TV dramatically increased the popularity of the top politicians such as Nakasone, Hosokawa, and later Koizumi and Tanaka Makiko, while on the contrary, the triumph of presentation over substance was rather detrimental for old-school heavyweights such as Miazawa Kiichi or Ozawa Ichirō.

In both Japan and the West, the third age of political communication (term by Blumler and Kavanagh 1999) nurtured the journalists' focus on dramatic incidents and scandals while bringing about a distorted sense to the viewing public. What followed was a decline of admiration as social emotion (Wetherell 2010) and radical decrease of public trust in politicians and institutions (Wuthnow 2004). The positive coverage of presidential aspirants slumped, sex scandals became naturalized, and negative gossip about political elites has increased (Edelman 1977; Achter 2000; Thompson 2005; Bennett 2007; Adut 2008; Bösch 2011).

The technological transformation media modernity in 20th century Japan started at approximately the same time. As early as in 1950, the *Tōkyō Tsūshin Kōgyō* (later known as Sony) constructed the first tape recorder, and within five years the company

introduced the first compact transistor radio. In 1951, the new commercial radio stations were established in Tokyo and Osaka, in 1952 the first tabloid weeklies (*Shūkan Sankei* and *Shūkan Yomiuri*) were published, and in 1953 the NHK and the commercial NTV started its first television broadcast. In 1959, the tabloid industry was booming with the new titles *Shūkan Bunshun, Shūkan Gendai, Shūkan Kōron, Shūkan Heibon*, and in the same year the first televised media event took place (the wedding ceremony of Prince Akihito and Shōda Michiko). In 1960, the public TV channel NHK aired the first televised political debate in Japan, being watched by around twenty million viewers. Only between 1952 and 1976 the circulation of daily newspapers almost doubled, while the households with TV rose dramatically from 1.425 in 1952 to over 27 million in 1976 (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986).

The negative consequences of these transformations soon emerged in Japan. Since 1960s, the Japanese public witnessed an increase in the media's invasion of privacy and defamation (Asano 2004), while frequent pollution scandals had become foci of citizens' protest movements (Gordon 1993; Broadbent 1998). In 1970, television played a key role in the Lockheed scandal, while the newspapers became obsessed with the phenomenon of "money politics" (*kinken seiji*) following the corruption of Kakuei Tanaka. In 1970s and 1980s, the Japanese media were drawn to commoners, focusing on their individual crimes in a sensational way: they were often targeting suspects and their families before

the beginning of their official trial, while the assumption of innocence until proven guilty was rarely practiced by them. Throughout the 1980s, the main role of the public broadcaster NHK was to legitimize the LDP's hold on power by portraying the government as a competent caretaker of the Japanese public (Krauss 2000). This hegemony however became weakened by the increase in tabloids' investigative reporting since late 1980s. Especially the Miura scandal from 1984 (discovered by *Shūkan Bunshun*) and the Recruit scandal from 1988 (uncovered by the local branch of *Asahi Shinbun*) became a commercial threat to other mainstream media outlets since the outside media that triggered these scandals were now drawing advertisers away from the inside media. In the meantime, the private television stations started broadcasting more politics on infotainment-oriented soft-news shows in order to catch up with the new wave of sensationalism and scandal (see Taniguchi 2007; Kabashima and Steel 2010). Throughout the 1990s, frequent corruption cases were scrutinized from within the discourse of "tele-politics": the relaxed-style and infotainment-oriented coverage of sensitive issues was practiced especially by the TV Asahi's news program *News Station* (aired since 1985 and replaced by *Hōdō Station* in 2004). This "quiet revolution" in press relations, including the shift from print news to television, was further facilitated by the Prime Minister Koizumi who was well known for preferring smaller news outlets. Ever since Koizumi took power in 2001, the esteemed *Yomiuri Shinbun* became more vulnerable toward the

commercial TV stations and the scandal-hungry weeklies. Another revolution in information exposure (*jōhō kōkai*) occurred when the DPJ won the elections in 2009 and allowed the journalists from weeklies and the foreign press to attend their press conferences. This however changed with the return of the LDP in 2012, weakening the role of the media as a media watchdog.

While approaching the new millennium, both Japan and the West experienced an advent of the new media, which once again changed the rules of scandal. Firstly, the mainstream news outlets gradually ceased to serve as the exclusive gatekeepers of information. Secondly, the mediated visibility of late modernity introduced computer-mediated interaction along with new modes of surveillance. The realm of politics and entertainment was transformed into a glass house, while the new technologies contributed to a situation where the intimate processes of our life become virtual feeding ground for the media. In terms of surveillance, the old notion of *panopticism* (the few observe the many), which was originally outlined by Bentham and discussed by Foucault, became challenged by *synopticism* (the many observe the few) whereby the public can now record/report sensitive moments that would otherwise go unnoticed.[14]

[14] Synopticism was enabled by the latest technology of communication (miniature recording devices, handheld cameras, satellite relay systems and ubiquitous high-speed internet, digitized CCTV systems connected with computer databases), and by the technological ease of producing evidence (including recent infiltration of small media into nationwide channels). Moreover, the contents of symbolic exchange can be now preserved in a durable fashion (e.g. by using digital storage systems), so that many past transgressions can be retrospectively recalled through the process of spotlighting (Liebes and Blum-Kulka 2004). Some scholars exalt the emancipatory potential of the new media,

Apart from the technological transformations, we register a growing trend toward an increasing media self-censorship in Japan. This crisis in media democracy is deepening especially during the second tenure of the Prime Minister Abe Shinzō (2012-present), and became characterized by Momii Katsuto (the director-general of NHK) who became infamous for his remark that NHK cannot say "left" when the government is saying "right". In the course of 2016, Japan dropped to number 72 in the World Press Freedom Index (conducted by Reporters without borders), while David Kaye (UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression) reported in the same year that the independence of Japanese press faces serious threats, mainly related to jeopardizing journalistic objectivity and ignoring whistleblower protection. Needless to say, these political developments can influence the exposure of power scandals and the nature of their mediation.

In this chapter, I conducted a brief diachronic analysis of scandal, and commented on scandal's etymological roots and transformations on the backdrop of mediated visibility. Scandal in its original meaning already contained its basic motive, i.e.

---

or celebrate internet as a decentralized, "anarchic" place, however the cyberspace is equally the cardinal site of the "carnival of crime" (term by Jewkes 2011). Consider the Japanese ultra-right-wing activists that use the new media and spread their beliefs effectively via internet (the so-called *netto uyoku*). Moreover, the means of surveillance are in Japan often used to monitor consumption patterns in order to put together detailed consumer profiles, and the disclosure of buying/selling personal data is usually surrounded by massive publicity in Japan (e.g. the 2003 Lawson data leak, the 2004 Softbank data leak, or the 2014 Benesse data leak scandal).

the transgression of moral codes and eventual damage to the identity of a community. It pointed to a "fall from grace" which was condemned as serious deviance from what is in given society viewed as sacred. However, the secular base of scandal, and its religious (biblical) version cannot fully serve as the basis for understanding contemporary media scandals in Japan. Besides, it was the transformation in technology, politics, and journalism, which became axiomatic for any consideration of 20th century life, and which influenced the way scandals are mediated today. Furthermore, in 21st century, the changes in mediated visibility due to the emergence of new media made scandal a fixture in global media agenda. Needless to say, this visibility will always be a double-edged sword: on the one hand, the elites can better engineer their backstage, but on the other hand they are drawn into a space where they are likely to be caught in the web of public scrutiny. To borrow from Thompson: those who live by the media are most likely to die by the media.

1.2. Contemporary Uses of Scandal Terminology

In its present form, the semantic core of the term "scandalous" still relates to deviating from a certain norm (i.e. "scandalous" can be synonymous with "transgressive" or "deviate"). "Transgression" or "wrongdoing" is however not fully equivalent to scandal – it is the revelation that elevates a certain transgressive occurrence into a media event.

Generally speaking, the betrayal of both personal and social trust is similarly "scandalous" since they trigger moral indignation. The betrayal of personal trust, existing in principle only in private communication, can develop from "gossip", "hearsay" and "rumor", while a serious public scandal (financial, sexual, power-related) usually emerges from the latter (i.e. betrayal of social trust).

The semantic meaning of scandal is not fixed. In its normative sense, the term is usually connected with a certain disgraceful situation or event, but scandal also points to original transgression, and to negative public backlash which follows. In a similar vein, the meaning of corruption is seen as in the process of being revealed rather than as a fixed truth (Heidenheimer 1978). Being directly related to scandal, corruption points to abuse of public office for private gains, and it may give rise to a power scandal. We can roughly distinguish between individual/personal corruption and a "systemic corruption". These categories may become confused since in scandal a system failure becomes in principle attributed to individual transgressor. At any rate, scandals that indicate the system failure are expressed by adjectives such as "organizational", "structural", "institutional", or "official" corruption.

The deliberate acts of surveillance, wiretapping and whistleblowing might be perceived by the offended side as "scandalous" (especially when the activity is employed on a continuing basis), but they are just a primary triggering device. Faux pas, gaffes,

diatribes, hate speeches and other "talk scandals" (term by Ekstrom and Johansson 2008) depend on the social position of the speaker, but they usually do not generate any large-scale scandal, and the eventual outcry can be subdued either by ignoring the accusation or by a swift official apology.

The expressions "affair", "case", "controversy", and names with the suffix "-gate" usually appear in political/government corruption or in sex/infidelity scandals, and they are used interchangeably (e.g. the Lewinsky-Clinton affair, or Monicagate). Furthermore, the label "affair" indicates that some scandal has transformed reality into intrigue while generating opposed entities and reversing the accusation process (e.g. Boltanski 2004; Blic and Lemieux 2005).

As "social problems" can be described those non-normative practices that are perceived as an ongoing condition (e.g. *ijime*, prostitution, human trafficking, illegal workers or child pornography). If the media bring forth some of these issues, they can gain a certain scandalous potential (see Ito 2006). On the other hand, the culturally determined sensitive "controversial issues" (e.g. Japanese politicians' visit to Yasukuni shrine) may become a topic of discussion, but as "high-order events" they will hardly crystalize into a proper scandal despite the criticism from abroad.

The Japanese media dedicate a lot of time and space to various incidents (*jiken*), accidents (*jiko*) and other "problems" (*mondai*) that can stay on front pages for weeks to

months' time. The western media draw the readers' attention by using reinforcing headlines such as "shock" or "sensation", but the Japanese headlines related to a certain moral disturbance are usually less dramatic. Furthermore, despite the frequent use of foreign words in Japan, the term *sukyandaru* ("scandal") is rare in Japanese media, and so is the old Japanese term *shūbun*. The tabloids and television channels publish *goshippu, uwasa, fūhyō* or *denbun* (gossip, rumor, talk, or hearsay). When reporting on certain *skūpu* or *tokudane* (scoop, newsbeat) the Japanese media use a rich variety of somewhat vague expressions such as *wairo, shūwai,* or *gigoku* (bribery), *funshoku* (embellishment), *fushōji* (disgraceful matter), *oshoku* or *fuhai* (corruption) or *giwaku* (suspicion). In Japanese celebrity scandals, the terms *furin* (adultery), *uwaki* (cheating) and *kakuseizai* (stimulants) come to the fore as newsworthy vices. In order to point at larger social issues related to corruption, the media utilize less straightforward terms such as *yarase* or *netsuzō* (hoax), *kōzō oshoku* (structural corruption), *fusei kōi* (unfair practice), *fusei keiri* (illicit accounting), *funshoku kessan* (creative accounting) or generally *kinken seiji* (money politics). The money politics can get further divided in media coverage into *kinmyaku* (money connections), *jinmyaku* (personal connections), or *uragane* (slush funds). If these connections are disclosed publicly, they may lead to *sōdō* (disturbance) or *ōsawagi* (uproar) in society. Some minor scandals are related to *shitsugen*, *futekisetsu hatsugen, bōgen, yaji* (gaffe, slip of tongue), and *sabetsu sendō hyōgen* or *hēto supīchi*

(inappropriate utterance, hate speech).

When we look at the Japanese expressions related to scandal, we may notice a certain linguistic idiosyncrasy. The celebrity scandals are abundant in strong moralizing expressions, but political/corporate corruption is often referred to by less pejorative, vague terms. This points to institutional attempts to detach pejorative labels from certain transgressive/corruptive practices, and to re-shift scandalicity away from real structural issues to human-interest stories. Furthermore, it can be seen as part of practicing linguistic vagueness which lies in modifying negative terms into milder ones (see section IV, chapter 5). Besides, similar scandals offer different vocabulary depending on the media bias: what is dealt with as "disturbance" in the mainstream media can be seen as "fiasco" by the foreign media, but a grave "scandal" in tabloids and weblogs (this was e.g. the case of the 2015 Olympic logo scandal coverage).

1.3. Alternative Typology of Scandal Theory

While following King (1985), scandal researchers distinguished between sexual, financial, and power scandals. Today, it is problematic to force the complex phenomenon of scandal into such framework, with Japan showing much wider variety of scandal types (especially with celebrity scandals surpassing others in relevance for the public). For my own

theoretical purposes, I find it useful to categorize the contemporary scandal theory via scandal as (1) media construct, (2) public reaction, and (3) a power tool:

(1) the role of the media (mediacentric perspective): scandalous behavior is a behavior that opposes ethical norms of a society/community (Merry 1984; King 1985). More importantly, scandal is an event in which the public revelation of an alleged private breach of law or norm results in social disapproval or debate, followed by reputational damage. It is however always the case that we have "politics of scandal" only because the media put before us the "scandal of politics" (Schudson 2004). Related to this, the dominant perspective of scandal research points to media and journalism as the main sources of scandal. While being narrated by the media, scandals occur when private acts that disgrace or offend the dominant morality of a social community are made public, producing a range of effects (e.g. Lull and Hinerman 1997).

As I indicated above, development of investigative journalism has played an essential role in constituting what scandal looks like today. The mediacentric perspective indicates that real scandal does not begin with the transgression itself, but with the activities through which the transgression is made public, and depending on the normative *news values* (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Watson 2007). The news values that determine a media scandal are constituted by these attributes:

- threshold and magnitude (i.e. a certain disturbance needs impact to become a scandal)
- continuity (i.e. once scandal is defined as news, it usually returns in a follow-up)
- reference to something controversial, deviant and negative (i.e. the "bad news")
- oddity (i.e. unusual events that happen without warning)
- reference to human-interest aspects of scandal
- reference to power elites and celebrities

(2) the role of the public (sociocentric perspective): according to the sociocentric perspective, the proliferation of scandal requires studying the conditions for *publicity* rather than the conditions for corruption or its mediation. Scandals are played out in front of a public in order to acquire their meaning, and it does not matter whether a transgression is real or just an accusation. What matters is the public articulation of an opprobrious discourse (Thompson 2000; Tumber and Waisbord 2004a; Adut 2008). In such understanding, scandals are synonymous with negative public reaction against deviation (Jimenez 2004). Scandal, understood here as public outrage, lies in the fact that it is unacceptable for the public to accept that the deviance of an individual may reflect the deviance of the society as a whole (Sherman 1978). Moreover, if we discuss the role

of public opinion, we must bear in mind that it stands for a mere statistical abstraction, or, as Ehrat puts it, it is "what *all* think that *All* think (Ehrat 2011, ix, emphasis retained). Furthermore, Ari Adut (2008) defines scandal as an event that starts with the publication of a certain transgression to a negatively oriented audience, and it lasts as long as there is a sustained public interest in it. Also, focusing on the role of the public, Johannes Ehrat (2011) claims that scandal is a meaning type generated by public opinion as a necessary by-product. While stressing that scandal is a crisis communication pattern, Esser and Hartung (2004, 1041) define scandal as "…intense public communication about a real or imagined defect that is by consensus condemned, and that meets universal indignation or outrage". Sherman (1978) also understands scandal as a social reaction to a violation of socially invested trust in an institution or role, and in the same vein, Jimenez defines political scandal as "…public opinion reaction against a political agent regarded accountable for certain behavior that is perceived as an abuse of trust on which that agent's authority rests" (Jimenez 2004, 1100). In other words, the public must negatively react to accusations, but it is equally necessary to publicly express this disapproval. At any rate, the synonym of scandal is in this perspective a negative public opinion against a behavior that was widely considered deviant. Nonetheless, this opinion is largely constructed and capable to create an impression that everybody feels the same. The externality of public opinion does in fact not really exist, and politicians act only *as-if*

they were attentive to a public opinion (Boltanski 2004). While being based on the feelings of betrayal of social trust, the negative impact on the public lies either in generating moral indignation (Boltanski 2004), or in reaffirming political cynicism (Schudson 2004).

(3) the role of power struggles (functionalist/hegemonic perspective): basic conditions upon which a successful scandal can be generated, lie fundamentally in having access to channels of publicity. In other words, it is indispensable to secure the best grounds for a negative public reaction, and the access to those channels can become a subject of the power struggle. Despite the aforementioned role of the public, scandal is seldom deployed for purely civic purposes. On the contrary, publicity can be used as an effective weapon in social, political and artistic conflict, with elite actors at times strategically manipulating scandals. The power-struggle orientation in scandology focuses on multidimensional social resources and the contest over them – it understands scandal as a struggle over symbolic power in which reputation and trust are at stake (e.g. Thompson 2000). Scandals then function as relations of the power holder to the powerless (Tumber and Waisbord 2004) and struggles over representation and framing (Alexander 2011). They become instruments of power, occurring when an act is journalistically constructed and subjected to a sanctioning judgement (Molotch and Lester 1974; Ehrat 2011). In the same vein,

Sighard Neckel understands political scandal as a mechanism of informal social control interlinking the social relationships of competing power groups in a way that it serves the function of moral regulation of politics (Neckel 2005). To sum up, scandals contribute to maintaining the symbolic reproduction of the ruling power conditions, and they can be understood as side-effects of the symbolic rules of political representation.

1.4. Defining Ideal-type Media Scandal

Not every scandal exists in its pure form. The aforementioned theorists usually deal with an ideal-type, large-scale, high-profile media scandal in which the majority of non-participants are alarmed by certain publicized transgression/corruption for a protracted period. It is important to define an ideal-type scandal in order to stress some elements of scandal that are common to most cases of the phenomenon. By doing so, we can further distinguish between a “successful” and “failed” scandal. Some scandals do not catch up, or they fail to get magnified by the mainstream media. Regarding the processuality of an ideal-type scandal, we recognize five basic stages:

1. **transgression** (departure from everydayness)

2. **secrecy** (followed by motivated disclosure)

3. **disapproval** (authorities/media → public)

4. **damage** (individual and/or institutional)

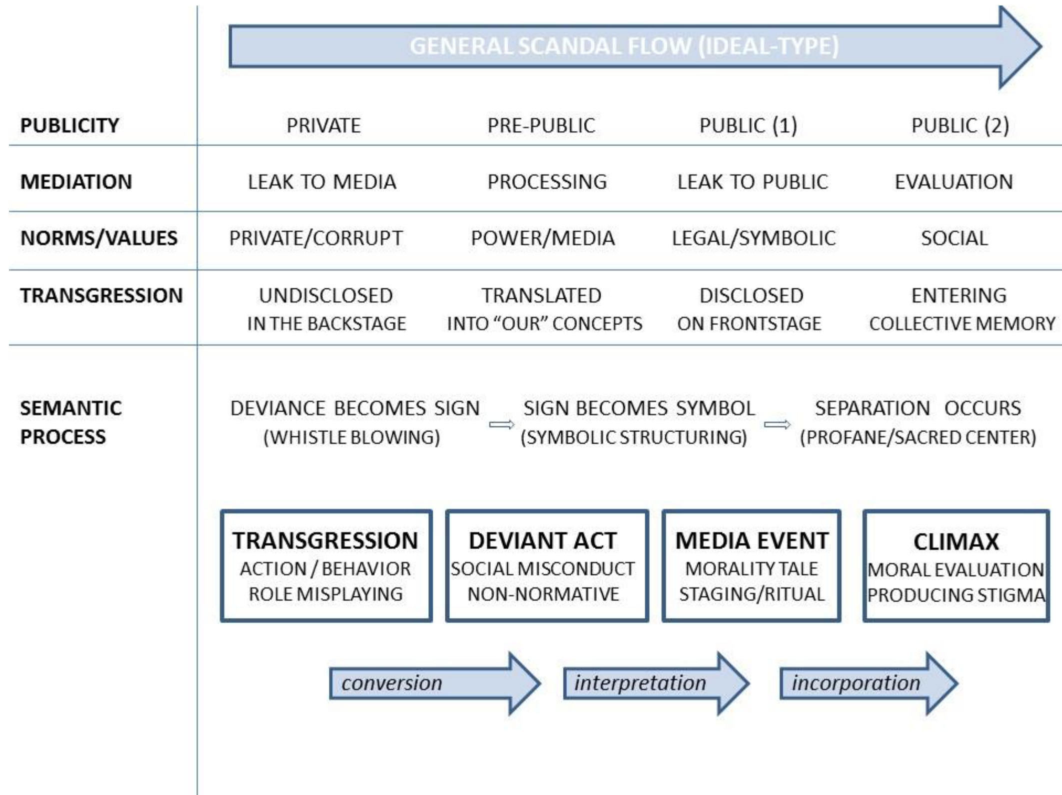
5. **stabilization** (return to everydayness).

This processuality indicates that there are multiple necessary preconditions for a scandal to occur. Firstly, there must exist a collective definition of an act/behavior as “transgressive”. If the social consensus is not sufficient, the act could not be considered as deviant and “polluting”. Secondly, transgression must be individualized via at least one person (alleged culprit, scapegoat). Thirdly, there must be certain negative collective response toward the transgressor (i.e. the revealed transgression must be denounced by the public and the authorities). To sum up, I suggest the following definition of an ideal-type media scandal:

A transgression/corruption is disclosed (via whistleblowing), attributed to at least one individual (real or alleged) who belongs to some elite circle (political, cultural, corporate), is framed by the media (guilt frame or excuse frame) and eventually denounced by the public (leading to individual sanctions or institutional consequences).

Figure 1. The basic structure of a scandal flow (ideal-type).

Source: Author



2. LOCATING TRANSGRESSION AND SCANDAL IN SOCIAL COLLECTIVITY

2.1. Maintaining the Sacredness of Social Collectivity

Scandals are integral for any social collectivity (including the traditional *gemeinschaft* and its Japanese equivalent *kyōdōtai*). They confirm the rule and strengthen social integration by the social group accepting them, and by punishing the those do not follow the rule. The logic behind transgressions is in social practice orientated toward the collective. Scandals would hardly exist without shared beliefs, conventions, and the control mechanisms that validate them.[15]

The basic form of scandal as conflict-resolution pattern seems to be universal for any social collectivity. After all, the fundamental tendency to hold the presence of others as the necessity of man is found practically everywhere. Our humanity and sociality are intertwined, which is also why Berger and Luckmann (1966) insisted that *Homo sapiens*

---

[15] In non-democratic, authoritarian states, the media are explicitly subordinated to various forms of state power, so that scandals will take on a different shape. Furthermore, in totalitarian states the media events are usually imposed and monologic, while it is the public itself (not the power elites) that constitutes the main spectacle (Dayan and Katz 1988). The non-democratic media are based on censorship, repression, and manipulation of polls, while the antidemocratic politicians use their power to prevent opinion of civil society from being separated from the state (Neckel 2005; Alexander 2006c). In other words, there is little space for scandals and other "bad news" in totalitarian states. Nonetheless, these regimes do investigate compromising facts about their enemies, which can be used as a "scandal threat" (e.g. Ehrat 2008). Conversely, scandals would be avoided altogether in perfectly transparent societies, or in societies that became completely demoralized (Garfinkel 1956; Marciani and Moureau 2013).

is always in the same measure *Homo socius* with its natural inclination to empathy, cooperation and social affiliation (e.g. Latour 2005; Lakoff 2009; Sapolsky 2013). Nonetheless, the propensity for corruption, greed and gossip are built into our genetic heritage as well (e.g. Gluckman 1963; Nietzsche 1966; Sloterdijk 2010). Besides, many classical political scientists (e.g. Montesquieu, Rousseau, or Hobbes) stressed that any social collectivity hardly survives unless it solves the problem of linking individuals to a broader society, notwithstanding the (originally Aristotelian) skepticism toward any social togetherness which renders individuals as mere discursive constructs that identify themselves by superimposed worldviews and imitated desires (Wittgenstein 1953; Sartre 1956; Girard 1996).

Maintaining social collectivity is a double-edged sword. While circumscribing our natural liberties, we sacrifice our individual freedom in the name of the common good while being made to endorse core ideological values. Furthermore, our disciplined selves easily become a part of *ornamental culture* (term by Susan Faludi), which encourages people to play almost no functional roles at the expense of only decorative, consumer roles. Under these hegemonic forces, the dictum of collective responsibility is being built into a logical grammar of our moral categories (Smith 2008). In order to preserve our personal security and individual rights, we subordinate ourselves to collectivity through a social contract (Hobbes 1960; Rousseau 1994). This contract is being grounded on a

"common sense", it assures our social liberties, and it is structured by various "norms of reciprocity" (term by Gouldner 1960). On a political level, this bond involves a covenant between the governing and the governed, and it is based on social trust. The exposed deviances do not necessarily damage the social system in question, however the transgressor is judged as betraying *social trust* when violating the norms of reciprocity between the governing and the governed.[16]

In order avoid moral chaos, a society sets up a system of laws and moral prohibitions. If this symbolic system starts disintegrating, the society becomes "unhealthy" and begins to show signs of breakdown: the rejection of imposed rituals, and the destruction of symbols associated with them are typical elements in the collapse of social orders (e.g. Collins 2004). Thus, the "sacred" spirit of society (or the *conscience collective*) must be stored in our cognitive map (or *collective unconscious*). Only with such "mental equipment" – which in turn informs our beliefs, conventions, and social rituals – we both maintain and represent *en masse* the social collectivity we claim to

---

[16] *Social trust* is an aspect of the normative system that makes up the social structure in which we live (Wuthnow 2004). On macrosocial level, trust is an important lubricant of a social system (e.g. Arrow 1974), while a sovereign is needed to create such "situation of trust" where people can rely on the promises they make to each other (Hobbes 1960). On microsocial level, social trust is a part of a rational actor's effort to calculate the costs and benefits of entering a specified relationship with another person (Wuthnow 2004). In a high-trust society like Japan, where mutual basic trust is central to Japanese morality (e.g. Yamamoto 1990) loyalties are likely to facilitate trust. On the one hand, damaging social trust leads in Japan to dire consequences, but on the other hand, the conservative public holds that respect and trust should be automatically passed over to people and groups of a certain elite rank despite their corruption (see below).

belong to (Durkheim 1915; Lipmann 1922). Needless to say, some of the attributes are hegemonic in their nature: they are being legitimized and maintained without direct coercion and at the level of various sets of ideologies without us clearly noticing it. These ideological values inform societal norms (both formal/explicit regulations, and informal/unconscious understandings), and these norms become in turn authentic projections of the *general will* (Hobbes 1960; Rousseau 1994). Only this makes us morally responsible persons capable of feelings of guilt, bad consciousness, and resentment (Nietzsche 1966; Freud 2003; Boltanski 2004).

Despite all this socioethical engineering, conflicts and crises occasionally surface within the apparent consensus. This is however nothing surprising because some degree of conflictuality is always present: any deviation from norms must be understood as a “normal phenomenon” and an inevitable condition in any society (Durkheim 1982). Nonetheless, these transgressive eruptions do offend the “sacred center” of the conscience collective (Alexander 1988) while generating “moral disturbances” in society, politics, or art (Adut 2008). First of all, these disturbances are caused by the sheer fact that we live in intersections of different norms and discourses as diffused by various institutions. We are the members of different social groups at the same time (e.g. family, company, political party, university seminar), whose moral expectations always differ. Thus, the diverse moral codes passing between groups cannot always lead to a consensus. Secondly,

each individual has his/her own particular way of thinking about individual morality which is not a fixed entity and can grow contradictory over time. If we apply this to the world of governance, we see that the political representatives have to govern their conduct and strategies simultaneously as members of their political subfield (i.e. maintaining party loyalty and alliances), and the broader political field of citizens or non-professionals. Consequently, political scandals indeed render themselves as involving elements of hypocrisy, since every political donation bears an element of bribery. Especially in Japan, the political corruption became confused by payments of "illegal" gifts to public officials and distributing funds under cover of the culturally established and officially prescribed custom of gift-giving (Befu 1975; Mitchell 1996; Rupp 2003). The "scandalous" conflict between political goals and general norms becomes especially apparent in case of those politicians who switch too often between "just politics" and "non-routine politics" (Alexander 1988; Thompson 1997; Neckel 2005). Moreover, we shall also consider the debilitating side-effects of power-holding, the individual psycho-social weaknesses of certain elites, and the unconscious "Dionysian" drive toward transgression of limits without considering the impact.[17]

---

[17] The rich and powerful are often "powerfully reckless" (term by Gibbs 2011), shamelessly persisting in defying gossip while continuing to break basic social rules. As a matter of fact, they are emblematic of Shakespeare's Macbeth, who represents corrosive psychological effects produced when evil is chosen as a way to fulfil the ambition of power. Such elites are pathologically prone to moral hypocrisy, monetary greed being set out of control, and ignorance toward contested features of social life. Importantly for scandal, this self-assuredness of political power can cast elites careless in moments of engaging in certain transgressive conduct (this is especially the case when certain

In order to avoid the breakdown of an established collectivity, our individual desires (including the Nietzscheian/Freudian desire to transgress) must be curbed by authoritative social forces of law and order. These forces in turn generate disciplinary emotions of moral indignation (guilt, shame, and fear of getting caught), and they become important when discussing the hegemonic force of media scandal (see below). Unfortunately, we usually notice these forces only after going "against the stream" (unless the transgression is a form of *perversion*). Once the deviance from norm becomes an offence to the sentiment of the collectivity *per se* (i.e. the imaginary *we*, or *wareware*), the disapproving reaction to scandal occurs *as-if* spontaneously.

Some philosophers of human nature insist that people are inherently aggressive/transgressive, but I believe that this radical notion applies less to commoners and more to the powerholders.[18] In any case, the state, family, community – and the

---

transgression is performed on a continuing basis). This becomes especially evident in embezzlement scandals, and in cases where power elites (presidents, Prime Ministers, chairmen, CEOs) send themselves over the top with alcohol, drugs, infidelity or gambling. For instance, the KDD president Itano Manabu was in 1979 found guilty of embezzlement based on extensive personal use of golf clubs and artwork purchased by the company. Furthermore, the Mitsukoshi president Okada Shigeru was in 1982 found guilty of directing extraordinarily high commissions to a company run by his lover, while the former Tokyo Governor Matsuzoe Yōichi was discredited by using political funds for private purposes. In a similar vein, the Italian media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi and the French politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn both discredited their career because of their extravagant sex scandals. In this regard, Ruth Miller echoed the thought of Pier Paolo Pasolini when insisting that the "pornographic force" of political corruption is what makes transgressions possible (Miller 2008).

[18] Apart from the drive of self-preservation (Nietzsche), or the survival of the fittest (Darwin), Sigmund Freud (2003) discussed the mankind's innate inclination to aggression and non-cooperative principles at uncivilized level. Thomas Hobbes even built his political theory on our chronic anxiety and fear of violent death in a "wolf-like" world. Even Aristotle warned us that "…appetite is like a wild beast, and passion perverts rulers

media as "social guardians" – present the modern civilizing forces. Similar as the Freudian *superego*, these forces stand for anything what issues commands: parents, teachers, laws, class prejudices, public opinions (Nietzsche 1966). On the other hand, however, many social theorists insist that conflict enhances a group's "consciousness of kind" (Simmel) while reviving its self-image (Turner) in a society that "needs" friction to work as a dynamic social system (Durkheim). In such functionalist logic law needs crime, religion needs sin, and people "need" scandal. I would like to offer here a more flexible interpretation of this socioethical conundrum, which might shed some light on the power-related scandals in Japan and elsewhere: the elite institutions and political rulers are a sort of evil-but-necessary entities that only reflect the inevitable moral imperfection of democracy (cf. Aristotle's archaic belief that democracy is yet another "perverted" form of governance). Since these institutions are often operated by other "wolf-like" actors just like ourselves, the struggles and conflicts will be always recurring as a sort of *perpetuum mobile*. Needless to say, this interpretation lends itself to the controversial claim that scandals *themselves* are not scandalous (see below).

In this subchapter, I aimed to show that the notion of social collectivity, with all its benefits and limitations, maintains and reproduces its sacred social structures through institutions, organizations and discourses that frame and regulate social life – importantly

---

even when they are the best men" (Aristotle 1998, 97).

including transgressions and scandals. The existence of these networks of power is conditioned by various socially-integrative and hegemonic mediations and other forms of social control that induce conformity to social norms. In Japan and other media-saturated societies that are simultaneously based on collective imaginations, social codes of morality, and cultural myths, the mediated experience of witnessing the elites' fall from grace becomes central – especially, when the mass-media present a certain transgression as "everyone's issue". In next three subchapters, I touch more closely upon the social and sociological meanings of transgression, gossip, and scandal.

2.2. Transgression as Prelude to Scandal

Scandal underlies all kinds of events and processes that are related to transgression. Simply put, transgression is any action that can constitute violation of social norms or moral codes. Transgression, followed by moral indignation, is a part of social processes, and a part of the individual psyche as such (Garfinkel 1956; Jenks 2003).

In transgression, the agency initiates a transition from one order to the other while defying (denying, inverting, "polluting") the conventional schemata of a structure. More importantly, transgression is a "limit experience" which exceeds the borders of conventionality but does not destroy them. Thus, rather than undermining conventional

morality, transgression "underlines it" in a hegemonic manner (e.g. Bataille 1986; Stallybrass and White 1986). This twofold effect of any transgression is crucial for the social meaning of scandal: primarily, one violates rules and goes beyond certain limits set by commandment, law or convention, and secondarily, one simultaneously announces (and thus "praises") the same commandment, law, or convention. In other words, transgression is a component of any rule, and it is confirming limits of normality by exceeding and destabilizing them. Besides, transgressions are charged with meanings that reflect each society's background and experience, and therefore they are always based on culturally-specific evaluations (i.e., we register certain action/behavior as legitimate and normative in one society, but being condemned as scandalous in other culture).

In neofunctionalist terms, transgressions are complementary to the profane, mundane world. Thus, they are judged within the sacred-profane framework of the dichotomised moral continua (e.g. social-antisocial, democratic-antidemocratic, sane-mad, pure-polluted), and if the latter framing prevails, a scandal can be generated via negative public backlash. Nowadays, some major transgressions become mediated as great media events that allow a new symbolic order in response to contradictions of the existing system, eventually initiating institutional reforms or cultural paradigm shifts (e.g. Dayan and Katz 1992). Nonetheless, in contrast to purely violent transgressions that are based on actual intention to cause harm or damage, scandals are in principle not grounded

in subversion or deliberate challenge to the status quo. Exceptions to this rule are the conspiracy-motivated political scandals, and artistic scandals that are motivated by one's artistic confession.

Ordinary citizens who engage in transgressive conduct can also be demonized by the media, e.g. by being depicted as "folk devils" (Cohen 2002) or by becoming "accidental celebrities" that were accidentally dragged in some "psychodrama" (Lull and Hinerman 1997; Marshall 2010). However, it is in principle the "conspicuous elites" and other elite representatives whose transgressions become rendered as eminently newsworthy. Commoners usually do not become main scandal subjects because they usually do not belong to any elite institution, and they do not directly represent/symbolize any system or societal structure. Thus, they are not the trustees of public moral standards and conventions, and thus their social status does not wield any potential to seriously violate social trust.

Any limit carries with it an intense relationship with the desire to transgress that limit (if only in a form of fantasy that gathers around what is illicit). Especially the art scandals indicate that transgressions involve limits while searching to break them. These aspects of transgression are essential to modern media culture as a means by which people one can re-invent their image or demonstrate their individuality. No matter if they sustain or transform any stasis, their manifestation is above all "purposive" (Jenks 2003). For

instance, as purposively transgressive can be understood those practices that belong to liminal zones of culture and thought (e.g. the counter-cultural avant-garde, radical political movements, or culture jamming). The "Dionysian" desire to transgress aesthetic and moral limits was central to the development of classical and modern art (e.g. Nietzsche 1999; Jenks 2003; Adut 2008) and this desire rendered itself as particularly purposive in postmodern art, with attempts to break rules and step outside of moral conventions while celebrating chaos within the modernity's quest for order. In Japan, same as in the West, we witness an increasing trend of incorporating transgressivity into mainstream content, while fictional accounts readily incorporate transgressive anti-heroes in order to transform revolt into style and dissatisfaction into a commodity (Prusa 2016a).

Importantly for this thesis, the identification of transgression is one of the key aspects integral to maintaining social order. After all, man adjusts to what he should not; he is unable to adjust to what he should (Toomer 1991, XI). In other words, it is through the violation of prohibition that the force of this prohibition is fully realized, and the structure and coherence of a social system is provided. Moreover, both the general principles related to an ideal of conduct, and the social meanings of transgression and deviance are always "constructed" – both socially (Berger and Luckman 1966), and journalistically (Molotch and Lester 1974). In other words, transgression is not a crime per se, but it can become criminalized (i.e. jurally defined as crime), and publicly

condemned via mass media channels. To be deviant means that others treat someone like he/she is deviant based on our *common knowledge* related to deviations.[19]

2.3. Scandal as Sociological Phenomenon

Scandal is fundamentally a form of **conflict** (contest, confrontation, competition, or crisis). For scandalicity to function, at least two ideals must be negatively polarized through accusation and defense in order to create an “issue”. Certain ideal purpose of conduct (or its interpretation) enters into conflict with another ideal (interpretation), either from within the same social collectivity, or from beyond the boundaries of cultures, eventually triggering a global/international scandal. Usually, one interpretation of conflict is subjective (individual), and the other is institutional (social). In other words, a scandal subject becomes sanctioned when certain conduct appears to involve private, “egotistic” interests over the “sacred” interests of social collectivity. In politics, the conflict of scandal lies in a serious misuse of power and breach of the norm of reciprocity between the governing elites and the people who gave them power (Hobbes 1960; Rousseau 1994). In Japan, conflict is a complex phenomenon whose cost are rather high in a society that

[19] Common knowledge can be defined as a symbolic public arena, where “everyone knows that everyone knows that everyone knows” (Gluckman 1963; Meyrowitz 1986; Adut 2008). More importantly for our context, it is the public rituals of all sorts that are the most effective generators of common knowledge about what is deemed appropriate or not in society (Schwe 2001).

emphasizes social harmony and conflict avoidance. However, many scandalous affairs relate competition between groups of producers, actors, and partial audiences, and the form and outcome of scandal is the product of their interactions. The scandal actors express opposing social claims to the validity of norms, and instruments of power are eventually used in order to defeat opposing forces. That is why in political discourse the so-called attack-politics is a powerful tool, and not a mere distraction from the real substance of political life.[20]

Furthermore, we can argue that scandal always represents a form of **struggle**. Seen from the perspective of the transgressor, it is a struggle for public trust which is a key factor for the elites to maintain their face. The success or failure of struggling individuals depends on skill and fortune same as on effectively commanding the frontstage (Goffman 1959; Alexander 2011). Once entering the media arena, scandal becomes a mediatized struggle and a process of cultural, semiotic and linguistic battle over meanings (Hall 1997; Bourdieu 1999). This occurs simultaneously within the "journalistic field", where in-group frictions between different bureaus, media producers, editors and journalists occur, and within the "mediopolitical field", which is emblematic

---

[20] In attack-politics, scandal becomes a political tool on the backdrop of internal struggles between powerful groups, factions, and individuals. Consequently, a certain damning evidence surfaces while some politicians threaten their suspect opponents with media exposure of their transgression. Any scandal provides opposition lawmakers with ammunition during the Diet session: calls for investigation by ethics committees (in order to determine whether any violation of rules occurred) and calls for resignation made during parliamentary discussions are the main strategies of attack-politics.

of out-group frictions between the media and their sources, and between the competing journals and papers.

Scandal-as-struggle is logically tied to an understanding the phenomenon as **strategy**. The mediated visibility (which can cause a character failing of one's opponent) became a potent weapon in the struggle for political advantage, while the cumulative effect of scandal was incorporated into the electoral style in Japan and elsewhere. Leaking a damaging information has become the most powerful weapon for politics in society (Castells 2009). Needless to say, without oppositional and factional pressure, many corruption cases would remain unnoticed.

Same as gossip, scandal can be approached from a functionalist/hegemonic perspective, i.e. as a tool for maintaining and re-establishing the morale of the community. In this understanding, scandals present a form of coercive social pressure which lies in encouraging the spirit of "togetherness" via sanctioning antisocial behavior. While promoting social cohesion and supporting the status quo, such coercion is conceived of as "integrative" since certain media events can evoke renewal of loyalty to the society with its legitimate authority (Dayan and Katz 1992; Couldry 2003). In such cases, a "successful", ideal-type scandal is conceived of as a **statement** of the norm (i.e. a declaration of what is considered by the members of a society to be good and proper), and a **lesson** that contributes to the improvement of the functioning of the society (e.g. Blic

and Lemieux 2005; Newton 2006; Marciano and Moureau 2013). Thus, scandal serves as a sign that moral community needs to be restored while learning a lesson form it. This understanding resonates with those conflict theorists that argue that inter-group conflicts are "beneficent" since they stand for safety valves that restore the integrative core and solidify groups (e.g. Simmel 1955). Nonetheless, every scandal always simultaneously represents a "latent dysfunction" (Merton 1968): it is an unanticipated and unintended temporary disruption of order and stability, with both the "manifest function" (proving that the supervisory organs of the state and the media-watchdogs are working) and the "latent function" (triggering scandal fatigue and political cynicism among the public.

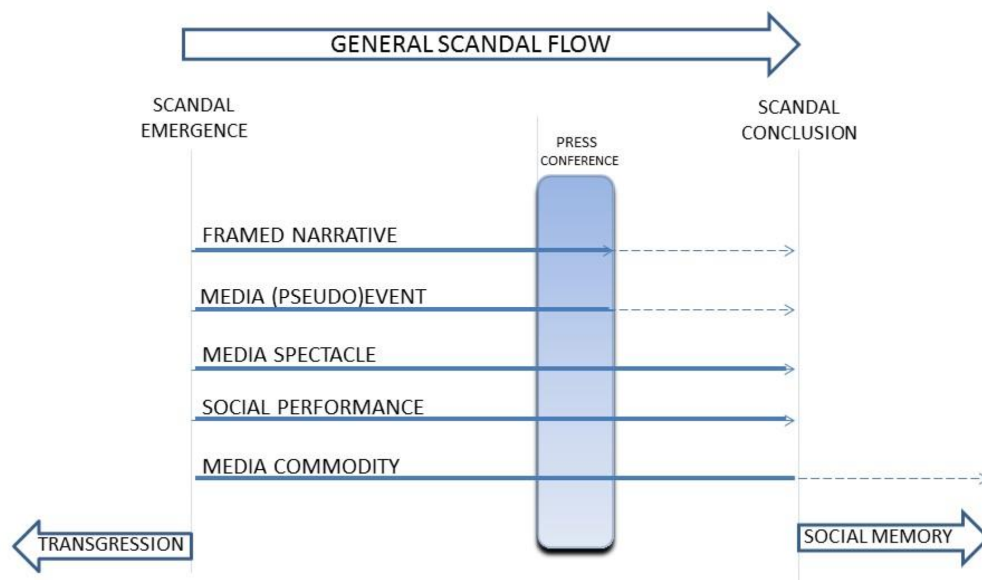
Most importantly for this thesis, scandal can be approached from within the neofunctionalist perspective as **social drama** and **ritual.** Scandals are in this light approached as degradation ceremonies and media-sponsored rituals cast into a pattern that is reproduced, institutionalized, maintained and understood as such. The section III of this thesis will develop the argument of media scandal as social ritual, but before that, it is important to theorize scandal as *media text*.

3. THEORIZING SCANDAL AS TEXT

The main aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of those theoretical perspectives that help to illuminate the characteristics of scandal as media text. In this orientation, which brings together theoretical insights from various disciplines, media scandal will be analysed as a structured and framed narrative, and a more or less spectacular pseudo-event. As the illustration below indicates, these features of media scandal are overlapping and they do not exclude themselves.

Figure 2. The main features of scandal as media text.

Source: Author



3.1. Media Scandal as Narrative

Formally speaking, narratives are discursive accounts of important factual or fictitious events and experiences of humanity. They help to organize our world and shape both our lived and mediated reality. According to William Labov (1999), narrative is a method of recapitulating experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of actual events from the past. We usually construct narrative structures in a temporal order, and in verbal, musical, and pictorial forms (Berger 1997; Jaworsky and Coupland 1999). These structures are essentially stories "about people" (or about types of people) that are co-constituted by cultural prototypes, images, and icons, and that have meaning for all those who live, create, or interpret them (Lipmann 1922; Fisher 1984; Lakoff 2009).

Narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge. It aims to civilize, educate and develop (Lyotard 1984), and in order to maintain our social reality and avoid the chaotic, we "tell stories about ourselves to ourselves" (Geertz 1973). With the outset of media modernity, it is mainly through the mass media of communication that society "talks to itself" (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986; Thompson 1995). At any rate, the fundamental means for any communicative and reflexive endeavour is that of a structured and framed narrative.

The narrative turn in social sciences posits that man is essentially a "story-telling animal" (term by MacIntyre 1981). In this light, all sorts of everyday language come in a form of a story (including casual communication), and all mediated discourses, where "journalists are storytellers" (Barkin 1984) are in principle narrative devices. Narratives are embedded in various media contents and literary sources as distinct as Twitter and the Bible. Furthermore, no set of legal institutions exists apart from the narratives that locate it, while even the scientific discourse (with its paradigm shifts) comes in a narrative form. Various traditional ceremonials and rituals also appear in a form of a structured narrative, moving from equilibrium to disequilibrium/liminality to equilibrium again (see section III). It is the case that through complex cognitive processes the human mind tends to construct a coherent story out of any material available in order to maintain objective experience. Clarissa Estes aptly described this inclination in a psychoanalytical manner: *the soul wants stories* in order to flood the fertile psychic delta (Estes 2004, xxxi-xxxv, original emphasis).[21]

In this regard, scandals are no exception. Scandals are media-focused texts that find their expression only through being articulated in a narrative mode. In terms of

[21] Life itself is structured as a complex macro-narrative, triggered by birth, concluded by death, and marked by various rites of passage. Thus, the "accident of birth" can be understood as a moment where equilibrium is disrupted whereby initiating the narrative of life, only to be later re-established by the "catastrophe of death". Life and death are correlates that neutralize and cancel each other out (Schopenhauer 1993), while the narrative of life is a full circle "…from the tomb of the womb to the womb of the tomb." (Campbell 2004, 12).

narrativity, the linear ordering of scandal parallels with the conventional narrative order, steering toward some "truth", which is essentially deemed a result which only appears at the end of the scandal drama. The basic narrative structure of scandal can be directly linked to Aristotle's *Poetics* (2006), where every effective plotting that hopes to affect the audience demands a narrative with beginning, middle, and end. The same narrative structures keep recurring from scandal to scandal, being constituted by opening (disclosure of transgression), the middle (scandal proper), and closing (apologies, damages). Scandals then ideally progress from crisis to a resolution that concludes the sequence of events. In terms of their narrative function, scandals came to be perceived as fairy tales for adults (Burkhardt 2011), whose grammar is based on the principles of folk tales (Dayan and Katz 1988). Moreover, the media rhetoric in scandal can be paralleled to that of the Greek tragedy (Ruigrok 2007), or even a detective novel (Boltanski 2004) which follows the transition from indignation to denunciation based on a clash between good and evil.

Every effective scandal story is to be persuasive, dynamic and prominent. The absence of a progressive narration or narrative incoherence can be confusing, hindering the audiences their appropriate responses, eventually withdrawing their involvement which is essential for any media event. Furthermore, in order to be effective, the scandal narrative must imply a certain amount of "moral agonism", which hinges on a conflict of

good against evil (Alexander 2006a). The central point of the narrative lies in a plot, or a "complicating action" (transgression of rules or conventions), which sets a climate of suspicion. Thus, scandal is in principle a morality tale, constructed primarily for condemnation purposes. It claims to possess knowledge of "doing the right thing" while aiming to mandate others to sanction in the context of the journalistically constructed public opinion tribunal (Molotch and Lester 1974; Ehrat 2011). In other words, the main teleological purpose of scandal is to narrate for sanctioning, and if this teleology fails, the entire story will collapse and give way to a different story.

Throughout political histories, power holders were frequently transforming their interest conflicts into dramatic performances, portraying themselves in simplified narratives as protagonists, and casting their opponents as antagonists. The mediated politics today still draws upon similar dramatic tropes: scandals as morality tales have their actor-categories: protagonists ("heroes"), antagonists ("villains") and victims. Those who represent heroes fight for a "good cause" (i.e. the sacred, the right, and the moral of a collectivity). The so-called villains (symbolic transgressors and legal rule violators) restrict them while representing danger for the social system. Finally, the victims are in scandal usually citizens to be saved.[22]

---

[22] The public is perceived as victim especially when the citizens/consumers are directly affected (e.g. in cases of food/safety scandals). Although Japanese executives and officials often proclaim that their public enterprise is in the "public interest", it is in principle the shareholders, industries, and advertisers they feel primarily responsible to. Thus, in corruption cases, the victimized outsiders are usually the taxpayers, in food

Scandals are construed as morality tales with heterogenous actor-categories:

- the media are the **narrators** (i.e. storytellers) that re-present a transgression
- the agents of justice (prosecutors, police, jury) are the **heroes** of morality
- the main transgressor is the **villain** (i.e. perpetrator of injustice, defendant)
- the public (including the loyal fans and voters) is the indirect (mass)**victim**.

In other words, the news department puts together a minidrama, which is co-constituted by the alleged villain (the transgressor), conspicuous heroes (prosecutor, courts, the police), indirect victims (commoners, taxpayers) and storytellers (the media) that promise investigation as a sort of *deus ex machina*. Furthermore, scandal narratives are always an issue of both performed narrativity, and contextualized morality. In scandal, the actions of main actors are subjected to moral evaluation: the "good people" assume the protagonist status, while those who appear to pursue consensually condemned causes are attributed the antagonist status. Throughout the unfolding of a scandal narrative we are expected to identify the goodness and badness whereby "naturally" siding with the protagonist and detesting the antagonist.

---

scandals it is the consumers, and in pharmaceutical scandals, it is the patients. Sadly, in Japan the reputation of ministries and the well-being of the clients in industry was often said to be more important than the lives of ordinary people (see e.g. Yayama 1990; Miyamoto 1996; McCormack 1996; Kerr 2001; Kingston 2004; Murphy 2014).

Scandal is an open story with twists and turns, sub-dramas, peripheral stories, and competing interpretations. Moreover, the basic narrative is accompanied by the event's textual suburbs: various "secondary texts" (term by Fiske 1989) include interviews, publications and documentaries about the transgressor, panel discussions, and other texts that usually only reinforce the preferred reading. The scandal narrative can also shift its focus away from the key transgressor to other individuals and "pollute" them in the so-called snowball effect. This effect becomes significant in Japan, where the group traditionally assumes collective responsibility (*rentai sekinin*) for the wrongdoings of each member. Finally, some scandals trigger a political or public debate on some originally unrelated "higher grade" issue (this was the case of Prime Minister Uno's infidelity scandal in 1989, which brought to the fore some gender-related issues).

Scandal narratives are intertextual: they are characteristic of a strong interplay between other texts, both nonfiction (referring to similar scandal cases) and fiction (paralleling popular narratological plots). The way, in which various narratives are interwoven throughout the course of social history creates a narrative framework against which a scandal will be read, pre-orienting the reader to read new scandals in reference to the past ones. This is also why there can hardly be anything like a "new scandal" since all its performative utterances depend on iteration of scripted events and background structures of meaning in successive performance (Fiske 1989; Giesen 2006). In this light,

new scandals are just "replays" of previous scandals, while it is only the scale of corruption, and the density of media coverage which differs.[23]

The formal climax signals that the basic scandal narrative is to be concluded, and it usually comes in a form of a non-routine media event, namely the televised press conference (see below). After this point, the media gradually disengage from the event, signalling that following events are little important to the concluded narrative. The scandal "coda" can be understood as the post-narrative part of the scandal where general observations are made, and effects of the event are shown. During this phase, various (auto)biographical accounts appear on the market. Big scandals sell books and films, continuously generating further commercial profit.[24]

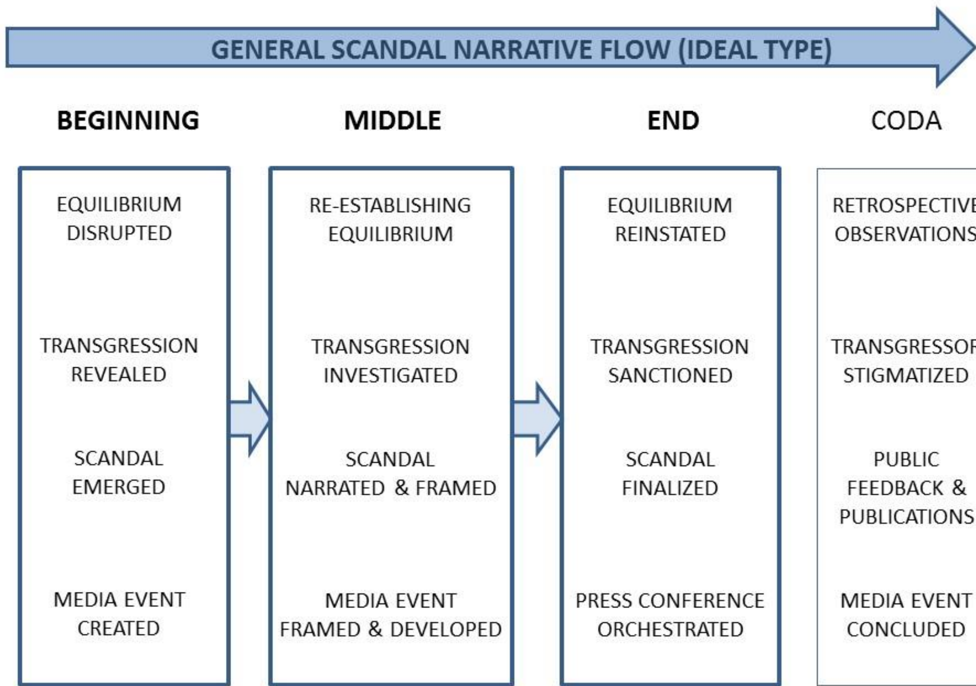
---

[23] For example, the 1976 Lockheed scandal became the prototype for any future political corruption case, while the 1992 Sagawa Kyūbin scandal was just a "follow-up" to the 1988 Recruit Scandal)

[24] For instance, Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal inspired many movies including *All the President's Men* (1976), *Nixon* (1995) and *Frost/Nixon* (2008). Among popular dramas that were inspired by actual scandal worth mentioning are *Eight Men Out* (1988), dealing with a sports corruption scandal, *Scandal* (1989), based on the British Profumo scandal from 1963, *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room* (2005) and *Inside Job* (2010), both based on one of the largest corporate scandals in American history. Other recent scandal adaptations include *The Armstrong Lie* (2013) based on the doping scandal of Lance Armstrong, *Welcome to New York* (2014), depicting the sex scandal of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, and *Spotlight* (2015) scrutinizing the religious scandal of British Catholic Church in 2001. Contrarily to the West, the Japanese media/film production does not paint journalists and whistleblowers as "heroes". A scandalous accusation, made about Kōno Yoshiyuki in the aftermath of the 1994 sarin gas attack, was dramatized by Fuji TV in 2009, and the Japanese celebrity megascandal of Sakai Noriko from the same year was adapted for the screen under the title *Setsuna* ("The Moment"). Furthermore, a feature-length documentary about the 2011 Olympus scandal, titled *Samurai and Idiots: The Olympus Affair,* was released in 2014, and another film-documentary on the 2014 Samuragōchi scandal was released in 2016 under a title *Fake* by the acclaimed documentarist Mori Tatsuya. As for the fictional accounts on scandal, the Japanese comedy *Shazai no Ōsama* ("The King of Apology") from 2013 ridiculed apologetic performances in contemporary Japan, while two classic movies by Kurosawa Akira

Figure 3. General scandal narrative flow (ideal type).

Source: Author



Although scandals are generally pre-structured by the teleology of pursuing the truth, some scandal narratives die without actual resolution. This can also be a result of shifting attention to a new scandal, since the only reality, which can compete with a media event, is another media event (Dayan and Katz 1992). By continuously producing new scandal narratives in endless succession, the media usually maintain the repetitive cycle of perpetual disintegration and renewal in order to secure circulation.

Shūbun ("Scandal") from 1950 and *Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru* ("The Bad Sleep Well") from 1960 depicted corruption between politicians, bureaucrats, big business, and the yakuza in postwar Japan.

3.2. Media Scandal as Frame

Scandal narratives are made up of frames – smaller narratives with simple structures that tend to organize our experience (Goffman 1974; Entman 1993). The framed narratives bind various facts together into a logically conceivable pattern: they create awareness on unconscious level while anchoring real occurrences via symbolic coordinates. For instance, scandals are always bound in space and time, so the basic framing coordinates are "we" (*wareware*), "now" (*ima*) and "here" (*koko*) (e.g. Ishida 2003). Furthermore, the media are framing scandals by their placement, visual portrayal, and the overall tone of the media report. In other words, the media discourse, understood as a set of interpretive "media packages" (term by Gamson and Modigliani 1989), not only transmits media narratives, but it also suggests further meaning through framing.

Frames are both conscious and unconscious, visible (i.e. immediately identifiable), and invisible (i.e. they become visible in practices). They render experience by defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements and suggesting remedies. Furthermore, they involve selection, salience, and moral positioning of protagonists versus antagonists. While being typically based on the arousal of emotions, media framing proceeds by the structure and form of the narrative including the use of sounds, images, headlines, illustrations, or metaphors. While activating our mind with

proper stimulus, the frames – both cultural and ideological – exert significant influence on our evaluations of social elites' transgressions (Lippmann 1922; Castells 2009; Kepplinger, Geiss and Siebert 2012).

Frames are related to *news values* (metatextual routines that predetermine meaning before any journalistic text is generated). Moreover, the news is being simultaneously selected based on the significance of other news emerging at the same time (cf. media priming), and on the social importance attributed to news via their placement and ordering (cf. agenda setting). Besides, the journalists know in advance the type of story they are looking for, so the general frame, including its negative codes and associations, is already in motion. Even the public shock, which eventually results from a scandal, is culturally predetermined since public expectations are guided by preconvention which generates regularities (Tiffen 2004; Mast 2006).

The inherent pathology of media frames lies in the fact that they by necessity oversimplify reality while being tied to over-signification (i.e. they magnify or reduce meaning). First, it is the contextualization (and equally importantly the absence of context) that modifies the meaning. Secondly, frames entail a way of discussing the problem (including how it will be discussed) and they entail the kind of discourse that will follow (e.g. treating illegal drug use as "public health issue", or "criminal justice issue", or "foreign crime issue"). Thirdly, visual frames are often applied in Japanese

scandal reporting: diagrams, maps, charts, and other presentations of "objective knowledge" are presented to the audiences. They are highly effective tools since they are ostensibly free from emotive involvement and subjectivity whereby increasing the degree of trustworthiness. Furthermore, the televisual framing offers patterns of expressing distance, such as close shot (intimate/personal), frontal angle (involvement), oblique angle (detachment), high angle (viewer power), low angle (models depicted as exercising symbolic power over the viewer), long shot (socially distant "stranger") (Kress and van Leeuwen 1999). Especially during scandal hearings, the "bracketed experience" includes in-camera editing, repetition and juxtaposition (Alexander 1988), while villainy is metaphorically transformed into the representation of the subject in extreme close-up (Fiske 2011). Especially Japanese apologia, extreme close-ups show anything less than head and shoulders of the subject, and such framing is an effective means of enhancing the visual spectacle of degradation.[25]

Media framing is not a single-layered, monolithic process. It is co-defined by negotiations and struggles among political actors, media institutions, and interest groups.

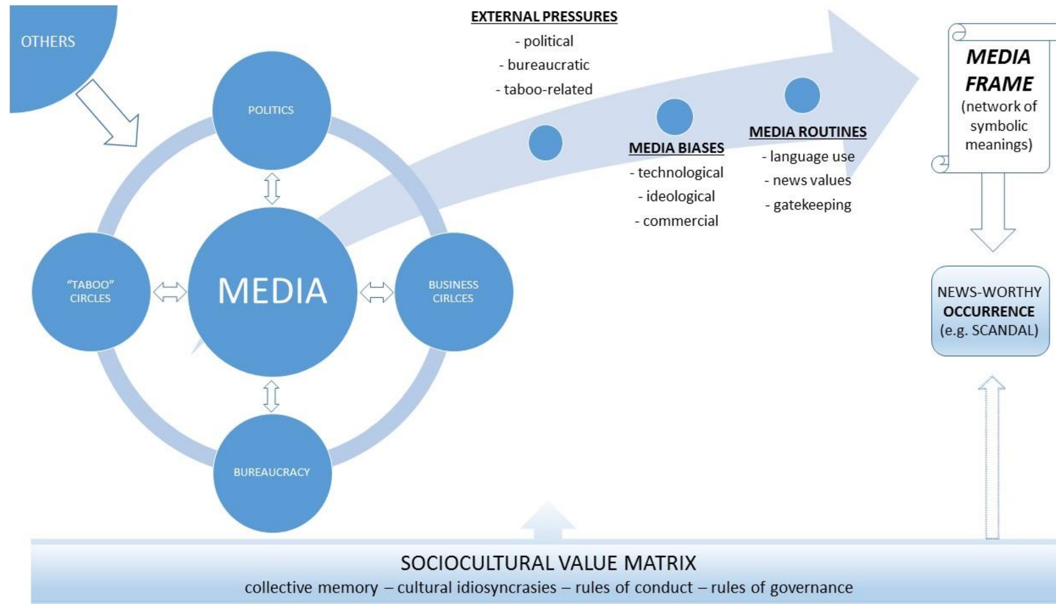
---

[25] Also consider the pseudo-aesthetics of the paparazzi style-footage in TV and tabloids: the presented material often looks shoddy in terms of composition, lighting, shooting angle, or sharpness. This evokes a sense of raw realism, and aims to reveal a momentary glimpse into "evil" (consider the snapshots of culprits back-seated in the dark of a car and hiding their face during their transport after arrest). Also, worth noticing is utilization of music and sound in TV clips: positive sound-framing is facilitated via bright tunes and optimistic themes in the major key (e.g. depictions of the transgressor prior to scandal), while negative sound-frames are tinged with suspicious and gloomy tunes in the minor key.

Besides, scandal frames are always positioned within a certain interested moral system: they move from their starting point, that is usually chosen, and they aim at specific and usually predicted end, which lies in public condemnation of immorality. For this purpose, a "guilt frame" is established by the media based on available information with regard to selected components. The emotional reaction to a guilt frame is moral indignation, anger, and calling for punishment. On the contrary, the excuse frame in the media solicits sadness and calls for no or mild punishment (Garfinkel 1956; Kepplinger, Geiss and Siebert 2012). Within the guilt frame, which dominates in media scandals, the transgressor becomes associated with the profane code of motives, relations, and institutions, which can lead to misinterpretation and "symbolic annihilation" of alleged transgressor (term by Gaye Tuchman). Besides, media frames cause the public to view scandal protagonists as guiltier than the media portray, or on the contrary excusing them more than the media do (Kepplinger, Geiss and Siebert 2012).

Figure 4. Media framing based internal and external pressures.

Source: Author



In postwar Japanese history, consider the case of Tanaka Kakuei: his popularity reached its peak in 1972, but the public opinion changed rapidly after the allegations in 1974 surfaced. By stripping all honorifics from his name in the news, the media applied the guilt frame on Tanaka's case whereby directly contributing to his popularity fall to lowest levels. In a similar vein, the charismatic but controversial entrepreneur Horie Takafumi (head of the Livedoor Company) was in 2006 effectively demonized by the mainstream media (based on his criticism of Japanese conservative business circles), which contributed to his jailtime. Similarly, Ozawa Ichirō, who was always on bad terms with the mainstream media, also ended up being negatively framed, which significantly threatened his power (see below).

3.3. Media Scandal as Event

Media event is a more or less pre-planned coverage of a certain real event or chain of events. It represents a dramatized, complex process shaped as stories and scripts that are being construed by mediated forms of communication. Contrarily to ordinary news, the ceremonial media events are performances that can challenge or affirm the established order while temporarily disrupting the normal flow of broadcast (Dayan and Katz 1992). Being based on ideological and commercial motives, the contents of media events are dictated by writers and journalists, and its distribution is decided by corporate or state organization. Besides, the event's framing packages have usually sponsors, i.e. organizations employing professional specialists whose daily job bring them into contact with journalists and promote preferred package (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Boorstin 1992). On the contrary however, scandal professionals in Japan are scarce, often leaving amateurs as scandal spokesmen, or merely producing manuals of "criris management" (*kiki kanri*) (see West 2006).

Media events are usually pre-planned, but the organizers cannot be fully certain how they proceed. This is especially the case of events based on accidents and other non-routine, disruptive events, including scandals: they crash through the ongoing habitual arrangements of newsmaking, or they rest upon miscalculations that lead to a breakdown

in the customary order (Molotch and Lester 1974; Dayan and Katz 1988). Big media events – including large-scale scandals – are conducted in a breaking news-style and provided simultaneously by multiple mass media channels often through live transmission. The live broadcast invites an awareness participating in ongoing scandal with all its subtleties. Equally important is the right timing of a live event (i.e. the "sacred time"), and the right venue (i.e. the "sacred place").[26]

While echoing the actor-network theory (Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005), media events represent a heterogeneous engineering and assemblage of various related actors. In other words, these events are neither a result of a single self-conscious performance, nor are they reducible to one particular actor. They are constituted by negotiations between organizers and broadcasters, while the broadcast can be both forced and denied. The journalistic paradigms of objectivity and neutrality become contested, since unlike ordinary news, media events are less descriptive of a state of affairs, and more "symbolically instrumental": they display what they wish to achieve (Dayan and Katz 1992).

The coverage of media events is usually extremely intense and out of proportion to the event being covered, due to which other important news issues might get less

---

[26] For instance, it makes a difference if a high-ranked politician conducts an apologetic press conference in a hotel (the "constructed" center) instead of his official residence (the "real" center). As for the timing, it is a part of scandal strategies to schedule the coverage for a Friday evening edition of a newspaper, or for the more closely watched Monday morning edition.

coverage at the expense of a media frenzy. Nonetheless, some of these events enter collective memory either in a form of historic "triumph", or as a cultural "trauma". Such trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to an event that leaves marks on the group consciousness (Alexander 2012), and it is the case of major scandals in a country's past. (In Japan, this was the case of Lockheed and Recruit scandals, where some "ordinary" bribery case brought down many political leaders). Private homes are temporarily transformed into public spaces, where debates on given moral issues are activated, and changes of attitudes are made possible. In other words, the ideal-type scandal is a media event which aims for normalization of certain conflict with the "help" of the public (i.e. if the public does not approve or take part on the event, it decreases chances for its success). Eventually, in scandal the media "monopolize" public opinion.[27]

The media event of scandal is both an unfolding event (with eventual surprises, twist and turns), and a scripted event (goal-oriented, media-framed, bound in space and time). While differing from traditional media events as described by Dayan and Katz

[27] The notion of public opinion is to a significant extent a mediopolitical construction (Lippmann 1922; Anderson 1983; Alexander 2006c), whereas the opinion polls are always partly illusory. Firstly, the elites who act only "as-if" they were attentive to public opinion, only support each other in a "circle of belief" (Ehrat 2008; Lakoff 2009; Boltanski 2004). Secondly, the outcome of the polls represents only a soft data based on different questions. Thus, various surveys with different institutional background can come to a wide range of conclusions because of the way the poll questions are *defined*. For instance, apart from the basic set of options ("agree/disagree"), some Japanese pollsters offer the option "don't know/no answer". In a comparative study conducted by Ikeda and Kohno (2008), the Japanese respondents provided the highest percentage of such evasive responses. In addition to this, some surveys on distrust in Japanese politics are also slightly misguiding because they ask about "satisfaction" with politics rather than about "confidence" or "trust" (e.g. Pharr 2000).

(1988; 1992), scandals are in principle not experienced as positive displays of togetherness: they do not celebrate reconciliation, but rather manage conflicts. Scandals wish to be spontaneous exposures and rejections of thing concealed. In order to illuminate the specific essence of scandals, I sum up those features of scandal event that are *in contrast* to the category of media events as postulated by Dayan and Katz:

- scandals highlight social structure through disapproval, degradation and exclusion, while many large media events highlight the same structure through displays of unity and solidarity
- scandals are built on a blameworthy/newsworthy transgressor (as opposed to praiseworthy/heroic figures of great media events), and they disseminate sentiments of moral indignation (as opposed to empathic experiences facilitated by big media events)
- scandals are not advertised, rehearsed or pre-planned (except for those scandals that are the outcome of strategic use within the attack-politics, or some other form of pre-planned conspiracy)
- big scandals usually surprise large audiences, the whole nation in case of a national scandal, or even the world as such in case of global scandal (on the contrary, in big media events the audiences/participants are urged for weeks or months in advance)
- scandals are repetitive and rather monologic (on the contrary, some great media events

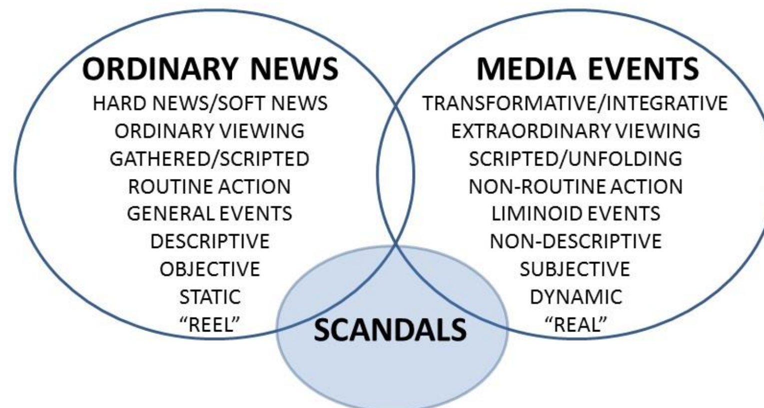
are unique, innovative, dialogic, eventually initiating a "new order" by contesting the status quo)

- the significance of scandal is usually assessed as soon as the transgression has been revealed and the transgressor identified (on the contrary, the significance of many media events is assessed and constructed *post facto*)
- apart from a handful of megascandals (e.g. Watergate or Lockheed), scandal events do not wield significant transformative potential of changing societal, political or economic attitudes, as is the case of major movements and revolutions.

Regarding its journalistic form, scandal is a hybrid text: it shares the features of both routine events (ordinary news), and non-routine accidents (media events). Thus, based on their journalistic format, they are both descriptive (a state of an affair is on a periodical basis presented in the news), and symbolically instrumental (they aim to achieve certain ideological/hegemonic goal). Moreover, the treatment of scandals in the news is changing throughout the time: at the beginning, the routines of objectivity are transcended to some significant degree, allowing access to otherwise unavailable elite information. Eventually, the situation becomes transferred from scandal investigation to a televised ceremony. Finally, the anti-routine, liminoid event becomes again treated by the routine-making media procedures.

Figure 5. Media scandal as journalistic hybrid between ordinary news and media event.

Source: Author



Furthermore, Dayan and Katz (1992) indicated that the most significant of media events are those "pseudo-events" that actually work. In the same vein, scandal is not an media event *per se*. It is always a more or less hyped report of certain eventworthy occurrence that is turned into a media event, and eventually becomes scandalized through negative public opinion. Many contemporary scandals not only in Japan can be critically approached as pseudo-events (or even "non-scandals"), because:

- they represent rituals that are planned, reproduced, and used strategically by different groups, exerting or seeking power in society
- they emphasize the act of visual stimulation at the expense or "real" knowledge whereas mesmerising the public by focusing on attractive trivia

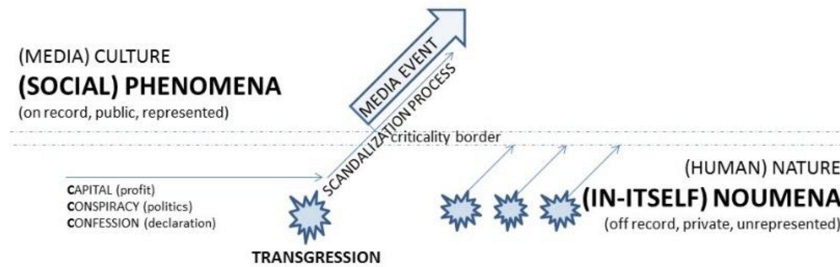
- in many pseudo-scandals, journalists tend to blow things out of proportion, penetrating the audience by feelings of “unhealthy curiosity”
- their structural/institutional background becomes deemphasized, while the public’s attention is drawn away from general issues toward the abnormality of specific event.

Seen from a philosophical perspective, we can add that a scandal *phenomenon* is something that “shows itself” (or is becoming visible), while scandal *noumenon* stands for the initial transgression (i.e. the invisible, transgressive force, which is normally unrepresented). In this light, the original transgression (*noumenon*) is always less scandalous than its mediated version (*phenomenon*). Moreover, the original transgression can hardly be understood as scandalous itself since the intersection and relationship between “transgression” and “limit” occurs outside of the social coding, and it becomes negatively labeled if, and only if it is exposed by a motivated whistleblower. The media events in general and media scandals in particular invite implosion between the “real” (*noumenal*) and the “representational” (*phenomenal*), which allows for countless pseudo-events.[28]

[28] The dichotomy of *noumenon* and *phenomenon* was a key part of the philosophical inquiry since its outset. We find discussions on *noumenon* in Plato (as abstract *ideas* or *forms*), in Immanuel Kant (as the *thing-in-it-self*), or in Martin Heidegger (as opposed to *phenomenon*). The Cartesian dualism is also based on this discussion (i.e. the distinction between *noumenon* as a proto-core of a meaning, and *phenomenon* as a “secondary reality” of appearance/representation. Simply put, the binary of *noumenon* and *phenomenon* refers to occurrences in *reality* per se (the unmediated, unreflective, “actual” world) as opposed to the realm of *appearances* (thoughts, images, and sounds that only reflect/refer to

Figure 6. Scandalization as transition from noumenal to phenomenal reality.

Source: Author



3.4. Media Scandal as Spectacle

Big media events often emphasize the act of audiovisual stimulation at the expense of "real" knowledge. Thus, they can be theoretically related to the notion of media spectacle. Spectacle (from the Latin *spectaculum*) refers to displaying a visually striking performance that is primarily memorable for its appearance. In the context of media scandal, spectacles are understood less as occasions that publicly demonstrate civic collectivity, and more as media-organized public events with more or less distracting,

---

genuine reality). In terms of public involvement, the former can be understood as occasion for citizenship (audience-as-citizens), while the latter points to a media-constructed pseudo-event (citizens-as-audiences) (see Waisbord 2004).

superficial, and deceptive qualities. The critics of modernity claim that through various spectacles our perceptible world is being replaced by a set of superior images mediated by signs and signals. In spectacle, the *see-worthiness* (i.e. the “politics” behind the promoted phenomena) retreats at the expense of mere *seen-ness* (i.e. their representational and visual aspects).[29]

As I will futher indicate in section III, the traditional rituals had a capacity to *transform* people, ideas and mores. However, the modern ritualized spectacles in the West merely *present* and *persuade* spectators that the surface visions are meaningful refractions of social order (e.g. Handelman 1997; Kellner 2003; Alexander 2006a). Similarly, in postwar Japan the so-called spectator democracy is typical for spectacles that are conditioned by the passivity of their audiences, setting them apart from the performers and making them deliver their vote when requested (e.g. Stockwin 2008; Kabashima and Steel 2010; Kruze 2015). Modern capitalist media spectacles were scrutinized as mere

[29] For Guy Debord (1967; 1973) spectacles were a by-product of the development of capitalist society where the commodity came to gradually colonize social life. In this train of thought, media spectacles can be positioned within the paradigm of postmodernism, where excess of information, preference for infotainment, and packaging of a media commodity win over actual substances of the content. Consequently, authenticity becomes more an attribute of the audiovisual, while the spectators end up acquiring a falsified knowledge of general aspects of life (Debord 1967; Kellner 1989; Toomer 1991). Some postmodernists further argued that the electronic media supplanted the *scene* of the spectacle by “fascinating” ceremonies of the *obscene*: questioning the distinction between reality and its (mostly televisual) representation plunges the universe into the postmodern “beyond of the spectacle” while obscenity begins when there is no more spectacle (Baudrillard 1988b; Virilio 2000; Boltanski 2004). In other words, everything becomes immediately transparent, pervertedly open, and exposed in the raw light of information and communication.

"declaratives" that actualize other possibilities of bureaucratic logic through large-scale aesthetic productions (Baudrillard 1988a; Handelman 1997). These spectacles do not challenge the hegemonic power, and rather serve as pacifying tools of initiating individuals into "proper" ways of life.

In both East and West, the "hegemony of the visual" became paradigmatic of the contemporary era in which politics, entertainment and information merge. Our everyday life is now spectacularized through various media representations (this situation was primarily triggered by the advancement of spectacle in the medium of television). Scandal belongs to one of such spectacles: it is a declarative public event, which is tied to over-signification, and to the act of exclusion (Handelman 1997). There is nothing truly "revolutionary" or transformative in contemporary scandals: we only keep on re-telling stories to ourselves about our "normal sins" (term by Gamson 2011) that are transformed by the media into profitable media commodities.

The ultimate form of a media spectacle is what Kellner (2003) describes as "megaspectacle". Megaspectacles dominate the mediascape for long periods of time, and are being endlessly scrutinized in the media whereby co-defining the entire era of politics and culture. While stemming from a relatively mundane transgression, scandals constitute a postmodern spectacle where the primary goal is to keep audiences interested.[30]

---

[30] Kellner distinguished between regularly scheduled megaspectacles (the Oscars, the World Series, the Olympics, presidential elections) and media extravaganzas (the Gulf

III.

APPROACHING SCANDAL AS RITUAL

War, the televised O.J. Simpson trial, the Clinton sex scandal, or the 9/11 terrorist attacks). Most of these megaspectacles are simultaneously global spectacles since they are televised all around the world. In Japan, consider the megaspectacle of Sakai Noriko (2009), which was reported in many Asian countries, the Nonomura Ryūtarō faux pass (2014) that went global, or the Olympic logo scandal of Sano Kenjirō (2015) which became a major global news.

1. SCANDAL AS SECULAR RITUAL WITH SACRED AMBITIONS

1.1. Scandal as Social Performance

In this section, I aim to connect the performance/ritual theories to a broader theory of scandal as a secular social process. In order to prepare the ground for such interdisciplinary theorizing, I find it necessary to elaborate on the understanding of scandal as social performance. This orientation is in accord with the neofunctionalist framework, where the materiality of social practices – including both traditional rituals and modern scandals – is replaced by the more multidimensional concept of performance (see Alexander 2006b). Performances are coexistent with the human condition, and they can take place anywhere, depending on a variety of circumstances. Besides, every social performance (including religious rites, artistic/sports performances, and the so-called theater of politics) is constitutive for human communication, and the only type of living thing capable of realizing such conduct is the symbol-making *homo symbolicus* (Cassirer 1946) with his cognitive inclination to emblematize and narrate reality.[31]

[31] The dramaturgical perspective in arts and sciences is not a new phenomenon. In the West, we can find its roots in Hellenistic and Roman satirical poetry, or in the Stoic philosophy that often mentioned the illusory character of our social reality. In theater, Shakespeare famously stated that "the world is a stage", and the notion of *theatrum mundi* was defining the dramaturgical essence of society until 18th century (e.g. Boltanski 2004; Junge 2006). In philosophy, performative aspects of behavior and language were discussed already by Thomas Hobbes (1960). In social sciences, the dramaturgic aspect of performances was closely elaborated by Erving Goffman (1959), Kenneth Burke

In this perspective, we realize that at both the macro and the micro levels the contemporary societies are permeated by symbolic performances and ritualized activities. If approached macro-sociologically, we can state that the whole of our social world, constituted by objects, people and events, is one big "meta-performance" (or "macrodrama") in which spectators can become performers and vice versa. The mediopolitical world is particularly emblematic of performance and dramaturgy. Within the so-called theater of politics, the actors, producers, and stage managers craft discourse as drama, transform public into a stage, and unfold the script (e.g. Edelman 1964; Law and Hassard 1999; Apter 2006). In a similar vein, various practices within the journalistic field materialize depending on the way the newspeople *perform* their tasks (Tuchman 1972; McQuail 1992; Bourdieu 2005).

In a micro-sociological perspective, individual human behavior becomes expressed in a form of performance that is grounded on highly symbolic axiological systems. People are usually unaware actors on a metaphorical stage playing out roles while all performances are grounded in any activity that takes place before particular set of observers (Goffman 1959; Burke 1969). The actor's stage is any place that is bound to some degree by barriers to reception, while the front stage in scandal functions in a ritualized fashion to define the situation for the observer (Meyrowitz 1986; Giesen 2006).

(1969) or Richard Schechner (1988), who stressed in a similar vein as Shakespeare that people are actors on a metaphorical stage.

The main dramaturgical aspect of scandal performances lies in the fact that the conduct is a staged activity that attempts to conceal some inappropriateness. While paraphrasing Goffman, we can talk about a "dual presentation of self" in scandal: the elites perform their expected roles based on their "delegated trustworthiness" (Bourdieu 1984), but their private actions deviate from certain conventions. Once this schism becomes exposed, the elite actors readily follow a "new" dramatic script of public confessions (either a scripted apology, or manifestation of denial). The confessional performance in Japanese scandals is usually conducted in predefined categories (passivity, approval of authority, admittance of transgression), but it is not necessarily fixed: the more assertive actors employ evasive strategies (circumlocutions, phrasing the utterance with ambiguity, counter-attacking and refusing to admit the guilt). They can also switch between these two strategies depending on the scandal development (such as in the case of the 2009 Ozawa Ichirō scandal – see below).

Every scandal performance is in principle directed to other institutionalized platforms. The elites do not represent only their transgressive selves, but they simultaneously stand for some shielding subject (a sports team, a corporation, an entertainment agency, political party/faction, a public institution, or the nation as a whole), which becomes polluted by the individual's transgression. This fact becomes especially highlighted during the apologetic confessions during Japanese scandals where the culprit

never fails to apologize to institutions and systems he/she is related to, although the institution in question ritually disassociates from him/her (see next chapter).

Any dramaturgical performance implies the existence of a more or less responsive audience. The reaction needed to fuel a scandal is from the most part a reaction undertaken in and by the public, which can get expressed by the opinion polls, street interviews, but also in internet chatrooms. Apart from the primary audience that witness a certain event on the spot, scandals necessitate a presence of a secondary media audience. Large media audiences (or whole nations in case of global scandal) are "invited" to interrupt their daily routines and join in the media event. Some scholars claim that in media (post)modernity, the tide of information does not require a response by the recipient, so scandal performances too are seen primarily as "monologic" media events (e.g. Dayan and Katz 1988; Thompson 1995; Adut 2008). Indeed, scandals do not require a fully participating public – at the most basic level it is enough that the public "simply watch". The publics usually spectate on scandal reality but are not usually part of it, although they too can become "ritualists" rather than mere audience members (Grimes 2006). In other words, some public reactions to scandal in Japanese past clearly indicate that the audiences can become proactive performers that make the communicative situation in scandal at least "quasi-dialogic" (see below).

Finally, scandals are enabled and shaped by the performance of the media

organizations themselves. Their journalistic performance depends on internal routines, media biases, and other external forces that determine the scandal frame (see section IV, chapter 6). If the guilt frame prevails, the media performance will highlight the sacred values of a society by pointing at exposed pollution and, ideally speaking, by reaffirming the morality of a community in crisis. At any rate, Japanese media scandals are however achieved less as morality-checks in the name of solidarity, and more as ritualized social performances during which the culprit struggles to minimize the gravity of sanctions related to him/her and those involved.

1.2. Bridging Ritual and Scandal Theory

If there is one universal cultural quality that marks the earliest forms of human social organization, it is the centrality of rituals. In premodern times, various social processes were heavily marked by episodes of ritualized cultural communication in which the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, shared a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents (Durkheim 1915; Turner 1967; Geertz 1973). The result of such rituals was manifold: the spirits were appeased and neighbourhood solidarity strengthened, while the acceptance

of authority was flowing from the enactment of the public ritual.[32]

Since the beginnings of the social sciences, ritual as a specific category of social behavior has been perceived in different ways. For instance, the traditional rituals were understood as re-enactments of historical or mythical precedents (Eliade 1959), but also as important "safety valves" that exhibit (and exaggerate) real conflicts in order to release tension and afford social catharsis (Gluckman 1963; Bell 1992). Moreover, the exchange rituals were rendered as having political significance (Mauss 1966), while the rituals of penal discipline were correlated with "economies of power" (Foucault 1977). Ritual was recognized as a preeminent form of cultural practice (Geertz 1973), but also as a type of political power (Lukes 1975) and effective tool of social control (Douglas 1973). Such rituals are not dead repetitions, but continuous erasings and superimposings (Schechner 1985) which simultaneously renders them as "statements" being paradigmatic of social order (Leach 1954). Such body of research indeed makes an impression that ritual is humanity's basic social act (e.g. Bellah 2005).

Durkheim (1915) believed that both the archaic man and the secular man of today have their "civil religion" which provides individuals with meaning and binds them into

[32] The notion of ritual encompasses a vast number of elements, but most generally it relates to repetitive and memory-inducing patterns of life, thought, belief or behavior. In case of animals, ritual consists of a certain formalized and fixed pattern, and it is a key concept for their behavior. In case of humans, ritual can be understood at the corporeal level (i.e. as any habit or repeated pattern with or without particular meaning), or at the level of "interaction ritual" (e.g. face-to-face meetings and greetings, maintaining a dress code, attending burial ceremony), which stands for prescribed mechanisms to ensure the apparent social unity (Goffman 1959; Collins 2004).

a community. Both the notion of civil religion and its later sociological applications (see Bellah and Hammond 1980; Alexander 2006a; Giesen 2006) are useful starting points for approaching scandal as a secular ritual of civil religion, which aims to contain conflict and prevent a community from degenerating into chaos. In this train of thought, the existence of a community *per se* relies on symbolic representations and ritual performances that re-narrate both the triumphant and traumatic moments by accentuating the boundary between inside and outside. Scandals can be seen as one of those rituals: same as the archaic religious/folk performances, they aim to sustain and mobilize collective sentiments and solidarities based on the sacred-profane binary. They maintain a "logical void" between the sacred and the profane that re-affirms the symbolic boundaries of good and evil (Durkheim 1915; Alexander 2011). However, while diverging from Durkheimian understanding of the sacred, scandal is not the veneration of an object held to be sacred by a community, but it lies in a public degradation that aims to serve as affirmation of collective conscience, and a call to obey the commonsensical morality. To borrow from Edmund Leach (1954), scandal is a ritual which is not a chorus of harmony, but a language of argument.

In order to further demonstrate how the logic of ritual is related to modern Japanese scandal, it is equally necessary to discuss the notion of *social drama* (Turner 1969; 1980). Victor Turner developed his early notion of ritual as social drama while

using the performance approach to ritual. Importantly for the scandal theory, Turner, followed by the neofunctionalist theorists, emphasized the role of frictions and constraints, which are mitigated by ritual in the face of certain conflict. Furthermore, I believe that the performance of modern Japanese scandals is semantically close to the premodern "rituals of affliction" that served as the means of repair and purification due to some crisis (see Turner 1967; 1990). Differing from the rites of passage as theorized by Arnold van Gennep, rituals of affliction can be forced on those who have been caught deviating from norm. They are terminated by a purification ritual that re-establishes the line between good and evil – a transition made possible only by the act of punishment. The punitive exclusion of the transgressor is believed to reduce the appetite for transgression in a community, and to legitimate the authoritarian status quo.

Importantly for understanding modern scandals, the Turnerians believed that the basic components of premodern social dramas and modern rituals can be treated as fundamental aspects of social behavior as such. The modern media only "repackaged" ancient subjects and themes: the social ritual of meeting, talking, gossiping, and telling stories with peers about each one's latest exploit is just a reassertion of tribal story gatherings (Barkow 1992; Estes 2004; Schwab and Schwender 2011). In the same vein, neofunctionalists believe that there exist continuities between premodern sacred rituals and contemporary social performances, including the phenomena of stardom, fandom,

and scandal. Of course, the premodern model cannot be taken as a strict analogy for certain universal processes of secular social life today. Nonetheless, some contemporary social symbols are *like* sacred ones, while the conflict between social values is *like* the conflict between the sacred and profane, and pure and impure (Alexander 2010). A significant affinity between premodern and (post)modern actions and motives lies in their processuality. According to Turner, every social drama follows this processual pattern:

1. breach of norm-governed social relationships (more or less deliberate)
2. crisis or extension of the breach (revelation of hidden clashes)
3. redressive mechanisms (public actions undertaken by authorities)
4. reintegration of disturbed social group (or recognition of a schism).

The social drama works itself out the way a dramatic plot works. Its performance is not only analogous to classical and modern Western drama, but also to the Japanese aesthetic notion of *jo-ha-kyū,* where there is a breach (*jo*), eruption of crisis (*ha*), and a rise to climax that displays the conflict (*kyū*). More importantly for our context, we notice that many of them basically follow the same progression as Turner's social drama (ideal-type):

1. a scandal is triggered by a certain transgression
2. the breach leads into a crisis that cannot be simply sealed off
3. purifying sanctions (both symbolic and legal) are brought into operation
4. the transgressor is publicly displayed, punished and eventually reintegrated.

The processual similitude is apparent, although in contrast to traditional communitarian rituals, contemporary scandal is less a humanly meaningful cultural rite, and more a commoditized social performance with strategic features. Nonetheless, both ritual and scandal is a pragmatic form of cultural practice which stands for the very production and negotiation of power relations. They function as an instrument of social control which effects social conformity and reinforces collectively held values and attitudes.

Premodern social dramas and (post)modern media scandals share their fundamental logic: while following the aforementioned stages of the purification process, they reflect and perpetuate the principles of order (moral, social, cultural, political) and they neutralize (if only temporarily) assumed danger of protracted pollution by sanctioning and scapegoating the transgressor. Thus, the modern mechanisms of redress operate as alternatives to the ritual mechanisms used in tribal societies (Gluckman 1963; Merry 1984). The main mechanism for neutralizing the pollution in both cases is that of a public ritual.

Ritual in modern secularized societies became even more complex. Modern secular rituals are ceremonies that present doctrines and dramatize moral imperatives without invoking the other-worldliness of some mystical powers (Moore and Myerhoff 1977). It is the ideological element that distinguishes a secular ritual from mere custom. Rituals as metaphysical containers of human nature always "hold something", and they can become vehicles for a particular ideology (Lukes 1975; Marvin 2002). They sustain the shared meanings of society – in our context especially those meanings that postulate norms for transgressions, and, in the words of Bell (1992) such conceived rituals have power to discipline the body and regulate the mind.

Ronald Grimes argued that the media model the ritual, while the ritual models the media (Grimes 2006; 2011). In other words, ritual and media interact – either by "mediatizing of ritual", or by "ritualizing of the media". As for the former, various social ceremonies today are indeed mass-produced as media events, and scandal is one of the archetypical forms of such *media rituals* (Couldry 2003; Cottle 2006). As for the latter, it is not only the transgressors who perform their repentance/denial in a ritualized way: it is also the journalists who practice during scandals various "ritualistic performance strategies" (Tuchman 1972): they entail strategic rituals that justify a claim to objectivity, and they develop ritualized procedures in order to protect the system (and themselves) from eventual blame.

The media/scandal performance is a form of a dramatic ritual that makes individuals cohesive within a society: nothing really new is learned but a particular view of the world is portrayed, and the common sense reconfirmed (e.g. Carey 1998; Chwe 2001). Some media rituals (for instance, the high rituals of state or royal ceremonies) integrate societies in a collective heartbeat and evoke a renewal of loyalty to the society and its authority (Dayan and Katz 1994). However, this is rarely the case of contemporary scandals in Japan since during scandal the aforementioned values are portrayed less as subjective human preferences, and more as imposed conditions. After all, contrarily to religious rituals that are foundational to voluntary collective action, media scandals are "involuntary rituals". Besides, the scandal-ritual serves as a hegemonic tool of soft social control while standing for a commercialized media fixture which deepens political apathy. At any rate, every scandal offers a "window of ritual": both rituals and scandals provide a limited area of transparency in otherwise opaque surface of the regular, uneventful social life.

1.3. On the Japanese Sense of Ritual

The extent of ritualistic behavior in Japan appears to surpass other cultures, both Western and Asian. The foreigners are often mesmerized by the "elegance of ritual" that surrounds

Japanese social performances including religious parades and local festivities, various official and royal encounters, or the ceremonial rites of Japanese business culture (see Hirano 1989; Davis 1992; Bremen and Martinez 1995; Steunebrink and van der Zweerde 2004; Murphy 2014). Moreover, it is the omnipresence of various interactional rituals in Japanese everydayness that further points to a heightened sense of ritual and ritualization in Japan: more than in any other country, the apparently insignificant mundane practices of Japanese daily life gain potency through incessant repetition, effectively constructing and sustaining cultural systems (McVeigh 1994). In the same vein, many aspects of Japanese group life are highly ritualized, calling for a "quasi-religious" behavior (including admittance to a group, behaving inside the group, or when leaving the group). Especially, the relationship between group members and outsiders in Japan has a remarkably ritualistic character (Sugimoto 2010; Prasol 2010). Some scholars assert that a smooth functioning of ritualized mechanisms of group life and its governance – including public humiliation in case of rule violation – forms the foundation of the distinctiveness of Japanese society as such (Haley 1982; Pye 1985).[33]

The religious belief systems are rather weekly-rooted in Japan, where animism,

---

[33] Marry Douglas (1973) stated that ritual is an important and effective tool of social control in societies that are 1) closed social groups with 2) restricted codes of linguistic and symbolic communication, in which 3) there is great emphasis on hierarchy as opposed to personal identity, and 4) yet a general social consensus still upholds the system. Japan arguably belongs to such societies.

contemplation, and syncretism often prevailed at the expense of any fixed form of religious dogmatism (e.g. Bellah 1970; Hirano 1989; Davis 1992). On the other hand, however, Japan developed a strong civil religion (*shimin shūkyō*) and folk customs (*minzoku*) that are institutionally different from religion systems, and are typical for their emphasis on public ritual (e.g. Yanagita 1957; Bellah and Hammond 1980; Okuyama 2012). In Japan, it is not the belief per se, which forms the core of Japanese religion, but more importantly it is the praxis (*shugyō*) the feelings (*kimochi*), and all the "religious aestheticism" that surrounds them (e.g. Davis 1992).

In the Japanese past, ritual always played a salient role at various levels of Japanese polity. The cultural rituality, same as "spontaneous" adherence to rules, were underpinned by the historical development of society, politics and culture, and many scholars registered parallels and continuities between rites in pre-industrial and industrial Japan (e.g. Smith 1961; McVeigh 1994; Schnell 1999). Besides, many idiosyncratic features of premodern Japanese culture are tied to folk religion and village ethos (Yanagita 1957; 1962). In other words, there was always a strong link between Japanese community rituals as both cultural performances based on folk beliefs of "civil religion", and ritual as a strategic quest for managing sociopolitical order. Thus, both Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity were pragmatically adapted and integrated into the framework of political ideals, while the community festivals of agrarian Japan (*matsuri*) derived from

a long tradition of combining religion and government in Japan (Yanagita 1957; Steunebrink and van der Zweerde 2004; Sugimoto 2010). Consequently, the institutional basis for many ritual practices still rests on religious rules and folk traditions that were only altered by the zeitgeist of political history. The facets of Japanese social existence and ritual mutually construct each other (McVeigh 1994), which renders ritual and hierarchy as highly effective means of maintaining social order in both modern and premodern Japan.

Talcott Parsons (1954) noted that in Japan the social structure is permeated by both the magico-religious and secular aspect, while much of ordinary social obligation in Japan carries a directly sacred character. Such conceived "sacredness" points to a ritualized hierarchical order of the Japanese elite where seniority, loyalty and reciprocal obligations are the norm. Importantly for this section, the sacred and secular aspects do not necessarily exclude each other. Firstly, Japan is one of those countries, where profane and sacred denote aspects of almost any kind of action. Secondly, the sacred and the profane are not understood as categorical opposites, but rather as a continuity of sacred and profane experiences and feelings. This is also why the largely "pragmatic" (technical, rational) ritual of Japanese scandal simultaneously appears as a form of "sacred drama" with (pseudo)religious traits. This duality in both ritual and scandal is a reflection of a highly situational relationship between the "magical attitudes" and "goal-rationality" in

Japan (Davis 1992; McVeigh 1998).

I indicated above that it is not only the rituals for the dead, the Japanese rites of passage, or the religious beliefs related to the imperial system, that represent the elements of civic religion in contemporary Japan. Equally importantly, the Japanese ritual functions as a performative expression of governing ideology through a symbolic medium, while the ritualization of conflict is characteristic of the political and corporate culture. The social obligations in Japan are immediately and directly "ritual obligations" (Parsons 1954, 282), and *saving/losing one's face* guides daily life from the Japanese business etiquette to transactions on a village market. A face loss based on disrupting some of these obligations has serious impact on one's group/institution, and a grave infraction might be sealed off only via a ritual of purification. Here, the tripartite structure of *hare-ke-kegare,* which permeates some traditional Japanese festivals, can partly illuminate the operational logic behind the scandal performance in Japan.[34]

The traditional Shinto, which can be understood as a body of spiritual rituals, teaches about the act of becoming impure (*kegare*) and the necessity of purification

---

[34] The Japanese anthropologists emphasize three traditional concepts related to ritual purity in Japan: the sacred or "non-everyday" (*hare*), the ordinary or "everyday" (*ke*), and the polluted (*kegare*), while pointing to certain affinities with the functionalist distinction between the sacred and the profane (Yanagita 1957; Sugimoto 2010; Okuyama 2012). *Hare* refers to something which is public and common, but also extraordinary and special (the opposite is *ke,* which is associated with private, informal things). *Kegare* was originally believed to point to defilements such as death, birth, menstruation, and others.

(*misogi*) stemming from certain forbidden behavior that brings about impurity and pollution (e.g. Hirano 1989). *Kegare* is less a form of moral judgement, and more a spontaneous reaction to some amoral forces (therefore, *kegare* is not synonymous with the Christian notion of *sin*). While being still a part of Japanese mentality today, *kegare* points to some form of taboo violation that needs to be "undone" by the person responsible via a purification ritual (*misogi, harae*).

The ritual of exclusion (and eventual reintegration) is a form of purification deeply rooted in Japan's mythology and political history, while the processuality of scandal can be related to the complex symbolism of purification rituals in Japanese folklore. In Japan, the retention of earlier forms of social control, importantly including modern versions of gossiping and village ostracism (*mura hachibu*), are still among the most prevalent means in social ordering (e.g. Haley 1982; Prasol 2010). In a similar vein, the phenomenon of "social exile" in modern scandal is informed by the traditional extra-legal sanction of *mura hachibu,* i.e. the punishment of severing of community ties with the offender in order to preserve internal harmony. Furthermore, only a complete confession of error served to reconfirm the rightness of the villagers' reaction to deviation. This again parallels with apologetic confessions in media scandals that become a precondition for elites' future comeback.

While following the neofunctionalist argumentation, this chapter stressed that in

Japanese culture and society there exist parallels between modern cultural practices and premodern sacred dramas informed by religious and folk beliefs. In scandal, various myths, narratives, and performances of the sacred are assembled in a dramatic form while reflecting the desirability of avoiding the “evil”, polluted, and tabooed. In following chapters, I will illustrate how the Japanese media scandal is a meaningful cultural practice that was to an important extent informed by the rules of Japanese civil religion. Thus, scandal can be metaphorically approached as a cleansing ritual of pollution and purification via confession and temporary exclusion.

2. PERFORMING THE RITUAL OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

One of the particularisms related to Japanese scandals is the public performance of the scandal culprit and its media coverage. The social role of apology, confession and repentance (including the readiness to take responsibility and admit guilt) partly diverges from its understanding in the West. On the one hand, the police and prosecutors traditionally place emphasis on confession, since admission of guilt is a necessary condition for the "restorative justice" (*shūfukuteki seigi*), in which a transgressor's "return to society" is realized through behavioral correction instead of mere punishment (e.g. Haley 1982; Yamamoto 1990; Pontell and Geiss 2008). On the other hand, the Japanese apology performs a kind of "lightning conductor function" (term by Stockwin 2008). While being less a conduct of admitting guilt, and mitigating a wrong for which one is responsible, confession disperses tension in a ritual way, and satisfy the damaged party.

The idea behind Japanese scandals as mediated rituals of restorative justice is grounded in a firm inclination of the Japanese legal system not to punish or retaliate, but to correct and restore. The logic of such conceived justice emphasizes the act of confession (more or less forced), public humiliation (more or less staged), and the ritual of exclusion (more or less temporary). Especially the "masochism" of public humiliation (including the obligatory "tears test", see below) is regarded as a primary virtue that

enables the forgiveness (*yurushi*). Furthermore, it is believed that it restores the sense of oneness (*ittaikan*) which still seems to pervade the Japanese society (e.g. Davis 1992). Equally importantly, the ritualized scandal performance is based on conditional rules, and all scandal actors must be aware of the constitutive elements of a ritual action. The logic of the performance is underpinned by a set of prescribed rules and patterns (*kata*) for proceeding in given situation.[35]

The Japanese scandal-ritual is both dramaturgical and performative: it involves doing/saying things via both physical and verbal communication, while using media technology to enhance the effect of "collective effervescence". It is both a symbolic and instrumental activity that reflects the distinction between sacred and profane in a moralizing manner. The Japanese are said learn conformity and solidarity predominantly through emotive means (e.g. Matsumoto 1996; Sugimoto 2010) whose impact can be seen in the "emotive moralizing" in Japanese scandal. This becomes especially evident during the "degradation ceremony" (i.e. the scandal climax in a form of a televised press conference), where the emotionally-charged moral indignation serves to affect the ritual

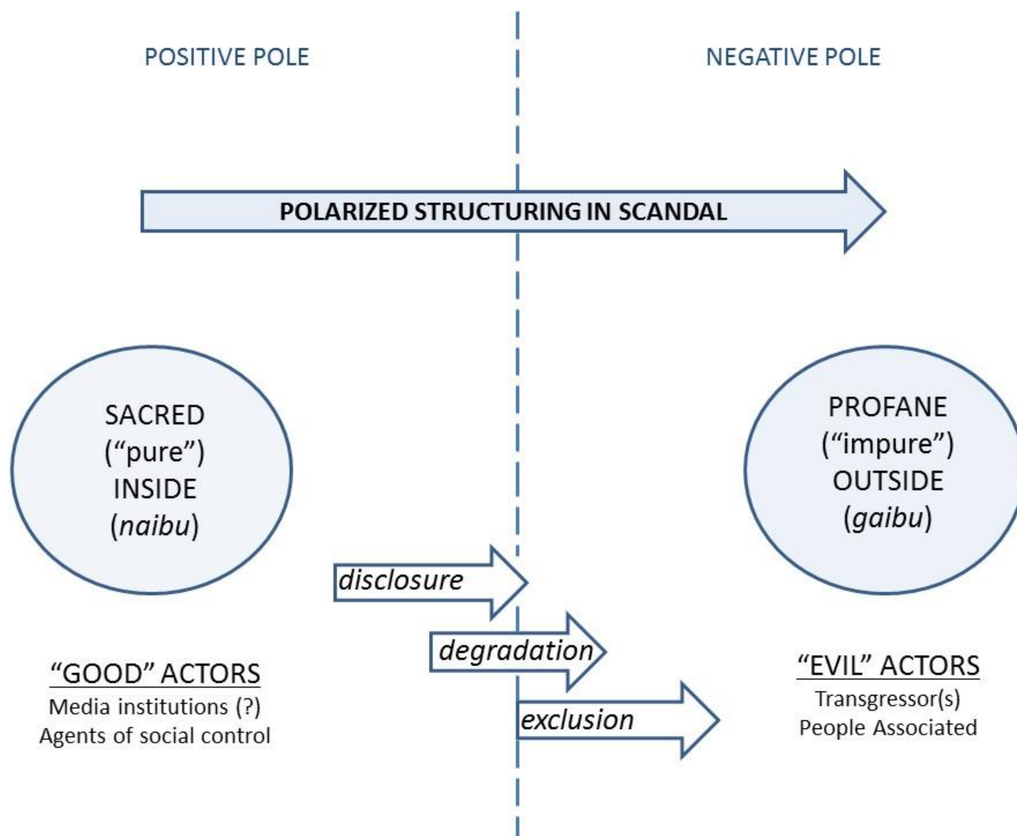
---

[35] The notion of *kata* usually refers to conventions that are used repeatedly in the production or practice of an art form in Japan. It is however not only the traditional Japanese arts (including martial arts or the classical theater form of *kabuki*), where *kata* becomes indispensable: the adherence to *kata* is a notion equally respected in Japanese social everydayness. In this relation, some scholars describe how the Japanese need to be familiar with the nature and sequence of any process they are about to undergo, which at times renders them "naturally" adhering to algorithms (e.g. Sugimoto 2010; Prasol 2010). If one makes mistakes in the processuality of Japanese scandal-rituals, or refuses to participate, it significantly deepens the scandal crisis while provoking negative public backlash.

destruction of the transgressor (Garfinkel 1956). In order to maintain the separation between the positive ("good") and negative ("evil"), the culprit's performance becomes mediated as a "movement" from purity of the sacred inside (*naibu*) to impurity of the outside (*gaibu*).

Figure 7. The symbolic polarized structuring during the scandal-ritual.

Source: Author, inspired by Alexander (1988)



2.1. Confession and Apology

Kenneth Burke (1969) once noted that the ultimate motivation for *all* public speaking is to purge ourselves of a sense of guilt. The act of confession of guilt is a concept to be found in both Christian and Confucian traditions same as in the cannons of western philosophy from Augustine to Rousseau. In most of these sources, confession is seen as an indication of remorse and a step towards moral rehabilitation.

The willingness to confess and apologize, which can avoid litigation and further prosecution, is critical for the Japanese justice (see Johnson 2002; Haley 2006). In Japanese legal system, the accused person's confession, remorse and cooperation with the agents of social control are considered as highly favorable, although they are often forced and can lead to serious cases of judicial error. Notwithstanding the actual share of one's guilt, confession lays the foundation for apology and expression of remorse. This plays a vital role in Japanese custom, and it gets reflected in scandal performances as well.

When people's expectations are shattered and social trust damaged, a common response is to develop explanations of what went wrong in order to realign social relationships (Wuthnow 2004). In confessing and apologizing, the offender is given a chance to correct for the offence and re-establish the expressive order (Goffman 1999), and in the same vein, the confessional and corrective ritual of apologia quells the scandal

situation. It is based on the dialectic of accusation-cause, and it usually stands for the most spectacular part of a scandal narrative. Ideally speaking, the apology, which is performed as interaction with the sacred, becomes accepted by the public if the perpetrator repents by readily acknowledging the wrongfulness of his/her act.[36]

Throughout the course of media modernity, apologia became part of the linguistic context *of* scandals, rather than potential rhetorical antidote *for* them (Achter 2000, 321, emphasis retained). The speech act of apologia creates social reality by "doing" something with words and gestures. This act becomes judged on the backdrop of a binary felicitous-infelicitous (or efficient-inefficient), rather than on the metaethical binary true-

[36] Before discussing the performance of confessional apologia in Japanese scandals, it might be useful to sum up the basic theoretical notions that underlie the act of apology as such. The **essentialist** (or evolutionary) understanding stresses that apology is a device inherent in us to resolve natural conflicts (the standard of reconciliation protocols as "natural conflict resolutions" were registered already between chimpanzees). Apology is in this understanding approached as aggression control (i.e. the way to mitigate the victim's anger). The **religious** (or theological) understanding renders apologies as being connected with religious rituals of repentance: it is not a kind of social necessity, but primarily an act of demonstrating faith in one's god (transgressors are conceived of as a "sinners" or "souls to be saved"). The western conception of apologies emerged from this understanding (Thompson 1997; Smith 2008; Ehrat 2011). The **metaethical** (or deontologist) understanding emphasizes that both the victim and the offender recognize each other as two people struggling to make sense of the very meaning of their lives and values, whereas the centrality of intentions is emphasized when assessing dignity, rationality, and morality of a certain act. Emphasized are the consequences of action rather than the transgressor's mental state). The gradual loss of metaethical meaning of apology is ascribed to the general decay of meaning and non-instrumentality in modernity (Smith 2008). Finally, the **dramaturgic** (or performative) understanding claims that apologies are *offerings* (i.e. performative moves of the corrective process where the offender is given a chance to correct for the offence and re-establish the expressive order), and *intrapersonal accidents* (one's identity is divided into a rebellious self and a conforming self) (Goffman 1959; 1999). Besides, apologies are performative utterances: the act of uttering "I apologize" or "I will not do it again" is a performative speech act that brings some condition into being through the act of speaking (Austin 1957; Searle 1979).

false. In other words, the main goal of a scandal apologia is not the so-called pursuit of truth, but a transgressor's performative efficiency and willingness to confirm the authority.

Regarding the rhetoric style and verbal eloquence of an effective performance, it is more efficient to proclaim, "I was wrong" rather than just "I am sorry" in order to demonstrate shared commitment to moral principles (Smith 2008). Consequently, a promise (no matter how implicit) which postulates "never to do it again" constitutes the most important aspect of apologies. A perfect apology expresses both humiliation and humility, where shame and gratefulness are mixed in one single proclamation. Equally effective is a demonstration of one's moral and physical transformation, which is substantiated with concrete plans (e.g. immediate hospitalization and temporary withdrawal from one's post). By doing so, transgressors can alleviate the public outrage by exhibiting clear symbolic evidence of their commitment (e.g. Sakai Noriko underwent psychological health check, wrote a confessional autobiography, started attending university courses, divorced from her dubious husband, and attended anti-drug campaigns.) By expressing one's personal commitment, the transgressor can facilitate the media's excuse frame, based on which the audiences react less negatively to the transgressor and call for minor or no punishment (Jiang et al. 2011; Kepplinger, Geiss and Siebert 2012). The excuse frame has a potential to "cancel the debt to society" (Lakoff 2009), but if the guilt frame prevails, the transgressor will have to "pay the debt" for

causing troubles (*meiwaku*).

The televised performance of confession and apology determines the overall media frame. In Japan, these televised ceremonies are largely polysemic: they serve as both PR tools for improving one's image by updating the support base, and as emergency tools to alleviate a scandal crisis. In case of the latter, these press conferences are used to:

- announce information before it leaks somewhere else (strategic info-leak)
- denounce transgression but assert innocence (face-saving coming-out)
- ritually degrade and exclude the transgressor (punitive sanctioning).

Especially the Japanese weeklies and the TV utilizes aforementioned moralizing while discussing to what extent did certain media apology present an inherent *moral value* (i.e. the apology proved us that it speaks directly to identity of the transgressor, thus enabling his/her moral transformation), and to what extent was it emblematic of a purely *instrumental value* (i.e. the apology served merely as social tool with utilitarian benefits). If the latter impression prevails, the transgressor can be additionally accused by the media of obscuring justice by conducting a skilful performance.[37]

---

[37] The weeklies sometimes use pie charts to illustrate the overall quality of one's scandal performance. This chart is determined by factors such as the gravity of transgression (*jiken no ookisa*), impact of the press conference (*kaiken no inpakuto*) or the length/depth of one's bows (*ojigi no fukasa*).

Lucien Pye insisted that the Japanese leaders follow the rule, “Merely apologize, so as not to have to explain” (Pye 1985, 168). Being a part of the cooperative strategy, apology is a means of inducing conforming behavior. The public scandal apology (*shazai kaiken*) is itself hardly a spontaneous act since apologizing in public carries with it the stigma of loss of reputation. The confessional patterns, including the wording of the speech, the emotional expressions, and other “standardized expressive equipment” (Goffman 1956) are usually fixed. In Japanese scandal, I distinguish between three main patterns of handling the confession:

1. apologetic/cooperative strategy (*shazai/kyōryoku no senryaku*)
2. protective/offensive strategy (*mamori/seme no senryaku*)
3. strategy breakdown (*senryaku hatan*).

The apologetic/cooperative performance is typical for celebrity scandals and corruption scandals where gathered evidence became overwhelming. The protective/offensive strategy usually is utilized by stubborn and relentless politicians. The apologetic and offensive strategy however does not exclude each other and can be effectively combined as part of one’s damage control (this was the case of Ozawa Ichirō, see below). Finally, strategy breakdown is a result of losing emotional control over the situation, or it is caused

by dramatically over-performing one's confession. It occurs rarely, but has to be counted for another possible outcome of confessional press conferences.[38]

The act of Japanese post-scandal confession is strictly ceremonial in its nature. It is a ritualized performance which occurs usually during an urgently arranged news conference at some public "non-place" (e.g. a hotel's conference room). The event is rigidly structured, inaugurated by a selected spokesperson, sealed by long bows that indicate the degree of deference, and followed by a shower of camera flashes. The culprits use a highly polite, humble form of Japanese language (*kenjōgo*). At the outset, they in principle apologize (*owabi, shazai*) sincerely (*kokoro yori*, *makoto ni, fukaku*) for failing their personal responsibility (*sekinin*) and causing inconvenience (*meiwaku*), worry (*shimpai*) and distrust (*fushin*) to citizens (*kokumin*), clients (*okyakusan*), fans (*fan*), investors *(tōshika*), stakeholders (*sutēkuhorudā*), or simply everyone they offended *(subete no minasan*). While apologizing to affiliated institutions (including their members) is partly related the historical phenomenon of collective responsibility (*rentai sekinin*) in Japanese social collectivity, apologizing to "everyone" points to the fact that the Japanese *seken* (i.e. the total network of social relations that surround a Japanese individual) wields a certain normative power.

---

[38] One such example which went viral in 2014 was the press conference of a provincial politician Nonomura Ryūtarō, who ended up crying hysterically and banging his fists on the desk while trying to mystify his profligate use of public funds.

Those culprits who utilize the cooperative strategy usually indicate gratefulness for learning a lesson (*hansei*) and readiness to prevent recurrence (*saihatsu bōshi*) of the transgression in question. Some add that a transgression like theirs should not be permitted (*yurusenai*), promising to undergo investigation (*chōsa*) of the corruption/scandal by *ad hoc* committee. Some culprits express in a hegemonic fashion their gratitude for cooperation (*kyōryoku*) and support (*sapōto*) from those social groups they belong to (showbiz agency, political party, company), but they also express gratitude to the police and the media.

Ambiguity as an important aspect of any ritual (Bell 1992), and the Japanese scandal-ritual is no exception. As a matter of fact, many scandal performances violate the Griceian maxims of linguistic utterance (Grice 1999): expressions are carefully ambiguous, usually too brief or too circumlocutory, and the explanation of the motive sounds either irrelevant or doubtful. (Or, to use Socratic reasoning: the expression is usually neither “true”, nor “good” or “useful”). Besides, this ambiguity, expressed in the “soft language” of Japanese politeness contributes to an impression that the culprit either camouflages the real motives of transgression, or he/she does not apologize for the transgression per se, but for the *exposure* of the transgression.

Both the voice and the body of the apologizer play their role during the mediated confession. Apart from the aforementioned linguistic utterances, the nonverbal body

communication is observed very closely in Japan. It is the physical entity in ritual which is followed most closely (Marvin 2002). These "rituals of power" (term by Douglas 1966) work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body, including postures and movements. Moreover, they forge he body of the transgressor as a medium of the play of power (Foucault 1977).

The auxiliary criteria for judging apologetic performances become those artificial extensions of personality such as hair color, make up style, or dress code. Furthermore, the "struggle for renewal" (both physical and mental) is in Japan valued especially in case of those celebrities who announce their plans to undergo medical treatment after their scandal (this is the case of celebrities' drug/sex scandals). During their public confessions, the celebrities appear in a physically degraded state, which is yet another strategy of Japanese apologia. Finally, the public expressions of feelings are generally not favourable in Japan, but the emotional scandal performance reverses this ideal. The final sequence of "crime and punishment" includes displays of one's deep sadness, which provides the imagined offended side with observable physiological evidence. Here, the tearful performances prove that one's tears are both natural facts and cultural realities of public symbolism.[39]

[39] In Japan, where people are by nature soft on tears, the so-called tears test proves the plausibility of transgressor's self-reflection (*hansei*) under the scrutiny of a disciplinary gaze. In this culture-specific setting, the reason (*risei*) being overpowered by emotion (*jō*) through tears helps to deform the context (Kishima 1991; Matsumoto 1996; Yano 2004). Thus, the source of this public symbolism derives less from private psychology, and more

Instead of admitting guilt and asking for forgiveness, a culprit can choose a defensive strategy in order to control the scandal fallout by submitting their own self-narrative. This image restoration strategy lies in denial and avoiding responsibility based on reducing offensiveness of transgressions or disguising accusation (Benoit 1995). The ulprits avoid taking sides, refrain from comments, or they counter-attack the accusation. The Japanese scandal-tainted celebrities are in principle cooperative, submissively undergoing the scripted ritual of confession. On the contrary, many Japanese politicians and corporate heads choose the noncooperative strategy of denial. (For instance, the Japanese heavyweight politicians such as Tanaka Kakuei and Ozawa Ichirō employed strategies of attack in order to preserve their face in the wake of their scandal, or they aimed to neutralize the impact of accusation by maintaining the atmosphere that no real scandal has actually occurred.) Such actors choose to engage in denial in order to construct a separation of the accusation and the accuser. By doing so they let the audiences shift their attention away from the accusation by shifting blame on other scandal actors (e.g. secretaries, biased journalists, or oppositional politicians that scheme one's character assassination). Other transgressors at times utilize the strategy of acting casual and relaxed (both in word and action) whereby trying to avoid the "sacred" realm of values.

---

from the Japanese cultural code. Nonetheless, such public humiliation can provoke voyeuristic entertainment bordering with sadistic gaze. In this "spectacle of suffering" (term by Boltanski 2004), the unfortunate is being observed by those who do not necessarily share their suffering. It can be assumed that some spectators actually find joy in the pseudo-sadistic spectacle of a tearful apology.

Such scenario is however rare in Japanese scandal apologia.[40]

One's resignation is a usual outcome for Japanese politicians and celebrities involved in a scandal. The p litical elites may step down, but they can keep on pulling strings behind the scene (the typical case of this was Tanaka Kakuei who became more powerful *after* his scandal). Besides, some scandals are managed as a publicity tool and a good showbiz strategy: the moments of confession and apology are covered as a pure spin, collapsing apology and comeback phases into one another.[41]

By utilizing protective strategy instead of straight apology, the culprit makes the scandal look like an "affair" (i.e. a site of contestation and political conspiracy). The most common defensive strategy of Japanese elites is to claim innocence via "televised vindication" (*keppaku kaiken*). In such cases, the elites either insist that there occurred no illegality (in funding/accounting), or that they did not know that some practice was illegal

[40] They are exceptions to this rule in Japan. For instance, consider the not-so-apologetic press conference of the Japanese TV host and top-celebrity Shimada Shinsuke who in 2011 resigned over his links to yakuza, but showed little remorse during the televised event. In another case of a unrepentant "powerless elite", the Olympic logo designer Sano Kenjirō shocked the Japanese and international public in 2015 when he vehemently denied any guilt in his pending plagiarism cases (Prusa, forthcoming). Most recently, the young actor Takahata Yūta surprised the Japanese public by his arrogant stance after his alleged rape scandal in August 2016. He looked unrepentant during the bowing ceremony upon his release from detention, and refused to conduct any press conference himself. (His mother, the veteran actress Takahata Atsuko conducted the confessional ritual instead.)

[41] Consider the case of the J-pop star Inagaki Goro who returned after 143 days of exile, while his apologetic performance during the TV show SMAP x SMAP garnered a 39 percent rating. In a different case of the 2011 aftermath of the nuclear crisis in Japan, the TEPCO Company apologized to the public by running an apologetic advertisement (*owabi kōkoku*) whereby simultaneously securing further profit for the media (Uesugi 2012).

(in case of drugs). Some culprits simply claim that they did not know about a transgression (*shirimasen deshita, shōchi/ninshiki shinakatta, mattaku/hakkiri to wakarimasen*), they cannot comment (*nanitomo ienai, komento/kotae ha sashihikaeru*), or they do not remember (*kioku ni gozaimasen, wasureta*). The more assertive reactions of the Japanese heavyweights include "unnecessary to answer" (*kotaeru hitsuyō ga nai*), "I left the matter up to my secretary/staff" (*hisho/sutafu ni makaseta*), or claiming that the evidence was based on a hearsay (*denbun*).

The protective/offensive strategy is chosen by those politicians who know that their professional platform (or the cabinet in case of ministerial scandals) will try to protect them, because admission of guilt would cause even bigger damage. The less defiant politicians express their embarrassment over their carelessness, admit to their share of responsibility (*sekinin*) and emphasize their duty (*ninmu*) to investigate (*kentō*) the issue in question. In inevitable cases (e.g. based on the excess of corruption, the pressures of backstage politics, or based on results from prosecutorial investigation), the designated culprits offer resignation (*jinin*) while distancing themselves from their professional platform (entertainment agency, political party, board of directors). In case of drug-related scandals the entertainers often apologize but deny the allegation since acknowledging any drug abuse in "drogophobic" Japan usually spells the end of career.

By consulting the substances of scandal confession, it becomes clear that in

Japanese scandals, apology has primarily strategic (or instrumental) value with performative force. In this approach which counters any metaethical (or deontological) understanding of apologies, confession is a mere sociopolitical tool and rhetorical stratagem. It is fundamentally motivated by the offender's attempt to change how others perceive them, to keep relationships intact, and to maintain their social stature. Once transmitted as a televised performance, the act of confession and apology is turned into an orchestrated media pseudo-event with a high degree of spectacularity and elevated media ratings. Despite the pseudo-quality of these events, the media offer a window onto the mental and physical states directly relevant to apologetic meaning while evaluating the trustworthiness and appropriateness of the performance. The media anticipation is centered on wording of the confessional statement, while the transgressor's glances, gestures and postures become commented upon. Demonstrating affect and breakdown of one's physical control over body (e.g. lacrimation, sweating or blushing) represents a decorum which becomes closely associated with scandal denouement. Nonetheless, most scandal denouements do not get by without the ritual of exclusion, which usually follows the public confession and apology.

2.2. The Ritual of Exclusion

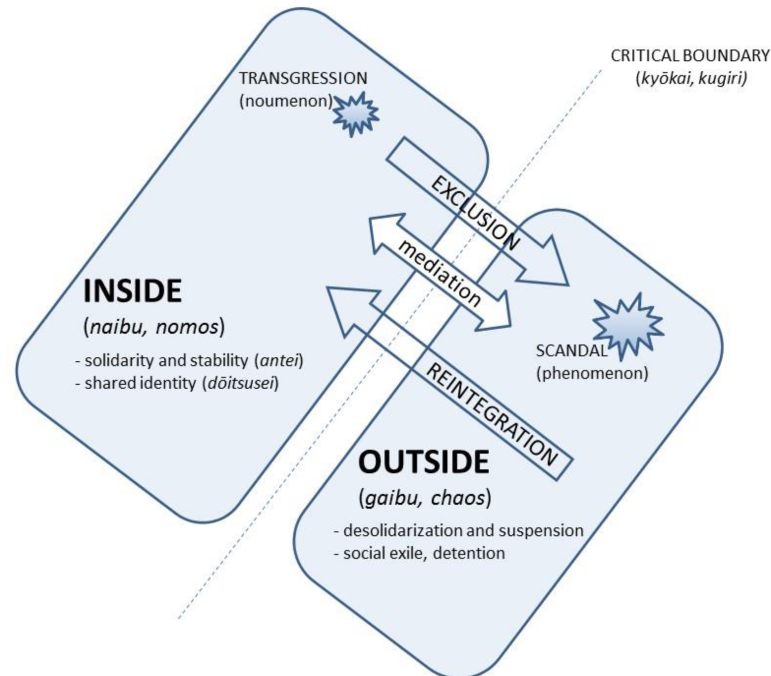
In Japanese ethos, the recognition of harm to one's group is ideally expressed by voluntary disassociation from it. In scandal, where the dissociation is usually not voluntary, the aim of this ritual is to display the transition of conflict to resolution by publicly degrading and excluding the alleged culprit. As I indicated above, in Japan the persistence of religious (liminal) and quasi-religious (liminoid) activities is included in the purification ritual. Traditionally, they were conceived as a form of exorcism in order to appease deities, but today, this moralizing technique is enforced with the reasoning that offenders need to cleanse their spirits to conform to social norms in future (Sugimoto 2010). In Japanese past, the nonroutine group punishment of exclusion and ostracism (*mura hachibu*) was a form of public boycott of the transgressor, and a punitive foundation for regulating group behavior. In a similar vein, ostracism based on pollution was one of the crucial themes in Greek tragedy, and it was an important conduct in many other areas of Greek life. In other words, humiliation based on differentiation from a group, and social exile as a form of radical social isolation, are one of the tenets of the civil religion worldwide. I believe that the public ritual of exclusion and social exile in Japanese scandal today is just a modernized version of this traditional communal rite. The modern ritual of exclusion in scandal is based on the same principle, although its

prerequisite is more "technological" (i.e. the ritual is made public, and is "unnaturally" magnified, through mainstream media channels).

The social phenomenon of taboo in Japan is related to ideas of pollution (*kegare*) and evokes antipathy toward the impure (antisocial, unlawful or anomalous). The maintenance of taboos was since premodern times constituted by a symbolic differentiation of *us* (the pure ones) and *them* (the polluted ones), while in serious cases the latter is to be excluded in order to maintain the integrity of the sacred. In Japanese scandals, the transgressor becomes excluded to the "outside" (*gaibu*) – that is, beyond the imaginary border that delineates their difference to the sacred "inside" (*naibu*). In practice, the inside represents in Japanese context a political faction, party, or even the political system as such. Similarly, in Japanese celebrity scandals the popstars and actors become temporarily excluded from their mother-agency (*jimusho*) and are not seen in on stage unless their "social exile" has been lifted, which usually depends on the decision of their agency. In politics, the primary aim of putting a scandal-tainted party through the ritual of exclusion is in principle to prevent failure in upcoming elections, while in celebrity scandals the exclusion is primarily capital-oriented: it wishes to "purify" the entertainment agency in the eyes of advertisers and audiences. These parties seek replacement (resignation, retreat to background) for those members that became "polluted" by a transgression beyond the possibility of immediate recovery.

Figure 8. Scandal as mediatized ritual of exclusion and reintegration.

Source: Author



In neofunctionalism, moral meaning is relational, and we establish it in principle by comparing "good" meaning to "bad" meaning. This too can be applied to scandals: the good members of civil society respect the sacred side of the code, based on which the evil (impure, corrupted) one's should be excluded. This "readjustment" is effected performatively, i.e. by means of the ritual of exclusion.

Marking the boundary between inside and outside while keeping transgressors at a distance is one of the tenets of community rituals (Giesen 2006). The discursive marking is an outcome of a simplified polarized network of the culturally-specific understanding of certain conduct. The deep semiotic framework of good versus evil (sacred versus profane, pure versus impure) parallels with the differentiation of us (the

good community) and them (the evil perpetrators). As previous figure showed, the scandalization process in Japanese scandal is also a boundary-marking activity constitutive of shifting boundaries between us and them. Similarly, in Japanese attack-politics it is the "good" actors who represent the delegated sacredness by publicly charging the "evil" actors during a scandal. Their motivation however lies less in protecting their platform (party, faction, tribe), and more in securing their own political capital by making personal profit out of the scandal.[42]

In media representation, the impure is made to stand for those signs of pollution based on taboos being broken. The polluted transgressor has to be made to stand as "out of the ordinary", and is separated from a place in the legitimate order. In both cases, the media and the agents of social control make use of the imaginary moral sentiment of the "we" (the normal, moral, respectable), indicating that the transgressor is *different* from the sacred ideals. It is the gravity of the transgression and the confessional performance of the transgressor (to which the public responds in a certain way) that influences the length of one's social exile. It is however in principle the case that every scandal culprit becomes sooner or later reintegrated to society.

[42] The interpellations during the Budget Committee meeting (Yosan Iinkai) are attended by all ministers and broadcast live on television and radio. They are one of those "free" occasions where rival politicians grill their counterparts on grounds of their alleged wrongdoings. As a matter of fact, some interpellations in the past did influence the course of a scandal (consider the 1989 sex scandal of Uno Sōsuke, or the 2007 corruption scandal of Matsuoka Toshikazu).

2.3. Toward Reintegration

In Japanese scandal, confession and temporary exclusion is one of the milestones in the restorative process toward the transgressor's second chances. Japanese moral perception values the rehabilitation of the offender, which also becomes reflected in national folk tales where those villains who repent are forgiven (e.g. Yanagita 1957; Prasol 2010). The aforementioned ritual of exclusion appears damning for one's career (especially when transmitted by the mainstream media). However, the most of transgressing celebrities are in Japan allowed to proceed with their comeback while many scandal-tainted politicians return to high-profile politics, or they are parachuted to less visible ranks. Some politicians resign from ministerial/party posts, or they quit the Diet for certain period of time. The scandal-tainted politicians are often re-elected, resorting to (originally Shintoist) metaphor of *misogi* ("purification") and interpreting their comeback as a completion of their purification ceremony. According to Sugimoto (2010), this tendency to override ethical considerations with more pragmatic judgements corresponds with the social habits of the common Japanese.

For instance, one of the most corrupt politician in Japan, Suzuki Muneo, was expelled from the Liberal Democratic Party in 2002, but he apologized and returned to the Diet three years later as a representative of his regional constituency in Hokkaido.

Similarly, the Finance Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō resigned in 1991 over a stock market scandal, but in few years' time he became the Prime Minister of Japan. The ex-Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō was tainted by the Recruit scandal (1988), involved (together with Ozawa Ichirō) in the Nishimatsu scandal (2009), and discredited by his frequent slips of tongue. Nonetheless, the scandal-tainted Mori was in 2014 appointed to head of the organizing committee for the 2020 Summer Olympics, which itself became scandalized by the controversies related to the Olympic Stadium and the Olympic logo.

The ritual of reintegrating the scandal-tainted elite is not limited to the world of politics. For instance, Wakasa Tokuji, the former president of ANA resigned in 1976 after being implicated in Lockheed scandal, but before stepping down in 1997 he became a honorary chairman. Furthermore, the 2015 plagiarism controversy related to the Olympic logo designed by Sano Kenjirō also did not annihilate the stigmatized designer altogether. Sano's logo was withdrawn, but one big advertising agency hired him in order to improve their own image based on Sano's "bad boy" reputation (Prusa, forthcoming).

The tradition of purification and reintegration has been a commonplace in Japan's high politics. For instance, Tanaka Kakuei and Fukuda Takeo were indicted in the Shōwa Denkō scandal (1948) and Ikeda Hayato and Satō Eisaku were implicated in the shipbuilding bribery scandal (1954), but all of them were soon reintegrated and later became Japanese prime ministers (besides, Satō received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974).

Miyazawa Kiichi resigned in the wake of the Recruit scandal (1988) but returned to government in 1998, serving a three-year term as Finance Minister. Abe Shinzō was forced to resign in 2007 partly because many of his Cabinet Members were involved in corruption, but he was re-elected as Prime Minister in 2012. In another case from the same year, Maehara Seiji and Noda Yoshihiko from the DPJ had their donation scandals pending (the former resigned as Minister for Foreign Affairs), but they had little trouble being re-elected in the 2012 election. More recently, the scandal-tainted Obuchi Yūko resigned in 2014 from her post as the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, but soon she returned to high politics, while her Minister-colleague from Abe cabinet Amari Akira stepped down in 2016 after accusations of political bribery, but as soon as in June of the same year he publicly announced that he would resume his political activities.

The second chances seem to be more common in case of political scandal (involving men) than celebrity scandals (involving women). Firstly, this impression becomes underpinned by the fact that transgressing females are publicly treated in a more humiliating and emotionally tense manner then their male counterparts. Secondly, many male celebrities get away with their scandals rather easily. For instance, consider the popular entertainers Shimizu Kentarō or Tashiro Masashi (aka “Marcy”) who were both arrested multiple times during their career on charges of stimulant possession, but always made their comeback while promising to never do it again. In addition, Masashi, who is

deemed one of the most notorious transgressing male celebrities in modern Japan, wrote his own scandal memoir in 2002, titled *Jibaku – The Judgement Day.* Similarly, the singer and actor Oshio Manabu reappeared on stage in the beginning of 2016 despite the fact that in 2011 he was embroiled in a drug scandal which was connected to death of a hostess who lost her life after taking drugs with him.

Most of Japanese celebrities are allowed to come back on stage after their scandal, albeit with a different agency or with a modified image. Moreover, many celebrities write in the meantime their "scandal memoir" which can be compared to Japanese politicians approaching their re-election after scandal as a form of "purification" (*misogi*). For instance, Sakai Noriko released her confessional autobiography after her scandal in 2009, and announced her comeback in 2012 (see below). Furthermore, the Japanese celebrity Yaguchi Mari, who became famous as a former member of the idol group Morning Musume, temporarily fell from grace after her infidelity scandal in 2013, but made her TV comeback in 2015. Similarly, the weekly tabloid *Shūkan Bunshun* in 2013 triggered the infidelity scandal of Minegishi Minami from the idol group AKB48, but Minegishi impressed many after shaving her head in a self-imposed act of contrition and was allowed to make her comeback within just few months' time. Finally, the Japanese TV personality Becky was discredited by the same weekly because of her own infidelity scandal but was allowed to return to show business in less than half year despite the

unprecedented media frenzy surrounding her case.

I believe that corruption in Japan is pervasive but rather nontransformative in terms of general effect on the elites' mores. Nonetheless, the scripted (pseudo)ritual of pollution and purification based on temporary exclusion is a must. Many "cleansed" politicians are re-elected and come back to politics, while most of the transgressing celebrities reappear within months or years' time, depending on the gravity of their transgression. Once the shame of degradation from exclusion is endured, most of deviating elites are back on track because their political/cultural capital is too precious for the system to be wasted by annihilating the transgressor altogether (this was also the case of Sano Kenjirō and his Olympic logo/plagiarism scandal from 2015 which did humiliate the designer, but thanks to his connections in the world of advertising his reintegration is being planned).

Nonetheless, there are some exceptional cases, where reintegration is likely to be impossible. This applies to cases where one's scandal lead to national disgrace (e.g. the 2014 case of Samuragōchi, who falsely claimed to be totally deaf, while his work, including the acclaimed No.1 symphony "Hiroshima" from 2003 was actually written by a ghost-writer). Furthermore, if the scandal triggers a global ridicule (such as the infamous hysterical press conference of Nonomura Ryūtarō in 2014), it is highly unlikely for the transgressor to get any second chances in the world of politics. Finally, the reintegration

becomes troublesome if the transgressor was involved in a scandal more than one time (this is the case of the entertainer Tashiro Masashi, who was arrested based on drug possession on multiple times in the past). At any rate, it is safe to conclude that the repetitiveness of these ceremonies of confession, exclusion and reintegration (being accompanied by the media over-exposure) only intensifies political apathy and moral skepticism among the Japanese public.

3. ON HEGEMONIC USES OF THE SCANDAL-RITUAL

3.1. The Hegemonic Force of Media Scandals

The previous chapter aimed to illuminate the cultural pragmatism of rituals of pollution and purification based on socio-culturally grounded notions of confession, exclusion and re-integration. There is however another feature embedded in these scandal-rituals: their hegemonic power lies in indirect enforcement of general morality via shaming and punishing via adverse publicity.

In this vein, scandal functions not only as a strategic tool in political discourse (see below), but also as a hegemonic tool of soft social control. In the latter case, scandal reminds the commoners indirectly to refresh their commitments to rules and conventions. In the former case, scandal becomes a pragmatic means of shifting scandalicity from corrupted structure to individual agency by attacking and eventually scapegoating selected individual. The ultimate argument of this socioethical engineering is to demonstrate that “the system worked” while scapegoating (displaying and excluding) the transgressor as a “rotten apple”.

Hegemony is a conflicted and dynamic process, which must continually absorb and incorporate disparate values and transgressions (e.g. Williams 1977; Gitlin 1980).

Today, these processes would be impossible without the mainstream media that not only in Japan play an important role in constructing and controlling the moral discourse. Especially in case of crime and scandal reporting, the mainstream media are the primary sources of textual and audiovisual messages that transform people's minds in terms of what they want and fear, while legitimizing their power through displaying confessions and apologies of rule violators (Edelman 1964; Jenks 2003; Castells 2009; Lakoff 2009). Owing to these capacities, the media play the key role in maintaining hegemonic power in society.[43]

The role of any ritual is either to effect social change, or social conformity (Bell 1992). In the same vein, the effect of scandal can be disruptive and transformative, as well as socially integrative and hegemonic. (Likewise, the public can feel both empowered and enthusiastic, or undermined and exhausted by a scandal.) This section touches upon the hegemonic features of scandal as informal means of social control

---

[43] Hegemony, a concept originally derived from Antonio Gramsci (1971), describes a process where the approval of a certain action is reached through consent rather than coercion, being supported by presentations of appropriate meanings on everyday basis. Hegemony works by being articulated between the realm of coercion and punishment; it is a non-decision-making process which is in part predicated on the media as "ideological state apparatuses" that exert power to dominate communicative exchange and define reality (Althusser 1995). The primary function of modern disciplinary apparatuses is however not *revenge* for transgression (as was often the case of the premodern punishment), but a *reform* as the means of coming to live by society's standards or norms (e.g. Foucault 1977). The media hegemony points to the fact that every media content is influenced by the ideology of those in power in society (Herman and Chomsky 1988). More importantly for this thesis, the hegemony of scandal (same as the hegemony of punitive ritual) lies in the acceptance of authority, which flows from the enactment of the scandal-ritual itself, and in the act of production of a subordinate, ritualized agent.

through displays of public condemnation. Moreover, relating hegemony to scandal can illuminate why the media in Japan possess no coercive and little economic power, but they still have significant social and symbolic power over society.

The hegemonic approach in scandal studies renders media scandals as rituals whose mediations serve as an articulation and regulation of dominant moral codes and values (e.g. Lull and Hinerman 1997; Thompson 1997). Thus, scandal-rituals attend to the process of periodic moralization which supports dominant values, reinforces norms and reaffirms the status quo. This symbolic domination includes rhetorical devices public degradation ceremonies that aim at making for docility and subordination (Garfinkel 1956; Foucault 1977). In scandal, the institutional norms are felt as "moral imperatives" whose violation is expected to be followed by feelings of guilt and shame on one side, and moral indignation on the other.

Maintaining collective identity by shaming and exclusion is one of the most powerful means of shaping and controlling social order (Alexander 1988; Couldry 2003; Giesen 2006). Furthermore, the "politics of scandal" relates to a symbolic framework, where embarrassment (both personal and institutional), fear (from getting caught), and shame (from losing face) becomes a powerful hegemonic tool. This becomes especially apparent in Japan where the combination of generating feelings of guilt and exacting shame for failure to conform does not encourage rebelliousness (Pye 1985), and where

the threat of shaming contributes to the maintenance of Japanese culture as such (Matsumoto 1996).[44]

The institutional systems manipulate the everyday life of the Japanese from a variety of angles in a wide range of spheres. In the past, the Japanese civic religion often rendered itself as a "political religion", which is an example of conscious manipulation, only depending on what political regime it serves (Bellah 1957;1970; Bellah and Hammond 1980). Contemporary Japanese civil religion is to a significant degree still a state-sponsored civil religion that facilitates "massive gentling of the people" (term by Bryan Wilson), due to which the Japanese are said to be prone to accept economic exploitation and political authoritarianism. One function of this political religion lies in offering "reassurance rituals" (term by Edelman 1964) that generate hegemony in a pivotal way (Foucault 1977; Thompson 1995; Giesen 2011).

---

[44] The media can enforce behavioral rules by displaying/imposing feelings of guilt (which derives from individual reflection of wrongdoing) and shame (which is a socially constructed, permanent condition that stigmatizes and makes the shamed person publicly undesirable). Guilt is constituted when we act against our personal convictions and it accompanies the recognition of our transgression. It is therefore our own conscience (i.e. our own readiness to feel guilty) that belongs to hegemonic mechanisms of constraint and social control. On the other hand, shame is a social feeling based on being symbolically or physically exposed (e.g. Benjamin 1968; Adut 2008). In any case, shame and guilt are self-aware moral emotions that evaluate social behavior. Some scholars claim that these emotions are to a certain extent culture-specific. Ruth Benedict (2005) stirred academic debate over the idea that contrarily to the Western/Christian "guilt culture" (*tsumi no bunka*) with strong sense of sin, Japan represents a "shame culture" (*haji no bunka*) in which there exists little inherent moral pressure in transgressors as long as their transgression remains undiscovered. While this dichotomy had certainlimitations, some interdisciplinary research recognized its usefulness (e.g. Kerbo and Inoue 1990; Miller and Kanazawa 2000; Messersmith 2003; Pinnington 2010).

In Japan, the techniques of "soft social control" ensure that the dominant moral order is reproduced. The power of the state is brought into daily mediated experience in moralistic fashion, while the moralizing technique is enforced with the reasoning that offenders need to "cleanse their spirits" to conform to social norms in future same as in the past. There is a continuity in forming moral uniformity on the national scale in Japan. In Japanese history, these inclinations became more apparent especially after 1868 when the government proceeded to educate its people on ideology (e.g. Prasol 2010). This "social management" included the way how Japanese bureaucrats and private groups envisioned their task (Garon 1997). For instance, much of the Japanese work ethic, which can be traced back to Confucian moralism of the Tokugawa period, continues to be promoted today via "administrative guidance" or "spiritual education" programs sponsored by the power elites. Throughout Japanese postwar history, these programs aimed to inspire the morality of others and legitimate accumulations of capital already in place. In case of displaying conflict and scandal, it was traditionally the Japanese television news (most notably the NHK) that throughout the postwar history portrayed the Japanese bureaucratic state as "conflict manager" and ritualized rule maker (Krauss 1996; 2000).

The media hegemony in contemporary Japan (represented by the big five dailies, the main news agencies, and the public broadcaster NHK) is closely related to the political

hegemony (the nearly uninterrupted postwar rule of the LDP). The better these hegemonies cooperate the more effectively will the overarching ideology translate into an effective form of soft social control. Such control standardizes the thought patterns and attitudes of the Japanese, and it is an important means of "friendly authoritarianism" in Japan (Pharr 1990; Miller and Kanazawa 2000; Sugimoto 2010). Furthermore, these forces shape both the news content, and the entertainment programs that encourage a feeling of social stability which is resistant to substantial social change (Gitlin 1980; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Indeed, these mediated performances originate less in ritual, and more in the non-political entertainment itself. This is especially the case of the "national medium" of Japanese TV, which relies heavily upon celebrity fetishism, food programs, and festival-like spectacularity of mundane things.

The Japanese conservative media generally respect authorities and condemn transgressors from a seemingly removed position. By doing so, they hope to discourage social subjects from violating conventions by showing deviation from the desired norm. Simultaneously however, they emphasize that corruption and criminality is a function of the wicked individual rather than of the "unfair society". By practicing "general deterrence" (term by Sherman 1978), the media aim to scare most people in the population from a wrongdoing by publicly punishing few individuals who allegedly "did it". People respond to scandals in a form of moral reflection. This may lead to a minor moral panic

in a society, but more often the effect of scandal on the growingly apathetic Japanese public is nontransformative or contradictory (see below).

In a covertly hegemonic mode, the Japanese media for one thing offer a compensatory alternative to the public by showing elites being humiliated and persecuted, and for the other, they produce an amorphous "atmosfear" in which anybody can be shamed and persecuted for defying given conventions. Thus, the seemingly subversive/transgressive acts of pollution actually uphold the existing social order – both through the media displays of the shaming process, and through a cathartic release of divisive tensions. In such cases, the viewing public can find enjoyment by experiencing the (Aristotelian) therapeutic relief based on viewing dramatic representations of tragic events, or they vent the (Nietzscheian) *ressentiment* toward the elites via a "bitter joy" (*schadenfreude*) stemming from one's fall from grace. In other words, the hegemonic interpretation of scandal stresses that the confessions and degradations of the rich and famous offer certain delight in witnessing the social elites being persecuted, whereby releasing the tensions and frustrations of the public. Finally, in scandal, the aforementioned affects bridge between the emotional, hegemonic and economic realms, which makes them a sought-after media commodity with high levels of emotivity and cheap production costs.

3.2. Rendering Corruption as Human-Interest Story

In many scandals, the mediopolitical hegemony tends to deemphasize issues of structural corruption by pointing at individual cases, and by focusing on human-interest aspects and various second-order transgressions. While utilizing adversalialism as ritual, the charges against officials are often restricted to them personally while being separated from their institutions and offices. In other words, especially the mainstream media tend to focus on whether a certain social elite was personally corrupt while ignoring larger structural issues.[45]

The Japanese media often distract attention from deeper structural problems – either by focusing on the secondary transgressions, or by making scandals into spectacles about the private lives of individual elites. They redirect the public attention to human interest-related sensations while keeping the deeper background beyond reach. Quite common in this regard are scandal sub-dramas that contain elements of sex, drugs, and public indecency. A telling example is the Nishiyama incident from 1972 (also "Okinawa-

---

[45] Individualization of corruption is however inevitable because official policies or operations of political parties cannot become scandals – no matter how unreasonable, wicked, and inherently scandalous they are. In other words, corporations have neither bodies to be punished, nor souls to be condemned, and after all it is not the system that cheats, lies and steals, but it is the people (Sherman 1978; Barker 1994; Newton 2006). Besides, events discussed in terms of individual actors are always more likely to be reported than those that are the outcome of abstract social forces (Galtung and Ruge 1965). Finally, it is only via individualization that someone can be held responsible in order to ameliorate the public backlash.

gate", or *Okinawa mitsuyaku jiken*). The political journalist Nishiyama Takichi disclosed a top-secret official document, in which the Japanese government paid millions of dollars to the US government in order to end the occupation of Okinawa. Nonetheless, Nishiyama was soon after the disclosure accused of an extramarital affair with the (female) source of his scoop. This human-interest story became the main focus of media coverage. The accusation generated a new sex scandal while redirecting the attention away from governmental deception which was at the origin of the incident. The Japanese mainstream media sided with the government while Nishiyama went in a 30-year self-imposed exile. In a similar case from 2002, the Japanese prosecutor Mitsui Tamaki, who claimed he was arrested for being whistleblower, was brought down by a constructed scandal based on a claim that he was seen with an escort during his business hours (West 2006).

There are many other cases of shifting scandalicity from the inherently corrupted structure to individualized agency. For instance, in 2014 the trade minister Miyazawa Yōichi was accused of a conflict of interest over his shares in the TEPCO Company while receiving illegal donations from a foreign-owned firm. These issues were however soon overshadowed by a sex scandal related to Miyazawa (his underlings spent office cash in a sadomasochism bar in Hiroshima). Moreover, the primary controversy itself (i.e. the minister owned 600 shares in the *de facto* nationalized company under his jurisdiction) was an effective distraction from restarting nuclear reactors and raising the sales tax (see

McCurry 2004). Much earlier in 1994, the Chief of MOF's Inspector's Office became a target of scandal after enjoying himself in a *shabu-shabu* restaurant with waitresses in the nude from the waist down. The extraordinariness of this scandal also distracted the public from the fact that mismanagement of economy is a deep structural problem within most elite ministries in Japan (see Johnson 1982; Amyx 2003; George Mulgan 2006). By making the MOF staff into the main villain, the Japanese media avoided examining the flaws of the system he exploited.

Other Japanese scandals were fueled via connecting the transgressor to some sensitive issue while rendering as dangerous for the system in question. For instance, the sex scandal of the China-born DPJ member Nakai Hiroshi in 2012 received bigger coverage because the reporters were interested in how the DPJ government of Hatoyama would respond (see Carlson 2013). More recently, the LDP's Mutō Takaya became in 2015 infamous for his ultra-rightist remark on his Twitter account (he called the Japanese youth as "selfish" (*rikoteki*) since according to him they tend to avoid war). Shortly after this gaffe, Japanese tabloids ridiculed Mutō based on a sex scandal very similar to that of Nakai (Mutō allegedly let a male prostitute access the lawmakers' lodging in Tokyo's Akasaka district).

Avoiding the corruptness of the elites' structure by refocusing on some second-order transgression with a human-interest quality is practiced in Japanese entertainment

as well. For instance, the Japanese pop-star Aska was in 2014 arrested in a drug scandal, but soon the media focused on his multiple lovers while leaving aside the well documented proliferation of illegal drug use in Japanese showbiz. Similarly, during the megascandal of Sakai Noriko from 2009 the media for ignored the structural issue of drug use in Japanese celebrity world while focusing instead on human-interest features of Sakai's troubled past (see below).

While pushing structural scandalicity toward individual agency, the Japanese media tend to focus on marginal "objects of interest", rendering them as profane symbols of corruption. For instance, the academic controversy of Obokata Haruko (the 2014 STAP cell scandal) made headlines in every newspaper, but the TV stations focused more on Obokata's cooking apron (*kappōgi*) than on the original issue of thesis fabrication. In the same year, the Justice Minister Matsushima Midori was accused of violating the election law, while the object of interest was the paper fan which the Minister distributed to voters in her district. (Similarly, Matsushima's colleague-Ministers Obuchi Yūko and Shimajiri Aiko were ridiculed based on aa paper calendar bearing the politician's' name). Finally, earlier in 1990s the LDP politician Kanemaru Shin became vilified based on millions of dollars and gold bars found in his home. The object of interest (i.e. the stash of gold bars in Kanemaru's closet) became the symbol of political greed.[46]

---

[46] The scandal of Kanemaru Shin was a "moral paradox": the prosecutors were under a strong pressure after it became clear that Kanemaru was allegedly receiving only a mild

3.3. Scapegoating and Attack-Politics

If unsound practice is publicly recognized, the related institution must designate a target to blame in order to protect itself (in organizational analysis, this phenomenon is known as "bad apple frame"). Rene Girard (1996) located ritual sacrifice as the central act of cultural systems, while Durkheim (1915) understood the act of sacrifice as a symbol of social alignment. Furthermore, Kenneth Burke (1969) insisted that there are only two ways of redemption from the guilt: *mortification* (i.e. confession of guilt and request for forgiveness) and *victimage* (i.e. placing the blame on someone else, usually via the process of scapegoating). In the same vein, Georg Simmel criticized the practice of self-sacrifice as an act flowing from the irrational forces of feeling and volition which points to a lack of intelligence, or to a desire to disguise one's hidden egoism (Simmel 1978). These insights are reflected in institutionalized treatment of transgression and corruption in Japan and elsewhere. For instance, in his classic research on police corruption, Lawrence Sherman (1978) registered a frequent strategy of "rotten apples": in order to defend the corrupt police department from the all-encompassing deviant label, the police

---

treatment. However, Kanemaru became eventually exposed because he compassionately insisted not to let his personal secretary take the blame for the scandal (see Babb 2005). In Japan, it is usually the aides and junior associates of senior politicians who buy stocks on the market instead of their bosses whereby keeping superior's name technically clear. While protecting his aides (instead of using them as protective shield) Kanemaru destroyed his political career and contributed to the fall of the LDP from power in 1993.

rather admitted to individual deviance whereby re-shifting the responsibility from the corrupted system to few individual policemen. In Japanese context, David Johnson (2003) found that the problem of police corruption (i.e. the embezzlement of money from police slush funds) is not a problem of a few rotten apples, but of a failed organization. My case studies (see below) also show a tendency of the elite backstage to blame individuals instead of scrutinizing the inherently corrupted structure. At any rate, an individual sacrifice for the sake of social preservation is a social function that is at the core of any society, while scapegoating contributes to maintaining the sociocultural order.

The social practice of scapegoating can be found in traditional rites where the transgressor becomes a moral sacrifice that is offered for the group's sin. In Japan, the scapegoat legacy and ostracism has been present in communal existence since ancient times, and it co-defines everyday interaction in order to enforce social consensus (e.g. Eisenstadt 1995). In Japanese scandal, there exist a tendency to punish the lowest accountable person instead of the highest, while the Japanese corporate monoculture gets usually strengthened by the illusion that bad apple has been rooted out (Johnson 2001). In contemporary Japan, the formal and informal agents of social order are more interested in finding someone guilty rather than finding the guilty someone. According to Pascha (1999) and many other, one of the main reasons why cases of corruption are made public in Japan is related to looking for scapegoats. In this subchapter, I further elaborate on

argumentation and indicate how scapegoating works as a patterned mechanism of turning structural corruption into a forced public ritual of confession and exclusion.

Generally, scapegoats are individuals who are designed to personify a wrongdoing, and/or to be punished for the errors of others. Besides, they can be stigmatized by their rivals in order to ameliorate the public outrage and to use support of public resentment to gain power. The elite deviants can become scapegoats of the social system as a whole: the guilt is relieved by blaming and excluding the individual in question while attempting to save the reputation of one's professional platform. If there exist concerns that a certain scandal could have a negative effect on social processes (e.g. during elections), others want to keep a demonstrative distance. By accusing someone of immorality via scandal, the collective fault is thrown onto a scapegoat which becomes characterised as profane, and foreign to "sacred" ideals. Besides, once a transgressor becomes publicly convicted, he/she serves as an easy target for unloading the surplus confusion in the public (i.e., the frustration is directed towards the spoiled and overpaid elites). Consequently, the pubic polls allocate support for the stigmatizer and approve of the stigma of the alleged offender. This process becomes crucial for the stigmatized transgressor especially in Japan, where the stigma runs very deep (see West 2006).

In Japan, the act of self-victimizing bears on ritualistic features. The Japanese elites usually admit fault without further elaborating on questions surrounding his guilt.

Their performance however varies depending on how seriously they implement the expected appearance (*tatemae*). The scandal performance is typical of dramaturgical perfection in case of those who willingly accept the role of culprit, only to be given another portfolio at the next occasion. This is also the case of mothers/wives apologizing on behalf of their transgressing sons/husbands.[47]

On the contrary, the heavyweight politicians insist that that they were made scapegoats by their opponents – either in politics, or by the media. Indeed, these cries are hard to refute since many Japanese political scandals are attributed to the invisible part of politics (Taniguchi 2007). There are many cases of lobbying, majority manoeuvres, attack-politics, and politically-motivated use of corruption which is the main force behind many Japanese scandals. On the other hand, however, blaming the opponents for conspiracy can be rendered as a cheap strategic tool to win the sympathy of the viewing public.[48]

[47] For instance, the wife of Ototake Hirodata, who was in 2016 embroiled in a sex/infidelity scandal, apologized publicly while stating that she too "shared responsibility". Only few months later, the veteran actress Takahata Atsuko apologized for his son's sex scandal, although the purpose of her apology was motivated by safeguarding her own position in show business (Brasor 2016). Similarly, when the son of the actress Mita Yoshiko was arrested for drugs in 1998, she apologized in person, because – same as in the case of Takahata – she was blamed for securing jobs for her son despite his unprofessional attitudes. According to Brasor (2007), this case illuminates the deeply-rooted issue of gender inequality in Japan since nobody expected the person's father (former NHK director) to take the responsibility for his son's scandal.

[48] Let us consider here the conspiratorial nature of political scandal in postwar Japan. The Shōwa Denkō scandal from 1948 was said to be used by the Liberal Party to attack the Socialist and Democratic Parties coalition, while the Shipbuilding scandal from 1954 pointed to political opponents that used the crisis to attack the government and damage its reputation. The 1974 scandal of Tanaka Kakuei was propelled by Sasakawa Ryōichi

The most radical form of scandal performance is the so-called scapegoat-suicide. It is not unusual in modern Japan that some scapegoats loyally divert the responsibility from their superiors by killing themselves. This is not identical with Durkheim's "altruistic suicide", and it stands for yet another Japanese phenomenon which points to the fact that there are clearly different cultural responses to shame and responsibility. Some political aides and high officials approach the act of suicide as "alternative means" of taking full responsibility for a scandal, but they can also perceive it as a duty to make sure that the scandal will not cause trouble to the authority they serve. In such cases, suicide effectively hinders further investigation of the prosecutor's office.[49]

(see Samuels 2003) while Tanaka's Lockheed scandal, which occurred two years later, was allegedly generated by the prosecutors cooperating with the ruling party and the media (Johnson 1986; The Asahi Shinbun Company 2015). Some cases of attack-politics such as the Teijin scandal in 1934 and the Recruit Scandal in 1988 were allegedly used as attacks on political parties in general (Yayama 1990; Mitchell 1996). Furthermore, the first female foreign minister Tanaka Makiko was scapegoated because she was too critical about the Prime Minister Koizumi (Berkofsky 2002). More recently, the donation scandal of Ozawa Ichirō (2009) and Obuchi Yūko (2014) were perceived as a character assassination of those who posed a threat to the establishment.

[49] In the aftermath of the so-called STAP cell scandal in 2014, which targeted the RIKEN researcher Obokata Haruko, the co-author of the controversial research paper on STAP, Sasai Yoshiki committed suicide. In 2009, the former Minister of Finance Nakagawa Shōichi apparently committed suicide following his faux-pas (he seemed to have been drunk during the press conference) at the G7 finance Ministers' meeting in Rome, which lead to his resignation. Matsuoka Toshikatsu (then Minister of agriculture) and Yamazaki Shin'ichi (former executive director of a government environmental agency) committed suicide after a scandal regarding suspicious book-keeping practices in 2007-8 (Matsuoka became the first sitting member in the postwar period who committed suicide). In 2004, the former chairman of the renowned Seibu Group, Tsutsumi Yoshiaki and the president of Seibu Railway Koyanagi Terumasa, both committed suicide in the wake of the Seibu/Kokudo insider trading scandal. In 2001, the former junior minister Nakajima Yōjirō hanged himself after being convicted on charges of vote-buying and bribe-taking, while in 2006, a young executive at securities linked to Horie Takafumi's Livedoor scandal (Noguchi Hideaki) also committed suicide. In the aftermath of the 1998 bureaucratic scandal (*no-pan shabu-shabu*), one official involved in the scandal hanged himself. Earlier in 1997 the police raid of the offices of the corrupted Ministry of Finance,

IV.

MEDIATING SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN

---

and another corporate raid in the Dai-Ichi Kangyo bank scandal resulted in two suicides (the latter was former chairman of the bank, Kunji Miyazaki). One year later, the Diet member Arai Shōkei hung himself after receiving funds illegally generated on the stock market. In one of the police scandals from 1990s, a Fukuoka police officer committed suicide after it was revealed that the police psychologically pressured suspects and defendants. In 1989, the chief aide and finance secretary (Aoki Ikei) of then Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru committed suicide in the aftermath of the Recruit bribery scandal. Earlier in 1983, Nakagawa Ichirō (the father of aforementioned Nakagawa Shōichi, and a patron of Matsuoka Toshikatsu) also committed suicide, which was linked to skeletons in his closet. In 1980, the managing director of the trading Company Nissho-Iwai committed suicide after receiving bribes from the McDonnell-Douglas company. The largest number of scapegoat suicide in postwar Japan is attributed to the Lockheed scandal from 1976: the American corporate treasurer of Lockheed, Robert N. Waters committed suicide on the eve of the senate inquiry; the film actor Maeno Mitsuyasu died in a suicide attack on Kodama Yoshio (who was the key figure in the very same scandal), and even the chauffeur of Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei killed himself in the aftermath of Lockheed.

1. UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR QUALITIES OF JAPANESE SCANDAL

Scandals occur in every society. At first sight, the conduct of corruption and scandal does not differ much from culture to culture, while the "minimal structure" of scandal is universal. Everywhere in the world, corruption, scandal and gossip focuses on areas of a structural tension in whic conflicting interpretations of obligation and expectation cause certain strains (Turner 1969; Merry 1984). The existence of liminal and remedial phases (i.e. conflict/transgression, and resolution/redemption) was confirmed cross-culturally (Turner 1990; Bell 1992; Barkow 1992; Jenks 2003; Alexander 2006b). Historically, a culture at the edge of utter corruption is one of the oldest themes found in narratives of the human race as such (see Girard 1996; Campbell 2004; Estes 2004), while the narratives of scandal as epic, tragedy, and heroism are present in both East and West (West 2006; Prusa 2016a). Furthermore, feeding on one's private issues and scandalizing one's inappropriate behavior was part of social and political communication since antiquity. Transgression and corruption has been occurring in ancient Rome, the Islamic World, or Communist China (Pascha 1999; Murphey 2009; Sato and Doggett 2013), but scandal is not limited to these regions. Especially in last decades, major corruption scandals have rocked on a massive scale many Asian countries including South Korea, Indonesia, Cambodia, the Philippines or Myanmar (see Pharr 2000; Kidd and Richter

2003; Chang and Chu 2006).

If we take into account the recorded cases of unveiled corruption, followed by a public scandal in various world regions, we can safely assume that this phenomenon is a standard feature of all forms of political systems worldwide. The present-day systemic corruption is attributable to various normative strengths (e.g. personal moral obligations, effective voluntary associations, the centrality of elections in politics and the value of winning them, which can trigger attack-politics with scandalization as one of its tools). In the West, same as in Japan, scandal derives from capitalist conditions, the influences of globalization, and the distorted public sphere which is now heavily mediated by money and power media (e.g. Hanada 1997; Castells 2009).

Corporate contributions and donations that bear an element of bribery are evident in many democracies including Japan. Buying political influence and influencing governmental policy is a "legal" way of institutional corruption in the U.S. today (Lessig 2011; Gilens and Page 2014), while the semi-independent American press is seriously failing its role tied to social responsibility (Bennett 2007; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston 2007). In a similar vein, illegal financial practices in many European countries had been common and tolerated throughout the 20th century with many European politicians relying on illegal funds (see Barker 1994; Pujas 2002; Adut 2008). Besides, scandals and other socially harmful acts of power elites in the US are less common in

Japan (e.g. Reischauer 1977; Kerbo and Inoue 1990; West 2006). Likewise, gossip is also a universal social phenomenon, while the contents of gossip do not differ much across human societies. In Japan and elsewhere, judgemental/malicious gossip leads to being ridiculed with derogatory nicknames with victims of foul gossip being ostracized (see Smith 1961; Gluckman 1963; Merry 1984). Even the use of gossip for the sake of informal social control and maintenance of discipline is not unique to Japan.[50]

In the same vein, nepotism and cronyism are endemic in all kinds of systems and cultures. Especially the psychological trait of nepotism, which is constitutive of many power scandals based on bribery and kick-backs, is in many cultures considered as immoral, although its psychological mechanisms have universal design features that make human beings everywhere tend to be nepotistic (e.g. Barkow 1992; Matsumoto 1996). Besides, politicians everywhere came to be gradually perceived to be more or less inherently corrupted, so the issue of frequent political corruption does not bring about any serious public outrage in Japan and other "disaffected democracies" (term by Pharr 2000).

On the other hand, however, corruption cannot be viewed in isolation of its societal context: the recognition of certain behavior as scandalous, and the way how each

---

[50] In feudal Japan, intra-group mutual surveillance (including village gossiping and reporting deviances to authority) played an important socially-integrative role in maintaining group responsibility (cf. the *goningumi* system, or the *han* system). In rural Japan, people still receive occasional visits from agents of social control who collect gossip about their neighborhood. We can find similar utilization of gossip in western corporate culture: consider only the 2015 Amazon scandal which revealed that the workers were instructed to gossip about their colleagues and encouraged to send secret feedback to their bosses for the good of the company (see Kantor and Streitfeld 2015).

society treats transgression, is to an important degree culturally-specific, and reflective of each society's mores and attitudes. What constitutes transgression and corruption is culturally variable: the forms of institutionalized corruption are not the same in all places and times, and the boundaries for defining what is deviant or antisocial are also "cultural boundaries". Equally importantly, what matters in culture-specific scandal performance is the varying dominance of beliefs, emotions, and ritualized modes of expression. Some researchers emphasized that in Asia, the media logic when treating transgression is linked to preserving the onfucianism-influenced social harmony, face-saving, mutual trust, and respect for leadership (Masterton 1996; Pharr 1990; 1996; Hanitzsch 2007). Besides, the sense of "institutional sacredness", and the authoritarian aura that surrounds the rituals of power is characteristic for Asia in general (Chang and Chu 2006) and Japan in particular (Parsons 1954; Pye 1985; Bellah 2003; Murphy 2014). Furthermore, the Japanese media system, the political style and the nature of Japanese public sphere are the products of their own distinct histories (e.g. Hanada 1997; de Lange 1998; Freeman 2000; Pharr 2000; Krauss 2000).

The scandalization of the Japanese politics in postwar Japan was partly a consequence of specific electoral system (i.e. the multi-seat constituency system which let parties strive to win as many seats in the same constituency as possible, wherefore the candidates from the same party must fight one another). In the celebrities' drug/sex

scandals, it is the Japanese media that deliberately exaggerate the transgression (this becomes more apparent if compared to a rather benevolent approach to celebrity scandals in the West). Furthermore, a rather humiliating public treatment of female celebrities during their closely watched press conferences, same as a rather harsh treatment by their agencies (*jimusho*) reflects both the sexism of the entertainment industry as such (e.g. Marx 2012; McCurry 2016), and the deeply rooted patrilineal family system (*ie*) in which female adultery is seen as a serious infraction (Sechiyama 2016). On the contrary, the overflowing sexuality is thought to be part of the package that makes for a vital, charismatic male leader.

Japanese commercial sector is often perceived as a homogeneous communal society with tight social networks based on mutual trust, ritual deference to authority, and a sense of shared self-interest in pursuit of national advancement. The governing bodies might be weak, but Japanese corporations maintain strength via internal rules, norms of silence and extralegal punishments. Besides, in societies such as Japan, where the lasting social ties are based on mutual obligations and gift-giving, removing oneself from the obligation to receive or give can become the object of denunciatory scandal (Gluckman 1963; Mauss 1966; Blic and Lemieux 2013). Japanese corporate governance is typical of opaque decision-making, hierarchy-driven culture, and internal managerial rigor. A failure to abide by the law may be known to, but not condemned by the group, while

avoiding a leak of a sensitive information in order to maintain the group is considered public morality. Besides, in Japanese corporate world these factors impede outside directors from having sufficient independence from the management, while he statutory auditors wield not enough power against directors.

2. CORRUPTION AND SCANDAL IN POSTWAR JAPAN

Political scandals seem to similar structural features across cultures, but they must be examined in a historical context of a particular system. Clearly categorizing Japanese political system is however problematic since contemporary Japan inheres non-Western heritage while assimilating various aspects of Western thought in many areas. The twin imperial/government system with its ancient roots, and the postwar constitution (drafted by the United States but being different from the US model) are just two examples that impede us from a clear categorization of Japan being centralised, traditional, or "democratic".[51]

[51] There exist countless accounts on the state of democracy in postwar Japan (western scholars used various labels such as Asian-style democracy, democracy without opposition, pseudo-democracy, interest democracy, it-can't-be-helped democracy, MOFocracy, karaoke democracy, or feudalistic democracy). Some revisionists suggested to abolish the concept of democracy in Japan altogether (Wolferen 1989), while other Japanese critics claimed that the mediopolitical complex in Japan is using democracy to undemocratize the society (Asano 2001). Indeed, the contemporary Japanese voters have lower levels of voluntary political participation while being skeptical toward democracy as a dynamic system (Ito 1993; Ikeda and Kohno 2008; Yamamoto 2010). Nonetheless, by comparative standards, Japan represents an industrial democracy much like the Western democracies (see Pye 1985; Reed 1993).

2.1. Locating Corruption in Political Practice

Political corruption can be described as a trade-off between corporate and private donations, and unlawful selling of services by politicians and officials in exchange for personal or party benefits (e.g. Rothacher 1993; McCormack 1996; Castells 2009). According to Japan's bribery law, bribe becomes a crime if 1) the official demanded, received or contracted to receive money or something else of value, 2) the official knew the money was a bribe, and 3) the official was in position of authority to influence official business in favor of the briber (e.g. Johnson 2002).[52]

One of the most frequent corruptive practices in Japan is the bid-rigging on public projects (*kansei dangō*). In such case, a contract is awarded at a price higher than if it were put out to bid through fair competition whereas the successful bidder makes unfair gains at the expense of taxpayers' money. Other frequent forms of corruption are money laundering (i.e. making hidden money public), offering lucrative insider stock information, donating money through multiple routes, constructing law-evading sales systems and converting tax moneys into slush funds (*uragane*), using illicit, "creative" accounting (*fusei keiri*) via shifting the losses to different accounts (*tobashi*), "cultivating"

---

[52] Moreover, the Japanese Political Funds Control Law (Seiji Shikin Kisei Hō) prohibits corporate donations except to political parties or their organizations for managing political funds (see Giannakopoulos, Maras and Amano 2009). Prohibited are also donations made under the name of another person or body, donations from foreign firms, and donations accepted from "anti-social" forces (i.e. yakuza).

bureaucrats via entertainment (*zōtō settai*) and spending official expenses on vote buying.[53]

It is rather unsurprising that the father of money politics in Japan, Tanaka Kakuei insisted that his political *modus operandi* was consistent with Japanese traditions of political action (Stockwin 2003). After his scandal, Tanaka stated that he did not do anything out of ordinary, and that his political opponents only changed the rules on him (Johnson 1986). In a similar vein, the LDP Secretary-General Abe Shintarō (the father of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō) defended the culprits in the Recruit scandal from 1988 by stating that political donations are essential to maintaining a dynamic politics in Japan (Herzog 2013). Furthermore, during the 2005 scandal of the Japan Highway Public Corporation, Okuda Hiroshi (then chairman of Keidanren) insisted that the practice of bid-rigging (*dangō*) is a custom one finds just about everywhere (Hatch 2010), while the scandal of Matsuoka Toshikazu in 2007 revealed that the custom of kickbacks in public construction projects is practiced by virtually every Japanese politician – including the political heavyweight Ozawa Ichirō, who in the midst of his own scandal in 2009 insisted that politicians should be able to use political donations as they wish (*Time*, March 13, 2009).

[53] Some politicians make use of social expenses (*kōsaihi*), office expenses (*jimushohi*), utility expenses (*kōnetsusuihi*) and expenses for investigative activities (*chōsakatsudōhi*) by listing them as expenses, but spending them on vote buying or embezzling them for personal profit.

The cost of becoming a politician in Japan today, and the cost of operational expenses needed to run the personal support groups (*kōenkai*) surpasses any other country. Japanese politicians face pressures to raise large sums of money, which necessarily overrides any ethical considerations. Corruption in Japan becomes more a question of competitive pressures, and less of the politicians' personal benefit. While illustrating this fact, Nyblade and Reed (2008) distinguished between the political corruption of *cheating* (i.e. use of illicit means to enhance one's chance to be elected), and the economic corruption of *looting* (i.e. illicit use of public office private material gain). The authors confirmed that in Japan, much of political corruption has centered on improving the political fortunes in elections. Cheating can even be seen as "noble" since the elites utilize unethical/illegal means only to obtain a desired result, which eventually benefits some "greater good" (i.e. benefits for supporters/voters). On the contrary, looting, with its individualistic character and disregard for economical/political interaction, was regarded as profoundly dysfunctional (Girling 1997). It is also condemned by the spirit of Japanese law, where the rejection of private self-interest is a justification of authority and public welfare (Haley 2006).

Another important factor related to political corruption scandal is the degree, and the excess of a certain illegal/inappropriate act. In Japanese past, only those spirited individuals were celebrated who were prepared to take risks and exploit openings in order

to accomplish great things (Pye 1985). Today, corruption in Japan is structural and thus unavoidable if a politician wants to succeed. The problem can however surface if a politician is all-too-successful and ambitious while threatening the balance of the conservative hierarchical system. In other words, "excess" becomes a prelude to scandal in Japan (Nester 1990; Wolferen 2011a; Murphy 2014). The magnitude of such excess is expressed either by the amount of money at play (i.e. huge amounts are used for personal profit), or by an individualist, arrogant and "revolutionary" spirit (i.e. one attempts to extensively change the established power alignment).[54]

There are more explanations behind the omnipresence of political, bureaucratic and corporate corruption in Japan. If seen from the Weberian perspective, the phenomenon of corruption can be conceived of as a despicable pathology for developing societies. Eventually, this pathology would be wiped out in the process of modernization, bureaucratization and rationalization (Weber 1978). This hypothesis however becomes

---

[54] Consider the case of Horie Takafumi (aka *Horiemon*) and his Livedoor scandal from 2006. Horiemon was arrested on suspicions of market manipulation which lead to a disastrous loss of his company's market value. He was accused of securities fraud and sentenced to two and half years in prison. The problem with his transgression, which was nothing new in Japanese business world, was rendered as excessive, and undermining the foundations of Japanese market norms. Horiemon was just an independent actor who aimed to trigger a revolutionary change in the old political economy in Japan. In the same year, another activist investor, Murakami Yoshiaki was convicted based on insider trading in Nippon Broadcasting System shares. They both became a dangerous force for the long-standing elites who resented Murakami and Horie as "cowboy capitalists" (term by Hatch 2010). Besides, we can notice similarities between Murakami, Horie and the founder of the Recruit Company, Ezoe Hiromasa, who also attempted to bypass the traditional Japanese employment with a new labor market, but was undone by the Recruit scandal in 1988.

problematic if applied to modern Japan. For example, Weber's rationalization referred to eliminating the old-fashioned practices, but various ritual exchanges are still prevalent on various levels of Japanese polity (e.g. gift-giving as a fixed custom that may or may not constitute systemic bribery). More importantly, the corruptive practices in Japanese political and corporate world cannot be regarded as "dysfunctional" – quite to the contrary: in Japan, the business collusion came to be perceived as "function of culture" (Johnson 2001; Hatch 2010), while corruption often served as a grease for the economy (Blaker 1977; Pascha 1999). Simultaneously, a corruption which increases loyalty and political trust was in Japan intimately connected with the growth of democratic governance (Babb 2005), with the meritocratic bureaucracy generating social benefits and redistributing income from the rich sectors to the poor ones (Johnson 1982; 1986). Seen from the postmodern perspective, the corruption is a coordination game among various relevant actors within a polity, while the issue at stake is no longer the "truth" behind corruption, but the best possible input/output equation.

2.2. Historical Observations of Political Corruption in Postwar Japan

Corruption and bribery was a common affair since the beginning of Japan's recorded history. The political corruption in official places dates back to the Heian period (794-1185), being a source of repeated scandals in feudal, prewar and postwar periods (see Calder 1988; Mitchell 1996; McCormack 1996; Curtis 1999; Hayes 2005). In Japan, the long tradition of social stratification and feudalism laid the foundation of "interest democracy", in which collaborative competition with collusive traits was supported (Kyogoku 1987; Leggett 1995; Pharr 2000). Furthermore, the postwar Japanese public approached voting as a duty rather than a right, while being more concerned with practical ends than the ethic of the means (Kyogoku 1987). Bribery was officially deemed immoral (by the Confucianists) and illegal (by state authorities), but it was widespread before and after the Meiji Restoration, and it played an important role in political processes while greasing the political machinery. Since the beginning of 20th century, the most sensational political/corporate corruption cases were:

- sugar bribery case (1909): Diet members accepted bribes in return for tax concessions for Japan's leading sugar producer
- Siemens scandal (1915): bribery of naval officers to secure a contract with the German

arms maker to provide the electrical equipment for a naval vessel.[55]

- Teijin scandal (1934): a group of investors was accused of manipulating market for the benefit of key politicians when purchasing shares of the leading textile firm from the Bank of Taiwan
- Shōwa Denkō scandal, or *Shōden* (1948): the executives of the largest fertilizer producer bribing officials and politicians in order to obtain low-interest loans
- The shipbuilding scandal, or *Zōsen giwaku* (1954): the Liberal Democratic Party was accused of involvement in bribes and kickbacks from Hitachi Company in return for government contracts and subsidies.

Apart from its pre-war roots, the phenomenon of structural corruption in Japan must be attributed to the postwar zeitgeist. In postwar Japan, the government, business and bureaucracy were often united on the strategy of absolute priority of economic growth. Moreover, the government, business and bureaucracy agreed on absolute priority of economic growth under "administrative guidance" (*gyōsei shidō*), which stood for another example of manipulative power of the national bureaucracy over the business

[55] Being triggered by *Asahi Shinbun*, this was the first scandal to bring down a cabinet in Japan. Important was the role of Procurator-General Hiranuma Kiichirō, who was willing to prosecute the politicians involved in the Siemens scandal but reluctant to prosecute any officers of the Imperial army (see Mitchell 1996; Haley 2006). The person of Hiranuma influenced today's understanding of Japanese prosecutors as guardians of national virtues who charge the corrupted politicians.

world and further facilitated the culture of backroom dealings and political manipulation. Consequently, a strict sense of personal morality was reinforced by the corporatist culture, including the company loyalty, cooperation between employers and workforce, and discouraging domestic cut-throat competition (Sato 2005). In terms of politics, where competition is generally proved to curb corruption, party competition disappeared in 1955 while the dominance of the LDP was continuously supported by farmers and business circles who provided funding. Regarding the electoral corruption, the medium-sized district system caused in larger districts competition between the members within the LDP, which in turn necessitated high amounts of campaign spending (Sato 2005; Babb 2005). Such historical development generated political domination of conservative coalition with weak rival parties, but it also formed the discourse on corruption in postwar Japan. Throughout the postwar political development, the key role was attributed to the conservatives of the ruling LDP. While being backed by the US government, they created and maintained a strong coalition of politicians, business and landed interests. The economic success in the 1960s and 1970s was a result of a close collaboration between the power elite and the businessmen While enjoying the "emptiness of affluence" (term by McCormack 1996), the Japanese were kept on supporting the conservatives notwithstanding the mushrooming corruption scandals.

In postwar politics, the role of money politics goes back to the Kishi cabinet.

Later, it was spearheaded by Tanaka Kakuei, and most recently by Ozawa Ichirō (see below). Apart from scandals involving bureaucrats at government ministries, many Prime Ministers and cabinet members were forced to resign throughout this period. Satō Eisaku (along with Yoshida Shigeru and Ikeda Hayato) was investigated on multiple occasions – most notably because of the aforementioned Shipbuilding scandal from 1954, where leading shipbuilding firms bribed the government into revising a law to increase government shipbuilding subsidies. Kishi Nobusuke (Satō's brother) was employing government programs to generate business for political supporters, and Tanaka Kakuei, who was implicated in the Lockheed affair earned the status of father of money politics in Japan. The Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro was also indirectly implicated as a recipient of Lockheed funds and Recruit shares, while the Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi resigned in the wake of the Recruit scandal. Prime Minister Uno Sōsuke was an exception because he was doomed by a sex/infidelity scandal. Hosokawa Morihiro resigned after allegations that he had misused personal funds back in the 1980s, Hashimoto Ryūtarō had to resign over his involvement in concealing political donations, and Hatoyama Yukio resigned after misreporting vast number of donations in the context of Japan's securities' scandals in 1991. Kan Naoto, who "heroically" exposed the wrongdoing of his own ministry's HIV-tainted blood scandal in 1996, later joined the Japanese politicians who failed to pay mandatory premiums into the National Pension

System.[56]

Takeshita Noboru and his cabinet were involved in aforementioned stock-for-favor Recruit scandal. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō was forced to resign in 2007, although he was not personally embroiled in any political scandal, however many of his Cabinet Members were involved in corruption (including Matsuoka Toshikazu, who in 2007 committed suicide in the wake of his scandal). Mori Yoshirō was tainted by the Recruit scandal, involved in accepting illegal donations through shady political organizations, and associated with Ozawa Ichirō in the Nishimatsu scandal (see below). Besides, together with Obuchi Keizō, he accepted in 1997 a donation from the renowned Osaka Oil dealer Izui Jun'ichi (Blechinger 1998). Mori was politically undone by various scandals during his administration (especially the embezzlement scandal of Matsuo Katsutoshi in 2001) while scandalizing the Japanese public based on his numerous gaffes.[57]

---

[56] Some argue that Kan simply utilized the highly-mediated HIV affair for his own political gain, because his officials suddenly discovered (after 13 years of protraction) the *corpus delicti* documentation, while Kan used the corrupted ministry bureaucrats as an easy target in order to expose the HIV scandal (see Miyamoto 1996; Feldman 1997).

[57] Apart from calling Japan a "divine nation" (*kami no kuni*), Mori's reputation suffered the most when he continued to play golf after being informed about the fatal *Ehime Maru* fishing boat accident in 2001. Consequently, only 14 percent of the electorate expressed support for the Mori cabinet (Kabashima and Steel 2010). Interestingly, a situation not dissimilar to that of Mori occurred one year earlier in Russia, where the Russian president Putin waited for five days before he finally interrupted his holiday due to the fatal Kursk submarine incident. Amid the public outcry during which his favorable ratings fell dramatically, Putin easily survived the crisis by removing one of his generals from the post of the defense minister (Gorshkov 2002).

Figure 9. Japanese postwar prime ministers and their involvement in scandal.

Yoshida Shigeru (1946-1954)

– investigated (Shipbuilding scandal in 1954)

Hatoyama Ichirō (1954-1956)

– indicted (Shōwa Denkō scandal in 1948

Fukuda Takeo (1976-1978)

– indicted (Shōwa Denkō scandal in 1948)

Kishi Nobusuke (1957-1960)

– generated businesses via government programs; links to yakuza

Ikeda Hayato (1960-1964)

– investigated (Shipbuilding scandal in 1954)

Satō Eisaku (1964-1972)

– investigated (Shipbuilding scandal in 1954)

Tanaka Kakuei (1972-1974)

– investigated (Black Mist scandal in 1965); involved (Lockheed in 1976)

Nakasone Yasuhiro (1982-1987)

– suspected (recipient of Lockheed funds), admitted to receiving Recruit shares

Takeshita Noboru (1987-1989)

– involved (Recruit scandal in 1988)

Miyazawa Kiichi (1991-1993)

– involved (Recruit scandal in 1988)

Hosokawa Morihiro (1993-1994)

– accused (accepting loan from Sagawa; shady purchase of NTT shares)

Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998)

– involved (concealing political donations, and the Dental donation scandal)

Obuchi Keizō (1998-2000)

– involved (shady donations: Osaka Oil scandal 1997, Nishimatsu scandal)

Mori Yoshirō (2000-2001)

– involved (shady donations: Osaka Oil, Nishimatsu scandal, links to yakuza)

Hatoyama Yukio 2009-2010)

– involved (misreporting donations; Japan's securities scandals in 1991).[58]

---

[58] Not included in the chart are Prime Minister Uno Sōsuke (1989) who resigned after his extramarital sex scandal, and Prime Minister Kan Naoto (2010-2011) who failed to

Almost every year, the LDP government since the reign of Tanaka Kakuei has been tainted with corruption. Even today the nation's politics runs on money: political operations require underground funding which necessitates accumulation of large amounts of money by parties and factions. Exchanging favors is an indispensable component of the Japanese political/voting process, while bribes point to additional cost of projects in the world of political/capitalist competition. The whole picture gets further complicated once we include to our discussion the Japanese organized crime, which occasionally generates a yakuza-related corruption scandal (see below). In order to get the whole picture behind the logic of scandal in postwar Japan, I will map the collusion and competition of media- and non-media actors within the Japanese power-network.

2.3. Collusion and Competition of Power Circles in Japanese Scandal

In modern social sciences, the notion of one fundamental force within any social phenomenon was refuted, because there exist reciprocal relations and gaps between intentions in relation to one another (Foucault 1972; Lyotard 1984; Latour 2005). The actor-network theory came to emphasize that the *social* is not a sort of special domain or

---

pay mandatory premiums into the National Pension System. Considering the omnipresence of structural corruption, it is presumable that other Japanese Prime Ministers did not make it to the list simply because their corruption was not exposed.

reality, but a principle of connections and associations. Similarly, the political power in Japan is not in the hands of concrete identifiable actors, because the responsibility is diffused (Maruyama 1969; Pye 1985). If applied to scandals, the main actor (i.e. the root transgressor) is not the only source of action. During the scandalization process he/she becomes "…the moving target of a vast array of interconnected entities swarming toward it" (Latour 2005, 46). These entities are associated in such a way that they "make others do things" in a network of mediations (ibid.). In other words, Japanese power scandal highlights the continuing web of financial/policy ties between, and within the elite actors and their institutions.

The postwar research implies that Japanese power elites make for an interlocked "iron triangle" of the ruling political party, elite bureaucracy and business/finance circles (*sei-kan-zai*). Within this reciprocal power setup without any clear center of political accountability, the politicians master bureaucracy, the bureaucracy controls business, and business has influence over members of the LDP (Johnson 1986; Kabashima and Broadbent 1986; Kerbo and Inoue 1990). Nonetheless, the contemporary Japanese power system lacks central coordination while letting the weak external controls reinforce each other (Johnson 2002; Asano 2004; Sato 2005). During a crisis, various ad hoc committees and panels exercise authority without being held accountable while the Japanese elites claim to be the victims of a "system of irresponsibility" (*musekinin no taikei*) which,

according to Maruyama (1969) came to typify the power structures of postwar Japan. The main aim of this section is to examine this collusion as related to scandal, and to extend the list of scandal participants by including prosecutors, entertainment agencies, organized crime, and civic groups.

The most distinct protagonists of power interest are depicted by the **political circles** (*seiji*). They are represented by cabinet ministers, members of the Diet, the strongest factions of the ruling party, and other key decision-makers. The Diet member's local support groups (*kōenkai*) came to represent effective "political machines" that were transformed into local party chapters. Furthermore, Japan's highly organized farmers became a pillar of the political circles in exchange for generous protections (Gordon 1993). Moreover, the Japanese political circles are submissive to the elites from the private sector in order require financial contributions and to maintain the political machinery. Also, important for understanding scandal in Japanese politics is the fact that large political parties operate on the factional level. In other words, the basic unit of political organization in Japan is not the party, but the faction (*habatsu*). Factions include a range of cultural, historical, and institutionalized forces that also account for their role intrafactional struggles and attack-politics (see Watanabe 2013). In the light of these realities, scandal is less of a morality tale of "searching for truth", and more a result of power struggle between parties and factions.

The main decisions for the society are formally made by the **bureaucracy** (*kanryō*), which is represented by elite bureaucrats, chiefs of civil service personnel, the Prime Minister's office, and the prosecutor's office as an autonomous institution within the Ministry of Justice. The financial sector provides employment for retired bureaucrats via the mechanism of "landing from heaven" (*amakudari,* see below). The bureaucracy was traditionally a key support structure for the LDP and a major institutional pillar of corruption within the politician-bureaucrat nexus. The important player in the collusion and competition of power is the Ministry of Finance, because it controls the budgeting process through its Budget Bureau. On the one hand, the Japanese bureaucracy (both elite bureaucrats and the retired ones) is endemic of corruption because the discretionary regulatory and distributive authority is vested in ministries and open to direct political interference (e.g. George Mulgan 2006; 2010). On the other hand, the basic information policy of the Japanese state bureaucrats lies in concealing real facts from the public (Miyamoto 1996; Sassa 2011). In Japan, the bureaucratic scandals are most frequent in industries such as aviation, oil and energy, and defense (Blechinger 1998). In the past, the Japanese bureaucrats discredited their trustworthiness due to bribery scandals that include exposures of lower bureaucrats entertaining higher bureaucrats at taxpayers' expenses (*kankan settai*), or by accepting entertainment from business in exchange for favors (*zōtō settai*). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Labor was in the past involved in

stock transactions related to the Recruit Company, while the Ministry of Finance was not taking action about corruptive practices of the Japanese banks (Kerbo and Inoue 1990; Amyx 2003). Furthermore, more than one half of corporate wrongdoing, known to both the bureaucrats of MITI and the police, were effectively covered up (Johnson 1982; Amyx 2003). Te most tragic outcome of bureaucratic corruption in Japan was the HIV scandal from 1996: despite knowing that the imported unheated blood products could lead to the spread of HIV in Japan, the Ministry of Health and Welfare did not order companies to recall unheated blood products. In 1990s, the public mistrust spread from political authorities to bureaucratic institutions, and nowadays the mismanagement of the economy is still occasionally being exposed through corruption scandals at the elite ministries. The trust in bureaucracy was further eroded after the 2011 Tohoku disaster: it became clear that some state bureaucrats (along with the Japanese mass media) were obfuscating the truth about the impact of the disaster (Wakiyama 2011; Uesugi 2012; Tsukada 2016).

One of the most important players within the justiciary bureaucracy as related to scandal in Japan are the **prosecutors** (*kensatsukan*). The prosecutor's office is an autonomous institution within the Ministry of Justice (*Hōmushō*) and it is responsible for conducting investigations and presenting cases in a criminal trial against those accused of breaking a certain law. While the police are the primary investigating authority in

criminal cases, Japanese prosecutors have the power to investigate any offence (including bribery and white-collar crimes), and to decide if they institute prosecution (e.g. Hasegawa 2000). Their determination of whether or not they think a defendant is guilty comes when they decide to prosecute (*kiso*) or not prosecute (*fukiso*). Simultaneously, they act as important "norm entrepreneurs" who seek both acknowledgement and political profit when they set up enforcement priorities. Especially the special investigation authority at the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office (*Tokusōbu*) is stuffed by elite prosecutors and stands behind the biggest corruption scandals in 20th century Japan – among others, the scandals of Lockheed, Recruit, Sagawa Kyūbin, but also one of the earliest Japanese scandal cases, the Teijin affair from 1934 where the prosecutorial scandal leak turned the public opinion against the political opponents for the first time (see Yayama 1990; Mitchell 2002). The Japanese prosecutors are easing leaks according to a double standard (Yayama 1990), "borrowing" some major scandal cases from the police (Johnson 2002), or selling information to mobsters while ignoring police corruption (West 2006). Moreover, Japanese prosecution usually ignores the widespread use of police slush funds, but they also tend to neglect the control of the pachinko industry, and the connections to organized crime (Johnson 2003; West 2006).

In cases of political bribery, successful convictions and possible jail time remain rare in Japan. This is due to the fact, that prosecutors must prove that the defendant

actually received the money, that he knew it was a bribe, and that he used his authority to benefit the briber (George Mulgan 2010). Since confession is the most important evidence, the Japanese prosecution can hardly prove all these things with all suspects (consider only the 1988 Recruit scandal, where the prosecutor's office indicted only 12 out of 159 transgressors due to lack of evidence). Once they take a case to court, the Japanese prosecutors are known for an extremely high conviction rate, but if corporate elites and government officials are involved, the conviction rate almost halves (Johnson 2002). At any rate, it is the public prosecutors, along with judges and editors of some quality newspapers that are said to feel most responsible for protecting the face of Japan.

The **business circles** (*zaikai*) are largely represented by Japan's Federation of Economic Organization (*Keidanren*), along with the most powerful Japanese corporations. This organization shields the top executives and major Japanese corporations, and in the past, it often acted as go-between for political funding, channeling the funds to political parties whereby maintaining the power triangle (Leggett 1995; Kerbo and Inoue 1990). Keidanren's main role is to coordinate political contributions, and it was in principle distributing all political foundations to the LDP (it temporarily withheld the donations after the LDP regime was toppled in 1993, and in 2009). The reputation of Japanese business circles suffered the most by frequent consumer-affecting scandals (e.g. the 1996 HIV contamination scandal, the 2000 Mitsubishi safety scandal, or the 2001 false

labeling/BSE scandal). The business circles collude with bureaucratic and political circles through the so-called "descent from heaven" (*amakudari*) in which former senior officials join some of those organizations that used to be under their jurisdiction before their retirement (see below).

It is a well-known fact that the advertising agencies (most notably Dentsu) are in position to intimidate companies since they have access to delicate information and can both publicize and cover up scandals. Equally important in controlling information flow are the celebrity-managing **offices** (*jimusho*) such as Johnny's, Yoshimoto Kōgyō or Up front.[59] These showbiz-news gatekeepers protect their clients and themselves from scandals by putting pressure on media networks, the tabloids and their publishers. They attempt to suppress scandalous leaks once they emerge, and they do this via restrictions on first-hand access to the show business industry (Marx 2012). Furthermore, these agencies have power to influence programming and plant in the weeklies stories with positive spins about their stars (or negative spins on their rivals), using the tabloids in the same way the politicians use press club members from the newspapers (West 2006). The agencies threaten publishers to deny the coverage of all other artists under the office in

[59] While creating rather than managing idols, these offices wield an enormous amount of power with which they dominate other institutions and influence overall decision-making processes (Marx 2012). The top powerbrokers dictate to the media and advertising agencies which members of their *keiretsu* they want used, and perhaps unsurprisingly they often become a subject of scandal, mostly related to tax evasion, sexual harassment, or links to organized crime).

question, while the publishers often cooperate since they lose profit once being excommunicated by the office.[60]

The **organized crime** (yakuza) is sometimes described as the "fifth estate" in the power system represented by the ruling party, key ministries, big business, and the mainstream media. Apart from their ethically ambiguous activities, the yakuza is well known for penetrating the world of economics and politics since the end of World War II (see Messersmith 2003; Hill 2003). While establishing its position throughout the course of Japan's modern history, the yakuza came to collaborate with politicians (Adelstein 2015), bureaucrats (Kerr 2001), big banks (Yukawa 1999), entertainment agencies (Marx 2012), or even the world of sumo (Manzenreiter 2014). The organized crime is heavily involved in structural corruption, which is a tradition that stretches back to the beginnings of liberal democracy in Japan. (For instance, Kodama Yoshio, the notorious right-wing intermediary between the world of politics and the worlds of gangsters, was financing the LDP lead by Yoshida, Hatoyama and Kishi.) The same applies to the commercial sector. Perhaps the first postwar involvement of yakuza in scandal was the infamous Minamata pollution case, where the Chisso Company used gangsters to keep the demonstrating victims away from company executives (e.g. Johnson). While moving into areas generally

[60] For instance, in 2008 the pop-star Satoshi Ōno from the idol-group Arashi became a topic due to his alleged drug/sex scandal published in a tabloid *Shūkan Gendai.* Consequently, Ōno's managing office, *Johnny's* cut business ties with the tabloid's publisher *Kōdansha*.

associated with the finance word and real estate industry, the yakuza was involved in big corruption scandals such as the 1990 Itōman incident (speculation in property), the 1992 Sagawa Kyūbin scandal (bribes in return for political favors), or the 1997 Nomura scandal (insider trading). Many yakuza-related scandals are based on the so-called *sōkaiya* practice: *sōkaiya* can literally translate as "general meeting specialists", but they are essentially corporate blackmailers. The *sōkaiya* scandals involve large Japanese broking firms that were accused of paying large amounts of money to persons blackmailing the management in connection with the shareholders meeting. The yakuza extort millions from companies by promising to stay away from the meetings and not asking embarrassing questions. The collusion with yakuza exists most profoundly in the banking sector. For instance, in late 1980s one of the largest banks in the world, the Dai-Ichi Kangyō Bank was accused of loaning a huge amount of money to yakuza, while in 2004 Citibank Japan helped to launder money from the Japanese underworld (Messersmith 2003). The involvement of yakuza may be far-reaching, but it will not be easily exposed since the Japanese media usually avoid touching upon any sensitive topic related to organized crime. (The aforementioned Sagawa scandal in 1992 was among the first ones where the media openly discussed the involvement of organized crime in politics.) Besides, the attitudes toward yakuza in postwar Japan were not entirely negative.[61]

---

[61] Apart from the Japanese commoners being usually afraid of yakuza, approximately one half of the respondents in a survey conducted by Messersmith (2003) stated that the

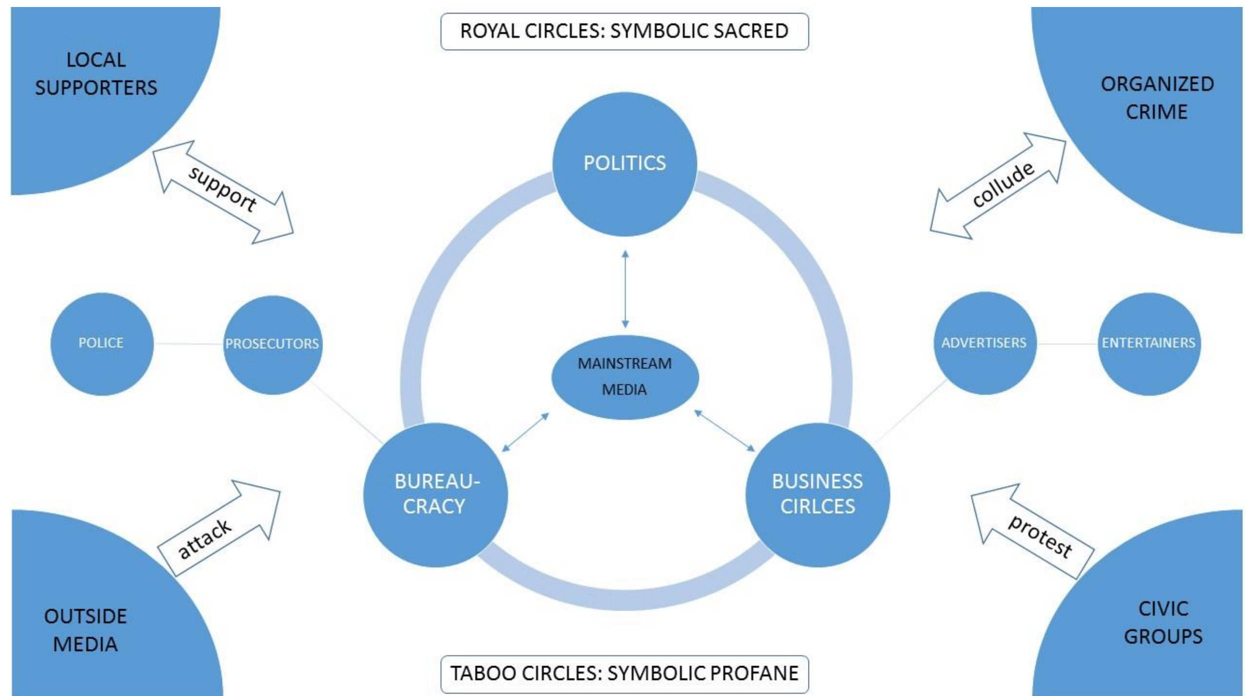
The logic of avoiding the mainstream media coverage and marginalizing their role in scandal applies to **other circles**: smaller minorities that become tabooed in Japan: the civic organizations (*shimin dantai*), the NGOs, the victim support networks, lawyers, independent journalists and academics. Unfortunately, their involvement within the power circles is often marginal, same as their potential to scandalize general public in case of the civic issues (see Ogawa 2009; Sugimoto 2010). Average Japanese citizens that seem to generally dislike litigation only seldom protest in case of scandal, but there were cases of effective public pressure in case of some scandals (see below). Similarly, Japanese civil groups and NGO's exert certain pressure, eventually resulting in legal defamation suits, but the chance of success (and mainstream media coverage of such protests) is usually low (West 2006). Besides, the power of the third sector is in Japan limited also because they are neither perceived as working for the "public good", nor do they usually mobilize *en bloc* (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986).

The power center does not explicitly incorporate the **mass media** (*masukomi*). They are not part of the administrative authority, but they have a social monopoly on covering activities of the power circles. The reporters usually cannot be held accountable for anything since the final responsibility is diffused.

Japanese organized crime helps make things run more smoothly in situations where government is ineffective or itself corrupt. The image of yakuza in Japan further improved due to their humanitarian efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake in Hanshin (1995) and Tōhoku (2011). Simultaneously, the heroic aura of yakuza members as tragic anti-heroes was maintained throughout the postwar Japanese fiction (Prusa 2016a).

Figure 10. Colluding and conflicting power during Japanese scandals.

Source: Author



3. SCANDAL CONSEQUENCES IN POSTWAR JAPAN

3.1. General Typology of Scandal Consequences

Every moral indignation over publicized transgression can produce a social crisis which translates into a pressure related to accountability (both institutional and reputational). Same as traditional rituals, scandals are simultaneously effects and causes of social crises (Alexander 1988). Theoretically speaking, by prosecuting and punishing transgressors a precedent is set, which may in turn influence how individuals and groups would act in the long run. Besides, any kind of punishment related to legal transgression is a precedent that the elites are not above the law, and that they cannot always hide behind political immunity, corporate bureaucracy, or celebrity fame.

There exist two ideal types of consequence theory in scandal discourse. The "no-consequence" theory posits that scandals, largely fabricated by the media, might have some impact on the careers and reputations of individuals involved, but they have no real impact on processes which shape social and political life (Thompson 2000). Scandals are in this light approached as nontransformative, "conservative" media events. On the other hand, the neofunctionalist perspective takes into account the scandal consequences as reaffirmation (consolidation) of the disturbed (dislocated) social order, based on which

reforms and improvements within social system can be implemented. It is however misleading to lean toward just one of these perspectives. Besides, there exist various factors that hinder any strict categorization: the consequences depend on the attributes of the individual, same as on the character of the scandal itself. Furthermore, not all irregularities (economic, political) develop into scandal, some scandals disappear immediately, while others grow big with major effects. The impact may stretch beyond the lives of involved individuals, and it can undermine social relations, institutions, and policies linked to those individuals.

Regarding the **individual effects,** defamatory gossip and scandal can seriously challenge a person's honor and social prestige. One's political reputation erodes and symbolic capital diminishes. In order to avoid further damage and secure positive publicity, the Japanese authorities proceed with "consultations", reprimands, resignations, firings, or they let candidates drop out of a race, relinquish presidential runs, and so forth. Corporate representatives are being driven from their offices, having their salaries adjusted, head managers are removed, and new administrators are installed, academicians can have their degree cancelled, while even the sports athletes are stripped of medals or banned from upcoming events.[62]

[62] In cases of corporate corruption, the disciplinary action toward individuals varies from company to company in Japan, but generally the heaviest individual punishment is "punitive dismissal" (*chōkai kaiko*), which is applied for actions warranting criminal punishment such as fraud or embezzlement. The next heaviest punishment is "resignation under instruction" (*yushi kaiko*), where the transgressor's past contributions to the

Other transgressing authorities are simply "side-slipped" (*yokosuberi*) to some different sections while being assigned a lower post, or they start working as company advisers. Simultaneously however, it is not unusual in Japan that people close to corrupted elites commit suicide in the aftermath of a scandal – either because of their own perceived share of responsibility, or in order to loyally avert further investigation (see below).

Public scandals can also lead to political, economic and social consequences, not to mention that a grave political corruption can be perceived as undermining the institution of democracy per se. Regarding the **institutional/structural effects**, it is the nature of transgression, the public response to it, and the institutional importance of people involved that determine to what extent a scandal becomes consequential. For instance, a corporate scandal that is badly handled can cause irreparable damage leading to board resignations, a plunge in share values and corporate takeover. As an immediate short-term consequence of a political scandal, the cabinet's approval can plunge, the political party connected to the transgressor registers loss in votes, and the factional proportion of power may change. Moreover, in the wake of major political scandals, moral campaigns, calls for action, and "administrative reforms" (*gyōsei kaikaku*) are eventuated. Management practices are inspected, new laws are passed in order to prevent

---

company are considered. Short suspensions from one day to one week (*shukkin teishi*) are common, as is a removal from position (*yakushoku kaijo*). Slightly lighter is suspension of position (*yakushoku teishi*) which enables the worker to return after a few months. A reprimand (*kenseki*) is the lightest form of punishment, in which the transgressor is generally required to write a letter of apology and is urged to reflect on his/her actions.

the type of scandal in question, administrative processes are put on hold, and in-house/outside committees are set up.[63]

Finally, the consumer-related scandals, food/safety scandals, and cover-up/false labeling scandals can have serious **commercial/business-related effects**. Companies, and agencies involved in transgression report disastrous net losses based on store closures, restructuring costs and re-branding strategies, losing sponsorship/advertising revenues, and shareholder losses. In order to save a company tarnished by scandal, corporations merge some part of the production with others (e.g. Olympus merged with Sony after the Olympus accounting scandal, Toshiba combined its PC production with Fujitsu and Vaio following the Toshiba accounting scandal, and Nissan took a 34 percent share in Mitsubishi right after Mitsubishi's latest data fuel scandal). The negative commercial effect must be attributed to public backlash during a scandal, which leads to sudden

[63] Here are just few historical examples of the transformative potential of scandal. For instance, Upton Sinclair's muckraking novel *The Jungle* from 1906 directly contributed by exposing conditions in the U.S. meat packing industry to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act. The 1920s' Teapot Dome scandal preceded the passage of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1925, while the 1972 Watergate scandal lead to establishing the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, and the special prosecutor's office. In 1990s, the British Committee on Standards in Public life was set up after multiple scandals around John Major, and in Australia a Royal Commission into the police force was created as a reaction to serial police corruption. In Japan, the 1995 Marco Polo tabloid scandal was an impetus to establish a position of press ombudsman within the tabloid's publishing company, while the Japanese "HIV scandal", which gained its momentum in 1996, lead to at least partial rehabilitation of its victims. Consider also the varying consequences of environmental scandals: the documentary *Under the Dome* (2015) about air pollution in China shortly after first screening made the market shares of air-cleaning technology companies rise by up to 10 percent, while the controversial document *The Cove* (2009) about dolphin slaughter had virtually no impact on whaling industry in Japan.

decrease of trust toward the brand in question, including cases of complete devastation of a brand due to the media outcry.[64]

3.2. The Impact of Power Scandals in Postwar Japan

In terms of political trust, lower levels of confidence in government represent the basic pattern in postwar Japan. The Japanese nowadays have a lower level of voluntary political participation, and are generally rather skeptical toward democracy as a dynamic, process-oriented system (Ito 1993; Ikeda and Kohno 2008; Yamamoto 2010). Thus, the national mood has been more often that of skepticism and the belief that Japanese politics is inherently corrupt (Yayama 1990; Johnson 2001; Sato 2005; Babb 2005). Starting through the late 1970s and culminating in 1990s, lower levels of political trust were registered because many Japanese felt weak in the face of arrogance implied by corrupt dealings of the elites (Yamamoto 2010; Tsukada 2016).

Once broadcast, power scandals in Japan seem to have an anti-democratic fallout: firstly, the publicity given to corruption in postwar Japan has directly contributed

---

[64] For example, in Japan the 2015 McDonalds lost more than 30 per cent of revenue after the 2014 scandal in which its major Chinese supplier of chicken was accused of food-safety violations in a string of food contamination cases. Similarly, following the 2015 Toshiba scandal the company in question showed a net loss of around 10 billion as a direct consequence of their accounting scandal, while in 2016 Mitsubishi Motors logged 130-billion-yen net loss on their fuel data scandal.

to the growing number of non-voters (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986). Secondly, the category of "less interested" audiences in Japan is spreading by including the "critical citizens" (*kihaku*), but also the "apathetic cynics" that ignore sociopolitical issues altogether, and the "disconnecteds" (*masukomi tsukare*) who grew tired of the mass media as such (e.g. Takahashi 2010; Heinze 2011).

As I indicated above, large corruption scandals were rocking Japan since the beginning of 20th century. The first large scandal of the postwar period, Tanaka Kakuei's Lockheed scandal shocked the Japanese public primarily because it was largely exposed by the media. Representing one of the biggest postwar corruption cases, the Lockheed scandal attracted media coverage like no scandal did before. It was rendered as a deep "national crisis" but it was basically a crisis for the rule of LDP (Watanuki 1977; Kishimoto 1977; Blaker 1977). Lockheed did have some transformative features: immediately after the scandal, the political funding system was revised in response to public demand for reform. The law from 1975 had complex and persuasive implications, but it had many loopholes (e.g. the law imposed no restriction on political contributions from registered "political groups") (Kono 1997). In any case, the scandal made the popular vote for LDP in the 1976 election drop to its lowest level in party history, it lead to a major revision of laws related to campaign financing, and some claim that it ameliorated the structural crisis of conservative politics (e.g. Calder 1988). In the end

however, the scandal changed the internal dynamics of the political apparatus only slightly. Firstly, Tanaka Kakuei was re-elected with the highest winning percentage of the vote ever recorded while becoming even more powerful than before the scandal. Secondly, in rural areas, as many as five of the six Lockheed-associated candidates were successful, and thirdly, those cabinet ministers who pushed for investigation lost later their own seats (see Blaker 1977; Johnson 1986; Schlesinger 1999; George Mulgan 2010; Woodall 2015). Besides, after the scandal the LDP left responsibility for political fundraising with individual politicians in order to prevent damage to the party, which partly contributed to the fact that corruption scandals became a familiar feature ever since (Blechinger 1998). The McDonnel Douglas scandal from 1979, which appeared only few years after Lockheed, actually shared similar features, but all involved politicians escaped lightly. In general, Japan's economic and foreign policies after the scandal did not change at all (Nester 1990a). Thus, the most tangible scandal consequence of Lockheed was the birth of investigative journalism in Japan. Since Lockheed, the Japanese media became more progressive in their reporting, bringing down cabinets and politicians in future.

One of the largest scandals in Japan's history, the Recruit scandal from 1988 showed certain consequences for the political discourse. In terms of immediate consequences, Prime Minister Takeshita established an advisory board to advise on political and electoral reform (Kono 1997). In terms of political representation, the Upper

House election deprived the LDP of its traditional majority for the first time since 1955, which clearly demonstrated Japan's dissatisfaction with increasing political corruption.[65] Nonetheless, the public outrage seemed to be less a direct consequence of preceding scandals, and more a negative reaction to a declining sense of economic well-being in the "bubble era" (e.g. Girling 1997; Pharr 2000), and passing of the unpopular consumption tax one year prior to the scandal (Kerbo and Inoue 1990). Besides, the second cabinet of Kaifu Toshiki reinstated many of the scandal-tainted party bosses, and in upcoming elections the LDP won majority while only one of the fourteen members implicated in the scandal failed to win re-election (Rothacher 1993; Hayes 2005). The main culprit, Ezoe Hiromasa, was after thirteen years in Japanese court handed a suspended sentence. The Recruit scandal is often seen as a significant turning point, in which Japan moved from the bubble economy to the following "lost decade" (e.g. Ezoe 2010). However, the events of 1988-9 only briefly threatened the LDP, which itself did only the necessary minimum to fight corruption.[66]

[65] When Prime Minister Takeshita proclaimed that he would carry out a political reform, the opinion surveys showed that more than 70 percent of people did not believe him, while up to 97 percent of respondents expected little or nothing from the reform measures (Yayama 1990; Nester 1990b). Still in 2001, only 9 percent of Japanese adults had confidence in Diet, while 8 percent of respondents had confidence in their national bureaucracy (Johnson 2001).

[66] Despite its gravity, the megascandal resulted in indicting only 12 individuals (out of 159 involved), while legally punished were only two politicians. This is however a rather unsurprising feature. In the shipbuilding scandal of 1954, only one person convicted (out of 71 arrested) was actually sent to prison, in the Lockheed scandal of 1976, altogether around 460 persons were questioned but no charges were made, and in the MOF's wining-and-dining scandals in 1997-8, hundreds of officials were involved but only one was charged with crime (Mitchell 1996; Pascha 1999, Johnson 2001).

Throughout the postwar development, the annual average of political and bureaucratic misconduct jumped significantly in the 1990s on the backdrop of a prolonged recession in this decade. there were certain attempts to improve the compromised system, while fighting corruption was the most important objective in Japan's electoral reform. In the aftermath of the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal (1992), in which more than one half of voters admitted they were once again ashamed of their politicians, it was perhaps paradoxically Ozawa Ichirō - one of the epitomes of political corruption – who actually helped to push the anti-corruption reform (Leggett 1995; Vogel 2006; Gaunder 2007). The "revolutionary" year of 1993, and consequent political shift can be understood as a delayed result of the two high-profile scandals in the post-bubble economy era (Pak and Kawai 2010), although other scholars argue that the scandals of the late 1980s and early 1990s were not a convincing explanation for the political upheaval (Christensen 2000). At any rate, the LDP's one-party hegemony was finally overthrown, and the new establishment again promised to cleanse Japanese politics from corruption. Four sweeping reform bills introduced a new electoral system, new regulations on political donations, government funding for political parties and special legal status for political parties.[67]

---

[67] The idea of separating politicians' responsibility from the party, which emerged after the 1976 Lockheed scandal, was now reversed by introducing a new electoral system combining single-seat districts and proportional representation (Iwai 2015), and by shifting responsibility for the raising of political funds back from individual politicians to parties (Blechinger 1998).

The focus in LDP was now on the local support groups (*kōenkai*), which in turn required massive political funds, while politicians were literally forced to seek fund-raising opportunities. In the end, the measures implemented by the government following the wave of corruption were not successful in reducing corruption scandals (Bowen 2003; Stockwin 2008; George Mulgan 2010). The revised Political Funds Control Law imposed only few effective controls on how political funds can be used, while politicians quickly adapted to the new regulation, finding new loopholes (see Reed and Thies 2001, Yoshida 2014; Iwai 2015; Brasor 2017). The new Prime Minister Hosokawa was pushed to resign within less than a year in office based on accusations of corruption (he was accused of accepting unlawful loan from the Sagawa Kyūbin Company, and of trying to cover up the purchase of shares in the privatized NTT Company).

Being fully exposed in 1996, one of the biggest bureaucratic scandals, the HIV hemophilia fiasco, eroded tremendously the public trust in bureaucracy, especially when it became obvious that the epidemic was not inevitable. The consequences however, were rather marginal. The national legislation on information disclosure was passed in 1999, but the attempts at institutional reform were not really meaningful. In early 2000s, three executives were given light prison sentences, while the distributor of the HIV-tainted blood (The Green Cross) was for nearly a decade denying any responsibility. The main individual responsible for the tragedy (the hemophilia expert Abe Takeshi) resigned as

dean of Teikyo Medical College immediately after the scandal, but was found not guilty of criminal charges (the Tokyo High Court suspended the appeals trial in 2004).

The emerging cases of police corruption in 1990s lead to the establishment of a Council on Police Reform, which was concerned with improved procedures for disclosing information (Tipton 2002), however the police scandals had an aggravating effect on a crime trend, actually contributing to the escalation of crime since the end of the century (Leonardsen 2006). More importantly, the practice of bid rigging on public projects (*kansei dangō*) started to be prosecuted in this decade, while the LDP even included the eradication of the infamous practice of "descent from heaven" (*amakudari*) as one of its campaign promises. However, the data indicates that this practice kept on flourishing notwithstanding the public exposure.[68]

Without learning any lesson from the disastrous cover-up scandal of the previous decade, other consumer-related cases soon emerged. The 2000 Mitsubishi safety/cover-

---

[68] *Amakudari,* which is one of the causes for the bid-rigging practice (*kansei dangō*), has toward the end the last century been decisive in 30 to 40 percent off all corporate executives in Japan (Kerbo and Inoue 1990). In 2010, only between 2007-2009, 1,757 bureaucrats received job position at organizations that received government contracts during 2008 (*The Japan Times*, August 24, 2010). The institutionalized practice of amakudari however rarely brings about a major scandal since it is not the primary cause in scandal. For instance, one of the root causes of the Japanese HIV scandal was the fact that upon their retirement many senior bureaucrats from the Ministry of Health and Welfare joined the Green Cross company which was at the core of the scandal (Miyamoto 1996; Feldman 2004). Two other publicized cases of amakudari-related scandal were the *Zenekon* affair in 1993-4, in which corrupted bureaucrats were found to be associated with general building contractors, and the financial scandals of 1997-8, where *Yomiuri Shinbun* reported that more than 250 former officials from MOF and BOJ had descended into high-ranking posts in financial institutions that they used to regulate (Blechinger 1998).

up scandal, the 2000 Snow Brand milk scandal, the 2001 false labeling/BSE food scandal, the 2002 Nippon Ham cover-up, and other "corporate betrayals" once again located the citizen/consumer in the role of "victim". As is usually the case, these crises were emblematic of maintaining bureaucratic continuity at the expense of effective crisis management (Miyamoto 1996; Kingston 2004).

Another major corporate scandal broke in 2005, this time related to the Japan Highway Public Corporation, and based on this corruption the Diet actually approved an amendment to the Anti-Monopoly Law which was originally established in 1947 (Dokusen Kinshi Hō). One year later, however, another bid-rigging scandal occurred, this time at the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA), which rendered the Law in question ineffective, while confirming once again bid-rigging on public-works projects remained an entrenched practice. (*The Japan Times*, February 7, 2006; Hatch 2010). Furthermore, in the aftermath of the corruption scandal of Matsuoka Toshikatsu in 2007, the Political Funds Control Law (Seiji Shikin Kisei Hō) was revised once again, however both MAFF ministers who succeeded the deceased Matsuoka were quickly discredited by their own corruption scandals. Same as in previous elections, most campaign finance scandals failed to become a decisive factor in the 2012 general election (Carlson 2013), and financial scandals related to political funds kept on hitting the Abe cabinet.[69]

---

[69] In October 2014, the Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Obuchi Yūko and her fund-management organization used political funds for "private" purposes (e.g. baby

Aside from political corruption, major corporate scandals, that were mushrooming during the "lost decade" of 1990s and onward, have not generated any significant transformative force so far. While the trend of secret political contributions continued, big corporate scandals kept on emerging since the beginning of 21st century: Horiemon/Livedoor scandal (2006), the Woodford/Olympus scandal (2011), the Takata air-bag scandal (2013), the Toshiba accounting scandal (2015), the Sumitomo Mitsui/Asahi Kasei construction scandal (2015), and the Mitsubishi data-rigging scandal (2016). Partly related to these cases, a new legislation on corporate whistleblowing was approved (the Whistleblower Protection Act was passed on May 2004, effective in 2006). Especially the scandal-tainted Toshiba Company created whistle-blower protections in 2006 and implemented mandatory compliance seminars for all departments in 2011, while a panel of outside advisers was created to consult on safety and legal issues. Nonetheless, during the upcoming scandals of Toshiba, Olympus and Mitsubishi, it became clear that those laws failed to curb corporate deception (for the issue of whistleblowing see the case study of Olympus).

When discussing Japanese corporate corruption, some scholars point to the

---

products, cosmetics, designer accessories), which forced the minister to step down. Her resignation was soon followed by a controversy of her successor, Miyazawa Yōichi, whose fund-managing body was found to have used its funds to settle expenses at an S&M club back in 2010. In 2015 the Minister of Education, Hakubun Shimamura became involved in a scandal where the Yamaguchi crime syndicate donated large amounts of money to a branch of the LDP headed by him (see Adelstein 2015). Finally, in a big blow for Abe's cabinet, the Minister of State for Economic Revitalization, Amari Akira had to resign in 2016 amidst allegation of bribery.

failure or unwillingness to reform the opaque decision-making with the traditional corporate governance, and to establishing post-scandal quasi-committees with non-professional knowledge and contaminated “yes-men” (Woodford 2012; Maeda and Aoyagi 2013). Besides, it is understandable that the government will not suggest any drastic punishment for major contractors since they will be needed for future cooperation (e.g. for the 2020 Olympics-related construction work). The scandal consequences within the corporate culture do not lie in transforming the culture per se. For instance, in the case of Toshiba, after a one-day suspension from work, pay cuts and reprimands, the scandal culprits continue to work, or they become executives of Toshiba group companies. (The real scandal consequence lay in Toshiba selling some of its subsidiaries and medical devices units to Canon, including the selling of a majority interest in its home appliance business to China’s Midea.) Some argue that there have been only little changes in corporate governance in the aftermath of these scandals simply because Japan’s community firms never really collapsed in a way Enron or WorldCom did in the US (e.g. Deakin and Whittaker 2009).

3.3. On the Nontransformativity of Japanese Scandal

The general impression is that shady campaign financing and other scandals related to money politics simply keep on erupting and fading away without any significant effect. Besides, it can matter when a scandal occurs (e.g. the consequences are generally more serious at a time of recession, while unprecedented economic growth usually allows transgressing politicians to uphold their status), while the scandal effects on public opinion can differ depending on the transgressor's local support and personal charisma. In terms of their structural consequences, the large postwar scandals did offer some opportunity to modify norms and conventions, while some scandals helped to bring down governments. It is however more often the case that scandal reporting does not directly influence the outcome of elections but the societal mood at that time.

Other scandals contributed to new regulations, while more regulation again lead to more scandal. Some major postwar scandals could have forced fundamental changes in political fund-raising, but the opposition either failed to address the issue effectively (Halloran 1970; Taira 1993; Scheiner 2006), or the media did not properly cover the oppositional effort (Kabashima and Steel 2010). Another obstacle, which directly relates to scandal consequences, lies in the conception of the Political Funds Control Law. Its purpose is not to regulate or restrict the flow of political funds, but to ensure that those

funds are properly managed (Yoshida 2014; Iwai 2015). Besides, the severity of scandal in Japan, including the increase in "reform rhetoric", which immediately follows, neither becomes a decisive factor in the passage of structural reforms, nor does one's involvement in scandal necessarily decrease one's political capital (Gaunder 2007). In fact, many Japanese politicians are being elected based on their populist rhetoric of cleansing of corruption, eventually using their own past scandal as an opportunity for "purification" (*misogi*) of their own political face (see previous section).

The laws related to corruption have been slightly strengthened in Japan throughout the last few decades, but scandals became even more persistent after changes in the law in 1994. In this regard, Chalmers Johnson (2001) correctly pointed that every new corruption-related law is only as strong as their enforcers are skillful and vigorous, but this ideal can be hardly implemented since many Japanese bureaucrats and politicians who have benefited from the structurally corrupted system have actively resisted attempts to reform it (e.g. Sugimoto 2010). Besides, placing a legal ban on political donations from private companies in Japan would not eliminate donations from industry groups and labor unions (Iwai 2015), while the conduct of financing Japanese politicians would only become harder, inviting new patterns of criminal conduct and increasing the cost of anti-corruption activities (Pascha 1999).

In postwar Japan, hundreds of corruption scandals were registered, while a

serious political bribery, which implicated both prime ministers and cabinet members, occurred virtually every year. Nonetheless, a scandal with magnitude strong enough to generate a "scandal election" (term by Steven Reed) and bring down government occurred on average only once a decade. Today, some observers claim that the scale and frequency of corruption, same as the public tolerance of corrupt politicians, seem to be slightly diminishing (Pharr 2000; George Mulgan 2010), while the Japanese bureaucracy is now subject to a greater legislative scrutiny (Amyx 2003; Kingston 2004; Woodall 2015).

Despite the "quiet" social transformation (Kingston 2004), the core institutions of Japanese capitalism have not really changed, while the opaque bureaucracy keeps on maintaining its continuity at the expense of any effective crisis management (e.g. Miyamoto 1996; Witt 2006). Despite all the reformist endeavour, the political funds are today still declared in inadequate way (Yoshida 2014) and the political system is extremely slow in moving away from corruption environment (Pascha 1999), in which most of the corrupted politicians are nearly always re-elected (Bowen 2003; Nyblade and Reed 2008).

It can be assumed that the already low trust in Japanese government will depend less on actual political, bureaucratic and corporate corruption, and more on the way how (and how often) will people learn from the media about their leaders' misconduct. In other

words, the key role in rendering corruption is to be still attributed to the media in Japan, where the public's confidence was always influenced less by economic deficits, and more by the *reports* on governmental misconduct (Pharr 1996; 2000). The media's increasing impact on electoral outcomes became most apparent in the three postwar elections before 1990, in which they sought to make corruption the top issue (i.e. the Black Mist scandals of 1967, the Lockheed scandal of 1976, and the Recruit scandal of 1988). In each election associated with one of these scandals, volatility rose and the LDP support temporarily fell, and this situation repeated itself after the recent scandals of the Abe cabinet, that however had no impact on the last election. This, and the absence of any sweeping long-term effect on political/corporate corruption came to render Japanese postwar scandals as rather insignificant, socially-transformative social reflections on some crisis, and more importantly for the public and the media as spectacular media events grounded in a degradation of an individual elite.

4. THE JAPANESE PUBLIC AND SCANDAL RECEPTION

4.1. On Affective Attitudes of Scandal Audiences

This thesis focuses primarily on scandal as a scripted social performance, and a product of commodified media rituals. Nonetheless, as I indicated in earlier sections of this thesis, scandals must be always "played out" in front of a public forum (no matter how imaginary) in order to acquire their meaning. Thus, I aim to digress in this chapter and elaborate on the affective value of scandal and the audiences' fundamental desires that underpin the "consumption" of scandal.[70]

While echoing Freud's metapsychology, Francois Fourquet noted that "there is no man, there is no praxis – there are only drives and intensities" (Fourquet 1974, 106). While being aware of the one-sidedness of this argument, I partly relate it to the critical insight that the media often make use of our inherent drives, affects and desires while exercising disproportionate powers in shaping our perception of morally- and emotionally-laden issues.

[70] Simply put, affect is an emotional state not based on rational decision-making processes, while the so-called affect studies focus on mental and bodily encounters with feelings or emotions. More importantly for the scandal context, emotions are mobilized, solicited and shaped by economic forces, making the spectators simultaneously emotional and economic actors (e.g. Illouz 1997; Lukács 2010). The affective value of scandals lies in enabling the audience to experience transgression, crime and punishment, which precedes moral indignation (anger, contempt, envy, and other negative affects). In scandal, these affects bridge between the emotional, hegemonic and economic realms.

In the discourse of media, morality and power, desire becomes an irreducible feature of human nature and one of the basic motives of human action. Also, the scandal industry can be scrutinized as parasitizing on our psychosocial affects that relate to our fundamental desires. I argue that the most important desire in consuming scandals is the desire to community. This desire can be further structured into the desire to relate, and the desire to know. Needless to say, we can relate other affective desires to scandal consumption (e.g. the desire for compassion versus the quasi-sadistic desire to punish), but the general aim of this section is to indicate that our inherent desires and sentiments usually precede and guide our moral contemplation associated with scandal narratives.

Generally speaking, the **desire to relate** stems from the primates' interest in tracking social hierarchies and patterns of social affiliation (e.g. Sapolsky 2013). Importantly for our context, this desire is also at the origin of all charismatics (primordial, religious, secular), while modern audiences relate to their idols (celebrities, politicians, and other VIPs) through the process of admiration. Contrarily to the original nature of charismatic authority (other-worldly, non-mediated), the image of real-world celebrities, politicians and artists is often effective only because of their charisma. In Weberian understanding, charisma is a collective belief that a person is embodying "the sacred" (the extraordinary, the divine). It represents specifically exceptional qualities that set an individual apart from ordinary people and create a basis for special treatment (Weber

1968). This treatment is simultaneously conditioned by his/her commitment and loyalty, which is expected to be demonstrated in turn. The projection of charismatic community can however fade away if the elites fail their extraordinariness.[71]

The bond between a charismatic persona and the rest (i.e. the star/agency or politician/party on the one side, and the fan/voter on the other side) enters a sort of unwritten contract, guaranteed by what Alvin Gouldner (1960) calls "norms of reciprocity". Simply put, it is a reciprocity of service and return service, while the spectator occupies the position of someone to whom a proposal of commitment is made. Such form of trust contains an element of socio-psychological, quasi-religious faith (Simmel 1978), and the Japanese voters have developed a strong feeling for these norms (Pye 1985). Thus, if someone aspires to some form of loyal political leadership, he/she is expected to be committed to produce benefits for supporters (voters, fans), which in turn reinforces his/her own social trust. Consequently, many citizens (and especially local authorities) cast their votes for the party they believe will provide them with more benefits than any other. In postwar Japanese politics since Tanaka Kakuei's introduction of local

[71] The loyal Japanese fans are known for internalizing the celebrities' manufactured star-image (encouraged by the celebrity agency and maintained by the media) while introjecting some aspects from heir star-personality by imitating their fashion, or by collecting the "totemic" objects of their stardom. They reach for their stars as sources of their ontological security, using them as "pedagogical aid in the discourse of the self" (Marshall 2010, 36). It is no wonder that large segments of the Japanese public are left confused once a celebrity scandal emerges, being unable to digest their sexual/drug-related transgressions and feeling deceived while reflecting on their committed consumption. It goes without saying that this pain of disillusionment is aroused and sustained principally by the Japanese media.

support groups (*kōenkai*), nobody in the provinces cared really about the politics per se – what really counted was whether a politician gets results in pressuring the central government to send resources to region. The transaction of benefits, being itself usually asymmetrical and covert, must be "blurred" since it can be seen as bordering with corruption and bribery. The phenomenon of "structural corruption" (*kōzō oshoku*) can be understood as blurring the return of the favour in order to avoid accusation. (The ideal role of the media-watchdog would then be to "sharpen" the picture of this transaction.)

Apart from affectively relating oneself to a charismatic authority, the proportionality of service and return service assures social cohesion and stability of the social system (Wuthnow 2004). In terms of media consumption, the ideal reciprocity of trust can be understood as maintaining the contract between producer (actor) and consumer (spectator) based on a desire produced on one side, and consumed (or "played with") on the other. Channelling desire in predictable ways is represents one form of social control, but if social elites do not follow the symbolic commitments and/or material expectations, there occurs a "reciprocity imbalance". This imbalance becomes significant in societies that emphasize lasting social ties based on mutual obligation and gift-giving, such as Japan. Removing oneself in such society from the obligation to receive or give will likely become the object of denunciatory scandal (Gluckman 1963; Mauss 1966; Blic and Lemieux 2013). The expression of disapproval can be apprehended by the public as

a betrayal of social trust, which provokes affective sentiments of moral indignation. At the same time, however, a more or less deliberate violation of conventions can actually form one's public image and reinforce personal charisma.[72]

Another key desire in the context of this chapter is the **desire to know.** Intellectuals of all sorts keep on reminding us of the unbreakable desire of the human spirit to receive and convey stories of all sorts in order to get closer to "truth". (This inclination indicated already by Aristotle's dictum that "all men by nature desire to know", while Plato's allegory of the cave aimed to show how men naturally desire narratives although they often fail to recognize knowledge). In the same vein, the basic narratological pattern of a media text lies in initial uncertainty, advancing in a teleological manner toward the concluding climax. The elementary unit is *knowledge*, and the main goal of epistemic emotions in media is knowledge gain: it comforts us to be in the position of knowing the world around us. While parasitizing on this ontological weakness of mankind, especial the stardom discourse is structured by the concealment-revelation

---

[72] In such case, the charismatic seduction is based on reaching beyond the commonsensical limits through transgressive acts and other enactments of "radical freedom" (term by Sartre). For instance, some politicians get more support from the public if they express anger about their scandal rather than expressing sadness about it (Jiang et al. 2011). In Japanese past, this often applied to arrogant-but-charismatic male politicians and celebrities with "liminal public image" such as Ishihara Shintarō, Hashimoto Tōru, or Kitano Takeshi, who in 1986 attacked the staff of the *Friday* tabloid inside editorial office based on the tabloid's scoop related to Kitano's girlfriend. Besides, those who have already survived several scandals can be rated higher by the public than those whose moral collapse can be perceived as an expression of personal weakness.

discourse, often "contaminating" audiences with unhealthy curiosity.[73]

Equally importantly for scandals, the desire to know in principle contains further moral reasoning. There is something in our psyche that recognizes a wrongful act and wants to tell the story of how it came about, and what action ought to be undertaken to correct it (Estes 2004, xxxix). Furthermore, the search for truth lies in a reflective thought which usually occurs only when the system of values is disrupted (Durkheim 1955). This also applies to scandals, where the media present to us all upcoming facts as "things we must know" as soon as some moral disturbance emerges. This mediated knowledge is however not always sufficient for all the segments of the Japanese public, which does wield a certain power to enter into a "dialogue" with the overwhelmingly monologic media event of scandal. Especially the sub-publics (loyal fans, orthodox supporters, and other "communitas") can publicly challenge the prosecutorial conduct in scandal, univocally side with the transgressor, or they create some "anti-structural" counter-event that becomes constitutive of the state of affairs. The most effective strategies are social networking (e.g. "flaming" incidents in online forums, or *enjō jiken*), sending angry letters to media companies, or even organizing public rallies. In Japan, the public

[73] In scandal, this desire seems to be always socially constructed. The audiences might not desire gossip "naturally" (i.e. demanding knowledge for the sake of the survival of the fittest), but their curiosity is aroused on the backdrop of a morality tale. In a similar context, George Lakoff talks about narratives with "ready-made emotions" (2009), while the Frankfurt School insisted a century ago that popular culture is inevitably "pre-digested" by the cso called ulture industry. The inbuilt markers of desire seem to be "always-already" there, so the audiences do not spontaneously discover the topics/objects of desire, but they simply "re-cognize" them in new media representations.

broadcaster NHK experienced these pressures on multiple occasions. For instance, the 1976 Lockheed scandal forced the president of NHK to resign after the broadcaster received over 1,200 angry phone calls over the president's links to Tanaka Kakuei, while in 2004 more than a million of Japanese households refused to pay the television fees after what they perceived as a mild treatment of an NHK producer tainted by embezzlement scandal (see. West 2006; Chun 2007). In the aftermath of the 1992 Sagawa scandal, the Japanese public exerted enormous pressure on the prosecution via rallies, petitions, and even hunger strikes (the source of the public backlash was the prosecutors' mild treatment of Kanemaru Shin). Most recently, prior to the scandals of Obokata Haruko (the 2014 STAP cell scandal), Sano Kenjirō (the 2015 Olympic logo scandal) and Shawn K (the 2016 CV fraud scandal), it was the internet communities that flamed the debate and contributed to unravelling of these scandals.

4.2. Scandal Typology Based on Public Involvement

John Tomlinson (1997) noted that scandals are "middle-order events" because their subject matter is somewhere between the borders of fairly trivial and extremely serious. The "high-order" issues (i.e. disrupting global events such as war, rebellion, economic depression, but also genocide or the refugee crisis) will not become scandal per se, either

because they cannot be condensed into a particular action of one individual, or because they are too complicated and abstract to the general public. Similarly, the "low-order" issues (i.e. insignificant, non-elite revelations that lack potential to disturb) will also not appear on the scandal agenda since they would fail to catch and hold public attention. Within the middle-order events that trigger public disturbances in Japan we can detect various types of scandal. The typology below distinguishes between five types of scandal based on the perceived involvement of the Japanese public.

The level of moral engagement will be always higher in the case of scandals that directly affect the citizen/consumer. In the case of **low public involvement** scandals (i.e. the public feels more like an observer than a participant, while the transgression is less relevant to public interests) it is the political and corporate corruption (in Japan most notably illegal financial transactions, false statements in financial and fundraising reports, shady sources of donations, bribery, and rather sporadically the private lives of political figures). In Japan, political corruption is widespread among nationally elected officials and prominent bureaucrats, and omnipresent donation scandals remain peripheral in terms of attracting attention unless they somehow directly relate to lives of average citizens. Also the vagueness and complexity of structural corruption contributes to low public involvement. Besides, corporate corruption and political scandal are less attractive for the public, since they usually cannot be accompanied by any spectacular, dramatic visual

imagery. The sex scandals, accusations of infidelity and other displays of failing intimate decorum are common only in tabloids, although their frequency in the mainstream media increased after the DPJ came to power in 2009 (Carlson 2013).

On the other hand, a relatively **high public attention** and public disapproval (i.e. the event is very relevant to the public) is usually earned by those scandals that directly affect the citizen/consumer: medical malpractices, food poisonings, defect cover-ups, false food labeling, cover-ups of product defects, but also environmental pollution and personnel/customer info-leaks. (This is said to be typical for the "spectator democracies", where the politically passive citizens become active only when their personal interests are affected.) There was a significant public outrage in the case of the 2000 Snow Brand scandal: the milk producer poisoned up to 14,000 consumers as a result of sanitation procedures that had gone unchecked for decades. Furthermore, the advertising giant Dentsu controls the information flow in order to protect clients, which was the case of the Morinaga powdered milk contamination scandal in 1955, the Taishō Pharmaceutical cold medicine scandal in 1964-5, but also the 2011 Fukushima nuclear crisis (Honma 2012; Karel van Wolferen, personal communication). It is however not only the big corporations, but also the Japanese Ministries that control information leaks or apply pressure on media. In many cases of bureaucratic corruption, the motivation is to maintain good relations with industries and suppliers. For instance, since 1950s the Ministry of International

Trade and Industry obstructed the spread of information on Minamata disease, while in 1962 the Ministry of Health did not immediately order the withdrawal of dangerous products from the market (i.e. the pharmaceutical products using thalidomide). Furthermore, the same ministry in 1980s did not stop the flow of the imported AIDS-tainted blood products (see e.g. Miyamoto 1996; Feldman 2004; Pontell and Geis 2008).

Average public involvement rate is in Japan represented among others by the complex education/academia-related scandals. Academic scandals range from leaking exam questions (e.g. the Meiji University bar exam leak in 2015) and bribing professors (the medical universities scandals in 2007-08) to plagiarizing research (e.g. the Fujimura Paleolithic hoax in 2000, or the Obokata/STAP controversy in 2014) and sexual harassment cases (e.g. the scandal series involving the Waseda social club in 2001, the Kokushikan University soccer club in 2004, or the Kyoto University American football club in 2006). The last type of academia scandals is based on “CV fraud” (e.g. the Kuga Jun’ichirō scandal in 2004, or the Shawn K scandal in 2016). These scandals are hard to disclose and thus not so frequent in Japan, so the media give them considerable attention. Another type of a scandal which is not unusual in Japan but occasionally creates ripples in society is the “scandal of the source” (*yarase*). In this scandal type, it is the media themselves who gets caught violating conventions. They can scandalize the public as soon as it becomes revealed that they 1) invented/plagiarized news reports, 2)

obfuscated/participated in political corruption, or 3) they made false accusations with serious impact.[74]

Very low public involvement (the theme is rather non-relevant to the general public) is typical for minority-related scandals, gaffes and discriminatory expressions.[75] Furthermore, there are basically no taboo-related scandals to be found in the big media – partly because they too represent issues with low public involvement. The mainstream

---

[74] In case 1), consider the 1989 *Asahi Shinbun* "coral incident", where it was revealed that a news photographer fabricated evidence of a vandalized coral reef, or the 1999 *Fuji TV* scandal, where the television company in question had paid prostitutes to act as wives on its supposedly true-life series "Loving Couples, Divorcing Couples" (*Ai Suru Futari, Wakareru Futari*). As for 2), which is the most frequent case of the scandal of the source in Japan, consider two major Japanese corruption scandals in the past –Recruit (1988) and Sagawa Kyūbin (1992). In the first case, where the top politicians were involved in insider trading in return for political favors, it became clear that also many journalists, including the president of the economic paper *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* were taking bribes. As is often the case in political corruption, in the case of Sagawa (a trucking company bribed more than 100 politicians) the club reporters did not immediately publish the transgressors' names although they knew them. In yet another case (the 1990 Itōman scandal) a journalist from *Nikkei Shinbun* was paid to write favorable articles about the company in question (Freeman 2000). Finally, in case of 3), consider the wrong accusation of Kōno Yoshiyuki in 1994, or *Shūkan Bunshun'*s accusation of Professor Kagawa Mitsuo from 2001, which resulted in his suicide. These "media injuries" may awake temporary moral disturbance if revealed, but they often disappear from the news agenda without any further explanation.

[75] The postwar history of Japanese politics is rich in gaffes and talk scandals. Among the most infamous ones, Prime Minister Nakasone made in 1986 a scandalous remark about blacks and Hispanics dragging American educational standards down, while Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō generated a minor scandal in 2000 when he referred to Japan as a country of the gods (*kami no kuni*) with the emperor at its core. Another infamous gaffe was made in 2007 by the then Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare Yanagisawa Hakuo's statement that women are birth-giving machines (*josei ha umu kiki*), and in the same year, the Defense Minister Kyūma Fumio resigned for his controversial remark regarding the "inevitability" (*shōganai*) of dropping the atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Other Japanese politicians known for their inappropriate utterances were the ex-Prime Minister Asō Tarō, or the Tokyo ex-Governor Ishihara Shintarō, who labeled illegal immigrants in Japan as "third-country people" (*sangokujin*) and commented on the issue of a bullied student contemplating suicide by saying "if you are gonna do it, hurry up and do it" (*yaru nara sassa to yare*).

Japanese media traditionally tend to avoid sensitive social topics related to the Emperor and his family, the religious Buddhist sect Sōka Gakkai, the ultra-right movement (*uyoku*), the right-wing lobby group "Japan Conference" (*Nippon Kaigi*), the Korean community (*zainichi*), the "impure" groups (*burakumin*), but also the Japan-America relationship or the child pornography.

On the contrary, the category of minimal social relevancy but **very high public involvement** is represented by the celebrity scandals. The Japanese public feels more like a participant than an observer, making celebrity scandals surprisingly relevant to the Japanese. Japanese celebrities, including active performers (singers, actors, entertainers), young no-talent celebrity (*tarento*) and sports stars, are the most usual actors in large-scale scandals. The typical cases drawing attention of both the mainstream media and the tabloids are divorces/marriages, sexual affairs/obscene behavior, suicide attempts, drug use, and illegal betting and match-fixing in sport (*yaochō*). Especially these scandals become a sought-after media commodity which sells papers and increases TV ratings.

4.3. Scandal as Popular Media Commodity

In a sociocentric perspective, scandals become synonymous with negative public reaction against a revealed elite deviation. Thus, scandal starts with exposing some transgression to a negatively oriented audience, and it lasts as long as there is significant and sustained public interest in it. This interest, which is grounded either in moral indignation or in simple curiosity, contributes to media scandals becoming sought-after commodities on the media market. The Japanese media in general, and the weekly tabloids in particular must entertain the readers enough to keep them buying their products, and scandals are one of those symbolic contents that sell papers and increase TV ratings. For the commercial media, every scandal represents someone's' "fortunate fall from grace" (*felix culpa*) since it attracts audiences and generates profit.

It is a common sense that the first responsibility of a government is to protect and empower its citizens, while the first responsibility of a business is to make money. In art and commerce, the dictum is that if the product does not sell, it will not be made, and this can be applied to scandals as well. Transgressions (fictional same as factual) sell well, while spectacular media events, including scandals, represent commercially motivated media contents. They can lead to significant profits if they succeed in attracting and entertaining the public.

Scandal-as-commodity is largely a product of historical development. The logic of newspaper publishing changed in the West throughout the 19th century from primarily political to primarily commercial (Herman and Chomsky 1988; McChesney 2008). Furthermore, the logic of mediating scandal was significantly affected by this transformation within the tradition of radical sensationalism (Curran 2002), and by the late 1990, sensational journalism was in the heyday of its corporate era. In other words, the Western media logic in late 20th century was shaped by both professional and commercial aspects of journalism, while the balance was shifting even more toward the commercial. Similarly, in Japan, the "small newspapers" (*koshinbun*) were traditionally carrying various scandalous articles before they were absorbed into "industrial papers" (*shōgyō shinbun*) toward the end of 19th century. The Japanese papers with the largest circulations in the first Meiji decade were commoner-oriented sheets such as *Yomiuri Shinbun*, which specialized in sensation and scandal. Later, in both Japan same as in the West, ever-larger conglomerates came to buy up the news media, while the international market was becoming the ultimate moral arbiter of economic correctness. Today, the Japanese and Western corporate media are primarily businesses: under the influence of advertisers they are dominated by business considerations, and for infotainment-oriented news, scandal is one of the most effective materials for attracting wide audiences. The mass media consider conflicts and crises of all sorts to be primarily commodities that

interest the viewer, and scandal is a lucrative news item also because its production cost is usually low.

To conclude, media scandals are co-produced by these organizations as a commodity to sell, and thus they must be linked to capitalist modes of production and ownership. In order to remain in business, the news media must give people what they desire (or more critically: what they were "made to desire"). While this might be an inevitable occurrence, the danger of such commodification is that the profit intervenes (if not undermines) the alleged moral mission of "pursuit of truth". Thus, especially TV ceremonies of confession and apology must be understood as both social performances with culturally-pragmatic qualities (see section III), and simultaneously as show business with producers assessing the economic potential of the event in advance. Rather than being motivated by a spontaneous desire to inform, it seems to be more often the commercial formula adopted in order to attract more readers and expand the target audience. The networks design the media content in principle according to their corporate strategies, whereby transforming the public into imaginary audiences by selling them the displays of transgressions of others.

5. SOME IDIOSYNCRASIES OF SCANDAL REPORTING IN JAPAN

5.1.Mediopolitical Background: Economic and Professional Structures

As I indicated in previous chapters, the sociopolitical background, including the role of the viewing/reading public, has an important impact on the logic of scandal in Japan. Within this overarching framework, specific economic patterns, journalistic values, and mediopolitical relations are likely to emerge. It is especially the economic and journalistic structures that co-define the process of scandal mediation:

1. Economic structures and ownership patterns (vertical, horizontal and diagonal media ownership). Apart from the sale of the newspaper, the main sources of revenue for the Japanese press rest upon advertising (generally represented by Dentsu), and other businesses (i.e. publication of magazines and books). Furthermore, each of the “big five” Japanese dailies (*Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, Nikkei and Sankei*) at least partially own one commercial TV station, many local TV's, radio stations and other non-media subjects, whereas they represent powerful media oligopolies (e.g. Yoshimi and Mizukoshi 1997). The “information cartel” is set up by Japanese media organizations based on the business model of *keiretsu* (somewhat controversial but generally legal grouping of

complementary firms that take place in an oligopolistic framework and are based on the stock control patterns). Many finance schemes within *keiretsu* are common and tolerated, which further increases the potential for media corruption while diminishing media's capacity as an independent watchdog.

2. Professional structures and the relationship between newspapers and their sources. The structure of this relationship is typically embodied in the reporters' club system (*kisha kurabu).* These "clubs", administered by the Japanese Newspaper Association (Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai), organize access and facilitate relations between news media and sources. The complex rules (both formal and informal) concern their operation and the treatment of information gathered, and they play an important role during scandals. In fact, almost all news articles distributed by the Japanese news agencies are from government, big companies, or big labor unions, and originate in press conferences and background meetings. The journalists collude with official sources (including the police or the prosecutors), and between the top politicians and veteran reporters there often exists an understanding of mutual empathy. This basic mutual trust, same as the clubs' limited membership and sanctions in case of violating in-group norms have a significant impact on the control of scandal information flow. Among other norms of self-restraint (*jishuku*), there exist "blackboard agreements" (*kokuban kyōtei*) and "press agreements" (*hōdō*

kyōtei), that put the timing of each information release under control (including scandalous scoops), restrict the entire newsgathering process, and result in a more or less uniform, standardized coverage. Besides, the course of many official political discussions (but also mediatized interviews and press conferences) is often anticipated by transcripts and list of questions (*burasagari*) that are submitted to respective authorities in advance (e.g. Feldman 1993; Freeman 2000; Stockwin 2008). Some scholars note that these procedures are being informed by the sociocultural dichotomy of *uchi* and *ura* (the reality within/behind the scene) versus *soto* and *omote* (the reality of surface appearances). While *uchi/ura* is a platform, where real solutions are construed, *soto/omote* presents the ready-made solutions to the outside world (e.g. Stockwin 2008). In its consequence, the Japanese mainstream press defers to elite sources by reporting stated principles (*tatemae*) at the expense of real journalistic intentions (*honne*), and is criticized for being just a PR office of Japanese authorities (for more info about the Japanese reporters' club system see Feldman 1993; Freeman 1996; Lange 1998; Krauss 2000; Freeman 2000; Sugiyama 2000; Asano 2001; Gamble and Watanabe 2004; Asano 2004; Killmeier and Chiba 2010; Uesugi 2012; McNeill 2014).

5.2. Political Journalism and the Use of Japanese Language

Apart from the visual and auditory perception, our mediated experience of social reality is equally importantly shaped by the textual (linguistic, written) cues. Language itself is however not a neutral medium for transmission and reception of pre-existing knowledge, since it reconstructs experience by putting in grammatical form the results of retrospective analysis while failing to represent reality in its entirety (Wittgenstein 1953). More importantly for the context of this chapter, the journalistic language too can easily fall prey to a more or less deliberate "distortion", which usually reflects the ideological leanings of each media organization. After all, journalism is a matter of rhetorical forms and choices of argumentation: it is always to a certain degree a "rhetoric fiction" (Fisher 1984) based on the traditional function of storytelling (Barkin 1984), which argumentatively produces its "pseudo-environment" (Lippmann 1922; Ehrat 2011). This chapter was inspired by the sociology of language (e.g. Bourdieu 1991), whose aim is not to understand language only as a means of communication, but also as a medium of power. Such perspective can indicate how various social phenomena, including scandals, become reinterpreted through, in and by structures in language in general, and by the linguistic devices of Japanese journalism in particular. While blurring, and obfuscating some segments of social reality that becomes materialized in media texts, the ritual use of some

journalistic expressions often conveys additional information and meaning to media reports

In Japanese mainstream media, corruption and pollution is usually confined to latter part of the dichotomy of explicit, ritualized "front" (*omote*) which is exposed to public attention, and the implicit "rear" (*ura*) which is in principle hidden from the public eye. While this dichotomy is not exclusively Japanese, it parallels Erving Goffman (1959) and his distinction between the frontstage and backstage: in the media-sponsored "theater of politics" we can generally distinguish between the stage where politicians engage in formal, conventional performances, while being aware that they are framed by the media, whereas in the back stage the informal actions, private consultations and role performances are in principle not in the focus of the big media. Importantly for analyzing media scandals, deception and hiding of facts is one of the most crucial elements of a politician's backstage performance. Such performance can also refer to concealment of some information from the audience in order to avoid divulging information that could be somehow damaging to political authorities.

The Japanese power elites in general, and the brokers between business and bureaucracy in particular, were always naturally reluctant to support the policy of information disclosure (*jōhō kōkai*). In a similar vein, the Japanese press does not want to be seen as taking sides, so it in principle applies descriptive frames within the so-called

objective reporting (*kyakkan hōdō*) (e.g. Hara 1997). The primary medium that can soften up the impact of sensitive political information, is the language itself. Language can help structure the culture of structural corruption: words and phrases are used in a deliberately indirect fashion, and linguistic tricks are applied in order to maintain the power consensus even after a scandal surfaces. While being aware of the fact that every word is recorded (the off-record accounts can also trigger scandal), both the politicians and the mainstream journalist make use of the "imprecision" of the Japanese language, which offers various means of blurring the sources and obfuscating the reporting by using a "soft language". For instance, when citing the sources, the mainstream media use expressions such as *suji mono* (official sources), *seifu shunō* (usually the secretary general or the Prime Minister himself), or *shunō shūhen* (usually people close to the person of Prime Minister such as his personal secretary), though the meaning remains indistinct. Besides, if the media choose not to quote someone's name in an article, they simply refer to him/her as *nado* (etcetera) (Hattori Takaaki, personal communication). Especially in mainstream scandal reporting, milder versions of the phenomenon of corporate/political corruption are commonly used in the mainstream media, such as *funshoku kessan* (creative accounting), *kinken seiji* (money-politics), or *sakiokuri* (postponement, delay). Furthermore, the use of passive voice in Japanese journalism is one important way that the media avoids assigning responsibility. The way in which Japanese verbs are used, same as modifying

negative words into their milder versions, are among the effective ritualized means of blurring responsibility and protecting the sources via the journalistic language.[76]

In this context, some scholars pointed at the phenomenon of *kotodama* (originally a Shinto-belief that words have spirits): the speaker is advised to avoid saying anything negative as it may become reality, and this tendency is embedded in the language of Japanese journalism (Maeda 2003; Killmeier and Chiba 2010). More importantly, the pragmatism of using indirect expressions, and the discrepancy between saying something and actually practicing is a structural feature around which the polity has evolved throughout Japanese political history (Yamamoto 1990; Maynard 1997; Feldman 1998).

Needless to say, in media scandal the data-gathering/editing processes reflect the policy of the mainstream media in general, and editorial policies of each newspaper in particular. The journalistic "labor" is divided and responsibility diffused during the teamwork. The full-time reporters (*ban kisha*) are on everyday basis attached to their

---

[76] In such cases, the Japanese verb appears at the end of a sentence in a passive form, and it facilitates the "rhetoric of commentation" (term by Maynard 1997), where the human agent does not appear in the sentence as an explicit grammatical subject whereby avoiding responsibility for the described action. The most frequent examples of carefully formulating accusations are verbal expressions in a potential form, such as *to ieru* ("it can be said that"), and the usage of passive verbforms such as *to iwareru* ("it is said that"), *to omowareru* ("it is considered"), *to mirareru* ("it seems to be the case that"), *keikō ga aru* ("there is a tendency that"), *koe ga aru* ("there exists an opinion"), *kanōsei ga aru* ("there exists a possibility") and *koto ga wakatta/akiraka ni natta* (it became clear/ it was understood that). The impact of a scandalous reporting can be also softened by using adverbs such as *tabun* ("probably") or *osoraku* ("perhaps"). Related to this, another strategy of political vagueness lies in modifying negative words into milder ones. For instance, "prostitution" (*baishun*) becomes "helping relationship" (*enjo kōsai*), wartime sex slaves are called "comfort women" (*ianfu*), taxes (*zeikin*) are replaced by "public funds" (*kōteki shikin*) and self-censorship (*jiko ken'etsu*) by "self-regulation" (*jishu kisei*).

political counterparts, maintaining specific proximity, which in turn influences the way of coverage. This proximity is conditioned by the fact that reporters identify with the politicians they cover, while their careers advance along with the politician's career (see Feldman 1993; Uesugi 2012). They are part of the aforementioned reporters' club system (*kisha kurabu*) which largely controls political reporting in Japan, including the wording of power-sensitive news. It gives the official reporters privileged access to politicians while disadvantaging the regional press, the foreign press, and the freelance journalists. Besides, political journalists submit their questions in advance, while many front-line reporters are young and underexperienced.

Finally, in Japanese language, various phenomena related to transgression, corruption and scandal are frequently reflected in proverbial phrases. This reminds us of Lyotard's impression that popular sayings, proverbs and other maxims are "like little splinters of potential narratives that circulate on certain levels of the social" (Lyotard 1984, 22). In the case of Japanese language consider the idioms "if water is too clean no fish can live in it", "put a lid on something that smells", "it is sometimes necessary to stretch the truth", or "in strategy, secrecy is highly regarded". In scandal, the idiom "cutting the tail of the lizard" (*tokage no shippo kiri*) is a proverbial account on the Japanese politicians' ability to undertake "purification" (*misogi*) and swiftly regenerate after their transgression, while "the honest man is sure to lose" (*shōjikimono ga baka wo miru*) can

refer to the tendency to keep silent about a corruption rather than to blow the whistle.

5.3. Bottom-up Mediation and the Role of Tabloids

Scandals are primarily kept private by elite mainstream media. The Japanese mainstream press rarely confronts political controversies, and even if they eventually do, they expose elite deviations within the official, ritualized "front" (*omote*). Moreover, these media are unlikely to carry out any investigation that would uncover political or corporate secrets. On the one hand, this *modus operandi* is underpinned by unwritten norms of the reporters' club (*kisha kurabu*), and on the other hand it is a result of the power of major advertising agencies (especially Dentsu), business circles (*zaikai*), government ministries, and even the organized crime.

The implicit "rear" (*ura*) of things, which is normally hidden from the Japanese mainstream audiences, is usually handled by the outside media. The initial impulse for triggering a scandal usually lies in a bottom-up process initiated by the semi-mainstream weekly magazines (*shūkanshi*), but occasionally also via freelance reporting, local newspapers, and the sports papers. Furthermore, some Japanese scandals with global reach are instigated by foreign press (e.g. the 1976 Lockheed case), and/or amplified by online communities (e.g. the 2015 Olympic logo scandal). Some major postwar

corruption scandals were triggered by the prosecutor's office (e.g. Lockheed, Recruit, Sagawa), or via a whistleblower who forwards some scoop to any place where the appearance of consensus is less assured (i.e. tabloids, foreign press, or prosecutors).

Apart from a handful of biweeklies, Japan has over 100 weeklies and about 3,500 monthly magazines with annual sales of more than three billion copies (Legewie 2010). Altogether amounting to a circulation of five to six million, the weeklies (*shūkanshi*) are usually the prime movers of scandals in Japan (the largest weeklies sell around half million copies). In terms of marketing, over 90 percent of Japanese magazines are bought at newsstands, so their existence is largely based on their controversial and scandalous appeal. In terms of censorship, they are free to indulge in a more speculative journalism because they do not belong to the restrictive system of *kisha kurabu*. Moreover, since major Japanese newspapers are known for representing the accurate-but-official *omote*-reality in a strikingly homogeneous way, many readers turn to magazines for an alternative. Apart from the weekly tabloids like *Sunday Mainichi* or *Shūkan Asahi* who are rather conservative since they are owned by one of the big dailies, there exists a variety of sensationalist sports papers with circulation around one million (e.g. *Sankei Supōtsu* or *Supōtsu Nippon*).

The most prominent scandal instigators are those weeklies owned by larger publishing houses – most notably the *Shūkan Bunshun* (publisher Bungei Shunjū), *Shūkan*

Shinchō (Shinchōsha), and *Shūkan Gendai* (Kōdansha), or the photo-tabloids *Friday* (Kōdansha) and *Flash* (Kōbunsha) or *Spa!* (Fusōsha). No matter how speculative or unethical the weeklies get, they still represent an influential news format that is necessarily guided by profit, and ranges from celebrity news to high quality journalism, serious speculations and unsubstantiated libel.[77]

The general press in the first instance ignores the tabloids' revelations. This is not only because of the journalistic agreements within the *kisha kurabu* system, but it also maintains the market share by avoiding offences (i.e. if a story is not based on an official investigation by prosecutors, there is always a risk that publications carrying the story will expose themselves to lawsuit). Nonetheless, depending on various circumstances (see below) the national dailies eventually start to cover a scandal as well.

Here is just a handful of examples of elite deviances and other "moral disturbances" in postwar Japan, that were exposed due to the aforementioned "bottom up" mediation. These cases vary in the degree of social importance, controversy and the media coverage, while some incidents are not proper media scandals. Nonetheless, all these incidents stemmed from either one-time transgression or a long-term corruption that had

[77] The weeklies were in the past calling into question the background and details regarding factual historical events such as the Nanking massacre, the existence of Holocaust and gas chambers, or the sex slavery of the "comfort women" (*ianfu*) in the Japanese army during the World War II. Furthermore, the Japanese tabloids were in the past wrongly accusing and stigmatizing ordinary citizens (e.g. the case of Kōno Yoshiyuki in 1994) and stigmatizing individuals to the point of their suicide (e.g. the case of Professor Kagawa Mitsuo in 2001).

some scandalizing effect on the Japanese public. The intention of this listing is to point out how a certain private matter (including gossip, gaffe and cover-up) went public through *other* than the mainstream media channels in Japan.

Takasugi case (1965). The chief Japanese delegate Takasugi Shinichi said that Japanese national emotion does not allow apology to Korea for war atrocities. Despite the request to keep his slip of tongue off-record, one Kasumi club reporter leaked it to the communist *Akahata Shinbun* and the gaffe was subsequently reported by the Korean papers *Nodong Sinmun* and *Dong-A Ilbo* (e.g. Lee 1980). Only then was the gaffe reported by the Japanese dailies that quoted the aforementioned papers.

Black Mist Case (1971). A series of game fixing and bribe scandals in Japanese professional baseball league. The scandal broke after the investigative activities of the *Shūkan Post* magazine and was consequently broadcast on the Fuji TV news program.

Minamata Case (1972). The Chisso Corporation's chemical factory leak of methyl mercury resulted in serious mercury poisonings in Minamata City. The Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (today METI) deliberately obstructed the investigation. The attention to Minamata was brought by a foreign photojournalist (the ex-*Life* magazine journalist William Eugene Smith).

Tanaka Kakuei Case (1974). In the mid-1960s Tanaka was involved in making shady land deals. Furthermore, in 1974 Tanaka's huge expenditures in the July election

and his failure to report details to the tax authorities became investigated by investigative reporters Tachibana Takashi and Kodama Takaya. Their findings were published in *Bungei Shunjū*, picked by *Newsweek,* and based on this revelation Tanaka was challenged during an appearance at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ). Only then did the Japanese mainstream media touch upon the story and Tanaka resigned his post following the accusations.

Lockheed Case (1976). Tanaka Kakuei and other actors (Kodama Yoshio, the Marubeni Co.) accepted bribes from Lockheed Corporation in return for having Japan's All Nippon Airways purchase the Tristar model of a passenger plane. The information was released by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and published by the *Los Angeles Times*. Only then did the mainstream media publish the whole story. In early February, *Asahi Shinbun* covered the investigation in a short article (*Asahi Shinbun*, February 5, 1976), but Tanaka was identified as the recipient of the bribes only after he was arrested half year later.

Miura Case (1984). The wife of Japanese businessman Miura Kazuyoshi was allegedly murdered by street robbers during a trip by the couple to the USA. Three years after the incident, the weekly *Shūkan Bunshun* ran articles indicating that Miura himself had actually been involved in killing his wife for the life insurance benefits. This incident sparked a harsh criticism of the Japanese mass media (see e.g. Asano 2004).

Toshiba-COCOM Case (1987). The Toshiba Machine Tool Company was suspected of selling the Russians advanced machining tools that were prohibited for export to the communist bloc. The material witness surfaced, and based on an angry reaction in the United States, a scandal was eventually generated (Wargo 1990). Initially, MITI and the Japanese Government denied the charges, but later the Toshiba Company itself atoned for the offence.

Sugar cane Case (1987). The governor of Kyōto Prefecture made an inappropriate statement regarding the situation where a typhoon damaged sugar cane fields in Okinawa. The incident, provided by Kyōdō wire service, was left untouched by the mainstream media. Nonetheless, the local newspapers in Okinawa and Hokkaidō did publish the story and only then the governor pushed to offer his apologies, making the case into national news.

Recruit Case (1988). Prime minister Takeshita Noboru, other Diet members and business leaders (altogether 159 people) were involved in insider trading and receiving shares from the Recruit Company in return for political favors. The scandal was obstructed because many journalists had also taken bribes (including the president of *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*). The Kawasaki local branch of *Asahi Shinbun* initially discovered the scandal but its management attempted to impede its own reporters' investigation (Nester 1990). The newspaper's affiliate weekly *Asahi Journal* finally picked up the story,

while the Communist Party's newspaper *Akahata* published a list of original share recipients, which eventually made Takeshita resign his post in 1989.

Uno Sōsuke Case (1989). Prime Minister Uno Sōsuke had an extramarital affair with a geisha. Later, she contacted the daily *Mainichi Shinbun* to provide them with a story, which was only briefly mentioned in *Mainichi*'s sister magazine *Sunday Mainichi*. Two days later, the *Washington Post* reprinted the article for international audiences, and the Japanese political opposition used the same article during discussion in the Japanese Diet, whereby initiating its coverage in mainstream press. As a result, Uno resigned his post while the treatment of women in Japan briefly became an issue on the sociopolitical agenda.

Dogeza Hatsugen Case (1990). Then LDP secretary general Ozawa Ichirō made an inappropriate wording of the prostration statement *(dogeza hatsugen*) toward the colonized Korea (this happened only ten days before the official visit of the South Korean President to Japan). The Japanese media did not directly print Ozawa's name – they only indicated "one of the heads of the LDP" (*jimintō shunō*) – however the Korean media published the details including Ozawa's name. The *Asahi Shinbun* also mentioned Ozawa as the author of the statement but they immediately came under strong pressure from within the *kisha* club system for breaking the tacit agreement (see Freeman 1996).

Sagawa Kyūbin Case (1992). The trucking company in question bribed more

than 100 politicians in return for political favors. The details including a list of bribed politicians were known to the club reporters, but stayed unpublished for many months due to the informal norms of silence. The scandal was initiated by *Shūkan Shinchō,* and the mainstream media started publishing the story only after the prosecutor's office had issued warrant arrests. Takeshita Noboru, Kanemaru Shin and others resigned, while their contacts with organized crime was revealed. The incoming prime minister Hosokawa Morihiro also resigned due to his own involvement in the scandal (this was published later in *Bungei Shunjū*).

Owada Masako Case I. (1993). The story of Princess Masako's engagement to the Crown Prince was kept secret because of the information embargo imposed by the Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō). However, the news agencies *Reuters* and *Associated Press* leaked the information to foreign media. Only then did the Imperial Household Agency and the Japanese Newspaper Association lift the embargo and send the same information to Japanese media through Japanese wire agencies *Kyōdō* and *Jiji.* Apropos of this, it was also the foreign media (the *Newsweek* magazine) that leaked classified information about the engagement of Emperor Hirohito to princess Michiko in 1958.

Jusen housing loan case. (1995). Japanese government was going to use the taxpayers' money to deal with bad debts related to *yakuza.* The story was published in

Nikkei Weekly and was picked by the foreign media (e.g. *Newsweek*). Only then, the Japanese mainstream media also began to cover the case, while the Japanese edition of *Nikkei* only quoted Newsweek as the source of scandal.

Toa Ilbo Case (1995). The Tokyo bureau of a leading Korean newspaper received an anonymous document, confirming inappropriate statements regarding the historical relationship with Korea, made by the Management and Coordination Agency's director during a Cabinet Press Club conference. *Toa Ilbo* contacted *Asahi Shinbun*, which did not confirm the allegations. The Korean paper then published the story, which was later picked by *Mainichi Shinbun* and *Tokyo Shinbun*. Consequently, both Japanese papers were barred from all club activities for one month (de Lange 1998).

Tochigi ijime Case (1999). A teenager in Tochigi Prefecture was bullied to death. The media misinformed the public about the incident by quoting incorrect police reports. The real background of the incident was investigated and published with five months' delay by the local branch of *Sankei Shinbun,* followed by *Shūkan Hōseki* and *FOCUS* (see Ito 2006).

Owada Masako Case II. (2004). Princess Masako became a topic when she was diagnosed as suffering from a mental disorder. The Imperial Household Agency blocked the information, but the story was picked up by foreign correspondent Richard Lloyd Parry from *The Times* in London, and only then did Japanese mainstream media publish

the whole story while referring to foreign sources.

Olympus case (2011). In a fraudulent accounting scandal, the British *Financial Times* published the story based on the article of Yamaguchi Yoshimasa in the magazine *Facta*. The main whistleblower became Michael Woodford, who was dismissed as president of the company, while *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* waited about a week to fully report on the scandal (Yamaguchi 2011; Woodford 2012).

Fukushima coverage case. (2011). The Japanese networks were monitoring the post-quake nuclear crisis through local broadcast, but same as the TEPCO Company and the government, they were either reluctant or late to air specific info regarding the radiation leak. It was the European (especially German and Norwegian) media, while the American *Washington Post* that were among the first to report the radiation map and the diagram of meltdown (e.g. Uesugi 2012).

Samuragōchi case (2013-4). The music composer Mamoru Samuragōchi (aka "deaf Beethoven") was falsely claimed to be deaf, while most of his work was attributed to his ghost-writer (the composer Niigaki Takashi). In March 2013, the NHK was still celebrating the artist in a TV documentary, but only few months later, the magazine *Aera* (publisher *Asahi Shinbunsha*) and the newsweekly *Shinchō 45* doubted the truth behind Samuragōchi. At the beginning of 2014, the big Japanese media finally started covering the scandal.

Shimomura case (2015). The Education Minister Shimomura Hakubun received political donation from the country's largest yakuza group (*Yamaguchi-gumi*). The scandal was triggered by the communist *Akahata Shinbun,* but it did not gain its momentum until it was picked by *Shūkan Bunshun* and *Sankei Shinbun* one month later (e.g. Adelstein 2015).

Amari case (2016). The Minister of State for Economic Revitalization, Amari Akira was accused of political bribery (he allegedly accepted money from the head of a construction company in exchange for political favors). The accusation was firstly published in a January article by the weekly *Asahi Bunshun,* and the follow-up piece in the same magazine caused Amari to call for a press conference and resign from his post, along with Amari's two aides who were allegedly entertained in Tokyo nightclubs at the expense of the same construction company.

The more powerful the object in journalism, the greater is editors' reluctance to publish the story, same as the damage to the reporter if it collapses. The scandal-seeking tabloids are often in trouble and legal action comes with the territory. The danger lies in those cases where editors have to correctly judge the norm audience when publishing a scandal because it may backfire (Jacobsson and Löfmarck 2008). Furthermore, it is equally dangerous to scandalize too far and overstep the values of the target group (Gluckman

1963). If the privacy violation (*puraibashī shingai*) is at stake, the media can plead the constitutional freedom of expression (*hyōgen no jiyū*). The tabloids' "nihilist enthusiasm" can get under fire also because of the placement and size of a transgressor's unflattering images (most recently, the tabloids became criticized after ridiculing Obokata Haruko by oversizing her close-up image on front pages of the sports papers in the wake of her academic/plagiarism scandal in 2014). Although the Japanese generally tend to avoid litigation, in some cases the weeklies are brought to court and penalized (they are in principle represented by their publishing houses). Only sometimes are they prohibited publishing, but it is still rare to be prosecuted.[78]

The financial damages are on the increase, but they are rather nominal, reaching up to one million yen per case (see Asano 2004; Legewie 2010). Once the cost/benefit estimation is made it is often worthwhile for the weeklies to run the risk, publish rumors, and eventually gain from negative publicity.

[78] For instance, an arrest warrant was issued by Kobe prosecutors in 2005 on a suspicion of defamation in a tabloid magazine *Kami no Bakudan* (published by Matsuoka Toshiyasu's *Rokusaisha*). Earlier in 1994 the popular tabloid *Shūkan Shinchō* (published by *Shinchōsha*) was ordered by court to pay damages in a serious misreporting incident involving a *Sōka Gakkai* priest. In 1995, the monthly magazine *Marco Polo* (published by *Bungei Shunjū*) ceased to exist based on an article denying Holocaust, which was publicly attacked by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCANDAL MEDIATION PROCESS IN JAPAN

At the outset of this thesis, I postulated, following the neofunctionalist paradigm, that scandal is a social performance between ritual and strategy. While section III focused on ritualized aspects of scandal as a meaningful sociocultural performance, this section (especially its last chapter) analyzes "strategic" aspects (professional, organizational) of scandal mediation in Japan. I aim to create a map of scandal mediation process across the whole Japanese mediascape, including both the inside/outside media and their role in scandal. This endeavor falls within the objectivist paradigm of scandal studies, which focuses on transgressions and misconducts as related to various organizational biases (structural, impersonal issues, malfunctions of the system) and media routines (i.e. patterned and repeated practices and forms that media workers use). They both result in the so-called "journalistic rituals of objectivity" that prevent individual journalists from being blamed (Tuchman 1972), while ensuring that the media system responds in predictable ways (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Thus, many classical observers claim that the less-routine events such as scandals are actually becoming routine news events, complete with standard reporting formulas (Molotch and Lester 1974; Edelman 1977; Gitlin 1980).

Lance Bennett (2007) rightly noted that scandals occupy a strange sort of

gatekeeping develops. First of all, the basic communication model of sender-message-receiver in scandal reporting is more complex than it looks like – most importantly because scandals are co-constructed by multiple interrelated or adversarial actors. Thus, I distinguish between four main types of actors that construct a media scandal:

1. **scandal promoters** ("sources of perception", insiders, whistleblowers). They identify and deliberately promote some transgressive occurrence as newsworthy. The promotion can take a shape of administrative spin, PR activity, or a simple tabloid gossip, while the promoters do not necessarily constitute a homogeneous entity
2. **primary participants** ("assemblers", "communicators", newsmen). Various networks transform occurrences via mediatization into newsworthy media events. They include information sources, news agencies, and both the low-level media workers (reporters, editors, writers) and high-level workers (publishers, news (vice-)presidents). Same as in case of scandal promoters, the work-ethic and media coverage via the primary participants varies significantly.
3. **secondary participants** (social control mechanisms, agencies, "pundits"). They legitimize/criminalize the transgression (the police, prosecutors, lawyers), they wield some power to influence the scandal development (entertainment/advertising agencies, crisis managers, investigative commissions,

the organized crime), and they provide the public with "expert truth" (media pundits and other opinion leaders that are relied on by the media to put events into a meaningful context)

4. **scandal consumers** ("receivers", "media audiences", readers/viewers). They decode and interpret meanings of previously promoted, assembled and eventually criminalized media events.

This chapter will focus most closely on the primary participants, i.e. the media institutions and their workers with more or less ritualized media routines. I will delineate those forces that control various functions along the scandal news process, including their decision what will become scandal and in what way. Furthermore, I consider the media-watchdog theory when analyzing the role of media in revealing elite deviances in Japan. The contemporary media/communication research implies that the traditional public watchdog argument is outdated. It is not paramount anymore in determining the media policy that are today given over largely to entertainment/infotainment, while more decisive is the exercise of economic power by shareholders and managers (e.g. Curran 2002). In this vein, the Japanese mediascape is often criticized for having no real independent body to keep government from controlling the media, while t*he watchdog role of journalists is on trial in several cases with enormous implications for freedom of*

the press. Also in order to review this criticism related to Japanese media, I highlight the developmental logic of and ideal-scandal mediation. I offer a five-act structure consisting of scoop leak to media, scandal processing, scoop leak to the public, scandal climax, and the post-scandal phase.

6.1. Initiation Phase: Scoop Leak to the Media

In the initiation phase, scandals are fundamentally structured by the dialectic of cover-up and exposure, and the explanation of initial revelation is seminal for understanding the process of scandal. Given how various social systems work (in Japan especially the world of entertainment, politics, and the corporate world), scandal seems to be always already there, "waiting to show itself". The emergence of a scandal, as just one product of journalistic rituals, is however nothing epiphanic, while leaks are more routine than exceptional. Indeed, scandals may appear as discoveries, but they are in principle *given*, and not naturally *born* out of their respective contexts.

In order to initiate a scandal, transgression must be revealed and leaked to the media that authorize it for publishing. During the initiation phase of scandal, the exposure itself is usually not controlled by the journalists. Generally, the scandal news content consists largely of statements from official sources, and in the same vein, the so-called

"scoops" in Japanese dailies are almost always authorized leaks (e.g. Shoemaker and Reese 1996; McNeill 2014). In some isolated cases, the scandal disclosure seems to be based on mere coincidence (for instance, the drug-packed husband of Sakai Noriko was body-searched by the Tokyo police "at random"; the Watergate burglars were caught "incidentally"). However, I argue that the primary motivation for leaking scoops to the media usually derives from the "3 C's":

1. Capital. The disclosure is profit-oriented. Whistleblowers are motivated by financial benefits for leaking some sensitive information (notes, documents or photos) while usually hiding their real identity

2. Conspiracy. In denunciatory scandals, the narrative about conspiracy can refer to secretive or illegal plots by political enemies, bureaucrats, prosecutors and other parties (i.e. some scandal incentives come as a part of attack-politics).

3. Confession. The disclosure works as unforced confession to the media (e.g. based on a spontaneous moral reflection), or as a provocation (e.g. iconoclastic scandals challenging artistic norms or provoking shock from the "immoral" in art).

While being primarily motivated by commercial profit, by a political plot, or simply by one's "moral awakening", a transgressive occurrence is transformed into a media event

and reduced into an understandable media phenomenon. The revelatory act is usually realized via whistleblowing (i.e. insider revealing information about some hidden secret), which is the most frequent type of short-circuiting of subversion of communication between reporters and their sources.[79] In other words, every scandal requires some intentional form of information leak, usually conducted by scandal "promoters" (insiders, or company zealots, anonymous reporter sources, political opposition, auditors, the police, prosecutors, or individual victims of corruption). Unfortunately, the information source is usually impossible to trace since scoops are based on the understanding that journalists will protect the person who gave them the information.[80] In Japan, the most of prosecutorial investigations that can lead to scandal are based on anonymous tips (Hasegawa 2000), or they were "motivated" by the data stemming from investigative journalism (Johnson 1997). Some law-breaking scandals are triggered by the police leaking data to the media through unofficial channels (e.g. Asano 2004). However, some

---

[79] Apart from the practice of whistleblowing (i.e. insiders and informers revealing information about certain hidden secret) we can add two more types of short-circuiting/subversion of communication between reporters and their sources: *entrapment* (journalists betraying their sources by breaking a formal or tacit agreement), and *spotlighting* (journalists retrospectively retracing a routine talk in the media that may have in the past lead to a major violation) (Liebes and Blum-Kulka 2004). The process of spotlighting became easier due to technological developments, since various journalistic sources are now accessible electronically, allowing to reconstruct past editorial efforts.

[80] For instance, up to 40 percent of published gossip in the weekly tabloid *Uwasa no Shinsō* (active 1979-2004) came straight from the *kisha kurabu* reporters (Gamble and Watanabe 2004). While enjoying friendly links with the weeklies, the reporter-whistleblowers usually write under pen name, or they at least sell a tip for scandal, for which they can receive an amount of money which equals up to 1,000 dollars (Jameson 1997; West 2006). The magazines in turn serve as a valuable scandal source for the commercial television broadcast.

leaks are not always accurate and can be potentially harmful to commoners.[81]

Some Japanese celebrity scandals stem from coincidences resulting in public exposure (and they are further amped up by the tabloid paparazzi), while other leaks are based on rumors that first emerged outside the big media (e.g. in online forums such as Channel 2 and critical blogs such as Netgeek.biz). The most reliable source for scandal (not only in Japan) is a sensitive leak in a fixed form (*busshō*). In such case, the medium for scoop (and thus the body of evidence) is represented by audio/video tapes, phone calls/transcripts, seized account books, or photographs of celebrities in "unflattering" scenarios (the so-called *nyan-nyan shashin*). The emergence of fixed evidence hinges on whistleblowing, investigative journalism, the police, and the prosecutors. Nonetheless, some discrediting "mysterious documents" (*kaibunsho*) are discovered all of sudden, which is to be attributed either to the practices schemed attack-politics (Taniguchi 2007), to bureaucrats avoiding/calling for responsibility (Miyamoto 1996), or to attempts on character assassination based on ones' sentiments of retaliation. These documents are re-printed in the tabloids, generating up to three scandal articles per month (West 2006).

---

[81] Consider the case of a leaked disinformation based on a flawed police report that lead to the false accusation of Kōno Yoshiyuki during the Matsumoto/Sarin incident from 1994, or the 1999 Tochigi *ijime* case from 1999, where a teenager from Tochigi Prefecture was bullied to death, but the media misinformed the public about the incident by quoting incorrect police reports (see Ito 2006). In cases like this, the Japanese journalists do not seem to tend to maintain the presumption of innocence, and they often uncritically adopt the police data since they are protected by the guidelines of The Japanese Newspaper Association (*Nihon Shinbun Kyōkai*), where newspapers are not held responsible for misinformation or libel as long as it is based on a police report.

6.2. Pre-scandal Phase: Data Processing

Not every publicized behavior or action causes public outrage. Some scoops, same as other "low-order events" cannot constitute a proper scandal because 1) they do not reach the threshold of attention of the public, 2) there was no scandal promoter who would start the "moral crusade", or 3) the solution was already internally reached at the level of elites and institutions.

The pre-scandal phase lies primarily in investigation and search for information prior to actual media release. The media wrestle whether some rumors are fit to print. In cases of confirmed violation of dominant social norm, it is primarily the media to get involved, while in the case of a violation of law, it is the police and the prosecutor's office. Thus, scandals are often simultaneously processed on two levels: the **repressive/legal level,** where an occurrence becomes a criminal act (i.e. the wrongdoing is rendered as infringing formal rules), and the **symbolic/ethical level**, on which the occurrence becomes a non-routine media event (i.e. the wrongdoing is rendered as infringing social custom, tradition or taboo). Regarding the processing of information, the former level corresponds to the realm of fact and motivation (i.e. the "pentad" of questions starting with who, what, where, when and how), while eventually resulting in material punitive sanctions (detention, fines). The repressive/legal process is supervised by the agents of

formal social control (police, courts, correctional institutions) based on failing one's "legal responsibility" (*hōteki sekinin*). The symbolic/ethical level lies in interpretations and meanings of transgression and relates to one's "moral responsibilities" (*dōgiteki sekinin*). The latter leads to symbolic punitive sanctions (loss of status, reputation and other forms of social disgrace) and is facilitated by the media as informal agents of social control. Especially in Japan, where social order is said to be often maintained through informal social control and damaging one's reputation (Haley 1982; Miller and Kanazawa 2000), sanctions on the symbolic/mediated level are more devastating than legal punishment.

In power-related scandals the Japanese mainstream media are likely to ignore the story, previously released by tabloids. They take the "see no evil" approach and keep the information outside their focus. As I indicated above, this is partly caused by institutionalized norms of silence: the details of corruption/transgression are an open secret to many mainstream reporters, who are however not encouraged to undertake any serious investigative reporting. This rule is institutionalized by aforementioned *kisha* clubs that are obliged to behave in accord with the information cartel. Another reason for keeping the rule comes from the conservative political pressures. These can de facto lead to revoking broadcasting licenses.[82]

[82] The Communications and Internal Affairs Ministry has the power to issue, renew or revoke licenses of broadcasting companies. There are more cases in Japanese history

The mainstream media are also unlikely to carry out any investigation that would uncover corporate secrets including corruptive practices. Such norms of silence are underpinned by the pressure coming from advertising agencies (in Japan most notably Dentsu and Hakuhodo) and partners from within the business circles (*zaikai*). In some cases, the information is withheld since it is related to some tabooed social topic in Japan (see above). On the contrary, the non-mainstream tabloids, sports magazines and local papers pick a scoop and take the initiative in investigation. Some Japanese magazines sell their gathered memo to other domestic media companies, or they inform other subjects including the foreign media, police and prosecutors. Their risk lies in reliability of leaked information and accuracy of the tips from whistleblowers, and the scandal information is evaluated in terms of estimated profit and eventual financial damages. In many cases, however it financially pays to be sued for previously released untruths or half-truths, although it is not preferable for the weeklies to be sued by an ordinary person (Gamble and Watanabe 2004; West 2006). Once the prosecutor's office obtains information from their sources (anonymous whistleblowers, police, tabloids, online forums), they eventually start investigation on their own. In other words, during the pre-scandal phase

---

where the politicians put pressure on a broadcaster due to sensitive media content (most notably the 1993 *Asahi* TV anti-LDP pre-election media coverage, or the 2001 NHK "comfort women" documentary censorship). Most recently, the Internal Affairs Communications Minister Takaichi Sanae warned the broadcasters that the government can order them to suspend operations if they keep on airing programs that are deemed "politically biased".

the outside media can determine what information reaches the prosecutors and which subject will be investigated. Pre-arrest reports in the weeklies are rather exceptional, because they can become heavily criticized if the accusation turns out to be wrong.

6.3. Scandal Proper: Transgression Going Public

During the stage I call scandal proper, the media finally piece together all available fragments of information and approach the public with a more or less consistent basic narrative. After first revelation surfaces, the new ones are quickly made, and from now on the media will keep establishing a record while keeping the scandal alive.

As I indicated above, the mainstream media are usually reluctant to pick up an info-leak pointing at some form of serious domestic corruption. However, these media can at least publish a "news report about a news report" while distancing themselves and referring to outside sources.[83]

Some scandals (especially those related to plagiarizing or safety) are scrutinized

---

[83] The mainstream Japanese media often avoid responsibility for releasing a controversy by reposting pictures or quoting articles from foreign sources or domestic weeklies. Without certificating the story or digging any deeper, the media state that something occurred "according to an article in…" (*…ni yoru to*). For instance, in 2004 the foreign media speculated that princess Masako suffered from depression, but the Japanese media only mentioned that *Washington Post* covered the story on its front page, and later they added that it was the weekly *Shūkan Bunshun* that had broken the story in Japan. In another case from 2013, *Asahi Shinbun* published an incident of four lynched American civilian contractors in Iraq's Fallujah (the so-called "strange fruit" incident), but *Asahi* only reprinted the controversial picture as it earlier appeared in *The New York Times*.

in Japanese online platforms (most importantly the 2channel forum, or BuzzFeed Japan). Scandals and gaffes can be also initiated by individually posted clips (on YouTube, U-stream, or Nico Nico Douga), pictures and comments (on Facebook or Twitter). Especially the platform of Twitter is a source for frequent political gaffes in Japan.

The key media actors in this scandal phase are the weeklies (*shūkanshi*). While sensing larger profit, the biggest competing tabloids (especially *Shūkan Bunshun* and *Shūkan Shinchō*) deepen their investigative reporting and elaborate on new disclosures, twists and turns. By doing so, the tabloids infuse the social drama of scandal with new moral energy, facilitating a "media hype".[84] The scandal hype tends to focus on negative aspects (e.g. the alleged transgressor's past is re-examined, leaving little space for other perspectives). There exist various strategies how to operate effectively during a media hype. For instance, the weeklies often choose to publish selected fragments of a scandal in a slow drip-drip process, where the first exposure (*dai-ichidan*) is followed by a new, more powerful one (*dai-nidan*) in next edition. Equally important is the intermedia influence as a routine of sharing information among various media/journalists. This invites for a (neo)functionalist interpretation, where the media power is in scandal

[84] Generally speaking, media hype is a media-practiced form of overstatement and exaggeration of events predominantly for the sake of novelty and newsworthiness. It may be channeled via sensational headlines, melodramatic vocabulary, or deliberate heightening of certain elements in the story (see Vasterman 2005). As a result, large scandals under the spell of media hype become typically inflated in size, scope, seriousness, while shifting our attention from certain structural problem to various sensationalist elements.

generated within the relations among their actors: the conservative dailies "need" the radical weeklies (and vice versa) in order to assemble a commercially successful scandal. Owing to such "division of labor" in scandal mediation, the scandal proper represents a transformation of the *sign* of a transgression into a complex *symbol* of the profane, polluted, and impure. Furthermore, this symbol becomes "contagious": those individuals and companies who happen to be associated with it can suddenly find themselves on the "evil" side of the polarized symbolic classification. Scandals often trigger the so-called snowball effect, which adds new polluted actors to the scandal agenda by indicating their links to main transgressor.[85]

The complexity of the profane symbol can give birth to a second-order transgression (e.g. Thompson 2000). It is based on a new statement, performance, or opinion related to ongoing scandal. In other words, some actions during the scandal

[85] One typical case of the snowball effect in postwar Japan was the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal from 1992. It became gradually clear that the trucking company bribed more than 100 politicians in return for political favors. Based on a thorough investigative journalism followed by issuing warrant arrests, many heavyweight politicians including Takeshita Noboru and Kanemaru Shin had to resign from their posts one after another. The snowball effect can also travel across the border: in Lockheed bribery scandal from 1976, even the Prince Bernhard of Netherlands was stripped of his official functions, while the scandal resulted in investigation in several other countries. Dangerously enough, the snowball effect can also be based on some arbitrary correlation. For instance, then minister of finance Nakagawa Shōichi not only appeared drunk at the G7 press conference in Rome in 2009: he blamed his intoxication on the overuse of his cold medication, which in turn infuriated the Japanese medicine makers who blamed Nakagawa's statement for sudden sales decrease of their products (Sassa 2011, 113). In another pseudo-correlation, the head of the Socialist party Doi Takako accepted in 1979 campaign money from the *pachinko* industry and the media linked her case to Koreans in Japan who own over one half of Japanese parlors and are involved in unsound activities (see Hayes 2005).

development can assign an aura of yet another scandal. Consider for instance the press conference of Nonomura Ryūtarō in 2014, which ended up in what looked like the politician's emotional breakdown. The initial charges pointed to the politician's accounting fraud, but Nonomura's hysterical performance embarrassed the feelings of "national pride" as soon as it went global.[86]

At a certain point of scandal proper, the reluctant Japanese mainstream press eventually takes up the case. Their own incentives to start covering a ceetain scandal are:

1. **official investigation**: transgression becomes a subject of substantiated indictment. Public officials, prosecutors, and police make raids and arrests, changing a private matter to a public one whereby "legitimating" scandal
2. **foreign pressure**: some non-Japanese agency (foreign media, international committees, auditors) enters the scene and reveals/magnifies scandal
3. **domestic mood**: the public climate (*seken*) and scandal backlash reach critical levels that the mainstream media cannot ignore anymore. In extreme cases, the

[86] The Japanese media are in principle careful not to disturb the "national harmony" by exposing certain sensitive issues. It is usually the foreign media, and/or the internet communities that make the public outrage occurs on a basis of national identity, which in turn may produce "national feelings" of shame. The image of the Japanese can be also shattered by exposing transgression during some closely watched global event, such as the plagiarism affair around the Japanse Olympic logo designer Sano Kenjirō, who was accused by Japanese tabloids of spoiling the image of Japan (Prusa, forthcoming). Moreover, in Japanese past the feelings of national embarrassment have arisen from letting the Japanese public know that it was actually the foreigners who exposed Japanese corruption (Johnson 1986; Nester 1990b), which was also the case of mediating 2011 Fukushima disaster (Wakiyama 2011; Uesugi 2012).

public can *en masse* attack symbolically the media institution by sending angry letters or protesting to pay television fees.

In the meantime, the desk people discuss obtained scoops with their bosses and editors of section that in turn consult the editor-in-chief. Nonetheless the highly-specialized factory-like environment leads to a lack of personal commitment, and lack of the individuals' control over the final news product. Besides, the individual journalists who write news are rarely named). In case of newspaper editing, scandals are usually handled by the social affairs section, or "city desk" (*shakaibu*), and not by the political section (*seijibu*). The latter usually keeps such scoops off the front page since they are either too close to their sources, or they are supportive of the LDP (e.g. Lee 1980; Farley 1996; Krauss 2000). Moreover, the *shakaibu*, which is the largest in size, controls the hierarchy of the news organization, not to mention that its reporters are often friends with police (Asano 2001; Uesugi 2012). On the other hand, the lack of political background knowledge makes the *shakaibu* section focus more on public degradations, apologies and punishments (Freeman 1996; Legewie 2010).

The Japanese television broadcast is equally important in scandal, since in Japan many people still turn to television as their main source of information (e.g. Kabashima and Steel 2010). The TV broadcast usually catches on as soon as the scandal appears in one of the big dailies, which is partly due to the fact that the commercial TV networks get

their news from the same source as the elite newspapers (West 2006). Moreover, once televizualized, the tabloid stories reach millions more viewers once they shift from the tabloids to TV wideshows (ibid.) Other scandals become televizualized once the tabloid coverage of a scandal grew out of proportion. In such case, commentators in the studio introduce the story by pointing to its prominence in the tabloids. In terms of its form and content, I believe that by switching between hard news and soft news, the television during scandals both mimics and distinguishes itself from the tabloid media. In other words, the Japanese TV broadcast during scandals is more comparable to the media logic of the tabloid weeklies, albeit more in content than in form. (This convergence could be also attributed to the rising reputation of the weeklies that have just recently intensified their fierce investigative journalism.) Especially during Japanese celebrity scandals, the TV broadcast lies in what Gamson (2001) described as hardening and lengthening what is a soft, short-lived, and lower status story.

Most of such stories become an issue during the daytime TV "wideshows" (*waidoshō*), where the commentators refer to the sensitive news as it previously appeared in daily press. These shows run on weekdays on major private TV networks, and they often monopolize attention of the viewing public (predominantly housewives) through real-life scandal, tragedy, crime, and gossip. Apart from continually debating the appropriateness of the transgressor's performances, the TV broadcast likes to focus on

various pseudo-events that became related to a scandal. Especially the police arrests and prosecutorial raids are carefully staged for the TV consumption, while the closely watched televisual climax comes as a confessional ritual of apology and sanction.

6.4. Scandal Climax: Confessions and Damages

Not all stories lead to resolution. Some stories are unreliable, based on bad tips, or they fail to give rise to criminal/moral charges. Some investigations end by expelling the journalist from the reporter's club on the grounds of violating the unwritten rules (Asano 2001; 2004; Uesugi 2012). In case of false formal accusation, the media can be sued and brought to court where they are represented by their publishing houses.

If a transgression becomes fully exposed and succeeds in awaking negative backlash, the ideal-type scandal will be concluded by mediated confessions and apologies. In this stage, the media uniformly and in detail cover the final part of the scandal including dismissals or further prosecution. The dailies' social affairs divisions (*shakaibu*), the tabloids and TV channels accelerate the scandal by paying excessive amount of attention to the moment of denouncement. The scandal climax is constituted by a televizualized press conference with alleged transgressor (the celebrities sometimes apologize with agency representatives by their side).

The media event of a confessional conference follows the logic of a "degradation ceremony" (Garfinkel 1956): in the midst of moral indignation the elites are pushed to apologize, and eventually they step down in order to stabilize the situation or to minimize the snowball effect. Needless to say, these confessional events are overwhelmingly strategic: it is a mixture of efforts to preserve the system/subsystem one belongs to, to save one's reputation, and to alleviate negative public moods.

During the scandal climax, the Japanese media (represented mainly by the TV commentators, journalists and pundits that are located in a remote studio) judge passionately the adequacy of confessions and apologies while focusing on transgressors' "expressive equipment". The most closely watched is physical appearance (frequency and length of bows, appearance of tears, clothing, and gestures), and verbal eloquence (word usage, politeness level, and the amount of words expressing apology). In ideal-type scandal, the culprit apologizes for failing his/her responsibility and causing trouble to all concerned parties, but the less cooperative actors use the scandal climax as a site of contestation and conspiracy. The apologetic/cooperative performance is typical for Japanese celebrity scandals, while the protective/offensive strategy is at times utilized by experienced politicians. Importantly for the transgressor, the apologetic conference can start up the process, which aims to restore the damaged reputation and make future comeback possible. While being concerned with their symbolic capital, celebrities,

politicians, and corporate leaders in most cases demonstrate regret, apologize, and eventually resign. Some of them return part of their salary by way of a symbolic apology to the public. In case of a court trial they pay a fine, get a suspended sentence, and they almost never serve prison terms.

6.5. Post-scandal Phase: Return to Normality

In neofunctionalist thought, some social rituals present liminal opportunities to modify existing norms in moments of "collective effervescence" (Durkheim 1915; Turner 1969; Moore and Myerhoff 1977). However, in case of Japanese scandals, transgression only hardly disrupts social order or transforms social understanding of corruption. Rather, transgressions are regulated and integrated into social order by the ritual performance (Giesen 2006). Similarly, in Japan the social ritual of scandal rarely challenges deeper social structures or transform dominant norms (see above). Scandals only seem to offer an outlet for the social order, meet structural demands and re-confirm their integrative character without necessarily incorporating some transformative ideas in order to avoid future corruption. After a certain period of time (weeks in case of controversies and months in case of large-scale scandal) the liminoid state is suspended by readjusting to the routine world of:

1. Public everydayness. The scandal-ritual is concluded, and the audiences return again to the common-sense world. The mobilized media public repositions itself on the emotional level to resume the profane level of everyday reality. The short-lived emotions that the audiences have felt during the liminoid period of scandal seem rather alien to them once the scandal is concluded. In other words, we may retrospectively realize that during the scandal hype we have *undergone* the emotional stir rather than *generating* it.

2. Journalistic everydayness. The scandal climax is followed by exiting the media event and converting back from the "ceremonial" (non-routine) to "agonistic" (routine) mode, in which events are again treated as news and addressed within ordinary news broadcast. Big scandals tend to overshadow other social, political or economic issues, and once the media return to journalistic routine, old conflicts loom large again, capturing the news for the first time in weeks or months.

3. Elite everydayness. To be involved in a scandal can remove one's delegated trustworthiness as a social elite (Bourdieu 1984). After the crisis of delegitimation subsides, the rules for the delegation of political power, that were temporarily annulled by scandal, are re-consolidated again. The return of Japanese transgressors to their professional platform (or to a different post) is possible, but it demands some time

(depending on the gravity of scandal, the decisions made by managements/parties/factions, but also on the personal charisma and popularity of the people involved. Only in extreme cases the return is made completely impossible. Once the punitive exile is nearly over, the transgressor usually offers another mediated apology to the public, symbolizing his/her comeback. Political actors are exiled from the public sphere, but many of them will be back, while some politicians conceive their next election campaign as a purification ritual (*misogi*). In bureaucratic and corporate scandal, the transgressor is often "side-slipped" (*yokosuberi*) to different section, assigned a different, usually lower post, or they retire while being compensated behind the scenes. Usually, no big lessons are learned, and no real reform is achieved. Nonetheless, during the post-scandal phase a subtle outpouring from the "collective conscience" occurs: major scandals become materialized in books, articles, and films that are more or less loosely based on given scandal narrative.[87]

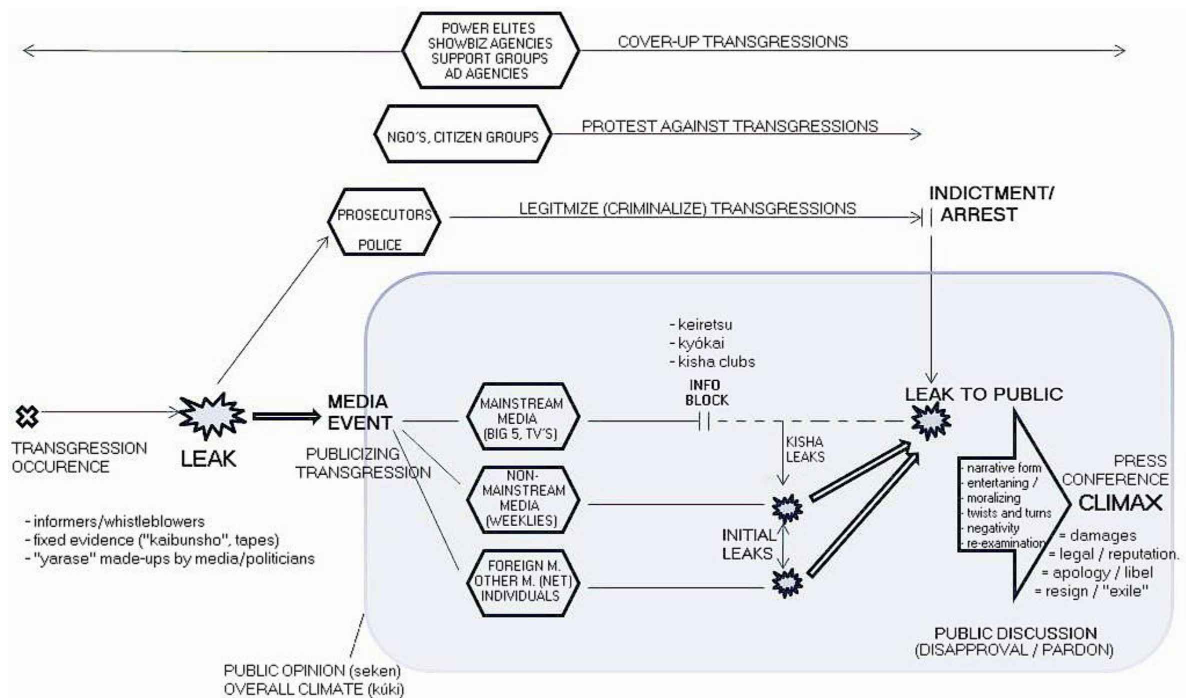
[87] Apart from countless publications and confessional autobiographies in the aftermath of many scandals, it is the film production which leaves traces of scandal in popular culture. For instance, the scandalous wrong accusation of Yoshiyuki Kōno in the aftermath of the 1994 sarin gas attack was dramatized by Fuji TV in 2009. The Japanese celebrity megascandal of Sakai Noriko from the same year was adapted for the screen under the title *Setsuna*, and a feature-length documentary about the 2011 Olympus scandal, titled *Samurai and Idiots: The Olympus Affair,* was released in 2014. Recently, the acclaimed documentarist Mori Tatsuya produced a documentary-style film about the 2014 scandal of Samuragōchi Mamoru, who was faking deafness while using a ghostwriter.

6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I elaborated a five-step process of scandal mediation in Japanese mediascape. This process aimed to model the complex causes propelling the scandal process. Throughout aforementioned stages, the scandal promoters, primary and secondary participants, and the scandal audiences have all their share in constituting scandal.

Figure 11. Diagram of the scandal mediation process in Japan.

Source: Author



The diagram above illustrates the ideal-scandal flow from the moment of actual transgression, through the leak to the public via mainstream media, until the scandal climax. During each phase of the process there are multiple sets of forces facilitating the flow, or trying to get information under their control. First, whistleblowers forward a compromising data to the media (domestic/foreign, mainstream/nonmainstream) and/or to the formal agents of social control (police/prosecutors). It is usually in a common interest of the power circles (*sei-kan-zai*), the mainstream media with its *kisha* club system, the advertising companies (e.g. Dentsu), and the celebrity agencies (e.g. Johnny's) to "manage" the information flow. Simultaneously, sensitive information is being leaked from the outside media. The is possible due the fact that both the tabloids and the foreign press are not official members of the inside media, although they are related on a level of cross-reference. Only in cases where scandal is "inevitable" (the transgression was meanwhile recognized by the authorities and/or the public noise cannot be ignored any longer), the mainstream media (along with the elites designated as culprits) finally approach the public via quality papers and respectable magazines.

V.

CASE STUDIES OF JAPANESE MEDIA SCANDAL

In section III, I delineated the conception of scandal as ritual with confessional performances based on various strategies planned by the transgressor and the platform he/she belongs to. In section IV, I was more interested in the role of the Japanese media when mediating corruption scandals in postwar Japan. The media coverage of scandal is non-routine and ritualistic as well, depending on their location in the web of power circles. This section focuses on three concrete scandal cases in contemporary Japan and aims to apply the theoretical insights from previous sections. In each case study, I follow the main storyline and conduct a critical discourse analysis of the narrative. Furthermore, I observe the more or less ritualized performances of the key actors in each scandal – most importantly the main transgressor and the media outlets. Moreover, I connect each scandal with a certain pathology that can serve as a background for understanding the omnipresence of celebrity/political/corporate scandals in contemporary Japan. In the case of Sakai Noriko, I pay attention to the phenomenon of celebrity fetishism and the expectancy violation which can trigger a megascandal if a certain celebrity exposes the gap between her real and reel image. In the case of Ozawa Ichirō I discuss the role of money politics and support groups, which are at the core of many postwar political scandals, and I mention the role of prosecutors that are one of the key actors in exposing and judging scandals. In the case of the Olympus/Woodford scandal I mention the obstacles of the traditional corporate governance in Japanese post-bubble economy, and

I scrutinize the function of whistleblowing as a way of consciously revealing corporate and other secrets that seem to clash with certain law or convention. I chose these three scandals because each of them represents a frequently scandalized platform, and at the time of writing, they were one of the biggest, and most spectacular scandals in the new millennium.

1. CELEBRITY SCANDAL: THE CASE OF SAKAI NORIKO

1.1. Introduction

Immediately after Takasō Yūichi was arrested in central Tokyo at the beginning of August 2009 for possessing illegal stimulants, his wife, the popular Japanese actress and former top J-pop idol Sakai Noriko suddenly disappeared from the city, fuelling media speculations. In the meantime, the arrest warrant was issued for her, based on minute quantity of drugs found in her Tokyo apartment. In the middle of an unprecedented media frenzy and six days after her disappearance, Sakai decided to surrender to police, was arrested after turning up in Tokyo and admitted to the charge. Following the headline-making police search and the arrest of Sakai that made the front pages of the national dailies, her office (the entertainment company Sun Music) publicly condemned her actions, suspended sales of all products related to her persona, and eventually withdrew her contract (simultaneously all Sakai's commercial contracts were cancelled). Sakai was indicted later that month and released on bail after spending a few weeks in detention. She publicly apologized during a closely watched mediated press conference and was sentenced in November 2009 to a suspended 18-month prison term for violating the Stimulants Control Act (Kakuseizai Torishimari Hō). In the scandal aftermath, the now-

former celebrity divorced from her husband, started attending university courses (welfare studies and nursing care) and wrote a confessional autobiography titled *Shokuzai* ("Atonement"). According to some sources, her comeback is being planned in China and Taiwan, where Sakai grew extremely popular since the 1990s.

Notwithstanding the perceived marginality and relative banality of the described events, Sakai's story became a national obsession, the major media spectacle and the biggest Japanese celebrity scandal in years.[88] In August 2009 Sakai's case received three times as many hours of TV coverage as the national election that lead to power shift in Japan, and although the in-depth media coverage of average celebrity scandal in Japan usually takes about a week, Sakai's case was extensively covered in the media over a few months. Furthermore, the scandal was picked by media editors including *The Japan Times* as the top domestic news story of 2009 along with events such as the political power shift, new swine flu hitting Japan, or the introduction of the lay-judge system. Besides, until now there were officially released three books elaborating on Sakai's scandal, while one of them (Nashimoto 2009) was adapted for the screen.[89]

The main aim of this case study is to offer some critical perspectives that would

---

[88] Owing to Sakai's popularity in Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China since the 1990s, her scandal became also a global spectacle. Asian TV broadcasters included the news about Sakai within their prime-time agendas and the story reverberated all over Asia.
[89] The full-length semi-documentary about the Sakai transgression is titled *Setsuna* ("The Moment"). It was directed by Kasahara Masao, based on the script by Nashimoto Masaru, and was released in Japan in April 2011.

illuminate the background of an event that instigated the media extravaganza and shaped Sakai's mediated morality tale into a nationwide megaspectacle. I will focus on the public ritualized performances of Sakai, and the way the Japanese media managed their non-routine reporting on this seemingly extravagant case. Moreover, there are at least two general "pathologies" behind the case of Sakai and many other celebrity scandals: the obsession with celebrity (i.e. celebrity fetishism), and the fantasy-based expectancy tied to their public *and* private behavior (i.e. the stars' behavior must not generate an expectancy violation).

While following the train of thought in Jean Baudrillard (1988a) or Douglas Kellner (2003), I want to indicate that there is nothing really "scandalous" about Sakai's transgression itself; it is rather the contradictory system of morals and the corporate media economy under consumer capitalism that is often ferocious, immoral, insensitive and therefore inherently "scandalous" in its obsession with celebrity. Thus, the whole capital-oriented celebrity culture may be rendered as one big "scandal", while the entertainment world reveals itself to be corrupt and inauthentic. Furthermore, I want to argue that Sakai, herself dealing with intrapersonal conflict based on the perceived gap between her "authentic" self and her "inauthentic" image, accidentally became an internal enemy of the social system, being caught in the discursive web of commercial media spectacularity,

anti-drug policy and celebrity fetishism.[90] Sakai accidentally became a scarecrow in the joint hegemony project of the “therapeutical” state that through the police and media organizations mobilized all dominant codes and themes in order to dissociate Japanese public/celebrity world and illegal drugs. While paying homage to laws and conventions, Sakai was made to serve as a scapegoat of various strategic (both commercial and political) interests in the symbolic process that pulls up guideposts for social management and regenerates the reality principle in distress while masking the very core of the scandalous system.

1.2. Who is Sakai Noriko?

Known by the nickname *Noripī*, Sakai Noriko (born in 1971) is a former Japanese pop idol, actress and singer, who also grew extremely popular in Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China since the 1990s (she became one of the most well-known Japanese actresses among the middle-aged Chinese). She was an all-round celebrity who performed in TV dramas same as TV ads, and was a regular fixture on popular TV shows and TV

[90] The stressful internal conflict was grounded in the gap between the professional image and the private self. Sakai initially found this dual nature of her persona “stunning”, but later it became the main reason for her physical and mental exhaustion (Sakai 2010). Linking these obstacles with drug use, Philip Brasor has ironically remarked that if someone like Sakai wants to cope with an image (agency-constructed, advertiser-sponsored) that has nothing to do with reality, one would really “have to be stoned to think you could get away with it forever” *(The Japan Times*, August 16, 2009).

commercials. Born in 1971 in Fukuoka Prefecture and coming from a broken home, Sakai rose to fame in 1980s after releasing her debut single *Otoko no Ko ni Naritai* only a few days before her 16th birthday. Sakai adopted the style of another Japanese idol, Seiko Matsuda, and in the 1990s she turned to acting (she debuted as an actress already in 1986 in a TV drama *Harukaze Ichiban*). Sakai belongs to the 1980s' golden age of idols in Japan, along with other sweet-girl divas such as Matsuda Seiko or Nakamori Akina, establishing a female singer/actress celebrity that builds on previous markers of distinction within the *kawaii* celebrity system. Sakai was propelled to stardom by a minor entertainment management company, the Sun Music. In 1990s when young, good-looking singers were striving to become artists instead of idols, and right after Sakai got married and gave birth to her son, Sun Music transformed her original "pure" image (*seijunha aidoru*) to reflect that of a good mother (*seitōha mamadoru*). In 1993, Sakai appeared in anti-drug campaigns, and two years later she released a song *Aoi Usagi* ("Blue Rabbit") which is considered her only real smash hit. While further maintaining her pure star image throughout the beginning of new millennium, Sakai was also actively engaged in significant international and domestic events such as the Japan-China sports-culture exchange event (2007) or the promotional campaign for the new lay-judge system in Japan (2009). She emerged again in the headlines after her drug scandal was triggered in the summer of 2009.

1.3. Noriko Sakai: The Scandal Narrative

Scandals are in principle never born but always given. The information leak that triggers a scandal, usually comes from non-reporter sources (whistleblowers, insiders, the police, the prosecutors). In Sakai's case, however, it was her husband's arrest (Takasō), which triggered the scandal narrative and initiated the disequilibrium. This scandal was thus initially not based on a tabloid gossip as is often the case, but it came out in the form of hard news grounded on confirmed facts. Only hereafter did associations and speculations emerge, giving way to soft news reporting, although these were still only precursors of the real spectacle. It is safe to assume that Sakai's management agency tried to get a hold of the situation, nevertheless the "norms of silence" (stemming from strong inclinations to private conflict resolution in Japan) were in Sakai's case broken from the inside: it was the president of her agency, along with Sakai's mother-in-law, who formally requested the police search while setting off the celebrity witch-hunt.

When people's expectations are shattered and social trust damaged, a common response is to develop explanations. Also in Sakai's case, the media developed a narrative around the line of "pursuing the truth" (*shinjitsu no tsuikyū*), attempting to explain what went wrong. Initially, the media maintained agenda of confusion and uncertainty, proclaiming that the situation is out of control, while Sakai's agency (Sun Music) voiced

"serious" concerns for her safety (this can remind us of the Foucauldian argument that caring is always also an opportunity for control. Sakai was turned into a "case" – both an example of transgression, and an object of care).

In the meantime, the media started framing events, objects and persons correspondingly while securing great audience ratings. Both protagonists were now associated with concrete images representing transgression and crime, while the key term of the narrative, "stimulants" (*kakuseizai*), was constantly repeated whereby creating firm symbolic linkage. Although originally representing only a subsidiary character in the scandal, Sakai's husband (Takasō) was categorically attributed the role of the main villain, and served as a target for Sakai's fans and their negative projections. The media frame of Sakai was in flux. The media initially rendered Sakai as a "tragic" subject (*higeki no hiroin*, *higeki no tsuma*) whereby generating feelings of sympathy. However, her disappearance was soon recognized as "contemptible" (*hiretsu*), and her acts were reframed as "antisocial" (*hanshakaiteki*). Sakai's "guilt frame" emphasized predominantly the negative aspects while critically re-examining her past. The gossip stories surrounding Sakai were now "backlighted" by her failure, the traps of success, and traps of entertainment industry as such.[91]

[91] Especially the tabloids and Japanese celebrity commentators came to a conclusion that the key to explain Sakai's drug "addiction" lies in her past, whereby claiming that her "real essence" (*honshitsu*) has been misunderstood since the beginning of her early career (Nashimoto 2009, 85). In order to support their assumptions, the tabloids went as far as to interview Sakai's former classmates. Their testimony was remarkably similar to the

Roughly at that point of time, the narrative became what Douglas Kellner (2003) calls a "media-mediated spectacle": the media became themselves a part and parcel of the story, with both mainstream and tabloid journalists following the traces of Sakai after her flight from Tokyo, flooding conference venues, and infiltrating into the Court building during the trial proceedings. It was however not only the presence of cameras and journalists that was modelling the scandal flow: the very medium of TV itself contributed to the main narrative twist: Sakai surrendered to police after she watched the breaking news on the TV when she was in hiding (Sakai 2010).

It was an easy task for the media to inculcate a sense of lack of knowledge within the concealment – revelation framework, sparking off curiosity and boosting the ratings. Everyone exposed to the media at the designated period of time was "contaminated" by the desire to know what Sakai is "really" like, how her psyche works, and what were the motivations for her "antisocial" actions. While resonating with the economic notion of "creative destruction" (term by Joseph Schumpeter), the media "make" a celebrity, (i.e. they create her "unreal" social illusion) in order to later pragmatically "unmake" her by re-examining her "realness". In a similar vein, the media make their audiences feel worried, surprised, afraid and outraged, just to offer them a remedy to make them feel "safe" again after the scandal.

Japanese news commentators concluding on criminals that they were fiends masquerading as average person.

In high profile scandal cases, the media create an intertextual universe of information (numbers, facts, observations, images, sounds) that are mediated on multiple discursive levels (mainstream media, tabloids, everyday gossip). Our perception of a star and her scandal is thus based on the sum total of all our mediated experiences. In Sakai's case, the newsworthiness did not come solely from the original transgression (i.e. using illicit drugs), but more importantly, she was a full-fledged member of the powerless-but-remarkable elite of the culture industry (e.g. Langer 1998). Owing to this remarkability of Sakai, the media had already a plenty of sensitive material at hand (mostly stemming from tabloids' previous investigations), so they were able to immediately piece together various more or less ambiguous fragments into an impressive narratological body of knowledge that in turn generated a highly marketable media spectacle. Especially the dark and turbulent past of Sakai was newsworthy enough to have created a rich source for a net of meanings and associations that were more or less arbitrarily paralleled to her transgression.[92]

Sakai's deliberate flight from the crime scene in the wake of her husband's arrest became the defining moment for the scandal narrative, as well as for the prosecution. Sakai's "adventurous" disappearance from the scene in order to avoid the drug test (the

[92] For instance, Sakai came from a broken home, she was abandoned after being born to a member of organized criminal underground who eventually tragically died. Besides, both Sakai's stable mate (Okada Yukiko) and Sakai's manager since her 1985 debut, committed suicide. Finally, Takasō's long-term mistress was a good friend of Sakai who was aware of their relationship (Sakai 2010).

media used a dramatic expression *tōbōgeki*) had caused such an outcry also because her behavior gave rise to "action" (as opposed to a mere behavior, actions usually require particular intentions). Sakai's noncooperativity and unpredictability greatly contributed to the agenda of speculation: along with the police that were attempting to locate Sakai, the media raised speculations and ethical questions, compiled and analyzed detailed maps of her escape route, and immersed themselves in "serious" investigations. While performing the role of "cultural police", both parties were greatly exaggerating the situation: even after the actress eventually surrendered to authorities, one chief detective proclaimed that upcoming investigations will be difficult (*muzukashī tansa*), while media commentators lamented that things in the entertainment world will never be the same (for the latter, see Nashimoto 2009).

In scandal, the denouncers must be located as supporters of the "sacred values", and fix their distance from the denounced ones (Garfinkel 1956; Alexander 1988). Various public figures, scandal commentators, pundits, and in Japan also the celebrity-colleagues felt that powerful words are needed. These "moral entrepreneurs" provided the audience with an "expert truth" about the scandal. Moreover, the producer Itō Terry, the veteran singer Wada Akiko, the major entertainment reporter Nashimoto Masaru, and even the then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura Takeo vehemently condemned Sakai and refused her acceptance within the category of celebrity. Besides, occasional person-

in-the-street interviewers on the TV (themselves being obviously under the spell of the spiral of silence) only reinforced the imaginary impression of a unified collective sacred. These self-appointed informal agents of social order were enthusiastically reaffirming their own positions within entertainment while publicly denouncing those symbolic elements that underlined corruptness and inauthenticity of that world. Meanwhile, the transgressor herself was temporarily muted, or only allowed to "say the right thing" during pre-scripted performances (i.e. during the prison release, trial proceedings and press conferences).

The fan base of Sakai however did not always share the mainstream viewpoint. Many fans (including those in China where Sakai is popular), have been loud in their support for Sakai, condemning the arrest itself. Moreover, there were many individuals urging the police to let them volunteer to take her place in the detention center. There were supporters that gathered in front of the Tokyo Wangan police station, screaming "Noripī!" and greeting Sakai, who was just released on bail, with a banner saying *Omedetō* ("Congratulations"). There was even a case of one deranged fan (Kanbara Masami) who at the end of August demanded immediate release of Sakai from the Tokyo Wangan detention center under the threat of a firebomb attack.

In the meantime, the media moved on with exploiting instincts inherent to human beings – especially the *schadenfreude* (i.e. the pleasure derived from the misfortunes of

others), which in media scandal lies in observing elites being degraded and humiliated. While retrospectively framing objects, events and actions related to Sakai in a negative way, the media at times transformed impressions into "facts" and Sakai's past remarks into "statements". Furthermore, Sakai's body tattoos prior to scandal did not mean any serious problem to the system of representation, however now they were re-interpreted as symbolic referents of "civil evil" and signifiers of actual incoherence between the star and her non-star self. Similarly, Sakai's predilection for clubbing and her actual DJ activities were now associated with drug culture. These anchorages strengthen the potential of the preferred reading and provide stimuli that the audiences draw upon in shaping their own values.[93]

Authoritatively, roles are attributed only in courts of law, but in mediated world, attributions are being negotiated, accepted and corrected while providing for ready-made moral projections (Ehrat 2011). In Sakai's case, the media employed linguistic devices

---

[93] Regarding the visual guidelines, consider the Japanese "paparazzi aesthetics" which can be registered in most high-profile scandals: although some street shots of Sakai leaving/entering public venues were taken by a hi-tech gear, the final product often looked shoddy in terms of composition, lighting, shooting angle, and sharpness. This "conspiratorial amateurism" had to evoke a sense of raw realism, aiming to reveal the momentary (but hardly momentous) glimpse of backstage features (e.g. the disturbing snapshot implying the "lost face" of Sakai when back seated in a car with her head deeply bent and her face immersed in the dark during her transport after her arrest). Also, worth noticing was the utilization of music and sounds in TV mini-clips focused on Sakai: the overall narration was accompanied by musical motives whereas positive depictions of unspoiled, nostalgic moments from her past were provided by bright, merry tunes and optimistic themes (in principle in the major key) while those shots already somehow related to her transgression were tinged with suspicious, gloomy and tragic tunes (usually in the minor key).

central to the construction of frame, while the suffix attached to Sakai's name underwent a "round-trip" throughout the narrative: "Ms. Sakai" (*-san*) or "actress" (*-joyū*), became in turn "suspect" (*-yōgisha*), "defendant" (*-hikoku*), "former defendant" (*-moto hikoku*), "former actress" (*-moto joyū*) just in order to once again reach the initial neutral status of "Ms. Sakai" (-san). Also, the nickname *Noripī* that Sakai is still known by, and whose use always connoted familiarity and lack of distance, was temporarily dismissed or mentioned with somewhat sarcastic undertone. While combining audiovisual and linguistic frames and anchorages, the media represented the audience by utilizing the emphatic/patriotic form of the personal pronoun "we" (*watashitachi, wareware*). For instance, at the scandal outbreak, the biggest Japanese daily shocked Japan by a sensationalist speculative headline "Noripī…can this be real?" (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 7, 2009). In a similar vein, the second biggest daily mourned on its front-page column *Tensei Jingo* ("Vox Populi Vox Dei") that "…a pretty flower was destroyed by power of drugs" (*Asahi Shinbun*, August 10, 2009). While encapsulating the sacred "we", the celebrity commentators lamented on behalf of the whole nation, that "...this behavior of the suspect Sakai Noriko is so far apart from how we used to know her..." (*sono hyōjō ha watashitachi no shiru Noriko Sakai-yōgisha no imēgi to ha amari ni mo kakehanareteru*), or "...where on earth did the pure idol, as we knew her, go?" (w*areware ga shitteita seijunha aidoru ha ittai doko he itteshimatta noka*) (see Nashimoto 2009).

1.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to Sakai Case

1.4.1. Socioculturally Located Meanings of Celebrity Discourse

In order understand the media frenzy around the case of Sakai in particular and celebrity scandals general, I deem it necessary to discuss some features of celebrity discourse in Japan. Owing to some universal narratives, and the global system of morals and media economy under late capitalism, the underlying conduct of celebrity scandal and transgression does not differ significantly from culture to culture. However, the recognition of a certain behavior/action as being transgressive and "scandalous" is culturally located. One issue that must be addressed in this regard is the centrality of television as "national medium" in contemporary Japan (see Yoshimi 2003; Heinze 2011). Furthermore, most people in Japan get their news from television, while the TV still represents one of the main media platforms Japanese idols are born in. Other researchers focused on the TV discourse while addressing Japanese celebrity discourse and concluded that there exists a culture-specific "televisual intimacy" (Holden and Ergül 2006), or "intimate televisuality" (Lukács 2010) in Japan, where a collective moral understanding underpins consciousness and has a direct impact on how the audiences conceive themselves and their stars. Especially the popular hybrid infotainment format of "wideshow" (*waidoshō*) engenders the taken-for-granted feelings of shared intimacy and

emotional proximity in Japan, broadening the appeal of the genre by injecting political and economic issues to the show. This platform works within the intertextual realm of mediated intimacy that is maintained and mediated by the *tarento* performers – often temporary figures in Japanese highly intertextualized mediascape that are emblematic of orchestrated ordinariness, imperfection and lack of talent (Stevenson 2008; Galbraith and Karlin 2012a).[94]

Another scandal-related phenomenon is the existence of "entertainment management companies" (*jimusho*) that among other activities find, manage and promote new artists, secure and plan the overall production work for them, and negotiate fees. In turn, the careers of contracted artists are completely at the mercy of their "offices" since they can both make and break the artist (see Marx 2012; Galbraith and Karlin 2012a). In a similar vein, the Japanese media can put a celebrity's career on hold by turning the audiences against her based on the way scandalous leaks are presented and framed.

The aforementioned phenomena, and the logic of Japanese media production, help to shape specific ties and asymmetrical relationships between fans and stars in Japan, where hopes and dreams are excessively projected onto celebrities (including the deep dependency on talents, or *tarento izonsho*). Often emphasized is a higher degree of

---

[94] Regarding the representation of imperfection, in order to create a sense of intimacy and authentic interaction between performer and audience in Japan, it is this immensely appealing human fallibility that represents an important factor and underlies the emotional connection between star and fan in Japan (Stevenson 2008).

affective involvement, and specific overlapping of audience's selves and their stars. Japanese celebrities/*tarento* tend to publicly position themselves as fans' servants rather than as superstars (Yano 2004), while Japanese fans tend to conceive themselves as participants rather than just observers of the celebrity world (West 2006). From within such perspective, the problem of authenticity and distinction between image and reality arises, having further impact on how celebrity scandals are approached.[95]

In Japan, a prescribed form of celebrity conscience is required: celebrities are not only "social phenomena" within "social practices", but they also represent symbolic commodities with unstable values, and carriers of information that stimulate consumption. They are in turn assigned significant cultural authority connected with huge symbolic influence (and correlated with immense monetary profits if at the top). However, they are simultaneously approached as public property with various obligations, duties, and socially created values that were ideologically designated as "virtues". Moreover, such notion of public is defined in national terms, wherefore turning these obligations and values to "national virtues".

Gossip flows most readily in morally homogeneous social networks, and it is there that its impact is greatest (Merry 1984). It is however not easy to judge whether the

---

[95] The "primary obstacle" in decoding celebrity drug scandals in general seems to be grounded in inherent inability of (not only Japanese) audiences/fans to accept that at those very moments of inhaling the fumes of heated methamphetamine, there was not the image (i.e. the *Noripii*-as-we-know-her), but there was fundamentally just an "empty" image holder (i.e. the "Citizen Sakai").

relatively homogeneous Japanese society leans toward consuming scandals and enjoying gossip in a "natural" way (cf. the Japanese notion of *uwasa no bunka,* or "gossip society"), or if this desire to gossip and scandal is always-already inculcated by the Japanese tabloid machinery that feeds the audiences what it believes they crave. My evidence, that the enormous crowd waiting for Sakai's trial on October 26 in 2009 did not really reflect the overheated public interest, would lean toward the latter assumption.[96]

Apart from the capital-oriented entertainment/celebrity discourse, there is more generally the socio-cultural background at work: individual transgressions (if revealed) have serious meanings due to a strongly integrated societal system with strict boundary maintenance and antipathy against excessive individualism. In Japan, big stars might be allowed to be poor and unskilled, but they can by no means be excessively controversial or violating expectations tied to them.

---

[96] According to media reports, there were 6,615 people waiting in the rain to possibly get one of the 20 public gallery seats at the Tokyo District Court, however apart from the commoners and hard-core fans (who even spent the night in a park), the significant number of people waiting in the line were actually part-time extras hired by the media companies in order to increase their chances to actually get into the courtroom. (The author is obliged for this information to Esaki Hajime from The University of Tokyo who was conducting a poll at the venue.)

1.4.2. Symbolic Transgression and Expectancy Violation

Sakai's transgression became so newsworthy precisely because it occurred simultaneously on two levels: within the legal frame, the prosecutors, police and the court criminalized her action by indictment and sentence. More importantly for initiating the spectacle, the media, operating within the symbolic frame, magnified the media-hype and triggered public outcry. The same media that colluded to fabricate, maintain and profit from Sakai's celebrity image, caught her now violating what Daniel Boorstin (1992, 51) calls "the laws of social illusions". Since the media could not reintegrate her transgression into any comfortable world view, they were allowed to construct what Douglas Kellner (2003) refers to as "megaspectacle".

The expectancy violation theory asserts that in case the elite actors who appear frequently in the media violate our stereotypical expectancy, we tend to evaluate them far more extremely than other people that might be doing exactly the same thing (e.g. Hinton 2000). Despite the entertainment agencies' expectations that private lives of their stars will not be in serious moral contradiction with images they are holding, subtle discrepancies within the conventional frame are actually essential for the stardom (e.g. deCordova 1991; Lukács 2010). In both processes of "making" and "breaking" a star, the basic narratological pattern lies in initial uncertainty, advancing toward a concluding climax, where the elementary unit is "knowledge". As I indicated in section IV, the news

media in general make use of our inherent “desire to know”, while the tabloids go as far as to converge the general search for knowledge (about the discontinuities of offscreen and onscreen personae) with search for knowledge as a practical imposition on life itself (cf. the basic philosophical problem of “things we *must* know”). The stardom as such is necessarily structured by this concealment-revelation discourse, and gossip and scandal are the key “tools” in this discourse.

The aforementioned desirable discrepancy was in the case of Sakai however far from subtle: she fatally offended her constructed “remarkability” and sparked off tremendous expectancy violation on multiple levels. Firstly, Sakai, known rather by the nickname *Noripī*, debuted as a young cute idol (*seijunha aidoru*), eventually becoming a “national idol” (*kokuminteki aidoru*) embodying “national virtues”. She was unspoiled, virginal, and emblematic of purity whereby turning into a role model for many girls. During this initial idolization process, Sakai with her innocent girl-next-door image was molded into “Japan’s little sister” (West 2006, 178), who even introduced her own speech style (*Noripī-go*). One decade later, based on new circumstances (marriage, childbirth, aging), her pure image was strategically transformed into a “mother idol” (*seitōha no mamadoru*), still unspoiled but not virginal anymore. This time, Sakai was adjusted to live up to a symbolic reincarnation of the “good wife, wise mother” ideology (*ryōsai kenbo*), serving as a role model for many women within the Japanese framework of

socially and culturally defined embodiments of femininity. Contrary to other grown-up sweet-divas (such as Matsuda Seiko, Nakamori Akina or Miyazawa Rie), Sakai was throughout her career never at the center of any big scandal, which is yet another feature that contributed to a massive expectancy violation.[97]

Throughout her acting career, Sakai represented various role types and characters that made the gap between her newly discovered "real self" (drug addict absconding from the law) and her past "reel selves" even more earth-shaking. Apart from many mother roles (*hahaoya*) the most significant ones, as related to Sakai's expectancy violation, were the gentle character that is eventually diagnosed with leukaemia in the 1993/1997 TV series *Hitotsu Yane no Shita*, the deaf and mute abandoned girl in the 1995 popular TV series *Hoshi no Kinka* (the impact of this story was further intensified by the fact the Sakai herself was abandoned after birth), and more recently the leading role in the 2009 real-life film to promote the new lay judge system in Japan.[98]

---

[97] Apart from numerous disturbing occurrences throughout Sakai's career that however cannot be categorized as scandals, perhaps the only event that was rendered by tabloids as "scandalous" was Sakai's brief romantic involvement with Nojima Shinji, the scriptwriter of the popular 1993 TV series *Hitotsu Yane no Shita* where Sakai was also starring. Nonetheless, her scandal record before 2009 was virtually clean if being compared with her fellow old school celebrities that made headlines time after time since their debut.

[98] The immediate countermeasure in order to dissociate these representations from Sakai-the-transgressor, was cancellation of the 2009 re-run series of *Hoshi no Kinka* just a few days after her arrest for drug offences in August. This was followed by the withdrawal of about 190,000 copies of the lay jury system promotional video from regional courtrooms and legal offices nationwide. Related to this, only three months prior to Sakai's arrest the popular pop star Kusanagi Tsuyoshi, who promoted the government-backed campaign on Japan's shift to digital terrestrial TV broadcasting, was also arrested over public indecency. Same as Sakai, Kusanagi was quickly pulled from the media while the

The conflation of the “pure” features with her “polluted” transgressive self had a seismic impact on her carefully cultivated image, which she was projecting for almost three decades, now shattering the whole taken-for-granted category of “celebrity”. While observing, and judging the (in)coherence and distance between the star and her non-star self, the Japanese media both retrospectively and concurrently monitored the gap between the signs that Sakai is “giving and giving off” (Goffman 1959). Moreover, they went on alert each time some signs appeared to them not to have fallen into what Barthes (1973) called a “proper circuit of signification”.

1.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors

If we analyse the performances of the scandal of Sakai, we must touch upon the hegemonic aspects of the media performance, which aimed to create an exemplary morality tale while operating in tandem with the formal agents of social control. In the meantime, the later performance of Sakai was emblematic of repentance and subordination, which she demonstrated in a highly-ritualized manner (both in utterance and bodily performance), in order to achieve purification which is a precondition for eventual reintegration and professional comeback.

Japanese broadcasters temporarily withdrew all commercials that featured his persona.

1.5.1. The Morality Tale and its Hegemonic Aspects

While being determined by their media logic and format, the print media simultaneously proceeded with the scandal coverage on two levels: the dailies were rather focused on the synchronic analysis of latest events related to Sakai (investigation results, trial proceedings, press conferences), whereas the tabloids were more often engaged in a diachronic analysis of Sakai's past (diachronic narratives sometimes prevailed simply because there were no major new developments at times when the media were still determined to feed on Sakai's case). The police/detectives now represented both the social control agencies, and the institutionalized crime news sources that adjust their messages to comply with media formats (Altheide 2002), when updating the main narrative by leaking to the media those private data they gained during interrogations with detained celebrity (Sakai 2010, 53).[99] Since infotainment merges news/journalism into entertainment/business, and thus enables to transmit tabloids' investigative reports by the national media, both the synchronic and diachronic aspects informed the final output. In other words, it crystallized into a morality tale that conflated structurally deterministic moralizing (the responsibility for Sakai's transgression was more or less extended to her

[99] Despite this, Sakai was – in accord with the hegemony theory – generally respecting and praising the work of the police, the detectives and the prison staff, being impressed by their kind treatment (Sakai 2010), somewhat overlooking the fact that she was anything but an ordinary detainee. On the other hand, her worst nightmare throughout the whole scandal was the media circus. She knew that she became subject to police investigation, however rather than fearing the formal agents of social control, she was constantly preoccupied with the aggressive media that were demonizing and "bullying" her (ibid).

entertainment/celebrity/family environment whose factors were determining her steps) and relentless moralizing about personal failure, rise and fall, crime and punishment of a spoiled celebrity.[100]

It must be also noted that Sakai's affair occurred in a "drugophobic" country, where the "therapeutical" state cooperates with prosecutors, police and the media in setting the agenda of a moral system upon which it designates people who take "wrong" drugs as "drug addicts" (Szasz 1973;1974). Besides, it is generally agreed that drugs take away discipline and hence a capacity to be a "moral person", while refusing to punish drug offences is seen as a moral failing (e.g. Lakoff 2009). At the same time, however, illegal drugs were always widespread in Japanese entertainment industry, with plenty of past and present celebrities involved in drug related scandals (see e.g. Nashimoto 2009; Ogata and Tsuda 2014).

One of the media policies in scandal lies in fitting moral frames. As it is usually the case in drug-related scandals, excessive media coverage inserts the event into a more or less closely related "problem frame" whereby entailing the kind of discourse that will follow – e.g. treating illegal drug use as a "public health issue", "criminal justice issue",

---

[100] The best example of such conflation is the moralizing account of the Sakai incident written by the veteran celebrity reporter Nashimoto Masaru (2009). By uncompromisingly condemning Sakai's transgression (including her performance during the scandal), Nashimoto extended his harsh criticism to a "structurally spoiled" contemporary entertainment industry in Japan (*amae no kōzō*), while calling for reforms in order to save the Japanese society from the ever-growing evil of drugs (see Nashimoto 2009).

"celebrity crime issue", or "the foreign crime issue". Regarding the last frame mentioned, it is a matter of fact that many Japanese celebrities involved in drug scandals in principle claim that they bought the illegal drug from a foreigner (Takasō and Sakai's personal dealer was allegedly of Iranian descent). Apart from other "higher issues" arbitrarily linked to Sakai's scandal, her case also initiated a debate on foreign crime problem while reinforcing the stereotype of foreigners selling drugs in central Tokyo (as a matter of fact the Sakai drug scandal was preceded by drug dragnets that started earlier in 2009 and targeted predominantly foreigners in Roppongi, Shibuya and Yoyogi). The biggest Japanese daily even linked Sakai's case with the issue of foreigners' illegal stay in Japan via the story of a Korean illegal immigrant who was also tried for illicit stimulants concurrently with Sakai's trial (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, November 3, 2009). As usual the media and the police were dealing with mere symptoms of crime when focusing on easy-target individuals, while avoiding the well-known taboo of Japanese organized underworld (yakuza) that itself is the most prominent vehicle for drug business in Japan, outsourcing crime activities to foreigners (e.g. Messersmith 2003; Hill 2003).

Throughout the narrative development, the Japanese media (predominantly the tabloids but also the dailies) simultaneously focused national attention on absurd minutiae. By putting on display the most banal and intimate aspects within the radius of Sakai's persona, the tabloids and TV programs managed to give the emptiness an appealing

variety. Typically exhausting was the media's inquiry into transformations of Sakai's appearance (how and why did the length and color of her hair change, how does the color and style of her clothes accord with the nature of given public event), or their inquiry into the "prison discourse" (how many meals is she receiving a day in the detention center, how often is she allowed to bath, or even what does her prison toilet look like). The minutiae were usually accompanied by the (Barthesian) feature of "surprise of quantity": the media were obsessed by recording and providing the audience with accurate numerical data, transforming trivia into obscurity (e.g. the police found 0.008 grams of stimulants and 42 strokes in Sakai's apartment, her escape route was 481 kilometers long, at the conference Sakai shed 22 large teardrops).

More importantly, some minutiae must have contributed to the hegemonic strengthening and awareness of the electronic panopticon: while minutely reporting what exactly was Sakai buying (the whole nation was informed that prior to her escape Sakai purchased underwear, cosmetics and instant noodles), how much money did she withdraw and where (400,000 yen from the ATM machine close to the JR Tokyo station building) and how did her escape route look like (the media were following and covering Sakai's movement within Tokyo and across neighbouring prefectures of Yamanashi and Kanagawa while compiling detailed maps), there was an implicit but clear signal being sent out to the public: everybody who lives in the media-saturated postmodern symbolic

environment marked by what Altheide (2002) refers to as the discourse of fear, is permanently monitored while the personal data is being processed and stored in databases. This "field of documentation" provides detailed information about monitored individuals, and allow power systems to control them (Foucault 1977). Furthermore, since mediated displays of crime and punishment serve to reinforce social norms, the media as self-appointed agents of social control are fully legitimate to make use of these databases while publicly shaming, persecuting and stigmatizing anybody who happens to defy given conventions.

Sakai's transgression was however neither grounded in deliberate subversion or challenge to the status quo (such a transgression could besides present the threat of gaining heroic potential), nor was she struggling to disrupt or transform the "artistic" field of process, where J-pop has been maintaining hegemonic position of cultural superiority in Japan ever since the 1990s. Yet, Sakai did defy both cultural conventions and legislative rules, and not punishing her "adequately" enough would represent actual threat to the integrity of the system. Besides, owing to the overall zeitgeist, Sakai's mass-mediated morality tale fitted the general cultural prescription ("drugs are evil"), and the related particular problem frame ("celebrity crime"). Sakai's drug affair, itself being just a tip of the iceberg, came to be socially and journalistically constructed as a symbol for that "root of all evil".

1.5.2. Performing the Orchestrated Patterns of Repentance

One important feature of media societies lies in a fact that the public is fascinated by trials and tribulations of celebrities (including various depictions of power/culture elites being submitted, degraded, humiliated and persecuted). The media in turn readily focus on such representations. Even victims in the news are evocative, bringing forth vicarious emotional experience, and may thus be "entertaining" (Altheide 2002). In case of scandals, the basic signs of submission and repentance expressed by deviating elites are resignation, stepping down from one's post, or taking financial responsibility for compensating those who have suffered losses due to the scandal. While following this pattern, the Sun Music Company's chairman stepped down and became advisor, the president became vice-president, and apart from their own salary cuts they promised to pay around 500 million yen to commercial sponsors and record companies. The main scandal climax however came in a form of a televised press conference attended by the transgressor in person. The staged pseudo-event took place immediately after Sakai's release on bail in September 2009, attracted phenomenal attention (43.3 per cent of all viewing audiences in Japan), caused a traffic jam around the conference venue, and was quite rightfully labelled by Nashimoto (2009) as a moment of history. Apart from previous public appearances of Sakai leaving or entering the detention center or the court, it was this orchestrated persecution that provided the audiences with observable physiological evidence,

rendering the emotional content of apologies "sadistic". In the spirit of what Garfinkel (1956) called "degradation ceremony", the sobbing Sakai repeatedly demonstrated the commitment not to do it again, promising to resist any temptation while skilfully conflating apologies for causing inconvenience (*meiwaku*) and expressions of gratitude (*kansha*, *ongaeshi*). During the 10 minutes-long ritual, witnessed by more than 502 reporters including 110 cameramen, the media recorded 22 large teardrops rolling down the Sakai's cheeks, however their authenticity was doubted (Nashimoto 2009; Sassa 2011). In this and other similar cases, the media commentators (in the studio joined by the "pundits") do not impartially transmit the event, but they passionately judge the proportionality to her offence while focusing on every minutiae of the performance's scenic aspects (e.g. the degree and duration of sorrow and guilt expressed by sobbing, blushing, sweating, shaking and other facial gestures, the frequency and length of bows, the physical appearance including makeup, clothing style/brand and color, the utterance style and the word usage). It is a standard obsession of the Japanese media during coverage of such events to somewhat playfully attempt to discover what has been carelessly violated, or more importantly, what was deliberately concealed for the sake of mastering the performance. Apart from moralizing based on evident of lack of etiquette (e.g. the media questioning the degree of repentance when Sakai's husband entered the courtroom with a bottle of barley tea in his hand although food and drink are prohibited

there), the media try to discredit the "realness" of the apology by attacking the very essence of performing (e.g. Sakai's "problematic" tattoos became again a topic for discussion since they were found to have been concealed with foundation during the press conference). Herein lies the main paradox: the media expect the transgressor to conventionally perform her repentant role during the conference with all devices at hand (including the waterproof makeup and waterproof eyeliner that would increase the visibility of Sakai's teardrops), but at the very same time, they end up critically commenting on Sakai's skillfully delivered dramatic act that is proclaimed to have only proven her virtues of an experienced actress.

In degradation ceremony, where the transformation of identity lies in destruction of the transgressing object, the media observed and judged the performed "coherence of front" (Garfinkel 1956; Goffman 1959), her readiness to feel guilty, and the veracity of her moral transformation (i.e. the proportion of honesty and seriousness implying the "conforming self", as opposed to cynicism of the false front indicating the "rebellious self"). The media thus again entered into a process of evaluating the signs that Sakai is giving and giving off, however this time focusing less on the incoherencies between the star and her non-star self, and more on the qualitative and quantitative signs of the repentant act itself. Perhaps they wanted to catch the glimpse of genuine imperfection that is an important factor in creating authentic interaction between performers and audiences

in Japan (Stevenson 2008). At any rate, being caught in a vicious circle of the coerced act of confession and apology, the former actress was required to perform that she is not performing, while the only "mysterious" aspect of this theater is that there really is no mystery.

1.5.3. The Aftermath: Toward Purification and Reintegration

A sufficiently painful apology postulates "never to do it again" rather than just "I am sorry", and is ideally followed by moral reconciliation (Smith 2008). It has to be an act of both humility and humiliation. Once the apologetic ritual is concluded, celebrities are sent to "exile" and are not allowed to go immediately back on stage for a certain period of time. Usually the exile period differs according to the agency's strategic decision and the prosecution details, but social responses and moods can also significantly influence the impact on the period. The aforementioned apologetic press conference of Sakai Noriko already started up the process, which aimed to dissociate the entertainment agency (and the celebrities under their contract) from her stigmatized image, but it also hoped to restore her reputation in order to make her future comeback possible. In the meantime, Sakai and her advisors started making some effort to destigmatize her persona at the societal level (i.e. to replace the deviating identity with a non-deviant one) and rehabilitate her image at the representational level (i.e. to offset the previous media-supported

dissociation of her negative image from any possibility of identification). In her first step of ritual purification, Sakai was transported immediately after the press conference to the Tokyo Medical University Hospital to undertake drug rehabilitation.[101]

During her trial, Sakai was asked about how she planned to "return to society" (implicating that she has been virtually ostracized and ordered out of the social realm), and although her agency's contract had been withdrawn, it was again the former agency's director Masahisa Aizawa who designed the re-integrative purification process for her: Sakai announced that she would enter university (social work department at Sōzō Gakuen University in Gunma Prefecture) and study welfare in order to once become a social care worker.[102]

The "pornographic force" sometimes represents the center of celebrity scandal. In Sakai's case, such a sub-drama did emerge, however only post facto: the tabloid *Shūkan Posuto* reported in March 2010 that a video tape which contains a pornographic content, allegedly featured Sakai. The story was however not covered in a way one would expect (also because the taboo prohibits sex in the Japanese news), and this tabloid gossip did

[101] During this transfer (which partly resembled the notorious 1995 freeway flight of O.J. Simpson), Sakai's van was followed by five helicopters, so that this pseudo-event could be transmitted live from the bird's-eye view (Carol Tice calls this practice "helicopter journalism"). A propos of this, the charge for a single use of a helicopter in Japan exceeds one million yen (Hattori Takaaki, personal communication).

[102] The person of Aizawa demonstrates the ritualized quality of scandals and their actors: once being like a substitute father for her since recruiting her as a teenager, Aizawa publicly denounced her transgression as "unforgivable" and publicly dissociated from her after the indictment, just to once again help her to re-integrate into society.

not "revitalize" Sakai's scandal. Meanwhile, Sakai proceeded with her purification: while giving up her luxury condominium in Tokyo (this however simply due to her problem of securing income after paying various damages and losing her annual income of one hundred million yen) she also decided to "sacrifice" her marriage for the sake of further disassociation from drugs (divorced in July 2010), and to devote herself to anti-drug campaigning. The "manifest" of her endeavor (along with well-known facts about her life and dull elaborations of her autocue answers from press conferences and trial hearings) was published in her autobiographical tell-all exposé from 2010, titled *Shokuzai* ("Atonement") (Sakai 2010). As for the content, this book is less a clarification of the scandal events, and more a sort of commercialized auto-therapy. More importantly, the publication can be understood as the final stage of her purification: while aiming to reverse her expectancy violation, Sakai disassociated herself from the polluted, "profane" image of a convicted drug user, and attempted to offset the public outcry by moving back toward the imaginary "sacred" center.[103]

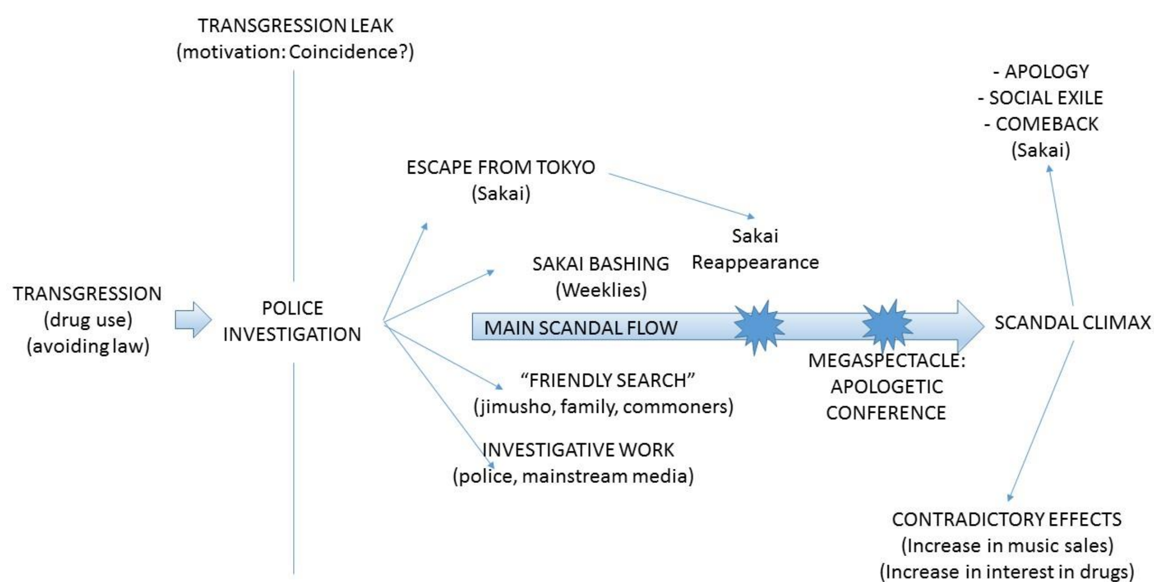
---

[103] Another level, on which the symbolic purification occurred, can be seen in how Sakai's overall image symbolically transformed throughout the course of the media events. For instance, Sakai was dressed in sober black from head to toe when released on bail, at the press conference and during trial proceedings (her hair was decolored). Later in November she was dressed in dark blue (and her hair dyed brown again) when touring the campus of her university. Finally, she hailed the reader from the cover of her 2010 autobiographical book in white from head to toe. Color symbols have certain impact on our cognitive and emotional responses. Especially white color symbolizes multiple meanings in Japanese aesthetic perception (e.g. the purifying aspect of revenge or death by seppuku) but in Sakai's context, it pointed more to confession and determination to reveal a secret (the Japanese words for confession, *kokuhaku* or *hakujo,* use the Chinese character for "white", while the phrase *hakushi ni modosu* implies one's wish to forget some conflict).

The stigma of Sakai's deviance will partly vanish, because she did follow the ritual of purification via exclusion, but the memento of her transgression has entered the collective memory via popular culture. As a matter of fact, the recent developments, underpinned by the same culture industry that degraded her, indicate that she is finding her way back to show business, although her stigmatized image will be conceptually reshaped and/or geographically relocated.[104]

Figure 12. The Sakai Noriko scandal flow.

Source: Author



[104] The preparations of her comeback, although initially not on Japanese soil, were under way already since the end of 2009 (initially, there seemed to be some chances to catch up in the Chinese music market). In April 2011, Sakai participated in an anti-drug campaign in China's Beijing, and at a press conference in November 2012 she officially announced her comeback to entertainment industry (her first post-scandal role was a female character in a Japanese historical drama from the *sengoku* era.

1.6. Conclusion

Since they gained legitimation as guardians of moral values, the media journalistically co-construct various social controversies. While simultaneously maximizing profits, these mediations dramatically embody society's basic values, and in principle serve as pacifying, socially-integrative tools that may reinforce public definitions of morality. The institutional consequences of the Sakai scandal were however rather laughable: the main structural countermeasure suggested in order to eliminate the root of the problem (celebrities and drugs) was an introduction of celebrities' medical check-ups including urine and blood tests, which would be enforced by their contracts with agencies. As addition, the Japan Association of Music Enterprises planned to distribute "celebrity manuals" that would promote the dangerousness of drugs (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 9, 2009). Nonetheless, Japanese celebrity/drug scandals proliferated ever since.

The scandal consequences can have contradictory effects, paradoxically delegitimating the social system. Sakai' transgression was indeed presented as "scandalous", however the main real actors of the scandal were the Japanese media, themselves entering the mode of transgression on more levels – among others by excessive, over-heated coverage out of proportion to the event being covered, and by multiple violation of norms of privacy and decency. The media coverage of this scandal

also illustrated how in contemporary Japanese media culture the mainstream journalism had become supplanted by tabloidization (i.e. aggressive shift away from important social issues to gossipy infotainment journalism) and celebrity fetishism (i.e. non-rational relation and excessive affection for "stars").

The effects of Sakai's scandal were received in opposing ways: not only failing to put the case in a proper larger context, the mainstream media reports did not analyze very much why the use, manufacture, and distribution of drugs is bad, and the impact was alarming: Japanese Broadcasting Ethics and Program Improvement Organization (BPO) announced in early November 2009 that the overheated coverage of Sakai´s case actually aroused interest in drugs among the Japanese youth. Moreover, the reporting practices of covering Sakai's drug scandal indicated something about reporting about illicit drugs in Japan. On one hand the Japanese media rarely specified the drug in question – usually abstract terms such as "stimulants" (*kakuseizai*) or "chemical substances" (*yakubutsu*) were used – but on the other hand they actually often provided detailed, instructive explanations of how to use the drug in question. The contradictory effects did not stop here: after Sakai's music label (Victor Entertainment) responded to her scandal with total ban on her sales, the increased demand for Sakai's music after her scandal briefly made her single *Aoi Usagi* (1995) the No.1 selling song on iTunes Japan in the fall of 2009.[105]

[105] After her label banned sales of her music, "Aoi Usagi" became the number one downloaded single on the Japan iTunes Store because it was part of a compilation album

The reading of Sakai's scandal may resemble the experience of reading a criminal novel, where disequilibrium is initiated while the narrative is organized around the adventure of "pursuing the truth". Differing from criminal fiction, a clear-cut resolution in Sakai narrative is missing. As for the legal level, Sakai's transgression has been criminalized and therefore legally concluded. Nonetheless, at the level of media production, where various media sources were simultaneously operating within different frames, the overall frame conflict hinders any final resolution. Consider the competing interpretations of scandal events as provided by the transgressor herself (Sakai 2010), and the major Japanese entertainment commentator (Nashimoto 2009). The frame conflict was existent across the whole Japanese mediascape throughout the scandal coverage: the big Japanese dailies were uniform and rather neutral/descriptive in their coverage. The TV channels and tabloids focused on sensation, visual spectacularization and absurd minutiae, while the coverage of the foreign press such as *The Japan Times* was either neutral, but at times sarcastic and sharp-tongued. The online chat-rooms, discussion forums and blogs presented a rich and balanced variety of pro-Sakai/anti-Sakai voices, stretching from emotional outbursts of disillusion to sophisticated insights into the scandal background. Unfortunately, there are no comments available from Sakai's official

---

(her music label had licensed the single to a different company). Since the iTunes Store allows consumers to purchase singles from albums, including compilation albums, her song became the top selling song.

fan club because the club was dismissed right after the scandal.

In other words, the symbolic "struggle" for meanings continued at the level of audience reception. No matter how firmly did the media set the agenda and frame the event, there will always be a discrepancy between the number of people who knew of the scandal, and who actually "believed it". Besides, despite all the efforts of Japanese cultural and political hegemony, Sakai did gain some sympathy from both the "conforming selves" and the "rebellious selves". Regarding the former, the key moment for the conformists was Sakai's choice to give herself up to police and to face the court, which may in turn change her into a "good person" again. Regarding the latter group (and seen from the psychoanalyst perspective), she demonstrated and projected the irrational mass-id (i.e. the desire to go beyond the limits of "normality", to transgress and revolt), whereby temporarily bypassing the collective super-ego (i.e. the civilization and its rules of everydayness). In this vein, her "epic" transgression had served as a sublimation of audiences' escapist tendencies and revolting impulses, temporarily distracting them in a cathartic way from frustrations of their everyday lives.

2. POLITICAL SCANDAL: THE CASE OF OZAWA ICHIRŌ

2.1. Introduction

Few months after the arrest of his chief secretary over shady political donations in March 2009, Ozawa Ichirō resigned as the president of his Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) just to become the party's Secretary General. Right after this shift, Ozawa became involved in two other scandals related to unreported donations from construction companies in the past, and to a shady purchase of land in Tokyo. In January 2010, Ozawa during his press conference denied any wrongdoing, but the Prosecution Inquest Committee (an independent judicial inquest panel composed of 11 citizens) decided to indict him in April over false reporting of political donations for the time period of 2004-2007. Later in June, Ozawa stepped down as the Secretary General. However, he was indicted again in February 2011 over another shady land purchase. His trial started in October 2011, and in April 2012 he was found not guilty of any fund conspiracy and was acquitted. Despite his multiple donation scandal, Ozawa soon reintegrated himself to the world of politics by establishing a new party, which was in 2016 renamed to Liberal Party (*Jiyūtō*), and is ready to challenge other parties in the upcoming elections.

The general aim of this chapter is to illuminate how strategic and ritual

performances of scandal actors (Ozawa himself, his secretaries, the media, the public, and the prosecutorial office) co-constructed a scandal narrative, at the end of which the culprit was acquitted and eventually made a political comeback. The scandal occurred in an environment, where wealth and its surplus is tied to a higher potential to grasp and secure power, but the same excess can become dangerous for politicians who inevitably depend on, but are also threatened by the media, since political scandals can trigger media bashing and character assassination while flaming moral indignation and generating support for opposition. While being related to the emergence and climax of this scandal I touch upon the issue of money politics in Japan, and the role of the prosecutors that both triggered the scandal and influenced its outcome. I attempt to illustrate this complex actor-network by analysing the political funding scandal of one of the most powerful political heavyweights of the last decade.

2.2. Who is Ozawa Ichirō?

The veteran lawmaker Ozawa Ichirō is a native of Iwate prefecture, born in 1942. Aged 27, Ozawa won a lower house seat for the first time in 1969 for the LDP. In 1985-6 he served as Home Affairs Minister, in 1989 he debuted as the youngest LDP secretary general, and until 1993, he served in prominent LDP and government posts. Ozawa was

famous for constantly drawing both praise and criticism, while being one of the most important politicians in postwar Japan who survived as a key player in national politics for almost three decades. During his heydays, Ozawa was strongly influenced by his main mentor and protégé Tanaka Kakuei, who was deemed not only the most powerful Japanese politician of all times, but also a father of the so-called money politics (*kinken seiji*) (Ozawa 2015). Same as Tanaka, Ozawa is known as a reformist politician who attempted to take on powerful bureaucrats and end the 1955 system and thus the LDP's one-party rule.

The main twist in Ozawa's political career came in 1993. He shocked the political world when he quit the LDP (in part to escape associations with corruption), joined the opposition camp, and established his own Japan Renewal Party (*Shinseitō*). By doing so, he replaced the LDP as a ruling force since 1955 and briefly controlled the non-LDP government with Prime Minister Hosokawa as its formal leader. Although Ozawa was always very close to LDP's kingmaker Kanemaru Shin, one of the main reasons for Ozawa leaving LDP was Kanemaru's involvement in the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal of 1992.

In the years of 1994-97, Ozawa first appeared as the head of the New Frontier Party (*Shinshintō*), which was back then the largest opposition party consisting mainly of the renegades from the LDP. Two years after the power shift, the support group Rikuzankai became Ozawa's main political funding organization. In December 1997

Ozawa broke up with *Shinshintō* due to a split of pro- and anti-Ozawa factions, and moved to another party, *Jiyūtō* (The Liberal Party). One year later, he joined the LDP in the governing coalition, but after Mori Yoshirō replaced Obuchi Keizō as Prime Minister in 2000, Ozawa became politically isolated. Ozawa's *Jiyūtō* joined with the DPJ, and in 2004 Ozawa (then the deputy head of the DPJ) was appointed to the head of the party instead of Kan Naoto (Kan resigned earlier over a scandal related to his failure to pay mandatory premiums into the National Pension System). Finally, Ozawa became the president of the DPJ in April 2006, but as early as in July 2007 he promised to step down if the opposition camp loses the election. After a sweeping victory of the DPJ at the end of July 2007, the LDP lost majority in Upper House elections while Ozawa criticized Abe Shinzō for staying at the helm of the LDP and the nation.

In March 2009, Ozawa's chief secretary was arrested over shady political donations from a construction company (i.e. the Nishimatsu scandal), and a few months after the arrest, Ozawa resigned as president of the DPJ, being succeeded by Hatoyama Yukio. The scandal prevented Ozawa from becoming Prime Minister, but his influence within the party was far from being eliminated: after his resignation, Ozawa was made senior deputy leader with authority to manage election campaigns, which meant that he gained complete control over the money used for those campaigns.

In August of 2009, the scandal-tainted Ozawa stood behind the DPJ's historical

win in general election. Nevertheless, he was soon implicated in other scandal related to unreported donations from construction companies (the Mizutani scandal), and to a shady land purchase in Tokyo back in 2004. The inquest panel decided to indict Ozawa over false reporting of political donations in the time period of 2004 to 2007, and Ozawa finally stepped down as Secretary General of the DPJ. Despite this course of events, Ozawa decided to run in DPJ's leadership race (and thus virtually aiming to become Prime Minister), but he was once again indicted in February 2011 over another shady land purchase. His trial started in October 2011, and in April 2012 he was found not guilty of any fund conspiracy.

In upcoming presidential elections, the Ozawa-backed candidate Kaeda Banri lost to Noda Yoshihiko (the Prime Minister until December 2012), which undermined the influence of Ozawa as the "shadow shogun" (*yami shōgun*). The new "Ozawa-shock" came in July 2012: after not willing to agree with the DPJ policy on the issue of consumption tax hike Ozawa, accompanied by dozens of his loyal followers, left the DPJ and created a new "People's Life First" party (*Kokumin no Seikatsu ga Daiichi*). Ozawa's newly created party did poorly in the election, but in October 2016 Ozawa formed a new "Liberal Party" (*Jiyūtō*) with another Japanese politician and former actor Yamamoto Tarō.

2.3. Ozawa Ichirō: The Scandal Narrative

The real opening of Ozawa's scandal narrative did not start with his person. It was the arrest of his chief secretary, Ōkubo Takanori, or more precisely, the media hype which occurred after the Japanese news agencies reported the details on March 4, 2009. Although it was Ōkubo who was arrested on the grounds of allegedly breaking the Political Funds Control Law (Seiji Shikin Kisei Hō), the media immediately speculated about links to Ozawa and his political fund management body.[106]

At this point of the narrative, Ozawa re-emerged as a proactive scandal actor, utilizing the strategy of offense and protection (*seme no senryaku, mamori no senryaku*). While refusing to admit any breach of the law from his side, Ozawa attacked the prosecutorial conduct in his scandal, casting general doubts on the exercise of legal justice. In the meantime, the media hype widened the scandal radius and brought about a minor snowball effect (some tabloids indicated that other LDP lawmakers were also receiving illegal donations from the same construction company in question). Soon enough, however, Ozawa switched to the apologetic/protective strategy (*shazai no senryaku,*

---

[106] Rikuzankai allegedly accepted illegal corporate donation from two groups (dummy entities) headed by a former official of the construction company Nishimatsu (the former president of Nishimatsu, Mikio Kunisawa was already indicted in a separate case of financial fraud). Nishimatsu provided Ozawa's office with a total of around 300 million yen for over more than 10 years in order to increase chances of winning contracts for public works projects in the Tōhoku region, where Ozawa's political base is located.

mamori no senryaku): while utilizing the ambiguity of the Japanese language, the tearful Ozawa admitted during his press conference to accepting the donation. He apologized for causing "trouble" (*meiwaku*) but retained the "knowing-nothing" approach (*shirimasen deshita*), claiming that he was unaware of the source of donation.

In the first instance, these loyal secretaries served as protective shields and scapegoats, setting their boss at a greater distance from alleged wrongdoing. During his own trial in 2012, Ozawa was pleading innocent mainly based on the claim that the financial reports were completely in the hands of his aides. Nonetheless, the loyalty of Ozawa's aides (and the political image of Ozawa himself) became somewhat shattered in 2011 when one of the aides, Ishikawa Tomohiro published an off-record book called "The Villain: Serving for Ozawa Ichirō" (*Akutō: Ozawa Ichirō ni tsukaete*).[107]

The next stage, following the arrest of Ōkubo, was a "cooperative" one (*kyōryoku no senryaku*): only three days after Okubo's arrest, Ozawa voluntarily agreed to be questioned by the prosecutors. The media polls showed that the majority of Japanese respondents would welcome Ozawa's resignation, but Ozawa soon returned to his offensive style, denied any wrongdoing and refused to step down. At the end of March,

---

[107] Among many other amusing details, the book revealed that Ozawa's aides had to weed the politician's garden early in the morning, cook his family breakfast, do the laundry, or clean the house. Other leaks included the secretaries keeping Ozawa cool with fans when it was hot because he hates air conditioning. Importantly, these accounts may generate defamation suits, but they are never powerful enough to bring down the politician in question.

he once again switched to the apologetic strategy (*shazai no senryaku*), apologizing in a tearful statement to the "people" (*kokumin*) while mentioning the term *kokumin* eight times. While operating on the empathic/patriotic basis, Ozawa reminded the public that despite his scandal he stood at the helm of the battle for the sacred good of the nation, centering his interest on national affairs instead of some political fund reports.

While being aware of the ongoing crisis, the DPJ attempted to manage the situation by forming an advisory panel of external experts, which consisted of three professors and one former public prosecutor. Ozawa however refused to consider the panel's advice.[108] On the contrary, in May 2009 Ozawa proceeded with his own strategy: he announced his plan to resign in order to prevent the DPJ from losing the upcoming general election. The major election victory of the DPJ that followed in August must be partly ascribed to this strategic ritual of temporary self-exclusion.

The scandal narrative was however far from being concluded. In November 2009, it became clear that between 2004 and 2005 one of Ozawa's aides obtained an unreported donation worth 100 million yen in cash. Only few weeks later, yet another scandalous disclosure emerged, this time related to a shady land purchase, realized through Ozawa's funding management body in Tokyo back in 2004. Same as in the Nishimatsu scandal, it was not Ozawa who was primarily targeted, but his aides (the first of the three Rikuzankai

---

[108] The author is obliged for this information to Hattori Takaaki from Rikkyo University who served as one of the panel members.

secretaries, Ishikawa Tomohiro, was arrested at the beginning of 2010). In the meantime, the president of DPJ, Hatoyama Yukio became a “victim” of his own donation scandal: between 2002-8 he misreported large amounts of donations (over 1 billion yen), that he received from his mother, while other donations were recorded as political donations from deceased or fictitious people.

Only three months passed since the scandal-tainted LDP had been ousted out of power by the DPJ, which once promoted itself as a viable alternative to money politics despite Ozawa’s pending scandals. In February 2010, the prosecutors did not charge Ozawa, but indicted his former secretary, Ishikawa Tomohiro. Nonetheless, following Prime Minister Hatoyama’s abrupt resignation in June, Ozawa decided to quit as DPJ’s secretary general. He again retreated to the background, but broke the self-inflicted exile as early as in August of the same year when announcing to run for party presidency. However, only few days before the actual election, the inquest panel decided to review the prosecutorial decision not to indict Ozawa. Ozawa’s indictment on 31 January 2011 gave the anti-Ozawa members of the DPJ, including then-Prime Minister Kan Naoto, the leverage needed to suspend Ozawa’s party privileges. Ozawa was indicted over shady land purchase, triggering speculations that his political career was over at last. According to another media report, Ozawa was to become a scapegoat in order to improve approval

ratings of Kan's Cabinet.[109]

Ozawa's party membership was suspended until the end of his trial, which started in October 2011. Nonetheless, after Kan's resignation in August 2011, Ozawa continued to wield influence over a large bloc of the DPJ. In April 2012, pleading not guilty of conspiring to make false financial reports, Ozawa was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

2.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to Ozawa case

The upcoming subchapters aim to highlight a background for understanding the environment from which most of the Japanese political scandals arise: it is the discourse of money politics (*kinken seiji*), the corruption that is at times related to Japanese support groups (*kōenkai*), and finally it is the prosecutorial conduct, which is decisive in triggering political affairs, but an oppressive prosecution ccan also create a sub-drama and decisively impact the outcome of a scandal (see below).

[109] Ozawa was quoted to appear voluntarily before the Lower House Ethics Committee to testify about his money scandals, but the real reason for this testimony was not only the pressure from Kan Naoto, but also the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (*Rengō*), which was a big supporter of the DPJ (*The Japan Times*, December 29, 2010).

2.4.1. The Issue of Money Politics and Support Groups

On more occasions toward the new year of 2012, the pro-LDP *Yomiuri Shinbun* (e.g. December 2, 2011) reported that Ozawa's political influence is based on his abundant financial resources including his funds management organization (Rikuzankai). The *Sankei Shinbun,* followed by other media, reported that Ozawa's income in 2010 was six times higher than that of the previous year, and in January 2012 the Japan Property Central published a list of Ozawa and his wife's real estate holdings, estimating their property being worth more than three billion yen.[110]

Moreover, Ozawa's political funds in 2010 were the highest ones compared to other Japanese lawmakers (*The Japan Times*, December 8, 2011), while Rikuzankai had the highest total revenue of any political organization that year (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, December 12, 2010). Although this is no unique phenomenon in Japanese politics, the dailies used these facts in order to facilitate a guilt frame by indicating that Ozawa was been living beyond his salaried means.

Money is the essential element in funding political activities, and for Ozawa (same as for his mentor Tanaka), the main source of campaign funding was the money-for-favours corruption in construction industry. Important in Ozawa's case was the bid-

---

[110] Only Ozawa's private residence and adjoining land in Fukuzawa were worth 1.3 billion yen (see japanpropertycentral.com/2012/01/politician-ozawas-vast-real-estate-holdings).

rigging practice within the "cement industrial complex" of the "construction state" (*doken kokka*) – a widely tolerated practice based on the nexus between officials, business people, high ranking politicians, and the Japanese yakuza (Goodall 1996; McCormack 1996; Messersmith 2003; Kingston 2004). Ozawa was enjoying loyalty and support from his local support groups since they knew well that he had a key word in deciding which company will be awarded construction deals in his home district. While still being a member of LDP, Ozawa was on a regular basis obtaining donations from construction companies, exceeding the legal limit more than six times (Bowen 2003). While criticizing the corruption in LDP in order to later achieve the power shift, and calling for abolishing the money politics (*kane no kakaranai seiji*), Ozawa himself was involved in many corruption cases, including the Recruit scandal, where he received a two-million-yen political donation from the company in question (Rothacher 1993). Only eventually, Ozawa's office was accused of issuing "voices from heaven" (*ten no koe*) in determining the winners of orders for public works projects in Ozawa's home prefecture Iwate (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, June 20, 2009). This system of money politics and the construction state practices are attributed to Tanaka Kakuei, who in 1970s perfected the collusion-based system while depending on his political support group *Etsuzankai*.[111]

---

[111] As a matter of fact, corruption in Japanese politics was in place long before Tanaka Kakuei, but it was Tanaka who perfected the system in which government-funded public works projects aided the economic development and the job market in Japan. The fact that Tanaka's political entrepreneurship actually proved successful in terms of bringing about the Japanese economic miracle, points at the "inconsistency" of (not only Japanese)

Equally important for Ozawa's political success was the practice of local "support groups" (*kōenkai*). These groups are usually backed by local companies and government workers who vote for their politicians, while these politicians are in turn expected to deliver "pork" to their constituents (Ozawa supported the Iwate prefecture, while his mentor Tanaka was famous for taking a good care of his constituency in Niigata). The local construction firms donate money in order to maintain friendly relationship with politicians who wield influence over public works contracts, and the politicians are in turn dependent on these firms for necessary campaign funds. Thus, it is not only the local support base (*jiban*), or the reputation of a politician's name (*kamban*), but most importantly, it is the campaign funding (*kaban*) that renders *kōenkai* as one of the major sources of political funding and political corruption in Japan. The practice of loyal support groups in Japan supports the assertion that social actors (both the politicians and their supporters) are in given situation more "obligation-preoccupied" than "right-preoccupied" (e.g. Lebra 1976). Consequently, it becomes a politician's "duty" to uphold the norms of reciprocity and to transgress the rules of conduct in order to fulfill their obligation toward the constituency. The constituents may yield materially from this reciprocity, and they readily support the corrupted politicians in next elections notwithstanding their scandals. Setting up and maintaining these support groups encourages intense fundraising, which

---

political discourse with any general moral theory of ideal conduct.

in turn contributes to recurring scandals in Japanese politics.

The money politics is however a double-edged sword. Politicians can be discredited by their rivals and enemies by exposing certain corruption from the past at the most "infelicitous" moment (e.g. shortly before elections). As is usually the case of exposing political donation scandals, Ozawa's investments were traced to a distant past. For instance, one of the real estate holdings that became a subject of discussion in the media in 2009 (the shady ownership of his apartment in Minami-Aoyama) was purchased by Ozawa's political fund management body as early as in 2001. Similarly, the shady land purchase in Tokyo's Setagaya Ward occurred in 2004, while the illicit donations that triggered the Nishimatsu scandal in 2009 had their roots already in 1995. In other words, in Japan it is rarely the case that certain corruption becomes exposed by a prompt investigative journalism. More typically, certain corruption is "dormant" for the time being, and it comes to light, if and only if it is exposed by some motivated party.

2.4.2. The Issue of Prosecutorial Conduct in Scandal

In contemporary Japan, prosecutors are often conceived of as "ambassadors of justice" (*seigi no shisha*), while the media are expected to cooperate as "democracy watchdogs" (*minshushugi no banken*). Ideally speaking, they both share same goals in cases of corruption and crime, i.e. to surveil authorities (*kenryoku kanshi*) and to search for truth

(*shinjitsu no tsuikyū*) behind corruption and crime (e.g. Matsubara 2014). As soon as one of them – or both of them at the same time, which is more often the case – publicly casts doubt about some power elite, they can immediately fuel public discontent toward them and their professional platform.

The Japanese prosecutors and journalists during scandal are on a similar wavelength, although Iimuro (1995) claims that it is the former who surpasses the latter in the amount of information. The information flow in scandal is being constituted both ways: either prosecutors pick up an issue from newspapers or magazines (Hasegawa 2000), or the mainstream journalists receive information from the prosecutor's office (Murphy 2014) while promising the prosecutors uncritical coverage of their work in turn (Johnson 2002). In some scandals, the prosecutors leak information to the media simply in order to garner public support (West 2006). Other sensitive information is being received in a form of written complaints and accusations made by outside informants, which is according to Hasegawa (2000) another major source of information related to ongoing bribery cases.

The role of prosecution in Ozawa's scandal was significant, if not decisive. It is hard to identify the source, based on which the prosecutors decided to arrest Ozawa's secretaries precisely in March 2009, i.e. close before the next general elections, where Ozawa's DPJ was expected to win. Indeed, the timing of arrest lends itself to conspiracy

being the main motivation for the information leak to the Tokyo District Prosecutors Office (Karel van Wolferen, personal communication). At any rate, the Prosecutors Office arrested Ozawa's aides and in 2010 they searched Ozawa's private office while continually leaking information to the media. Ever since the charges were brought against his three former secretaries, Ozawa ended up being at war not only with the mainstream media, but also with the prosecutors, staying reluctant to cooperate with them while publicly criticizing decisions of the inquest panel. Besides, the Tokyo prosecutor's office indeed triggered some of the biggest corruption cases in postwar Japan, but strong evidence, or a full confession was usually a prerequisite for indictment. In the case of Ozawa however, the prosecutors' attempt to indict him was taken back precisely based on lack of evidence, and absence of confession, and although Ozawa's case was reopened, he was finally acquitted.

Ozawa attempted to shake off the guilt frame and re-shift attention away from his funding scandal by lamenting that the prosecutors were politically motivated, or that there existed some ties between the prosecutors and the Cabinet since they both lean toward the ideology of anti-Ozawa camp. These accusations were however nothing cognitively new: as a matter of fact, Ozawa was critical toward justiciary bureaucracy and its legal mistakes already during the 1970s scandal of his mentor Tanaka Kakuei (Ozawa 2015), and later in 1990s, Ozawa again accused the prosecution of legal mistakes

when his political mentor Kanemaru Shin was interrogated during the Sagawa Kyūbin scandal (Sassa 2011). More importantly for Ozawa's case, it became clear that one prosecutor was employing abusive practices when questioning one of the indicted aides (the secretary Ishikawa was secretly recording with his IC recorder the prosecutor's attempt to influence the outcome of the interrogation). This is a sensitive problem in contemporary Japan, where prosecutors release leaks according to a double standard (Yayama 1990; Johnson 2002), but more importantly where forced confessions eventually lead to cases of judicial error.

Thus, the scandal narrative gained a new momentum via a new sub-drama, in which the Tokyo District Court accused prosecutorial interrogations of "illegality" (*ihōsei*) when embellishing the investigative report (e.g. *Yomiuri Shinbun*, April 27, 2012). The "scandalicity" shifted from root transgressors (Ozawa and his aides) to secondary participants (the prosecutors Maeda Tsunehiko and Tashiro Masahiro), which directly impacted the scandal development. The "new villains" of the scandal narrative appeared to use their authority in unlawful manner to pressure the suspect to adjust his testimony. Rendering the prosecutorial conduct as "inappropriate" (*futekisetsu*) meant a blow to the anti-Ozawa camp, and the issue effectively overshadowed the Ozawa scandal itself. While blending this new transgression with prosecutors' lack of evidence, Ozawa was acquitted, the Ozawa-critical voices failed in their demands for his resignation, and the

media discussion steered toward a declining ability of judicial actors.

2.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors

2.5.1. Ozawa versus the Media

In terms of his ambivalent relationship with the media, Ozawa is the opposite of politicians such as Koizumi Jun'ichirō, who became popular due to his "media honeymoon". On the contrary, Ozawa was infamous for taking an openly offensive stance toward the Japanese media, who were – along with the public and other politicians – allegedly perceiving him as a "villain" (George Mulgan 2014; Ozawa 2015). It can be however simultaneously argued that Ozawa, while struggling for power and leadership, was obtaining some public support exactly due to his self-confident, arrogant and non-repentant rhetoric. Ozawa's frequent gaffes and slips of tounge also belonged to his "unsociable" rhetoric before and during his scandal.[112]

[112] One example is the leaked off-record quotation in the magazine *Bungei Shunju* from 1994, where Ozawa was quoted labeling the former Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki a "fool" (*baka*). In another gaffe from May 1994, Ozawa made a seemingly misogynist remark "one is free to sleep with the woman of one's choice" (*dono onna to issho ni neyō ga ii janaika*), which leaked to the public through *Asahi Shinbun,* and was met with harsh criticism from female members of the Diet. The remark was however taken out of context (Ozawa was commenting the departure of the Social Democratic Party of Japan from the ruling coalition). Instead of trying to clarify the misunderstanding, Ozawa attacked *Asahi Shinbun* while attempting to exclude their journalists from all of his upcoming press conferences. Ozawa's scandalous remarks are however not restricted only to domestic politics. In a public speech in November 2009, Ozawa referred to Christianity as a self-righteous, and "exclusive" faith (*haitateki*) because according to him it tends to exclude other religions. In this and other similar statements, the backlash comes usually from the

Long time before his 2009 scandal, Ozawa was quoted claiming that the mass communication media exist primarily to be utilized by politicians (Iimuro 1995). His radical stance toward the mainstream media was however reflected already after the power shift in 1993: in order to demonstrate his will to improve political transparency and information disclosure (*jōhō kōkai*), Ozawa temporarily abolished the infamous practice of *kondan* (the off-record background briefings held after regular press conferences). Besides, together with Okada Katsuya he attempted to reform the elitist *kisha* club system while making press conferences more transparent by including journalists of the weekly magazines and the foreign press in his own briefings. These moves, however can be perceived as populistic in nature. Besides, while proclaiming that the change in the relationship between politicians and journalists must follow the change in politics, Ozawa soon imposed embargo on topics related to his scandals, and proclaimed that press conference is a form of a voluntary "service" (*sābisu*), which can be bypassed if deemed necessary (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 23, 2009).[113]

---

periphery (in the last case mentioned, it was the Japan Christian Federation of Churches, followed by the foreign newspapers). Moreover, the development of a gaffe usually depends on the magnitude of a statement, same as on the decision of the mainstream press to either ignore the story, or to include it in the news agenda.

[113] Ozawa was however not the only heavyweight politician that took a radical stance toward the media. Consider Prime Minister Satō Eisaku and his refusal to give access to the journalists to his resignation press conference in 1972 (Satō expelled everyone except from the TV camera crews from the conference hall, allegedly in order to be able to speak to the public "directly"). Also, consider the ex-Mayor of Osaka city, Hashimoro Tōru, who was infamous for attacking and ridiculing journalists during his press conferences.

It was from a significant part the broadcast of the *Asahi Shinbun*-affiliated TV Asahi which helped to oust the LDP out of power in 1993, paving the way for Ozawa and his reformists. Initially, the left-of-center, liberal *Asahi Shinbun* and other left-leaning papers welcomed Ozawa and Hatoyama's ideological positions as an alternative to the LDP (e.g. Ozawa pro-Asian stance versus the LDP's subordination to the US). It was however Ozawa himself, who later criticized *Asahi* for "betraying" him (literally *Asahi ni uragirareta)*, and for making use of his persona merely for commercial profit (Hattori Takaaki, personal communication). Indeed, the alleged "violent" editorial reporting (*pen no bōryoku)* of the *Asahi Shinbun* was at its starkest during the first half of 2012, when Ozawa struggled to stay in high politics despite his scandals. For instance, the editorial of *Asahi Shinbun* (January 13, 2012) asserted that Ozawa is unfit to be a politician, and although he was eventually found not guilty of fund conspiracy, the opinion column from July 5, 2012 and the editorial from July 12 stated that it is time for the untrustworthy Ozawa to retire (*Ozawasan, sorosoro seikai intai wo*). Rather adversarial was also the framing of the largest Japanese newspaper, the center-right conservative *Yomiuri Shinbun*, which supported Ozawa's guilt frame, partly based on Watanabe Tetsuo (the leader of *Yomiuri*) and his antipathy toward Ozawa). However, compared to Ozawa bashing (*Ozawa tataki*) by *Asahi Shinbun, Yomiuri* facilitated the guilt frame rather indirectly (e.g. by using Ozawa-critical sources without much space of counterarguments, or by using

visuals of Ozawa in bad mood).

As is usually the case, the Japanese tabloids were scrutinizing every aspect of Ozawa's personal life, which would undermine his efforts to avoid responsibility for his scandal. For instance, *Shūkan Bunshun* announced that Ozawa's wife Kazuko announced her divorce from him based on his cowardly way of handling the Fukushima radiation crisis in 2011 (*Shūkan Bunshun,* June 21, 2012), while other the tabloids speculated that the real reason of her coming-out was Ozawa's long-lasting extramarital affair. There were however some Ozawa-friendly magazines (*goyō shūkanshi* or "patronage journals") that did not fully support the tabloid-styled Ozawa bashing. However, rather than any sort of ideological leaning, it was more importantly the competition between the tabloids themselves. This generated a certain pro-Ozawa framing in order to challenge the rival on the tabloid market. Besides, the framing often depended on the ideological allegiance of those weeklies that are owned by one of the big dailies (Taniguchi Masaki, personal communication).

In his media criticism during the scandal, Ozawa targeted particular media outlets, but his attacks were oriented toward the Japanese media system as such. Apart from the all-too-obvious argument that the media coverage is full of "distortions" (*yugami*), Ozawa accused the Japanese journalists of contradicting themselves because they tend to talk about the necessity of political leadership, but at the same time, they

denigrate anyone who aspires to a position of being a leader. (Related to this, the demand of a strong and charismatic political leadership also explains the popularity of controversial Japanese leaders such as Ishihara Shintarō or Hashimoto Tōru, whose inflammatory statements often generated media attention. Some critical journalists denounce and demonize them, but these newsworthy "charismatic villains" help to increase the circulation.)

The press was particularly inventive when giving various metaphorical nicknames to Ozawa. While the loyal people of Iwate called the politician "Ozawa-*sensei*" (meaning "teacher", but implying respect combined with affect), the Japanese media used most frequently "*yami shōgun*" (shadow shogun) which was the same nickname used for Tanaka Kakuei. The foreign journalists framed Ozawa as "strong-armed", "self-confessed opportunist" and "lone wolf" (because of his tendency to act without consulting other party members and to switch factions/parties several times), "crasher", "party breaker" or "destroyer" (because he both broke up and formed various political groups, and finally ended up splitting from his own party), "kingmaker", "shadow Prime Minister" or "shadow shogun" (because without his approval it was close to impossible for any intraparty politician to be recognized, and his behind-the-scenes political influence lasted for decades. The list can go on with Ozawa being as "puppet master", "deal maker" and "backroom fixer" (because he was often pulling the strings and manoeuvring politics

especially at turbulent times).[114]

Nonetheless, the foreign coverage of Ozawa's scandal was comparatively friendly, facilitating the excuse frame. Especially *The Japan Times* was opening certain space for the pro-Ozawa voices during his scandal.[115] (The importance of the foreign media was also reflected in the fact that Ozawa was hiring a female translator that was on a daily basis briefing him on the news from the foreign press.) When Ozawa was losing support in Japan after the March 2009 scandal outburst, he agreed to give an interview to *Time* (March 13, 2009), and only a minimum space was given to discuss his corruption scandal. Other Asian mainstream media were also rather favorable when portraying Ozawa during his scandal.[116]

---

[114] Besides, the media referred to Ozawa's direct supporters from the DPJ as "Ozawa children" (as allusion to the "Koizumi children" of the LDP), while the unqualified-but-attractive female candidates, who Ozawa installed in order to broaden the party's appeal to voters, were dubbed as "Ozawa girls". Apart from the fact that they were politically unqualified, their past was questioned by the tabloids. For instance, one of Ozawa girls, Tanaka Mieko originally worked as sex-industry reporter and appeared in an erotic horror, while another female member of the DPJ, Ota Kazumi used to be working as a hostess (e.g. *Global Post*, October 5, 2009). Nonetheless, these leaks themselves were not disturbing enough to bring about a scandal sub-drama.

[115] See the editorial "Indictment of Mr. Ozawa" on February 2, 2011, or the opinion article titled "Madness of the attacks on Ozawa" on October 28, 2010, or Roger Pulvers' article from November 22, 2009, which justified some controversial statements of Ozawa). Needless to say, the sheer fact that a controversial politician is voluntarily giving interviews to the foreign press will render the whole article in a rather favourable light. The positive stance abroad could be also attributed to Ozawa's book "Blueprint for a New Japan" (*Nihon Kaizō Keikaku*) from 1993, where Ozawa argued for a more open form of government and free trade, while his main model was the British parliamentary democracy (Ozawa 1993).

[116] In the editorials of leading Chinese papers, Ozawa was not rendered in a fully negative light despite his scandal. On the contrary, the Chinese coverage was relating him to his mentor Tanaka who always supported friendly ties with China. The Korean media are traditionally hostile to those Japanese politicians who are conflicting on sensitive territory/history issues. Nonetheless, partly owing to their will to make certain

Ozawa was not the first politician who noticed the diametrical difference between the paper media and the online media in Japan. While never ceasing to criticize the way how politics is being covered in Japan, Ozawa was among those who started using the new media in order to bypass his traditional rival, the mainstream media. Apart from his own carefully administered homepage, Ozawa became an early user of the potentially subversive, and largely unedited platform Nico Nico Douga (the popular Japanese video hosting website which offers real-time news and full press conferences). While creating a minor controversy, in November 2010 Ozawa used the site for elaborating on his funding scandal instead of explaining the allegation in the Diet. Earlier in October 2008, when still serving as president of the DPJ, Ozawa gave an on-line interview in order to improve his public image and to get his unedited message out to voters. By talking about his favorite food or his first love, Ozawa acceded to a tabloid agenda of "positive gossiping": the revelation of one's "transgressive intimate self (Marshall 2010) underpins the process of celebritization by revealing one's private sphere in the form of somewhat spectacular voyeuristic intrusion. While bypassing the traditional ("representational") media and using the new ("presentational") media (Castells 2009), Ozawa pragmatically illuminated his personality which went beyond his onscreen persona, as he was attempting to heighten the affective connection to the audience of

amendments to colonial damages, both Ozawa and his protégé Hatoyama were rendered in a more positive light despite Ozawa's pending scandal.

especially younger voters.[117]

2.5.2. Ozawa versus the Public

Public trust can be actively produced and manipulated, while the powerful individuals display emotion in order to signal that they can be trusted because they have empathy (Wuthnow 2004). Apart from suffering from a kind of aphasia, Ozawa was rather unskilled when garnering public trust (Hattori Takaaki, personal communication). Nonetheless, his media image, corresponding with a stubborn courage to stay in Japanese politics by all means in order to implement reforms from within, did gain a certain appeal. Some polls undertaken during various phases of Ozawa scandal indicated that not only the academicians and politicians were divided in opinion, but also a significant part of the Japanese public was in favor for the strong leader with nationalist/traditionalist leanings, no matter his scandal curriculum. For instance, in September 2009, just a few months after Ozawa's aide was arrested, Ozawa still garnered more public support for the DPJ leadership than his rival Kan Naoto (*Yahoo Nyūsu*, September 14, 2009). This is however

---

[117] Ozawa appeared on a minor live Internet broadcast in Ameba Studio in Tokyo's Harajuku district. This cannot compare to the reach of the traditional media, but the fact that the show was hosted by a popular TV personality (Uehara Sakura), while the mainstream media actually reported on the broadcast, could have improved Ozawa's image during his falling popularity. Needless to say, there is nothing original in this strategy: Ozawa only followed in the footsteps of previous Prime Ministers that improved their charisma by practicing Zen Buddhist meditation (Nakasone) or endorsing Elvis Presley and opera (Koizumi). Only shortly before his scandal, the Japanese public was "enlightened" by the fact that Ozawa likes fishing, his favorite meal is *tofu,* or that his first love went unrequited.

not surprising, given that the Japanese were rather sympathetic toward Richard Nixon even after the Watergate scandal broke, while they gave very high votes to Tanaka Kakuei in his district notwithstanding his involvement in Lockheed scandal. (Similarly, during the 1999 Clinton-Lewinsky affair, many Japanese actually came to admire Clinton more than before his scandal.) Besides, the struggle of Ozawa was occurring in a zeitgeist generated by the recession since the collapse of the bubble economy, being typical of voters' cynicism and distrust toward hypocritical politicians (Yoshida 2002; Hayes 2005). Therefore, no matter how disturbing his scandals may have been, at such critical times a significant part of the Japanese public may have favored Ozawa simply for challenging the tax increase, calling for correcting the income gap, or calling for better management of the disaster zone after the March 2011 earthquake.

The public support from Ozawa's constituency in his home prefecture (Iwate), same as the backing of all his local supporters were taken for granted (unsurprisingly, the loudest ones who criticized the prosecutors' way of handling the corruption case were the people of Iwate). Equally importantly, Ozawa gained some public support by attempting to bypass the big media (see below), by distributing leaflets in person or by campaigning in the countryside, where he was deliberately choosing rather rare, not easily accessible locations (Taniguchi Masaki, personal communication). While dining in cheap local inns together with the locals, he was not only winning their favor, but more importantly he

was generating favorable coverage in local newspapers.

This however did not change the fact that the media's guilt frame grew strong enough to have persuaded around more than sixty percent of the Japanese public to call for Ozawa's resignation. Even after Ozawa was found not guilty, a poll conducted by *Yomiuri Shinbun* showed that 87 percent of respondents think that Ozawa has not sufficiently explained his scandal (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, April 24, 2012). It should be however also noted that the media polls taken by *Yomiuri*, *Asahi* and *Mainichi* were showing somewhat different results, not to mention the fact that the public opinion is conducted through media texts, and thus the notion of publicity – here represented by around 1,000 randomly picked Japanese in a telephone survey – was "relative" at best. At any rate, another form of media power here lies in recursively influencing the public and its opinion by conducting polls immediately after a transgression leak, and publishing the results whereby eventually reinforcing the "spiral of silence" (term by Noelle-Neumann) in which the majority is pushed toward sharing similar opinions.

2.5.3. The Performance of Ozawa

Regarding his political style, Ozawa was always performing strategically as a political "trickster" who acts on two contradictory sets of notions. On the one hand, he was an embodiment of the established features of the more or less corrupted political life, which

might have gradually embarrassed many Japanese. On the other hand, however, he rendered himself as a reformist who tried to get rid of some features of the outdated political habitus Besides, Ozawa had a rich political history of creating and destroying the very framework he helped to create, and forming parties only to have them merge with other parties. Ozawa was openly opposed to bureaucratic nature of Japanese politics, and these "non-Japanese" attitudes rendered him too powerful (and dangerous) for the comfort of the bureaucratic and political circles. This all must have contributed to oppositional attempts on his character assassination via attack-politics and scandal.

Regarding his scandal performance, Ozawa was on multiple occasions utilizing the strategic ritual of self-exclusion, followed by a temporary retreat to background and eventual comeback as a form of "purification" (*misogi*). In order to maintain a dynamic performance which could not be fixed and moralized upon, Ozawa initially utilized the strategy of offense and protection (*seme no senryaku, mamori no senryaku*), claiming that he doesn't know/doesn't remember (*shirimasen deshita, kioku ni gozaimasen*). However, he soon appealed to the people (*kokumin*) by contriction via the ritualized apologetic/cooperative strategy (*shazai no senryaku, kyōryoku no senryaku*) in a tearful apology for the troubles (*meiwaku*) caused to them.

After announcing his plan to resign in order to prevent the DPJ from losing the upcoming general election, Ozawa skillfully utilized the ritual of (self)exclusion and

separation for the sake of maintaining stability and integrity of the "inside" (*naibu*) of the party. He ostentatiously took individual responsibility and exiled himself to the "outside" (*gaibu*) while only briefly retreating to political background. In the meantime, he vehemently insisted to have become a political scapegoat (same as did Tanaka during the Lockheed scandal), and a victim of character assassination based on political conspiracy. The real scapegoats were however his secretaries that were used as a protective shield after Ozawa's funding management was accused of corruption. As is usually the case of political corruption scandals in general, Ozawa claimed that he had left the matter up to his secretary" (*hisho ni makaseteiru*). Indeed, Ozawa's personal responsibility could have been doubted since all kinds of duties (especially those related to political funding management) are usually re-delegated to the management body (Rikuzankai), and to the politician's aides (Ōkubo Takanori, Ishikawa Tomohiro and Ikeda Mitsumoto).[118]

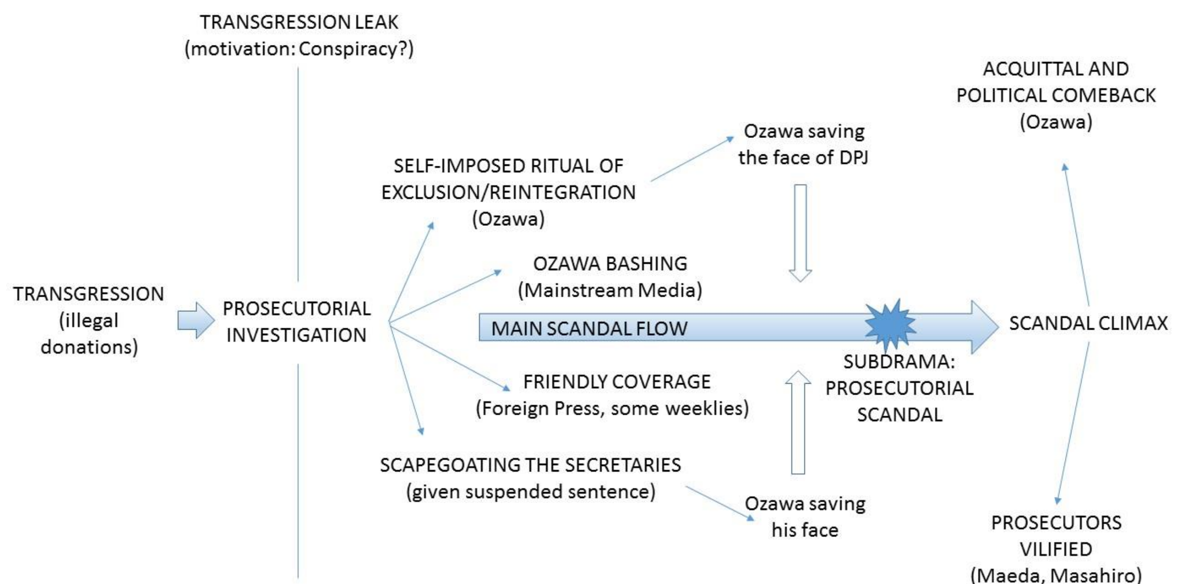
Finally, during the last stage of his scandal, Ozawa was fortunate to have the prosecutors themselves involved in scandal prior to concluding his trial. Ozawa made a good use the short-term tactics of ritual of self-exclusion especially when he resigned his position as party president, whereby preventing his political enemies and the media from further attacks while securing the election victory for his party despite his scandal. The

[118] All three Ozawa's former aides have been indicted on charges of falsifying the financial records of Rikuzankai in a trial that started in February 2011 (Ōkubo was arrested in March 2009 and Ishikawa and Ikeda followed in January 2010). In September 2011, they all were given suspended prison term while infuriating the presiding judge by denying any responsibility.

major election victory of the DPJ that followed in August 2009, same as his acquittal 2012, and the comeback which followed, must be ascribed to this strategic ritual of temporary self-exclusion, to the impotance of the media to unite in swaying the public, and to the flaws in prosecutorial conduct which accompanied his case.

Figure 13. The Ozawa Ichirō scandal flow.

Source: Author



Toward the end of the scandal narrative, an interesting intermezzo occurred during the final stage of Ozawa's trial. The media reported on March 12, 2012 that Ozawa's portrait was displayed in the Diet. As a general rule, the long-time Japanese lawmakers can have their portraits displayed in the Diet after reaching the 25th year in service. Indeed,

powerful rulers in Japan and elsewhere always attempted to portray themselves as the bearers of special cultural symbols. This act of strengthening one's political capital despite the scandal situation only confirmed that political scandal in Japan is rich in moral paradoxes: while being on trial for breaking the political funds law, Ozawa as an epitome of political corruption proudly observes how his own portrait is being displayed in a Lower House facility.

2.6. Conclusion

In contemporary Japan, the goal of revealing political corruption is not any sort of combined moral crusade of fair-play politicians, socially-responsible media, and unbiased prosecutors. Furthermore, the primary aim of "attack politics", which constitutes most of political scandals (and the scandal-mongering which eventually follows), is to raise doubts among potential candidate supporters, to mobilize opposition voters, and to sell papers. Moreover, in order to maintain the always-already corrupted system of money-politics, the Japanese parties themselves seek replacement of the "villain" from their own group (resignation, stepping down, or retreating into background) in case his/her exposed "pollution" is too excessive, and thus diminishing the reputation related to chances in next elections.

Despite the media and the prosecutors' attempt to insert the alleged corruption of Ozawa into the scandal framework of "searching for truth" while utilizing the bipolarities of legal-illegal, appropriate-inappropriate, or moral-immoral, the shadow shoguns's narrative once again proved that there is no such thing as "truth" in the world of structural corruption (perhaps "utility" could better substitute the term). Ozawa's performance between strategy and ritual should be labelled as "non-moral" since he himself only struggled not to be fixed within the moral binary framework of guilt (blame) versus excuse (praise). In such train of thought we may go as far as to assert that there is no such thing as a "real" individual scandal in politics. Much more scandalous is the unhealthy-but-functional relationship between politics and money in general, and the evil-but-necessary collusion of power circles. Furthermore, the damage control mechanisms, such as the aforementioned ritual of temporarily exclusion and reintegration, are not a form of transformative and meaningful moral reflection, but simply a means of preventing voters/supporters from distancing themselves from the party/faction in question.

Finally, the media were performing based either on their ideological allegiance, or on the logic of market as such. Moreover, they failed to put the transgression into a wider context, where the scandalicity arises from power struggles between interconnected actors of the scandal network (in this case the politicians, factions, oppositional parties,

prosecutors, and the public, which represents the marginal but an indispensable actor for the scandal to emerge). More importantly, the over-focusing on Ozawa scandals both in the media and in the Diet actually created a sort of political void while stalling much more socially relevant contemporary issues such as the measures to stabilize employment, the abduction question (*rachi mondai*), or the problem of relocating the U.S. Marine forces in Okinawa (Prusa 2012b).

In the aftermath of his scandal, political commentators somewhat ironically noted that in order to increase the number of his political followers, Ozawa's future will depend on his skills in campaign fundraising. In other words, money politics will keep on being an important *modus operandi,* no matter how many heavyweight politicians scandalized the postwar public because of this necessary evil. More importantly to understand the political ritual of exclusion, purification and reintegration, Ozawa made a comeback to the world of politics by establishing a new party, which was in 2016 renamed to Liberal Party (*Jiyūtō*) and is now supported by the charismatic former actor Yamamoto Tarō. Simultaneouslty, Ozawa keeps on educating young political leaders how to lead Japan in his *Ozawa Juku* ("The Ozawa College"). While still desiring for power in the discursive political vacuum "beyond good and evil" despite his funding scandal, and after publicly ridiculing the prosecutors and counter-attacking the mainstream media, in his struggle Ozawa was indeed "making his point".

3. CORPORATE SCANDAL: THE CASE OF OLYMPUS

3.1. Introduction

A number of high-profile corporate scandals were reported in Japan in 2011, and the accounting scandal of the Olympus Company was among them. Being the third largest publicly listed Japanese company, Olympus (established in 1919) was in 2011 an enterprise with around 40.000 employees and over 70 percent of the world's medical endoscope market. It was a strong medical business, but lately it was performing rather poorly in camera business. During 2011, a suspicion surfaced that Olympus engaged in improper accounting practices for over 20 years. It allegedly circumvented relevant laws and continued to conceal its losses by transferring the financial instruments relating to its unrealised losses to several funds that were not part of the Olympus group.

The scandal attracted global public attention especially after the CEO and president of Olympus at that time, Michael Woodford was expelled by the board of directors. After his removal, the scandal was fully exposed in *The Financial Times,* and Woodford brought charges against Olympus with the UK Serious Fraud Office (SFO). By 2012, the scandal had developed into one of the biggest and longest-lived loss-concealing financial scandals in the history of corporate Japan. In 2012, the scandal resulted in

resignations of the majority of board members, and the company settled its dispute with Woodford with a payment of more than 10 million pounds. In 2013, the former directors of Olympus and statutory auditor were sentenced to suspended prison terms. The main narrative of the Olympus scandal took around 12 weeks, and hundreds of billions of yen in shareholder value were wasted. In the aftermath of the scandal, Woodford published a best-selling book titled "Exposure: Inside the Olympus Scandal" (translated into Japanese under the title *Kainin*). A feature-length documentary in Japanese/French production, based on the book *Samurai to Orokamono* by Yamaguchi Yoshimasa from 2012, was titled "Samurai and Idiots: The Olympus Affair" (directed by Yamamoto Hyoe in 2014).

The main aim of this case study is to delineate the scandal narrative while emphasizing the strategic and ritualized performance of its main actors: The Olympus representatives, the main whistleblower (Michael Woodford), and all the media outlets that participated in the scandal (both mainstream, tabloid, and foreign). I argue that it was precisely the reluctance of the mainstream media to publish the corruption on the one hand, and the vigilance of the foreign and tabloid media to amplify it on the other, that contributed to the outcome of the scandal. The exposure temporarily ridiculed the company in question, but it did not bring about any serious transformation of corporate corruption and corporate whistleblowing in Japan. While being directly related to this scandal, these two issues – namely the omnipresent corporate corruption in Japan, and

the practice of internal whistleblowing – will be closely scrutinized, since they represent the main pathologies on the backdrop of the Olympus scandal, and many others that followed.

3.2. Who is Michael Woodford?

Michael Woodford is a British businessman, born in Liverpool in 1960. In 2004, he became head of Olympus's medical division, and in 2008 he was appointed head of Olympus Europe. In 2011, he became the president and the first non-Japanese to be appointed as the CEO of the Olympus Corporation in Japan, but was removed from his post after serving only few weeks. Soon he became the central figure, and the main whistleblower in exposing the Olympus scandal, which in the meantime developed into one of the biggest loss-concealing financial scandals in the history of corporate Japan. In June 2012 Woodford made an out-of-court settlement with Olympus over his dismissal. The western media outlets (*The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*) recognized Woodford as "Businessperson of the Year" in 2011, and The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) declared him as "Friend of the Free Press" in 2015. While being praised for his brave attitude during the scandal, Woodford now consults on corporate governance and whistleblower laws while using part of the reimbursement money for

charities. Despite his „success“ in the Olympus case, Woodford remained very cynical and skeptical about any possibility of the Japanese corporate governance to reform itself, which rendered his exposure as a mere "Pyrrhic victory". Furthermore, in an interview for *The British Chamber of Commerce in Japan* (January 2014), Woodford actually discouraged the Japanese junior company workers to blow the whistle on their superiors, given the nature of Japanese law and society. Also this points to the assumption that the Olympus case was anything but a precedent for transforming the whistleblowing practices and corporate governance in Japan.

3.3. Olympus versus Woodford: The Scandal Narrative

The scandal emerged shortly after the new president, Michael Woodford indicated in early October 2011 that Olympus had paid obscure companies that were used to hide old losses. Woodford appointed an outside auditor (PricewaterhouseCoopers) to confirm the allegation, but on October 14 he was dismissed as president, allegedly based on "obstacles" (*shishō*) and "divergences" (*kairi*) in management practices (The Olympus Corporation website, October 14, 2011). The previous president Kikukawa Tsuyoshi reassumed his title, only to be replaced by Takayama Shūichi who updated the apologetic message on the same website. While maintaining the official agenda, and shifting the blame away

from Olympus by all means, Takayama also insisted that the trouble was caused by various "speculations" (*okusoku*) in media reports. Olympus kept on denying any misconduct and blamed their "foreign boss" (*gaijin shachō*) for the immediate negative effect on the company's stock price. Woodford was allegedly unsuited to running the company because he failed to master Japanese business culture while making the scandal public (*The Financial Times*, November 8, 2011).

As a matter of fact, it was not Woodford, but the Japanese journalist Yamaguchi Yoshimasa whose story was the first one to expose the scandal based on an internal gossip heard from another insider-whistleblower (Yamaguchi 2011; 2012). Yamaguchi's article was released as a cover story in the Japanese monthly magazine *Facta,* revealing in detail that in 2011 Olympus was involved in an illegal practice of burying financial losses and running amok with senseless M&A (see *Facta*, August 2011). At that time, *Facta* was ran by Abe Shigeo (the former financial reporter for Nikkei) who also unearthed a major scoop in 1994 related to Yamauchi Securities, where dummy companies were set up to absorb the losses (McNeill 2014). Prior to releasing the scandal in June 2011, Abe had actually sent a letter to Olympus's PR office requesting an interview with president Kikukawa, but he was refused, and his inquiry concerning the irregularities was ignored (Woodford 2012). Precisely this arrogance and noncooperativity from the side of

Olympus actually steered Abe and Yamaguchi toward their proactive approach in exposing the corruption.

The original article, itself still rather harmless, centered on suspicions as to why Olympus would pay such high prices (close to 70 billion yen) for three small venture companies. While this was becoming a common knowledge (albeit only via internal gossip), the story prompted Woodford to inspect the case, only to find out that around 1 billion dollars in acquisition-related payments were used secretly to cover losses on investments dating back to the 1990s. At this point of the scandal narrative, Woodford decided to step in as the main whistleblower, and Jonathan Sable from *The Financial Times*, who was secretly contacted by Woodford, finally exposed the story on November 8, 2011.

In the meantime, Woodford tried to support his case by using the Japanese video-sharing website Nico Nico Douga as a “democratic” medium, through which he communicated directly with the Olympus employees with no media-gatekeeping restrictions. Equally importantly, one former board member of Olympus (Miyata Kōji) launched an online petition supporting Woodford’s case in order to sway the public opinion in Japan. The most important media exposure however, was Woodford’s appearance in the Japan National Press Club (Nihon Kisha Kurabu). Woodford behaved in a typically non-Japanese way, but he had his performance skillfully administered by

the charismatic veteran translator and trainee monk Waku Miller (at one point of the conference, Woodford half-jokingly called Waku the real "puppet master"). While effectively fanning the flames of scandal, Woodford-the-gaijin perplexed the reporters by describing the behavior of Olympus as "monkey theater" (*sarushibai*). He demanded to "live in a black and white world, not in a world of gray", and even added that the Olympus's board of directors should include at least one woman.

After Kikukawa announced Woodford's dismissal at official press conference on October 14, the Japanese dailies steered toward their "objective reporting" (*kyakkan hōdō*), which basically turned them into PR tools of Olympus. They ignored the revelatory news or interpreted the event non-critically, sharing their viewpoints with the non-repentant Olympus. Even when some media voiced some doubts, the top Japanese executives at Olympus were refusing to answer direct questions while blaming them for misreporting the steps they were undertaking. Moreover, they were keeping distance from Woodford, whom they attempted to frame as the "villain", threatening to take legal action against him. Despite minor improvements in approaching the issue of whistleblowing in Japan (see below), the media reported that Woodford was dismissed on the grounds on acting arbitrarily on his own authority (*dokudan senkō*).

Immediately after Woodford blew the whistle via *The Financial Times,* he was approached by numerous journalists from global media organizations. Only then was the

scoop eventually picked up by the mainstream Japanese media. As addition, Woodford gave two first exclusive interviews to Channel 4 News and Bloomberg. The Japanese mainstream media, including the business daily *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, refused to publish the scoop. In the early weeks after the initial exposure, much of the Japanese mainstream media stood firmly by Olympus, taking the "see-no-evil" approach and ignoring the original story in *FACTA*. Via the club reporters, the media bosses imposed silence on the story as part of the "blackboard rule" (*kokuban kyōtei*), while others treated the case as a mere "confusion" (*konran*) in management *(*e.g. *Yomiuri Shinbun*, October 27, 2011). Only after the business press in Europe and America published the scoop (most importantly *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *Bloomberg*), some local Japanese newspapers started to catch up as well. The leading Japanese economy paper *Nihon Keizai Shinbun,* who was supposed to be the most "responsible" medium in cases like this, stayed mute for a week while accusing Woodford of being a troublemaker. Besides, the Olympus offices were unable to give any statement, or they were out of reach.

The scandal gained a new momentum when *The New York Times* (October 23, 2011) reported that the FBI was investigating the Olympus case. In the meantime, Woodford kept on actively approaching the media, eventually giving interviews to the Japanese commercial networks Fuji TV, Nippon TV, and even the public broadcaster NHK, which however censored the material by omitting all mentions about the *Facta*

magazine (Woodford 2012). In a rather unusual move, Prime Minister Noda expressed his disquiet about the situation around Olympus (*The Financial Times*, October 31, 2011), which gave the scandal an irreversible status of a national/economic crisis.

On November 8, the Japanese media reported that Olympus finally admitted that the company's accounting practice was inappropriate, albeit downplaying the illicit practice as a mere "postponement" (*sakiokuri*). The leadership shifted the blame on previous president (Kikukawa), one auditor (Yamada) and the executive vice-president (Mori). Within just few days, the share price of Olympus showed more than 80 percent drop from the day before Woodford's dismissal one month earlier. In the meantime, Woodford gave up on a proxy fight to get him reinstated as the head of the company prior to the shareholders' meeting. After months of time, the media scandal finally climaxed. Even the conservative *Yomiuri Shinbun* (December 8, 2011) now perceived any reformatory attempt by Olympus as simply avoiding responsibility (*marunage*). The majority of board members has resigned, Olympus settled its dispute with Woodford financially, and on February 2012 Kikukawa, Mori and Yamada were arrested for suspected violation of Japan's Financial Instruments and Exchange Act (Kin'yū Shōhin Torihiki Hō). In 2013, the former directors of Olympus were sentenced, along with the statutory auditor, to suspended prison terms. The verdict was justified by the sheer fact that they only "inherited a negative legacy" from their predecessors (*Asahi Shinbun*, July

6, 2013). Years after the scandal, it remained unclear who was to be held responsible for the cover-up, while the former Olympus president Shimoyama Toshirō who at the beginning of 1990s instructed the board of directors to hide the losses, died in July 2013. In the same month, the Tokyo District Court sentenced one of the main handlers of the *tobashi* transaction and his two accomplices to four and three years in prison respectively. Eventually, Sony entered an alliance with Olympus (by investing into the company through a new joint venture) while Olympus started to advertise again in Japan.

3.4. Scandal Pathologies Related to the Olympus Case

3.4.1. The Issue of Corporate Corruption

The economy in general, and corporate scandals in particular should be analyzed from within the culture-specific framework of institutions, traditions and moralities. Importantly for Japan, behaviors of blind obedience and deference are deeply ingrained within the traditional corporate culture. Apart from the safety/cover-up scandals, the most frequent root of corporate corruption in Japan lies in "creative accounting" (*funshoku kessan*), including the practice of *tobashi* (shifting the losses to different accounts), dubious merger and acquisitions (M&A), and generally making false statements in financial reports. These "trends" became most evident during the wave of Japanese

corporate scandals of the early 1990s when companies were hiding losses from the asset bubble in temporary off-balance-sheet-havens. Consequently, at the end of this "lost decade" the Japanese market grew discriminatory, nontransparent and corrupt (Yukawa 1999). The roots of the Olympus scandal can be also directly traced to this historical period.

On the one hand, Japan is still often regarded as world's number one in business innovation (World Economic Forum 2015), while some aspects of Japanese corporate culture have become models for foreign companies. On the other hand, frequent corruption cases point at lower levels of corporate ethics. Needless to say, the behavior of corporations not only in Japan also depends on the emotional mind-set and manners of individual company managers. (For instance, only two weeks after the Olympus exposure, the ex-chairman of the Daio Paper Corporation, Ikawa Mototaka caused serious financial damage to seven affiliated companies from which Ikawa "borrowed" large sums of money in order to support his gambling habit.)

The dynamics of the Japanese economy – same as the nature of Japanese power scandals – began to shift since early 1990s. Many elite agencies including the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan experienced scandals involving bribery and cover-ups. In a first string of financial scandals that followed the bubble burst, it was revealed that each of the biggest Japanese security firms was in the past involved in insider trading (*Yomiuri*

Shinbun, July 1, 2012). One of them, the Daiwa Bank was accused by the US Federal Reserve of hiding more than one billion dollars of trading losses from federal authorities in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. Furthermore, another string of the so-called *sōkaiya*/banking scandals have loosened the bank ties with government in 1997 (see below).

One important factor in understanding corporate scandals in Japan, including the Olympus scandal, is the traditional corporate governance, which is typical of opaque decision-making, hierarchy-driven culture, and internal managerial rigor. Some foreign elements were incorporated after the World War II, but the corporate governance still somewhat differs from global standards. For instance, the Japanese corporate culture usually does not require having outside directors on the board, while various committees and panels often exercise full authority without being held accountable, thus facilitating a "system of irresponsibility" (Maruyama 1969; Pye 1985) in Japanese corporate and political culture. Related to this, the outside directors at Olympus were often its business partners, or they hailed from the foundation to which Olympus had made donations. Olympus had an accounting auditor (KPMG Azsa) prior to the scandal, which actually did notice some accounting irregularities, but this auditor was not re-elected as Olympus's accounting auditor in the shareholders' meeting in 2009 (see Maeda and Aoyagi 2013).

Furthermore, while having no general code of corporate governance, Japan

represents a rather unique system of cross-shareholding with a symbiotic relationship between companies, suppliers and the banks. This also impedes the institutional shareholders (*kikan tōshika*) from criticizing the company's board of directors if accounting irregularities emerge. In such setting, institutional shareholders (mostly banks and insurance companies) control large proportions of the share registers, making up for a concentrated powerful group, which allows Japanese corporations to behave in a way they do. (In the case of Olympus, the responsibility and power rested mainly with the shareholders of the Sumitomo Bank.) Besides, the members of a company's founding families usually monopolize the power in Japanese management (this can be partly attributed to the culture of absolute obedience to the family heads, due to which the executives in charge of accounting often "fail" to report the real data and other looming issues to the omnipotent board of executives).

Finally, the situation becomes further complicated by established connections of the corporate bodies with Japanese crime syndicates. Such constituted corporate culture will not only make it difficult to avoid the in-group rules that hide or obscure various corruption practices, but it will also treat harshly any signs of whistleblowing.

3.4.2. The Issue of Whistleblowing

Following the infamous Mitsubishi whistleblowing scandal in 2000, the Olympus scandal once again brought to the fore the issue of whistleblowing in 21st century corporate Japan. Simply put, whistleblowing is based on leaking to the public (via some media channel) a certain illegal, corruptive, or unethical activity that was/is occurring in a private or public organization. Generally, group membership affects ethical attitudes and behavior in a country where the relationship between collectivism and corruption is recognized. In Japan, the social group norms are often more effective than the overall legal framework, while corruption and bribery refers to acts of exchange that exist in a "gray zone", i.e. outside the range of customarily defined rules. In other words, failure to abide by the law in Japan may be known to, but not condemned by, the group. In this light, avoiding a leak of scandalous information in order to maintain the group can be considered "public morality", although it contradicts with the laws related to whistleblowing.

Despite the often-proclaimed strong unity (*ittaikan*) within every organized social group in Japan, there always exists a majority of loyal "core members", and a minority of less committed "peripheral members" (terms by Stockwin 2008). The leaders of the former may know about some ongoing corruption, but they do not question it, or they ignore it since they dwell under instructions of the top elites and family heads. The corporate social responsibility in Japan aims to ensure that corruption is prevented before

it happens. If corruption becomes dysfunctional, and the main culprit is indicated, he is dismissed quietly, while his crime is covered up (Kerbo and Inoue 1990; Inagami 2009). Prior to the scandalization process, the peripheral platform becomes further divided into what Sherman (1978) recognized as "evil fringe" and "zealot fringe". These two fringes are both equally perilous for any corrupt system: the evil fringe is usually committing corruption beyond limits, while the incorrupt zealot fringe engages in gossiping about a certain wrongdoing.

In the case of the Olympus scandal, the corruptive practices of hiding losses were circling around for a very long period of time in a form of internal gossip (Yamaguchi 2012). Generally speaking, we recognize between three main types of gossip (both socially-integrative and disruptive) that can lead to social consequences of both individual and collective nature. The *transactional* argumentation lies in an assumption that gossip is conducted by individuals, seeking to forward their own interest (symbolic, material) by manipulating cultural codes and denigrating others. Once its articulation is made public, a scandal can be born out of a seemingly innocent rumor. Furthermore, the *functionalist* argumentation stresses that gossip wields a certain integrative potential: it helps to maintain group collectivity and solidify social ties between its practitioners (e.g. Gluckman 1963). Most importantly for this case study, the *democratic* argumentation implies that in civic sphere (same as in corporations), it is precisely the rumor-mongering

spectator who is able to maintain a network of information (e.g. in a form of dissent), while it is usually not easy for the authorities to detect the source of civil gossip and control its transmission. This was also the case of Olympus: many company members were aware of the gossip regarding the illicit accounting. They communicated it only on internal level, but in this case, the brave "internal whistleblowers" transmitted the negative gossip to the unbiased media. These whistleblowers are usually company zealots who inform the management about some deviation for the sake of improvement, but they can also belong to a group which is cooperating with, but located outside of the corrupted center.[119]

Perhaps contrarily to expectations, the internal whistleblowing (*naibu kokuhatsu*) is not rare in Japan, and it seemed to be on a rise since the new millennium. The first high-profile instance of a corporate whistleblowing occurred in 2000 when an employee at Mitsubishi Motors exposed the company's cover-up of accident-causing defects. The Mitsubishi scandal, followed by dozens of other whistleblowing incidents

---

[119] For instance, in the 2011 gambling scandal of the Daio Paper Corporation, the main whistleblower belonged to a group subsidiary of Daio (*Yomiuri Shinbun*, November 24, 2011). Similarly, in the case of the 2002 cover-up scandal related to falsifying reports on nuclear safety by industry officials and public services, the person who blew the whistle was a foreign subcontractor (Kingston 2004). It is however not only the victims of corruption since the elites themselves can become zealot-whistleblowers (this role was assumed by Michael Woodford in Olympus scandal, see below). This phenomenon is however not limited to Japan: among the top global zealot-whistleblowers today consider Chelsea Manning who leaked classified military information to Wikileaks in 2010, Edward Snowden, who in 2013 publicly disclosed classified files of the United States National Security Agency, or the anonymous hacker who leaked the so-called Panama Papers in 2016.

(most importantly the mislabelling scandal of the Snow Brand Food Co. from 2002) brought the issue of whistleblowing in Japan to the fore. The Japanese legislature in 2004 did attempt to legitimize corporate whistleblowing via the Whistleblower Protection Act (Kōeki Tsūhōsha Hogo Hō), but the preconditions for enjoying statutory protection from retribution became paradoxically even tougher (see Wolff 2004).

Some believe that nowadays many corrupt in-group practices are in Japan often exposed by the employees themselves (Inagami 2009; Matsubara 2014). This can be partly explained by a snowball effect, in which each revelation of wrongdoing motivates more whistleblowers to come forward. Besides, these occurrences cast further doubt on the stereotype that Japanese employees exhibit a single-minded devotion to a group they belong to. As Martin Fackler observed, Japan now routinely sees several scandals a year that are initiated by employee whistleblowers (*The New York Times*, June 7, 2008). On the other hand, however, other observers believe that despite the existence of the whistleblower laws, the Japanese will always strongly hesitate to accuse their employers. Already prior to the Olympus scandal, the Japanese professors and lawyers grew skeptical about Japanese business ethics which values business at the expense of the morals (e.g. *Daily Yomiuri*, May 24, 2004). Besides, some whistleblowers expose their company's wrongdoing simply because they are afraid of being arrested (this was the case of Akahane Kiroku, who in 2008 blew the whistle in a false labeling scandal of the meat

processor Meat Hope). Most recently, writing a story that eventually exposes political corruption can now be regarded in Japan as misusing private information, carrying with it the danger of fines and imprisonment. This new rule was approved in December 2013 via the Special Secrecy Law (Tokutei Himitsu Hogo Hō), based on which can whistleblowers be punished to 10 years in prison and up to 10 milion yen fine.

In modern Japanese history, the act of whistleblowing was almost absent, while eventual whistleblowers were ostracized. Despite aforementioned exceptions, many Japanese scandals indicate that this tendency persists until today. The Whistleblower Protection Act aimed to encourage corporate whistleblowing in Japan, but the way it was formulated will hardly encourage whistleblowers, who are protected far less than in the West (Wolff 2004; West 2006). Consequently, the Japanese whistleblowers will hardly be protected for revealing corruption of public office. For instance, earlier in 2008, another exposed whistleblower from the Olympus Company, Hamada Masahara actually won his case in the Supreme Court, but the workplace abuse continued despite the successfully concluded lawsuit. In April 2016, Hamada was reimbursed and reinstated, but he lost any chance of promotion or pay rise. (This case reminds us of Akahane Kiroku – a sales executive at the Meat Hope Company, who revealed his company’s misconduct, but became treated like an outcast in his community while suffering depression.) Despite his “Pyrrhic victory”, Woodford’s case proved that there will be little or no tolerance for

whistleblowing in Japan, while the new Special Secrecy Law only makes whistleblowers and journalists even more uncomfortable.

3.5. Interpreting the Performance of Scandal Actors

Scandals are "fairy tales for adults" (Burkhardt 2011) with typical actor-categories: the protagonists ("heroes") who fight for the "good cause", antagonists ("villains") who violate rules and represent danger for social system, and finally the victims (usually citizens to be saved from the impact of corruption). Such narrative structuring is however never fixed, and it largely depends on the media framing (i.e. facilitating guilt frame versus excuse frame, or setting no frame at all by overlooking scandal), and on the public performances of the main scandal actors. Also, the larger sociopolitical context can matter. For instance, the Olympus scandal occurred one year after the disastrous Tōhoku earthquake, followed by the nuclear crisis at Fukushima. Apart from the catastrophic atmosphere of the post-3/11 zeitgeist, the Japanese networks, along with the failing TEPCO Company, must have contributed to public skepticism when it became clear that they both were reluctant/too late to air specific info regarding the radiation leak. Besides, the year 2011 witnessed many other corporate scandals that must have only deepened public skepticism toward latest developments in Japanese corporate culture.

The polarized framing in the case of Olympus/Woodford was clear: Woodford-the-villain (a foreign trouble-maker, leaking harmful information outside the Olympus family) versus Woodford-the-hero (an enthusiastic revelatory, attempting to "save" a dysfunctional corporation). At the outset of the scandal, Woodford was framed as a "villain" who through his non-Japanese, "arbitrary" moves disturbed the "harmony" of Japanese corporate governance while putting Olympus, its employees, and shareholders at risk. Once the scandal became global, owing to a handful of Japanese investigative journalists and the foreign media, Woodford succeeded to re-interpret his character in the eyes of the public as that of a "victim" of Japanese corporate system. Related to this, Woodford compared himself to Horie Takafumi (aka Horiemon), who had his Livedoor scandal in 2006.[120]

Although being foreign to Japan, Woodford was dismissed by his own company in a country, where forced removal of a company president is rare. Besides, Woodford's whistleblower-status allegedly put him in personal danger due to alleged involvement of the organized crime. On the one hand, the perceived threat of yakuza can be partly

[120] Horiemon is a former head of once hugely successful Japanese internet company Livedoor. The un-Japanese and easy-going entrepreneur was popular especially among the Japanese youth when criticizing the conservative business circles, but he was effectively demonized by the mainstream media. At the beginning of 2006, prosecutors raided Horiemon's company and arrested him on suspicion of market manipulation, and this lead to a disastrous loss of his company's market value. In a nationally publicized accounting scandal, Horiemon was accused of securities fraud, sentenced to two and half years in prison, and released on parole in March 2013. After his release, Horiemon was successfully "reintegrated" and returned to public life while publishing books and appearing in Japanese media.

contributed to Woodford's growing paranoia during the scandal. On the other hand, however, there did exist a certain relationship between Olympus and the organized crime: according to available information, the Japanese organized crime had its own share on the Olympus scandal since over one half of the amount from the pool of questionable payments was allegedly channeled to yakuza syndicates (*Facta,* August 2011; Greenfeld 2012; Maeda and Aoyagi 2013).

Due to the course of his public performances, Woodford became gradually perceived as a "hero", albeit motivated by seeking vengeance for his demotion. On the contrary, the top executives of Olympus (especially Kikukawa and Mori) were gradually steered toward the actor-category of "villain", albeit motivated by sheer survival of their own characters. Their vilification solidified once the independent committee had released their damning conclusion related to the structural corruption at Olympus. The non-mainstream media pressure culminated as well: in the weeklies, the Olympus leadership was degraded to "emperor without clothes" (*hadaka no ōsama*) (Gendai Business, October 10, 2011), while Woodford became labeled as a samurai among "idiots" (*orokamono*) (Yamaguchi 2014).

Generally speaking, media scandal is always a form of a more or less radical conflict where two main ideals (or their interpretations) are negatively polarized through public accusation and defense. First, the Olympus scandal was a conflict of two differing

interpretations of "loyalty". The Olympus leadership was primarily loyal to its traditional corporate principles of their predecessors – including the "necessary evil" of corporate cheating via creative accounting. On the contrary, Woodford (along with the primary whistleblower, who forwarded the gossip to *Facta* magazine) was loyal to a company, which was put into imminent danger through these illegitimate practices. Contrarily to expectations however, his method for dealing with the issue was a transparent "forensic accounting" (as opposed to "creative accounting" of Olympus).

Secondly, since Olympus was in 2011 an international company with both Japanese and foreign shareholders, the conflict occurred beyond the boundaries of separate cultures, triggering "global scandal". In other words, the conflict was simultaneously occurring on two levels: Olympus versus Woodford, and Japan versus "the world", while at stake was not only defamation (*meiyo kison*) of the Olympus Company, but also denigration of the Japanese corporate system as such. Seen from a global corporate perspective, the scandal lay in a fact that the Japanese leadership refused a talented leader mainly because of his "non-Japanese" corporate values (transparency, honesty, superb qualification). On the contrary, seen from the perspective of traditional Japanese corporate culture, Woodford violated the unwritten rules of conduct by leaking sensitive information to the public, whereby seriously damaging the reputation of a leading Japanese company. In other words, the fundamental problem did not lie in an

accounting misdeed, but in two differing mind-sets. This provoked a scandal “crisis” that was initiated by a rather unfortunate reaction of the Olympus leadership (ritually dismissing the disloyal president), to which Woodford reacted in a non-Japanese way (becoming an aggressive whistleblower).

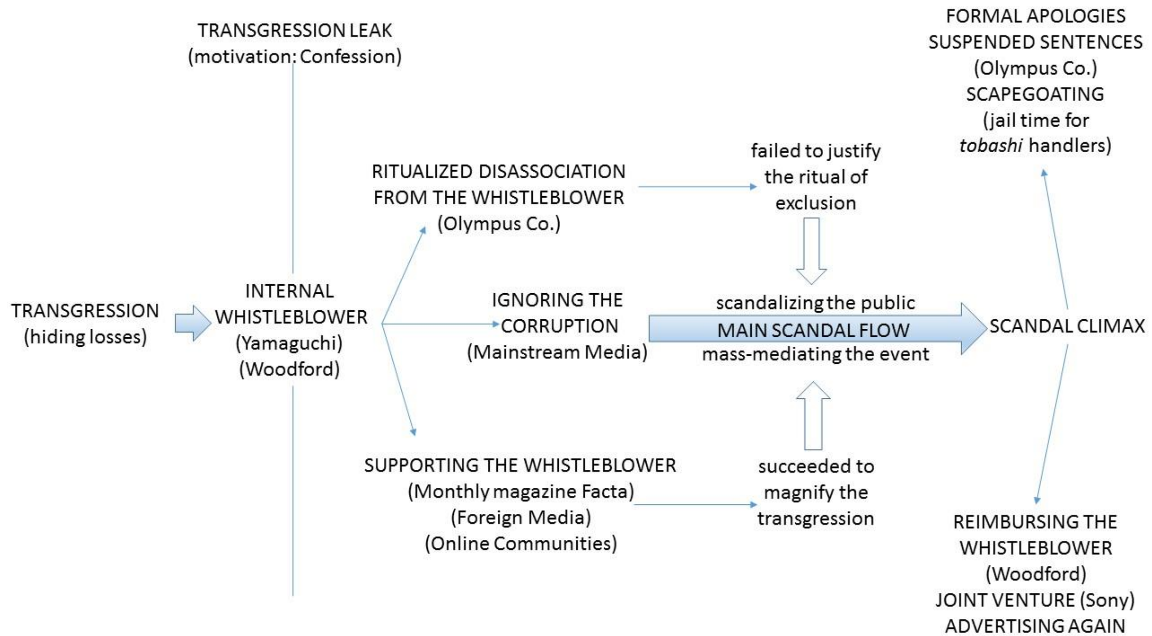
Thirdly, it is a fact that around 70 percent of the turnover on the Tokyo stock exchange market is realized by foreign investors. Consequently, this time the Japanese corruption involved not only the global media, but also the world of investors, and the overseas law-enforcement agencies (FBI, SFO). Along with the unsurprisingly delayed entry of the Japanese media, this was the decisive force, which impeded Olympus from treating problems as usual, i.e. through an orchestrated ritual of apology, a promise to investigate the case, and a routine move to establish ad hoc reform committee.

Finally, the Olympus scandal was a typical example of the “bottom-up” mediation, this time significantly supported by the foreign (media) pressure, or (*media*) *gaiatsu.* It was however the Japanese non-mainstream economic monthly that made the initial exposure possible, based on which the global exposure could only have followed. The editorial policy of the Japanese mainstream media at first did not acknowledge the scandal, because the scoop was too sensitive in terms of offending advertisers and damaging the status quo within the business circles (*zaikai*). Even the Japanese magazines initially rejected the scoop because it was not based on official prosecution and thus the

risk of being exposed to a lawsuit was too big (e.g. Yamaguchi 2011). Later on, especially the *Asahi Shinbun* and *Mainichi Shinbun* grew critical toward the case, however it was the Japanese dailies that in the first instance took the see-no-evil approach and refused to perform the ideal role of a media-watchdog. In the meantime, the independent investigative journalists disseminated the scandal (most importantly *The New York Times* correspondent in Tokyo, Tabuchi Hiroko, the investigative journalist Yamaguchi Yoshimasa, and the *Facta* editor Abe Shigeo). Only then could the global media networks make the scandal a top story in the Western media (the British television news company ITN even sent a team of reporters to Tokyo to cover the story). Without such intervention (alongside the notoriety Woodford received as a whistleblower-turned *gaijin shachō*), the misconduct would have gone unnoticed, and thus unpunished.

Figure 14. The Olympus/Woodford scandal flow.

Source: Author



3.6. Olympus and Beyond

Not long after the Olympus scandal, many cases of corporate corruption were exposed one after another: The Takata airbag/safety scandal (2013), the Toshiba accounting scandal (2015), the Asahi Kasei data fabrication scandal (2015), and most recently the Mitsubishi data manipulation scandal (2016). Without learning a lesson, much of the trouble that these Japanese corporations got into in the course of their scandal resulted

from the same pattern: denial and exposure. The corporate governance through outside directors had been reduced to an ineffective formality, while the denial stems from the superiors' pressure to achieve goals in the context of a corporate culture where going against the wishes of one's boss is unacceptable. The exposure is initiated only by the "heroic" internal whistleblowers who forwarded a sensitive information despite the ostracism and stigmatization which awaited them.

The companies in question have been tainted by profit-padding scandals, in which high-handed bosses for years systematically pushed their subordinates to cover-up weak financial figures. This sort of amoral self-preservation does not make for a scandal. It is more importantly the media's stance (most importantly the *Nikkei* in case of corporate scandals) and the negligence to uncover corruption, which only confirms the firm *modus operandi* of the Japanese mainstream media that have their own amoral reasons not to disrupt the fabric of things beyond the *tatemae* reality. Thus, similarly as in the case of Olympus, the Toshiba scandal was initiated from the outside (the Bloomberg News, quoting unnamed sources, reported that the US Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission are examining if any fraud occurred over a loss booked by Toshiba's US nuclear business unit Westinghouse), while the Mitsubishi scandal was triggered by the internal "zealots" located outside the corrupted center (i.e. the whistleblowing engineers of the Nissan Company that were forming a minicar joint

venture with Mitsubishi since 2010). Notwithstanding the new disturbance around the structural corruption of Mitsubishi, the company in question has already submitted documents to the government with the corrected mileage, and when the procedure is completed, it can again start selling the vehicles. The message was clear: Mitsubishi (same as Olympus or Toshiba) displayed their sorriness for the exposure (rather than for the corruptive practice per se) which only caused nuisance (*meiwaku*). The case of Olympus was different mainly because the key person, Michael Woodford was a foreigner who refused to accept the ritual of exclusion after humiliating the family/company he belonged to. Instead, he himself triggered the scandal by blowing the whistle, and despite his non-Japanese performance during the scandal, he succeeded to turn the public opinion against Olympus.

3.7. Conclusion

In concluding his book in 2012, Woodford was correct when lamenting that he was "winning the argument, but losing the war". In a war, where "Japan's enemy is Japan" (Yukawa 1999), the consequences of the Olympus scandal could have been anything but transformative, both in terms of corporate governance, and in terms of the mainstream media's social responsibility. Furthermore, some observers falsely claimed that Olympus

was more of an isolated case than an example of business culture. Having similar features of corporate corruption, Olympus was preceded in 2006 by the Livedoor scandal (see above), and yet another bigger corporate scandal (the Toshiba accounting scandal) emerged in 2015. While differing in extent (e.g. the accounting irregularities of Toshiba were 30 times larger than Liverdoor's fraud), these scandals involve the same type of corporate corruption: a long-term attempt to exaggerate earnings (Toshiba, Livedoor) or hide losses (Olympus) by insiders directed from the very top. Later, the Japanese corporate government was scrutinized as a "culture of deceit" (*kyogi taishitsu*) even by the mainstream Japanese media (e.g. *Mainichi Shinbun*, July 22, 2015). Rather unsurprisingly, these media unanimously agreed to make it a legal requirement to hire outside directors once the scandal was concluded. This idea was however refuted by the Japanese business lobbies that also opposed the Whistleblower Act (*Asahi Shinbun*, July 6, 2013).

Woodford was perceived as setting a new precedent for whistleblowing in Japan, adding to whistleblower-related laws that were passed in previous decade, but also here no substantial transformation occurred. In fact, earlier in 2008, another whistleblower from the Olympus Company, Hamada Masaharu, won his case in the Supreme Court, but his workplace abuse continued despite the successfully concluded lawsuit (e.g. *Asahi Shinbun*, July 11, 2012). In April 2016, Hamada was reinstated and reimbursed with 11

million yen, but he will have no chance of promotion or pay rise. Besides, the scandal further deepened cynicism in the way Japan operates the capital market, and it is safe to assume that no *gaijin* boss will be allowed to run large Japanese organization in near future.

Regarding the media-watchdog role, the Japanese mediascape did not undergo any serious liberal transformation either. On the contrary, in 2015 the conservative Nikkei purchased the independent *Financial Times*. Apart from the well-known fact that changes in ownership and corporate takeovers often bring different values, objectives, and ultimately the content of the news (Shoemaker and Reese 1996), this takeover can be related to the Olympus scandal, prior to which Nikkei functioned as "public information section" of the Olympus Corporation (*Sankei Shinbun*, July 24, 2015), while *The Financial Times* was the first foreign medium to expose the scandal. Despite the gravity of Olympus scandal, a revolution in corporate whistleblowing did not occur, while the chain of corruption scandals immediately after the Olympus case only confirmed that corporate fraud is here to stay.

VI.

CONCLUSION

This study is among the first to examine systematically the phenomenon of media scandal in postwar Japan. While conducting an interdisciplinary research informed by Jeffrey Alexander's neofunctionalism, the main aim of this thesis was to induce general principles about Japanese scandal as a social drama, and to address the role of scandal as cultural performance and journalistic ritual. Apart from the basic understanding of scandal as framed narrative and spectacular media event, I highlighted the role of scandal as a performance semantically located between (1) motivated expressive behavior (stemming from cultural rituals and fixed patterns), and (2) conscious strategic action (determined by journalistic routines and media ideologies).

After introducing my methodology and reviewing the literature on scandal in section I, I explicated on (private) transgression as an important social phenomenon that precedes every (public) scandal. In section II, I conducted a diachronic analysis that showed how scandal in both Japan and the West simultaneously developed from its original (religious) meaning to its (post)modern mediated form. Here, I showed how crucial was the development of technology, journalism, and politics in giving the shape to contemporary Japanese scandal. Furthermore, I argued that the basic understanding of

scandal as a media text must be grounded on the fact that media scandals are in principle narrativized, framed, and spectacularized morality tales, while their quality is often "pseudo-eventual". In section III, I extended the framework for understanding Japanese scandals as staged ceremonial performances that enable transgressors' pardon/comeback via culturally-specific rituals of confession, exclusion, and reintegration. In this relation, I also indicated that the scandal-ritual wields certain hegemonic features: on the one hand, derogatory gossip and public scandal of the elites serves to indicate (indirectly, and in a highly moralizing manner) how commoners should *not* live their life. On the other hand, scandal is a hegemonic tool used in conspiratorial attack-politics, while the damaged party produces individual scapegoats that take the blame and are sacrificed in order to "purify" those power segments whose corruptive practices became exposed. In section IV, I made a survey into the postwar history of Japanese corruption and found out that the media were overmagnifying corruption ever since the Lockheed scandal in the 1970s, and that in postwar Japan there occurred no significant changes in the wake of big scandals despite the media frenzy and politicians' calls for reform. In other words, Japanese scandals have been largely nontransformative – both in terms of dealing with elite deviances, and in terms of making the collusion of power structures more transparent. This renders scandal as a ritualized conflict with little reformatory potential, while its commodification helps to sell papers and increase TV ratings. Finally, in section V, I conducted case studies of

three large-scale Japanese scandals within their respective social contexts (entertainment, politics, and economy). While critically evaluating the main narrative of these scandals, I conducted a neofunctionalist analysis which focuses on scandal as social performance between ritual and strategy. In other words, I observed how each scandal in question had been (1) mediated as narrativized text, (2) performed as sociocultural ritual, and (3) generated by various pathologies (political, economic, media-related) on the backdrop of Japanese postwar history.

(1) Japanese scandal as structured text and morality tale

Every media scandal is an open text with twists and turns, second-order transgressions and peripheral sub-dramas. It finds its expression only through a narrative order, and must be infused with the overarching conflict of good against evil. The media readily disseminate those codes of morality where the difference of good and evil is indicated, and where purifying and polluting motives can be contrasted to create narratological tension.

a) Polarized Structuring

In Japan and elsewhere, the negative media framing is essentially based on the polarized structuring of the sacred ("pure") versus the profane ("impure"). The latter part of this binary is associated with Japanese elites being deceitful, calculated, and egoistic, and it can further activate the imagery of the weak (i.e. easily corrupted), tainted (by transgression) and deviating (from the norms of decency). Once these qualities are indicated in the text frame, it can pollute the collectivity in question: a faction, political party, an office (*jimusho*), but also the public, and the nation as a whole in case of global scandal.

The threat to moral purity of a "good society" induces the need to cleanse the pollution, partly because immorality is believed to be a contagion that can spread. This process is usually realized by scapegoating and ostracizing a designated individual via "purification ritual" (see below). The narrative purpose of scandal-as-text lies in telling a story about how one should *not* live one's life. The teleological function of such text lies in narrating for sanctioning, but it can fail if the plot is not dynamic, spectacular, and persuasive enough to catch the attention of wide audiences. The binary "true-false" is only of secondary importance in scandal, because the elites' confessional performance becomes effective and "truthful" if, and only if the audiences are persuaded.

Seen from the neofunctionalist perspective, the overarching binary, into which all

three analyzed scandals were inserted via media framing, was that of sacred-profane. In the Japanese press, this becomes indicated by expressions such as social-antisocial (*shakaiteki-hanshakaiteki*). (Such polarization is however misleading, because the term "antisocial" generally points to a deliberate behavior against society or community as such, not to mention that the same adjective is in Japan used for describing organized crime.) In the case of the Sakai Noriko scandal, the most relevant binary was that of pure-impure, since Sakai, who became exposed as a drug user absconding from the law, established her "reel self" in the past based on various innocent/motherly roles. In her scandal case, the media commentators subsumed the Japanese public into the overarching pronoun of "we" (*wareware, watashitachi*) in order to clearly disassociate the nation from the celebrity who once served as the "sacred signified". In the case of Ozawa Ichirō, his political funding scandal was mainly treated within the moral framework of legal-illegal (or lawful-unlawful). His actions were however not necessarily rendered as illegal because, as is often the case in political scandal, Ozawa effectively shifted the responsibility for his scandal to his secretaries, while the prosecution was eventually dropped based on lack of evidence. Ozawa's frequent gaffes and slips of tongue fell into the in-between category of "unsociable" and did not cause any serious harm to his reputation since the heavyweight Japanese politicians are "expected" to sound controversial. Furthermore, after new exposures related to the prosecutorial conduct were

published, it was the prosecutors themselves that ended up being judged from within the binary of legal-illegal whereby helping Ozawa to complicate the narrative and confuse the public's indignation. In the case of the Olympus scandal, Michael Woodford was initially judged based on the binary loyal-disloyal (to his company), but throughout the scandal narrative the binary "appropriate-inappropriate" (to fire Woodford) was applied to the Olympus company itself, vilifying its leadership and moving it to the latter part of the binary (inappropriate/illegal) on the pages of the mainstream press.

b) Expectancy Violation

The polarized structuring of a scandal narrative, and the media's guilt frame become more fixed if the so-called expectancy violation occurs (i.e. if an elite actor violates our stereotypical expectancy tied to him/her, we tend to evaluate him/her far more harshly than others who would do the same thing). Sakai was the biggest victim of this violation, mostly owing to her previous innocent/mother roles, and her PR activities connected to introducing the lay judge system in Japan. That is why the Japanese media framed her far more extremely than other people that might have perpetrated the same transgression. On the contrary, Ozawa Ichirō did not bring about any expectancy violation once his scandal was exposed. While echoing Machiavellian philosophy, the Japanese common knowledge contains a presupposition that politicians are to be corrupt in order to keep their power,

which in turn brings profit to their constituencies. The performance of Woodford versus Olympus also did not bring about any serious expectancy violation – mainly because Woodford was a foreigner who refused to play according to the rules of traditional corporate governance in Japan (including the norms of silence that impede the company members from whistleblowing).

c) Scandal as Open Text

All three case studies have shown that media scandal is a journalistically constructed narrative whose primary text is always an open story. Furthermore, it is a morality tale where the media symbolically attribute the roles of villains and heroes, but can shift the guilt/excuse frame depending on the scandal development. Besides, all three scandals generated various secondary texts, commodifying the transgression via books, films, interviews, and other post-scandal texts.

It was the second-order transgression that became decisive in the development of all three scandals. Following the twist in narrative development, Sakai Noriko was initially framed as a victim, but after her "unprecedented" escape from Tokyo in order to avoid the drug test she was quickly reframed as the main villain. It was precisely the "escape plot" (*tōbōgeki*) that opened space for highly spectacular reporting. The media were on a daily basis compiling charts and maps of Sakai's flight from Tokyo, they

practiced the costly “helicopter journalism”, and finally went berserk during Sakai’s tearful press conference. This only added to perceiving Sakai’s scandal as a journalistically constructed text, and a pseudo-event that did not unleash any transformative force but invited the attention of more than 40 per cent of all viewing audiences in Japan. In the scandal of Ozawa, the spectacular quality of the media text was rather lacking (this is usually the case of political scandals that were not based on sex or drugs). Ozawa was skillfully utilizing his press conferences, switching between denying and admitting guilt while appealing for the Japanese public (*kokumin*) to soothe their moral indignation. More importantly, his scandal narrative produced a significant twist – the exposure of illicit prosecutorial conduct – which added spice to a relatively dull and lengthy scandal narrative. This second-order transgression helped him to reach the acquittal and reintegrate into to the world of politics. The scandal case of Olympus/Woodford was more complicated. The narrative started without the presence of the media: Woodford as the new CEO who discovered the fraud was humiliated by the leadership by being ritually removed from his position. The second order transgression lay in exposing the mistreatment of a whistleblower-turned CEO. Once revealed by the foreign media, this increased the intensity and spectacularity of the media coverage in Japan (later producing books and a film), and it changed irreversibly the course of the scandal. Olympus had to apologize while Woodford became a celebrated whistleblower

albeit only outside Japan.

(2) Japanese scandal as social performance and secular ritual

Throughout this thesis, I argued that in Japanese scandals, ritual permeates strategy and vice versa. While being in accord with this argumentation, all three analyzed scandals contained elements of a secular ritual that gets reflected in the ritualized performance of the culprits, same as in Japanese journalists' rituals of objectivity. As for the former, the dramaturgical aspect of a scandal performance lay either in a staged conduct which tries to conceal some inappropriateness (i.e. denying responsibility), or in apologetic confession which speeds up the transgressor's rehabilitation (i.e. accepting responsibility). Either way, the Japanese scandal actors usually follow ritualized patterns (*kata*) of speech and behavior in order to save their face (see section III, chapter 2). As for the latter, magnifying or soft-pedalling scandals depends largely on the media's professional biases, ideological leanings, and commercial gains (see section IV, chapter 6).

In contemporary scandal, the ritualization (i.e. production of ritualized acts) is a strategic social activity partly based on cultural patterns, but it does not resolve social contradictions. Rather, it only temporary illuminates (and not eliminates) a certain conflict or opposition. To follow Maruyama (1969), we can state that ritualization of scandal became a part of the "interminable struggle" on the backdrop of tenseness and

uncertainty of postwar Japan. While resembling a sort of *perpetuum mobile*, new scandals are just updated cases of an old, well-known object and the usual subject. Instead of being an effective long-term prevention of the return of a crisis, scandals are rather just variations on one mythical theme: the perpetual, cyclical state of disintegration and renewal.

a) Ritualized Performance of Scandal Actors

For the most time during her scandal, Sakai's performance was carefully managed and her voice "muted" (she was only allowed to utter prescripted apologetic phrases during her press conference, and upon her release from detention). Her predominantly passive stance did not change even in her own book, published right after the scandal, where she further supported the hegemonic power of scandal by accepting her guilt, apologizing for the nuisance (*meiwaku*), and praising the work of the agents of formal social control. Her case is an example of a scandal where one's attempt to cover up his/her transgression becomes more important for the media than the original offence. It was her deliberate flight from Tokyo in order to avoid the drug test that irreversibly hyped up the scandal and flamed an unprecedented media frenzy. Initially, Sakai was noncooperative (and thus demonized by the media) after disappearing from Tokyo. Nonetheless, once being arrested, she utilized the apologetic strategy (*shazai no senryaku*), relying solely on

prescripted expressions of contrition. Especially the tabloids criticized her performance for being artificial, but owing to her well-managed public ritual of atonement, Sakai succeeded toward the next step of rehabilitation (divorce, hospitalization, anti-drug campaigning) and eventual reintegration (see below). On the contrary, Ozawa was a proactive scandal actor who co-defined the tempo of his narrative while attacking other scandal actors (most importantly the mainstream media and the prosecutors). Contrarily to Sakai, Ozawa was counter-hegemonic in essence, refusing to fully accept the guilt and personally take the blame. Furthermore, he skilfully confused the rituals of offence and apology in order to sway the public opinion. During his two-years long scandal performance, Ozawa was switching between offensive strategy (*seme no senryaku*) by attacking the media and the prosecutors, and protective strategy (*mamori no senryaku*) by making prototypical claims that he was not aware of the ongoing corruption. Furthermore, Ozawa repeatedly used the ritual of exclusion and reintegration, which was not any sort of a meaningful moral reflection, but simply a means of preventing voters and supporters from distancing themselves from the political platform he represented. In the case of Olympus versus Woodford, the scandal took shape of an “affair”: the performance of both actors transformed the scandal into an intrigue while generating opposed entities and eventually reversing the accusation process. The performance of Olympus was an example of a faulty crisis management: the company attempted to discard Woodford as

an irresponsible foreign boss (*gaijin shachō*) who is unsuitable for the position he assumed, but precisely based on this latently xenophobic provocation Woodford turned counter-hegemonic, using alternative media channels to topple the Olympus leadership. The beginning of the scandal was constituted by a failed ritual of exclusion: the Olympus management tried to get rid of Woodford based on his alleged disloyalty (i.e. breaking the ingroup norms of silence related to company losses). With his *gaijin* attitude however, Woodford refused to accept the ritual of exclusion, whose real reason lay in polluting the company by whistleblowing. On the contrary, Woodford backfired and counter-attacked the Japanese management with dire consequences for the company in question. It must however be noted that the narrative repositioning from villain to hero based on Woodford's offensive strategy (*seme no senryaku*) could have been effective precisely because he was a foreign whistleblower who leaked the scandal to non-Japanese media while ignoring the "sacred" code of traditional Japanese corporations (i.e. the norms of silence and private conflict resolution). Consequently, the foreign media exerted their pressure (*gaiatsu*) on both the corrupted company, and the Japanese media that based on their rituals of objectivity initially ignored the scandal.

b) Media Performance and Journalistic Rituals of Objectivity

Following Marshall McLuhan, we can claim that in Japanese scandals the medium is the message. Based on their media routines and rituals, the dailies during a scandal performance either take the see-no-evil approach, or they use a neutral, "objective" language (*kyakkan hōdō*). The television broadcast is usually more moralizing, symbolically punitive, and spectacular, while the weeklies are investigative, adversarial, and aggressive when focusing on human-interest aspects of a scandal. The social network communities are proportionally bashing and supporting the transgressor, but their power to change the scandal flow in selected case studies was marginal.[121]

At any rate, the Japanese media performance (i.e. the way the media perform their professional routines when covering scandal) becomes more important than the transgression per se. Nonetheless, the initial leak, which precedes every scandal, is rarely faciliated by the media themseves. It usually emerges from the outside of the mainstream mediascape, and is in principle motivated by one of the "3Cs": Capital, Conspiracy, or Confession. These motivations do not exclude each other, which makes it difficult to identify one primary mover. In the case of Sakai Noriko, the initial leak was based on

[121] This however cannot be said about the latest scandals of Obokata Haruko, Sano Kenjirō, or Shawn K, where online communities (*nettomin*) became the decisive force in triggering the scandal. On the on hand, this points to social media's rising popularity in contemporary Japan, while on the other hand these scandals indicate that the role of the traditional media as gatekeepers who prevent the elites' negative publicity is being significantly weakened.

pure coincidence (i.e. the police patrol found illegal stimulants when checking the belongings of Sakai's husband in the streets of Tokyo's Shibuya district). It was however the police who contacted other actors (the media, prosecutors, Sakai's agency) in the wake of the incident. Thus, the chances are that the leak was also capital-oriented since policemen sell scandalous information to interested parties. Once the leaked transgression had spread throughout the Japanese mediascape, the media performance was typical of a heightened spectacularity while focusing on absurd minutiae and emphasizing visual stimulation at the expense of describing the pathologies of the Japanese culture industry as such. Usually, the entertainment agencies (*jimusho*) attempt to block any scandalous information about their stars, but in the case of Sakai the transgression occurred on both a symbolic and legal level, and the prosecutorial conduct (e.g. the raid of Sakai's apartment, during which a minute amount of an illicit drug was found) allowed the frenzied media to cover the case as an attractive criminal story. In the case of Ozawa Ichirō, it was the prosecutors that triggered the case by arresting Ozawa's aides. This leads us to believe that the exposure was primarily a confession with traits of political conspiracy, since Ozawa's DPJ was going to win in next elections after a long uninterrupted reign of the LDP. The mainstream media (especially the *Asahi Shimbun*), followed by the weeklies, proceeded with Ozawa-bashing immediately after his secretaries were arrested for an alleged accounting fraud. During their performance, the

media applied a guilt frame by using visuals of Ozawa in a bad mood, spreading inconvenient information, publishing negative opinion columns, and leaving limited space to counter-arguments. The media performance however was not univocal: the *Asahi Shimbun*, accompanied by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, became the main Ozawa-bashers, while the foreign media, and loyal weeklies (*goyō shūkanshi*) actually stood by Ozawa. In the case of the Olympus/Woodford scandal, the initial leak was clearly motivated by confession: it was an internal whistleblower who warned the CEO of Olympus about the corruptive practices thereby urging Woodford to confess to the media. We may hypothesize that Woodford's leak to the foreign press was also motivated by capital (i.e. Woodford must have been aware of the reimbursement in case he wins the dispute), but this interpretation is rather unlikely, given his present activities (lecturing on corporate governance and whistleblowing, and contributing money to charities). The big media and even the tabloids initially took the see-no-evil approach (mainly because of the threat of losing their advertising partners), but the foreign press magnified the scandal abroad thereby putting the Japanese mainstream media into a position where they could hardly ignore the case anymore. Their belated entry into the "struggle for meanings" did validate the claims of corruption in Olympus, but as the fresh cases of corruption indicated, the scandalization of the Olympus case – same as the coverage of Ozawa's scandal, and the media frenzy around the Sakai megaspectacle – did not bring about and serious

consequences for the world of political and corporate governance.

c) The Nontransformative Nature of Japanese Scandals

According to Dayan and Katz (1992), ceremonial media events are – contrarily to ordinary news – those mediated performances that can challenge or affirm the established order while temporarily disrupting the normal flow of broadcast. As I indicated in section IV (chapter 3), Japanese scandals are typically frequent, short-lived, and rather nontransformative. In other words, no substantive lesson seems learned despite the calls for reform, while many similar scandals soon follow the case. In this regard, the long-term effects of the three scandals I analysed also did not bring about any serious transformation of corruptive practices. On the contrary, the effect of Sakai's scandal was rather contradicotry: while many of her loyal fans both in and outside Japan kept on supporting her notwithstanding her scandal, her music sales temporarily soared while the interest in drugs among the young Japanese has actually increased. Sakai herself was not permanently excluded from the entertainment industry: her comeback was planned ever since the scandal climax, and her first real professional re-appearence occured in 2012. Needless to say, she will never reach the same popularity, but formally speaking she is now back to business and available for advertising. Furthermore, her scandal did not create any new precendent for the entertainment industry since countless drug/sex

scandals of Japanese celebrities soon followed her case. Regarding Ozawa, he was fully aquitted in 2012 and immediately created a new political party (*Seikatsu no tō,* renamed in 2016 to *Jiyūtō*). At the time of writing, he is getting ready to challenge other parties in upcoming general elections despite his scandals. The abolition of donations from companies and organizations listed in the DPJ's manifesto remained in limbo, while donation scandals and other "financial irregularities" of many top politicians have been proliferating ever since, culminating in 2014, when as many as four ministers of Abe's cabinet had to resign. Ozawa's donation scandal only proved that political corruption in Japan is indeed structural, pathological and deeply-rooted, with little chances to make the system more transparent and less corrupt. Unfortunately, the scandal of Olympus also did not bring about any real consequences, both in terms of corporate corruption, and in terms of internal whistleblowing. On the contrary, the economic corruption (usually based on hiding losses or fabricating data) actually started booming right after the Olympus case, with Takata (2013), Toshiba (2015), Akebono (2015), Asahi Kasei (2015) and Mitsubishi (2016) having their corruptive practices exposed one after another. Furthermore, potential whistleblowers became even more discouraged by the new laws that now persecute whistleblowing in Japan even more severely. As a matter of fact, the punitive practice of leaking the whistleblower's name to one's superior, the harsh ostracism which follows, and no chances of promotion or pay rise for whistleblower, stayed intact ever since the

Olympus scandal. The internal consequences for Olympus were mostly the result of bad crisis management. Besides, the badly handled corporate crisis of Olympus caused irreparable damage leading to board resignations, a plunge in share values and mass firings. On the contrary, Woodford was generously reimbursed and became celebrated in the West.

(3) Japanese scandal as a product of mediopolitical pathologies

All three analyzed scandals brought to the fore some issues that constitute the background of many scandals in Japan: the issue of celebrity fetishism and media frenzy (Sakai), the issue of money politics and biased prosecution (Ozawa), and the issue of corporate corruption and internal whistleblowing (Olympus/Woodford). These are some of the pathologies that remained practically intact, although they became more (or less) transparent on the backdrop of technological and journalistic transformations in postwar Japan. Equally importantly, the impact of these scandals depended on a specific zeitgeist in which they occurred. The scandal of Sakai happened right after many other celebrities were caught transgressing conventions of decency (both symbolic and legal). Despite the gravity of her transgression, which generated a tremendous expectancy violation and a global megaspectacle, Sakai also became a victim of the principle of congruity (i.e. events that occur together closely in time and/or space become more fully and firmly associated).

Her scandal was socially and journalistically constructed as the boiling point of the 2009 super-scandal series related to stimulants possession or public indecency (most notably the preceding scandal of the sumo wrestler Wakarin and Japanese stars Suzuki Shigeru, Kusanagi Tsuyoshi or Manabu Oshio). This arbitrary grounding of Sakai's transgression to the zeitgeist of 2009 further magnified the media frenzy, fixed the media guilt frame, and prolonged the length of her social exile. The scandal of Ozawa occurred in a zeitgeist generated by the recession since the collapse of the bubble economy, being typical of voters' cynicism and distrust toward hypocritical politicians. Thus, no matter the seriousness of his transgression, at such critical times the Japanese public judged Ozawa also based on him challenging the tax increase, calling for correcting the income gap, and, toward the end of his scandal, for demanding better management of the disaster zone after the March 2011 earthquake. In the case of the Olympus scandal, its exposure occurred one year after the disastrous Tōhoku earthquake, followed by the nuclear crisis at Fukushima, which was also connected with malfunctions of the information exposure. This too contributed to public skepticism regarding the inherently corrupted corporate culture in Japan with little tolerance for whistleblowing, and to eventual public support for Woodford struggling with Olympus over the meaning of the scandal.

While following the criticism of Baudrillard (1988a) and Burkhardt (2011), I came to argue that in Japan it is not the scandal per se, which is inherently "scandalous",

but it is rather the deeply rooted mediopolitical pathologies that make scandals inevitable. However, even these pathologies are a "necessary evil" which inheres in postwar Japan. As Durkheim (1982) insisted, transgressions and deviations of various sorts represent habitual, inevitable, and thus "normal" occurrences in a society. Despite the tendency of the Japanese media to either avoid or ritualize conflicts, the crises that arise from a conflict are ubiquitous and integral to the workings of every society, arising from the very structure of society itself. This is especially the case of democracies that cannot exist without a certain measure of opacity. Finally, scandals and other moral disturbances are those genuine portions of reality that allow us to see what the social is made out of (James 1902; Garfinkel 1956; Latour 2005).

It becomes evident from my research that the most serious pathology dwells within the Japanese media system. The mainstream media are in principle *forced* to take up, or to hush up certain scandal news. They rarely practice investigative journalism – both in order to maintain good ties with elite sources, and in order to not "confuse" readers and advertisers that secure subscription figures. On the contrary, once they start covering transgression/corruption, the mainstream press renders itself as insanely democratic and relentlessly authoritarian. Moreover, news coverage often lacks editorial ethics, and the journalistic rituals of objectivity do not avoid invasion of privacy. However, the situation is much more complex, because the Japanese mediascape is not an ideological monolith.

Some mainstream Japanese media (especially the NHK and *Yomiuri Shimbun*) indeed gravitate toward their traditional role of a silent partner of power, restricting the flow of information and avoiding controversies, while the semi-mainstream tabloids (most notably *Shūkan Bunshun* and *Shūkan Shinchō*) synthetize both criticism and praise for the power elites. Nonetheless, relating the Japanese inside media to a fourth estate of power is too vague, and it does not illuminate the function of all interrelated media outlets during scandal.

The Japanese mainstream media are too free and too controlled at the same time: they have vast access to information channels but only very limited possibilities to make certain information public. While maintaining consensus with elite sources and advertisers, they often do not cover, but rather cover-up scandals. On the other hand, the outside media (weeklies, local media, foreign outlets) are both loyal and adversary, scrutinizing power elites from a detached perspective and disobeying conventional behavior depending on the profit/cost estimation. Especially the Japanese weeklies are effective "media tricksters" (term by Pharr 1996). They attack the status quo to defend it again later, and they utilize the creative/destructive dualism while blurring distinctions between good and evil. Perhaps paradoxically, their aggressive investigative journalism renders them as the closest to the western ideal of the media as "democracy watchdog".

In Japanese scandal, we register a sort of journalistic "division of labor": the

scandal industry flourishes on the periphery, while the mainstream media often function as a PR tool of power circles (political, bureaucratic, corporate). In other words, the dailies offer for the most part the preferred reading of a certain transgression/corruption, while the weeklies tend to negotiate/oppose the mainstream interpretation of scandal. This inside/outside media system is cross-referring, complementary, and always “functional” in its own way, because it eventually benefits all players: the mainstream media maintain the information cartel by framing and self-censoring the news, while the outside press, unbound by the rules of the cartel, keeps the privilege of a relatively unrestrained, controversial reporting. Simultaneously, their radical coverage sets the scandal agenda for other competing media – both mainstream and tabloid. Consequently, the media accountability is always diffused because scandal is neither a result of a single self-conscious performance, nor is it reducible to one single actor. It is in principle a product of the distributive and composite nature of agency, which operates in:

- **journalistic field** constituted by both the cross-reference and rivalry between different bureaus, between national newspapers, and between the weeklies
- **power field** occurring on a level of elite representatives, and within the invisible attack-politics
- **symbolic entanglement** of mainstream journalists with their elite sources, being realized in a symbolic cooperative/coercive manner.

Such “scandal network” blurs the lines between objectivity and political authority on the one hand, and between fact and political spin on the other. Moreover, in Japanese scandal the adversarial relationship among some actors is itself a *ritual* that mystifies media reporting. To sum up, the real issue does not lie in exposed transgression/corruption, but more importantly it points to multifaceted mediopolitical pathology:

1. The institutional background of scandals is usually systematically ignored by the inside media (i.e. the big five dailies and the NHK). What is produced is a fragmented picture, which necessarily falls short of representing the complete context of corruption (often at the expense of absurd minutiae and human-interest aspects). Japanese scandals rarely morph into “institutional morality tales” (term by Gamson 2001), having only cosmetic consequences for actual contents in the world of politics, business, sport and entertainment. In case of scandals that seriously threaten social trust (especially the food/safety scandals), the system produces scapegoats and ritually excludes them. Especially in celebrity scandals, the Japanese media often condemn transgressors that are the very products of the same media system. In political/economic scandals, they do not help to eliminate, but only temporarily illuminate the corruptness of the system if inevitable.

2. Once being forced to expose and investigate a scandal (usually based on prosecutorial raids, the weeklies or the foreign media), the Japanese mainstream media perform a role of self-appointed arbiters of justice, but are usually deferential to powerful forces, and often collaborate with the police and prosecutors. On the contrary, the tabloids are emblematic of journalistic nihilism and scandal frenzy while disregarding basic reporting principles and nourishing cynicism and political withdrawal. Besides, they are the main cause of "public pollution" (i.e. coarse invasion of privacy, disclosure of personal information about suspects or people associated with them, and spreading of moral panic and unhealthy curiosity).

3. The Japanese media often act as ethically flexible "tricksters": on the one hand, they are voluntarily undergoing self-censorship (*jishu kisei*) and regulate reporter routines via the *kisha kurabu* system in order to avoid retaliation from power elites and advertisers, but on the other hand they use selective framing to deconstruct the institutional authority in order to appeal to audiences and sell papers. In mainstream press, the former position overlaps with the ideology of political affair section (*seijibu*) that pragmatically downplays power-related scandals as superficial phenomena. The latter position applies to semi-mainstream weekly

tabloids that become “revitalized” by political sleaze, corporate greed, and celebrity fetishism.

4. Japan is characteristic of absence of strong social sanctions against political corruption, with laws being still easy to evade. These evasions are normally left to investigative journalism, but this practice is in mainstream media systematically discouraged. Corruption flourishes because of available loopholes, the impotence of the whistleblowing laws, and the tricks that power holders employ to sidestep legal liabilities. If caught, Japanese politicians are rarely punished and they often get back on track after undergoing the secular mediated ritual of confession and eventual temporary exclusion. Regarding the corporate world, it is often inevitable for the new enterprises (under the conditions of privatization and deregulation) to bribe political administration in order to win their patronage and to prevail over competitors. Besides, the corporate law of and other rules of disclosure encourage corporations to keep secrets. However, secrecy leads to leaks, and leaks lead to scandal.

5. The anti-corruption policies are difficult to implement because of the strong Japanese business lobby, and because the amount of reward is unlikely to offset

the downsides of reporting one's employer. The culture of whistleblowing somewhat increased in Japan with the outset of the new millennium, but the Japanese still have a relatively strong loyalty to their organizations, while the enacted whistleblower laws fail to curb corporate deception. Besides, the institutional/structural corruption is often employed in a pursuit of "socially legitimate" goals of business/politics, and is integrated as a part of the particular communication of the system. The corruption, however, must be always kept at some "reasonable" level in order to avoid the attention of tabloids and prosecutors. In other words, what matters in Japanese scandals is the *extent* of the disjunction between goal and means (i.e. the amount of illegally accumulated profit), and the *excess* of one's individualistic endeavor (i.e. the degree of one's ideological radicalism).

6. The high-level corruption does not usually become an important social issue in Japan. It will only become temporarily scandalized if a cooperation between the government and big business had some "unintended consequences", or if there occurred a breakdown in the ritualized system of media management. Besides, the finance schemes within the media *keiretsu*-based industries are common and tolerated, which further neutralizes the role of the media as independent

watchdogs that serve the public interest. Finally, the government-media collusion influences the news content, including the way scandals are approached. Especially significant are close ties of the ruling LDP and the biggest daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*, while the Japanese government pressures the national broadcaster NHK to modify or exclude certain information from their agenda.

7. The idol/celebrity discourse – importantly including gossip and scandal – was one of the "achievements" of Japan as an advanced industrial society with an economic surplus. The countless celebrity scandals are a daily fixture in the Japanese media; their pathology is emblematic of excessive, over-heated coverage out of proportion to the event being covered, and of violating norms of privacy and decency. Finally, the media coverage of celebrity scandals illustrates how in Japanese media culture the mainstream journalism became irrecoverably supplanted by tabloidization and celebrity fetishism.

Despite all sociocultural idiosyncrasies mentioned in this thesis, scandal and corruption is not an issue of specific social development in a non-Western country. Indeed, in Japan virtually every major politician has had some experience with bribes, while the growing exposure of corporate corruption has in recent years damaged the reputation of major

Japanese companies. However, structural corruption which derives mainly from capitalist conditions and collusive politics is evident in other western and Asian democracies as well. Corruption in the US became effectively institutionalized, while in European countries corruptive practices had been common and tolerated since the 20th century. Even the corrupt power elites in China cannot completely control media, manage news and hide scandals, although they try (Lull 1991). Besides, journalists everywhere find it now increasingly hard to maintain that they are wholly "objective", falling back on more defensive and ambiguous standards such as "balance" or "fairness" (e.g. Shoemaker and Reese 1996).

In this thesis, I have proposed a new framework within which we can reconsider the complex social phenomenon of media scandal in postwar Japan. While being in accord with the neofunctionalist paradigm, I scrutinized scandal as a sociocultural performance between ritual and strategy. In order to illustrate this quality, I elaborated on three case major media scandals in recent Japanese history, and observed the narrative structuring of scandal as a structured text and ritualized performance of involved actors (most importantly the mainstream/tabloid media and the main transgressor). This method however does not need to be limited only to the Japanese mediascape. In all media-saturated societies, there exists a similar tendency toward ritualization when treating transgressions of corrupted elites: not only in Japan, the media routines serve to defend

the organizational product from blame, while the ritualized performances are conducted by scandal culprits in order to save their face. I believe that such methodology can give a better insight into the ways transgression and scandal are processed and performed in contemporary media-saturated societies.

REFERENCES

Adelstein, Jake. “The Japanese Press and TEPCO: From lapdog to pit bull.” *No.1 Shimbun* Vol. 43, No. 6 (2011): 6-7.

——— “Learning valuable lessons from the yakuza?” *The Japan Times,* April 4, 2015.

Adut, Ari. *On Scandal: Moral Disturbances in Society, Politics and Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Achter, Paul J. “Narrative, intertextuality, and apologia in contemporary political scandals.” *Southern Communication Journal* 65:4 (2000): 318-333.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. “Culture and political crisis: “Watergate” and Durkheimian sociology.” In *Durkheimian sociology: cultural studies*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, 187-224. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

——— *Structure and meaning: relinking classical sociology.* New York: Colubia University Press, 1989.

——— *The meanings of social life: a cultural sociology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

——— “Cultural pragmatics: social performance between ritual and strategy.” In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 29-90. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006a.

——— “From the depths of despair: performance, counterperformance, and September 11.” In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 91-114. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006b.

——— *The Civil sphere.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006c.

——— “The Celebrity-icon.” *Cultural Sociology* 4 (2010): 323-336.

——— *Performance and Power.* Cambridge: Polity, 2011.

——— *Trauma: a social theory.* Cambridge: Polity, 2012.

Alexander, Jeffrey, C. and Ronald N. Jacobs. "Mass communication, ritual, and civil society." In *Media, ritual, and identity,* edited by Tamar Liebes and James Curran, 23-41. London: Routledge, 1998.

Amyx, Jennifer. "The Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan at the Crossroads." In *Japanese Governance: Beyond Japan Inc.*, edited by Jennifer Amyx and Peter Drysdale, 55-76. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Altheide, David. *Media Power*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985.

——— *Creating fear: news and the construction of crisis*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 2002.

——— "Mass Media, Crime, and the Discourse of Fear." *Hedgehog Review* 5, Issue 3 (2003): 9-25.

Althusser, Luis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

Altman, Kristin K. "Television and Political Turmoil: Japan's Summer of 1993." In *Media and Politics in Japan*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Ellis Krauss, 165-186. Honolulu: University of Hawai´i Press, 1996.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* London: Verso, 1983.

Anderson, James A. and Geoffrey Baym. "Philosophies and Philosophic Issues in Communication, 1995-2004." *Journal of Communication* Vol. 54, Issue 4 (2004): 589-615.

Apter, David E. "Politics as theatre: an alternative view of the rationalities of power." In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 218-256. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition.* London: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

——— *On Revolution.* New York: Viking Press, 1963.

——— *Crises of the Republic*. Marmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973.

Aristotle. *Treatise on Rhetoric*. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1857.

——— *Politics.* Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998.

——— *Poetics.* Newburyport: R. Pullins Company, 2006.

Aritake, Shuji. *Seiji to Kane to Jiken to* [On Politics, Money, and Incidents]. Tokyo: Keizei Oraisha, 1970.

Arrow, Kenneth. *The Limits of Organization.* W.W. Norton and Company, 1974.

Asahi Shimbun Company. *Media, Propaganda and Politics in 20th Century Japan.* Bloomsbury: SOAS Studies in Modern and Contemporary Japan, 2015.

Asano, Ken'ichi. "Media Critic: Asano Kenichi. Interview by Stewart Wachs." *Kyoto*

Journal 46 (2001).

——— *Hanzai Hōdō no Hanzai* [The Crimes of Criminal Reporting]. Tokyo: Shinpusha, 2004.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Babb, James. "Corruption and Governance in Japan." *Contested Governance in Japan: Sites and Issues*, edited by Glenn D. Hook, 174-191. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005.

Barker, Anthony. "The upturned stone: Political scandals and their investigation processes in twenty democracies." *Crime, Law & Social Change* 21 (1994): 337-373.

Barkin, Steve. "The Journalist as Storyteller: An Interdisciplinary Perspective." *American Journalism* 1(2) (1984): 27-33.

Barkow, Jeremy H. "Beneath new culture is old psychology: Gossip and social

stratification." In *The adapted mind: evolutionary psychology and the evolution of culture*, edited by Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby, 627-637. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1992.

Barkow, Jeremy H., Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, eds. *The adapted mind: evolutionary psychology and the evolution of culture*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1992.

Barret, Gregory. *Archetypes in Japanese Film*. London: Associated University Presses, 1989.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. London: Paladin, 1973.

Bataille, Georges. *Eroticism.* London: Boyars, 1986.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and Simulations." In *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, edited by Mark Poster, 166-184, Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 1988a.

——— *The Ecstasy of Communication.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1988b.

——— *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena.* London: Verso, 1993.

Becker, Howard. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance.* New York: The Free Press, 1963.

Befu, Harumi. “Bribery in Japan: When Law Tangles with Culture.” In *The Self and the System*, edited by Elinor Lenz and Rita Riley, 87-93, Los Angeles: U.C.L.A. Extension, 1975.

Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Bellah, Robert. *Tokugawa Religion.* New York: The Free Press, 1957.

——— *Beyond belief: essays on religion in a post-traditional world.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

——— *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

——— "Durkheim and ritual." In *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim*, edited by Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith, 183-210, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Bellah, Robert and Phillip E. Hammond. *Varieties of Civil Religion.* Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1980.

Benedict, Ruth. *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture.* New York: Mariner Books, 2005.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Bennett, Lance W. *News: The Politics of Illusion.* Washington: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Bennett, Lance, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston. *When the press fails: political power and the news media from Iraq to Katrina.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Benoit, William. (1995). *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Berger, Arthur A. *Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday Life*. London: Sage, 1997.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. *The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Berkofsky, Axel. "Corruption and Bribery in Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Case of Muneo Suzuki." *Japan Policy Research Institute* Working Paper No. 86, 2002.

Bisbort, Alan. *Media Scandals.* London: Greenwood Press, 2008.

Blair, Gavin. "Standing tall." *Number 1 Shimbun*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 2016.

Blaker, Michael. "Japan 1976: The Year of Lockheed." *Asian Survey* Vol. 17, No. 1 (1977): 81-90.

Blechinger, Verena. *Politische Korruption in Japan. Ursachen, Hintergründe und Reform* [Political Corruption in Japan. Causes, Consequences, and Reform]. Hamburg: Institute for Asian Affairs, 1998.

Blic, Damien and Cyril Lemieux. "The Scandal as Test: Elements of Pragmatic Sociology." *Politix* 71:3 (2005): 9-38.

Blumler, Jay G. and Dennis Kavanagh. "The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features." *Political Communication* Vol.16 (1999): 209-230.

Boltanski, Luc. *Distant Suffering. Morality, Media and Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Boorstin, Daniel. *The image: a guide to pseudo-events in America*. London: Vintage Books, 1992.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "La délégation et le Fétichisme Politique." *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales,* No. 52/53 (1984): 49-56.

——— *Language and Symbolic Power.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

——— *On Television.* New York: New Press, 1999.

——— "The Political Field, the Social Sciences Field, and the Journalistic Field." In *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, edited by Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, 29-47, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.

Bourdieu, Pierre and John B. Thompson. *Language and Symbolic Power.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.

Bowen, Roger W. *Japan's dysfunctional democracy: the Liberal Democratic Party and structural corruption.* New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003.

Bösch, Frank. "Kampf um Normen: Skandale in historisher Perspective." In *Skandale. Strukturen und Strategien oeffentlicher Aufmerksamkeitserzeugung,* edited by Kristin Bulkow and Christer Petersen, 29-49, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011.

Brasor, Philip. “Oh mother, I can feel the soilfalling over your head.” *The Japan Times*, November 25, 2007.

——— “In Japanese showbiz, the sins of the son visit the mother.” *The Japan Times,* September 10, 2016.

——— “Fundraising loopholes, a political norm.” *The Japan Times,* July 15, 2017.

Bremen, Jan van and D.P. Martinez, eds. *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan: Religious Practices in an Industrialized Society.* London: Routledge, 1995.

Broadbent, Jeffrey. *Environmental Politics in Japan. Networks of Power and Protest.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Bulkow, Kristin and Christer Petersen, eds. *Skandale. Strukturen und Strategien oeffentlicher Aufmerksamkeitserzeugung.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

Burkhardt, Steffen. "Skandal, medialisierter Skandal, Medienskandal: Eine Typologie oeffentlicher Empoerung." In *Skandale. Strukturen und Strategien oeffentlicher Aufmerksamkeitserzeugung,* edited by Kristin Bulkow and Christer Petersen, 131-156, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011.

Butler, Ian and Mark Drakeford. *Scandal, Social Policy and Welfare.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2003.

Calder, Kent E. *Crisis and compensation: public policy and political stability in Japan, 1949-1986.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Campbell, John C. "Media and Policy Change in Japan." In *Media and Politics in Japan*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Ellis Krauss, 187-212. Honolulu: University of Hawai´i Press, 1996.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Carey, James W. *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston:

Unwin Hyman, 1989.

——— "Political ritual on television: episodes in the history of shame, degradation and excommunication." In *Media, ritual, and identity,* edited by Tamar Liebes and James Curran, 42-70. London: Routledge, 1998.

Carlson, Matthew. "Campaign Finance Irregularities, Sex Scandals, and the Election." In *Japan Decides 2012: The Japanese General Election,* edited by Robert Pekkanen, Steven S. Read and Ethan Scheiner, 154-169. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Carroll, John B. and Benjamon Lee Whorf. *Language, Thought, and Reality. Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1956.

Cassirer, Ernst. *The Myth of the State.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946.

Castells, Manuel. *Communication Power.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Chalaby, Jean K. "Scandal and the Rise of Investigative reporting in France." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1194-1207.

Champagne, Patrick and Dominique Marchetti. "Toe Contaminated Blood Scandal: Reframing Medical News." In *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, edited by Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, 113-134, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.

Chang, Eric C.C. and Yun-han Chu. "Testing Asian Corruption Exceptionalism: Corruption and Trust in Asian Democracies." *Journal of Politics* 68:2 (2006): 259-271.

Chen, Ming-Chu. "Talking Sex and Gender from Taiwan's VCD Scandal." In *Globalization, Culture and Ineuality in Asia,* edited by Timothy J Scrase, Todd Joseph Miles Holden and Scott Baum, 191-214, Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2003.

Cohen, William A. *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

Cohen, Stanley. *Folk devils and moral panic.* Oxon: Routledge, 2002.

Collins, Randall. *Interaction Ritual Chains.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Cooper-Chen, Alice. *Mass communication in Japan*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1997.

Corner, John. "Mediated persona and political culture." In *The Media and the Restyling of Politics: Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*, edited by John Corner and Dick Pels, 67-84, London: Sage, 2003.

Cottle, Simon. "Mediatized rituals: beyond manufacturing consent." *Media, Culture & Society* Vol. 28(3), 2006: 411-432.

Couldry, Nick. *Media rituals: a critical approach*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Cucek, Michael. "Abe and press oppression: guilty, not guilty or not proven?" In *Press Freedom in Contemporary Japan,* edited by Jeff Kingston, London: Routledge, 2016.

Curran, James. *Media and Power*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Curtis, Gerald L. *The Logic of Japanese Politics.* New York: Columbia University

Press, 1999.

Dagnes, Alison and Mark Sachleben. *Scandal! : An interdisciplinary approach to the consequences, outcomes, and significance of political scandals.* New York: Bloomsberry, 2014.

Davis, Winston. *Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change.* New York: State of University New York Press, 1992

Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz. "Articulating consensus: the ritual and rhetoric of media events." In *Durkheimian sociology: cultural studies*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, 161-186. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

——— *Media events: the live broadcasting of history*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Deakin, Simon and D. Hugh Whittaker. "On a Different Path? The Managerial Reshaping of Japanese Corporate Governance." In *Corporate Governance and Managerial Reform in Japan,* edited by D. Hugh Whittaker and Simon Deakin, 1-27.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Debord, Guy. *La société du spectacle.* Film. Directed by Guy Debord. Paris: Simar Films, 1973.

——— *Society of the spectacle*. Detroit: Black and Red, 1967.

deCordova, Richard. "The Emergence of the Star System in America." In *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, edited by Christine Gledhill, 17-29, London: Routledge, 1991.

Deflem, Mathieu. "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* no.30(1) (1991): 1-25.

Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* New York: Praeger, 1966.

——— *Natural Symbols*. New York: Random House, 1973.

Döveling, Katrin et al., ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media.* London: Routledge, 2011.

Duggan, Mark and Steven D. Levitt. "Winning isn't Everything: Corruption in Sumo Wrestling." *The American Economic Review* Vol. 95, No. 5 (2002): 1594-1605.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary forms of Religious Life.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915.

——— *Division of Labor in Society.* New York: Free Press, 1933.

——— *Pragmatism and Sociology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

——— *The Rules of Sociological Method.* New York: Free Press, 1982.

Edelman, Murray J. *The Symbolic Uses of Politics.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964.

——— *Political language.* New York: Academic Press, 1977.

——— *The Politics of Misinformation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Ehrat, Johannes. *Power of scandal: semiotic and pragmatic in mass media*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion.* Orlando: Harcourt, 1959.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel. *Japanese civilization: a comparative view.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Ekstrom, Mats and Bengt Johansson. "Talk scandals." *Media, Culture & Society* 30 (2008): 61-79.

Entman, Robert. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43 (3) (1993): 51-58.

Esser, Frank and Uwe Hartung. "Nazis, Pollution, and no Sex: Political Scandals as a reflection of political Culture in Germany." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1040-1071.

Estes, Clarissa P. Introduction to the 2004 Commemorative edition of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* by Joseph Campbell, xxiii–lxv. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Ezawa, Masao. *Orimpikku ha kanemamire: Nagano gorin no uragawa.* [Olympic gold covered: the back of the Nagano Olympics]. Tokyo: Tankobon, 1999.

Ezoe, Hiromasa. *Where Is the Justice?: Media Attacks, Prosecutorial Abuse, and My 13 Years in Japanese Court.* Tokyo: Kodansha Intl., 2010.

Fackler, Martin. "More workers are blowing the whistle in Japan, but the risks are still great. *The New York Times*, June 9, 2008.

Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: Hodder, 1995.

Farley, Maggie. “Japan's Press and the Politics of Scandal.” In *Media and Politics in Japan*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Ellis.S. Krauss, 133-164. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

Feldman, Eric A. “Deconstructing the Japanese HIV Scandal.” *Japanese Policy Research Institute Working Paper* No. 30, 1997.

——— “HIV and Blood in Japan: Transforming Private Conflict into Public Scandal. *Blood feuds: AIDS, blood, and the politics of medical disaster,* edited by Eric A. Feldman and Ronald Bayer, 59-94. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

——— *The ritual of rights in Japan. Law, Society, and Health Policy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Feldman, Ofer. *Politics and News Media in Japan*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1993.

——— *Politically speaking: a worldwide examination of language used in the public*

sphere. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998.

Finley, Peter, Laura Finley and Jeffrey Fountain. *Sports scandals.* London: Greenwood Press, 2008.

Fiske, John. *Understanding popular culture.* London: Routledge, 1989.

——— *Television culture*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Fisher, Walter R. “Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument.” *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984): 1-20.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* London: Tavistok, 1972.

——— *Discipline and Punish.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

Fourquet, Francois. “L’ideal historique.” *Recherches* 14 (1974).

Franzese, Robert J. *The sociology of deviance: differences, tradition, and stigma.*

Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 2009.

Freeman, Laurie A. "Japan's Press Clubs as Information Cartels." *Japan Policy Research Institute* Working Paper No. 18, 1996.

——— *Closing the shop: information cartels and Japan's mass media.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Freud, Sigmund. "Civilization and Its Discontents." In *Theories of social order: a reader*, edited by M. Hechter and Ch. Horne, 101-111. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Galbraith, Patrick W. and Jason G. Karlin, eds. *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture.* Hampshire: Palgrave, 2012a.

Galbraith, Patrick W. and Jason G. Karlin. "Introduction: The Mirror of Idols and Celebrity." In *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture*, edited by Patrick W. Galbraith and Jason G. Karlin, 1-32. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2012b.

Galtung, Johan and Mari H. Ruge. "The Structure of foreign news: The presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers." *Journal of Peace Research* 2(1) (1965): 64-90.

Gamble, Adam and Takesato Watanabe. *A public betrayed: an inside look at Japanese media atrocities and their warnings to the West*. Washington: Regnery, 2004.

Gamson, Joshua. "Normal Sins: Sex Scandal Narratives as Institutional Morality Tales." *Social Problems* 48, 2 (2001): 185-205.

Gamson, William, A. and Andre Modigliani. "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 95, No. 1 (1989): 1-37.

Gamson, William et al. "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 18 (1992): 373-393.

Garfinkel, Harold. "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies." *American*

Journal of Sociology Vol. 61, No. 5 (1956): 420-424.

Garland, Christian and Stephen Harper. "Did Somebody Say Neoliberalism?: On the Uses and Limitations of a Critical Concept in Media and Communication Studies." *Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 10:2 (2012):413-424.

Garment, Suzanne. *Scandal: The Crisis of Mistrust in American Politics.* New York: Times Books, 1991.

Garon, Sheldon. *Molding Japanese Minds.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Garrard, John and James L. Newell, eds. *Scandals in past and contemporary politics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.

Gaunder, Alisa. *Political Reform in Japan: Leadership Looming Large.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, 1973.

George Mulgan, Aurelia. *Power and Pork: A Japanese Political Life.* Canberra: Asia Pacific Press & The Australian National University, 2006.

——— "The perils of Japanese Politics." *Japan Forum* 21:2 (2010): 183-207.

——— *Ozawa Ichiro and Japanese Politics: Old Versus New.* New York: Routledge, 2014.

Gerbner, George. "Cultural Indicators: the Case of Violence in Television Drama." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 388, No. 1 (1970): 69-81.

Giannakopoulos, Angelos, Konstadinos Maras and Shinya Amano. "Party Financing in Germany and Japan: Comparative Perspectives of Political Corruption." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2009).

Gibbs, Nancy. "Men behaving badly: what is it about power that makes men crazy?" *Time*, May 30, 2011.

Giesen, Bernhard. "Performing the sacred: a Durkheimian perspective on the performative turn in the social sciences." In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 325-367. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

——— "Ritual, Power, and Style: The Implications of *Negara* for the Sociology of Power." In *Interpreting Clifford Geertz: Cultural Investigation in the Social Sciences,* edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Philip Smith, and Matthew Norton, London: Palgrave, 2011.

Gilbert, Jeremy. *Anticapitalism and culture: radical theory and popular politics*. Oxford: Berg, 2008.

Gilens, Martin and Benjamin I. Page. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspective on Politics* Vol. 12 Issue 3 (2014): 564-65.

Girard, Rene. *The Girard Reader,* edited by James G. Williams. New York: The

Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996.

Girling, John. *Corruption, Capitalism and Democracy.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

Gitlin, Todd. *The whole world is watching: mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Gluckman, Max. "Gossip and Scandal." *Current Anthropology,* no. 3(4) (1963): 307-316.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959.

——— *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

——— "On face-work: an analysis of ritual elements in social interaction." In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 306-320, London: Routledge, 1999.

Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral panics: the social construction of deviance.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2009.

Gordon, Andrew, ed. *Postwar Japan as History.* Berkeley: The Regents of the University of California, 1993.

Gorshkov, Nikolai. "Kursk closure leaves questions unanswered." *BBC News World Edition.* July 31, 2002.

Gouldner, Alvin W. "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement." *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 161-178.

Grabosky, Peter N. "The Variability of Punishment." In *Toward a General Theory of Social Control*, edited by Donald Black, 163-189, Orlando: Academic Press, 1984.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison notebooks.* London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.

Greenfeld, Karl T. "The Story Behind the Olympus Scandal." *Bloomberg Business,*

February 16, 2012.

Grice, Herbert O. "Logic and conversation." In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 76-88, London: Routledge, 1999.

Grimes, Ronald L. *Rite ouf of place: ritual, media, and the arts.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

——— et al., ed. *Ritual, Media, and Conflict.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural transformation of the public sphere.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

Hacking, Ian. "Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: between discourse in the abstract and face-to-face interaction". *Economy and Society* 33, no.3 (2004): 277-302.

Haley, John O. "Sheathing the Sword of Justice in Japan: An Essay on Law without Sanctions." *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1982): 265-281.

——— *Authority without power: law and the Japanese paradox.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

——— *The Spirit of Japanese Law.* Athens: The University of Georgia, 2006.

Hall, Stuart, ed. *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London: Sage, 1997.

Halloran, Richard. *Japan: images and realities.* London: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970.

Hamai, Koichi and Thomas Ellis. “Crime and criminal justice in modern Japan: From re-integrative shaming to popular punitivism.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 34 (2006): 157-178.

Hanada, Tatsuro. “Can there be a Public Sphere in Japan?” *Review of Media, Information and Society* Vol. 2 (1997): 1-23.

Handelman, Don. “Gossip in Encounters: The Transmission of Information in a Bounded Society.” *Man* New Series, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973): 210-227.

Handelman, Don. “Rituals/Spectacles.” *International Social Science Journal* 49 Issue 153 (1997): 387-399.

Hanitzsch, Thomas. “Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory.” *Communication Theory* 17 (2007): 367-385.

Hannerz, Ulf. „Gossip, networks, and culture in a Black American ghetto.“ *Ethnos* 32 (1967): 35-60.

Hara, Toshio. *Jānariyzumu no shisō* [On Journalism]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1997.

Hasegawa, Tamotsu. „Investigation of Corruption in Japan.“ *Resource Material Series* No. 56 (2000): 469-475.

Hatch, Walter F. *Asia's flying geese: how regionalization shapes Japan.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Hayes, Louis D. *Introduction to Japanese Politics*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005.

Heidenheimer, Arnold, ed. *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1978.

Heinze, Ulrich. "Radio and Television Consumption in Japan. A Trilateral Intercultural Comparison with the UK and Germany." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, first published on 31 May 2011.

Herman, Edward and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent. The Political Economy of the Mass Media.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

Herzog, Peter. *Japan's Pseudo-democracy.* New York: Routledge 2013.

Hill, Peter. *The Japanese Mafia. Yakuza, Law and the State.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Hinton, Perry R. *Stereotypes, Cognition and Culture*. Hove: Psychology Press, 2000.

Hirano, Takakuni. *Shinto Sekai no Kozo* [The Structure of Shintoism]. Tokyo:

Perikansha, 1989.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1960.

Hobsbawm, Eric. *Bandits*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.

Holden, T.J.M. and Hakan Ergül. "Japan's televisual discourses. Infotainment, intimacy, and the construction of a collective uchi." In *Medi@sia: Global Media/tion in and out of Context*, edited by T.J.M. Holden and Timothy J. Scrase, 105-127, London: Routledge, 2006.

Holldorf, Michael. "Von der Moeglichkeit eines Neuanfangs: Der Politische Skandal and Hannah Arendts Gesellschaftskritik" [On possibilities of a new beginning: political scandal and Hannah Arendt's social criticism]. In *Skandale. Strukturen und Strategien oeffentlicher Aufmerksamkeitserzeugung,* edited by Kristin Bulkow and Christer Petersen, 67-86, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011.

Holler, Manfred J. and Wickström, Bengt-Arne. "The Scandal Matrix: The Use of

Scandals in the Progress of Society." *Homo Oeconomicus* Vol. 16 (1999): 97–110.

Honma, Ryu. *Dentsu to Genpatsu Hōdō* [Dentsu and Nuclear Reporting]. Tokyo: Akishobo, 2012.

Christensen, Ray. *Ending the LDP Hegemony: Party Cooperation in Japan.* Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2000.

Chun, Jayson Makoto. '*A nation of hundred million idiots'? A social history of Japanese television, 1953-1973.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Chwe, Michael. *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Iimuro, Katsuhiko. *Media to Kenryoku ni tsuite katarō* [On media power]. Tokyo: Rionsha, 1995.

Ikeda, Ken'ichi and Masaru Kohno. "Japanese Attitudes and Values toward Democracy." In *How East Asians View Democracy*, edited by Yun-han Chu, Larry

Diamond, Andrew J. Nathan and Doh Chull Shin, 188-219, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Illouz, Eva. *Consuming the romantic utopia: love and the cultural contradictions of capitalism.* London: University of California Press, 1997.

Inagami, Takeshi. “Managers and Corporate Governance in Japan: Restoring Self-confidence or Shareholder Revolution?” In *Corporate Governance and Managerial Reform in Japan,* edited by D. Hugh Whittaker and Simon Deakin, 163-191. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Inoguchi, Takashi. “Political Culture.” In *The Cambridge companion to modern Japanese Culture,* edited by Yoshio Sugimoto, 166-181. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Ishida, Hidetaka. *Kigō no Chi/Media no Chi* [Symbolic Knowledge/Media Knowledge]. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2003.

Ishikawa, Masumi. “Reckoning with Recruit.” *Japan Quarterly* 36:2 (1989): 135-140.

Ito, Takashi. "Journalism in Power Relations and Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of "Field": A Case Study of the Coverage of the 1999 Group Bullying Murder Case in Tochigi Prefecture." *Keio Communication Review* No.28 (2006): 71-86.

Ito, Youichi. "The Future of Political Communication Research: A Japanese Perspective." *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 43(4) (1993): 69-79.

——— "The Influence of Historical Experiences on the Japanese Political Communication Research." *Keio Communication Review*, No. 25 (2003): 3-17.

Iwai, Tomoaki. "Taenai 'Seiji to Kane' Sukyandaru." [Endless Scandals of Money Politics]. *Nippon.com,* May 4, 2015. http://www.nippon.com/ja/currents/d00175/ (accessed on February 2, 2015).

Jacobsson, Kerstin and Erick Löfmarck. "A sociology of Scandal and Moral Transgression: The Swedish 'Nannygate' Scandal." *Acta Sociologica* 51 (2008): 203-216.

James, William. *Varieties of Religious Experience.* New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902.

Jameson, Sam. "A Veteran American Journalist Looks at the Japanese Media. *Japan Policy Research Institute* Working Paper No. 40, 1997.

Jaworski, Adam and Nikolas Coupland. "Introduction: perspectives on discourse analysis." In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 1-44, London: Routledge, 1999.

Jenks, Chris. *Transgression.* London: Routledge, 2003.

Jewkes, Yvonne. *Media & Crime.* London: Sage, 2011.

Jiang, Jiang et al. "Emotional reactions to scandals: When does moral character make a difference?" *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 14, Issue 1 (2011): 1-10.

Jimenez, Fernando. "Morality Plays, Social Trust, and the Battle for public opinion." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1099-1121.

Johnson, Chalmers. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982.

——— "Tanaka Kakuei, Structural Corruption and the Advent of Machine Politics in Japan." *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1986): 1-28.

Johnson, David T. "Why the Wicked Sleep: The Prosecution of Political Corruption in Postwar Japan." *Japan Policy Research Institute* Occasional Paper No. 34, 1997.

——— "Bureaucratic Corruption in Japan." *Japan Policy Research Institute* Working Paper No. 76, 2001.

——— *The Japanese way of justice: prosecuting crime in Japan.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

——— "Above the Law? Police Integrity in Japan." *Social Science Japan Journal*, Vol. 6, Issue 1 (2003): 19-37.

Junge, Kay. “The Promise of performance and the problem of order.” In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 283-314. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Kabashima, Ikuo and Jeffrey Broadbent. “Referent Pluralism: Mass Media and Politics in Japan.” *Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1986): 329-361.

Kabashima, Ikuo and Gill Steel. *Changing Politics in Japan.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Kantor, Jodi and David Streitfeld. “Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace.” *The New York Times.* August 15, 2015.

Käsler, Dirk. *Der Politische Skandal. Zur symbolishen und dramaturgischen Qualität von Politik* [Political scandal: on symbolic and dramaturgical qualities of politics]. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH, 1991.

Kawai, Keiji and Brent McDonald. “Globalisation, Individualism and Scandal: New

Directions in Japanese Baseball." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29:17 (2012): 2450-2464.

Kellner, Douglas. *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

——— *Media Spectacle*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Keohane, Joe. "How facts backfire." *The Boston Globe.* July 11, 2010.

Kepplinger, Hans Mathias, Stefan Geiss and Sandra Siebert. "Framing Scandals; Cognitive and Emotional Media Effects." *Journal of Communication* Vol. 62, Issue 4 (2012): 659-681.

Kerbo, Harold R. and Mariko Inoue. "Japanese social structure and white collar crime: Recruit cosmos and beyond." *Deviant Behavior* 11:2 (1990): 139-154.

Kerr, Alex. *Dogs and Demons: The Fall of Modern Japan.* London: Penguin Books, 2001.

Kidd, John and Frank-Jurgen Richter, eds. *Fighting Corruption in Asia. Causes, Effects and Remedies.* London: World Scientific, 2003.

Killmeier, Matthew A. and Naomi Chiba. "Neo-nationalism seeks strength from the gods: Yasukuni Shrine, collective memory and the Japanese Press." *Media, War & Conflict* 3 (2010): 334-354.

King, Anthony. "Sex, Power and Money: Political Scandals in Great Britain and the United States." In *Politics in Britain and the United States: Comparative Perspectives on Institutions and Political Culture*, edited by James Ceaser and Richard Hodder-Williams, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985.

Kingston, Jeff. *Japan's quiet transformation: social change and civil society in the 21st century.* New York: Routledge, 2004.

———, ed. *Press Freedom in Contemporary Japan.* London: Routledge, 2016.

Kishima, Takako. *Political Life in Japan: democracy in a reversible world*. New Jersey:

Princeton, 1991.

Kishimoto, Koichi. *Politics in Modern Japan. Development and Organization.* Tokyo: Japn Echo Inc., 1977.

Kono, Masaru. *Japan's Postwar Party Politics.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Krauss, Ellis S. "Portraying the State: NHK Television News and Politics." In *Media and Politics in Japan,* edited by Susan J. Pharr and Ellis S. Krauss, 89-130. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

——— *Broadcasting politics in Japan: NHK and Television News*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Krauss, Ellis S. and Robert J. Pekkanen. *The rise and fall of Japan's LDP: political party organizations as historical institutions.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Kress, Gunther and Theo Van Leeuwen. “Visual Interaction.” In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 362-384, London: Routledge, 1999.

Kruze, Uldis. *Shin Kanemaru and the Tragedy of Japan’s Political System.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Kyogoku, Jun’ichi. *The Political Dynamics in Japan.* Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1987.

Lange, William, de. *A History of Japanese Journalism. Japan’s Press Club as the Last Obstacle to a Mature Press.* Brighton: Japan Library, 1998.

Labov, William. “The transformation of experience in narrative.” In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, 221-235, London: Routledge, 1999.

Laine, Tarja. “Shame on us: Shame, national identity and the Finnish doping scandal.” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23:1 (2006): 67-81.

Lakoff, George. *The political mind: a cognitive scientist's guide to your brain and its politics.* London: Penguin Books, 2009.

Lancaster, Roger. "Punishment." *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*, edited by Didier Fassin, 519-539, Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

Langer, John. *Tabloid Television: Popular Journalism and the 'Other News'.* London: Rutledge, 1998.

Langer, Susanne. *Philosophy in a New Key.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Law, John and John Hassard. *Actor network theory and after.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999.

Leach, Edmund. *Political Systems of Highland Burma.* Cambridge: Harvard University

Press, 1954.

LeBlanc, Robin M. *The art of the gut: manhood, power, and ethics in Japanese politics.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Lebra, Takie S. *Japanese patterns of behavior.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1976.

Legewie, Jochen. *Japan's Media: Inside and Outside Powerbrokers.* Tokyo: Communications and Network Consulting Japan, 2010.

Leggett, David. "Japan's money politics." *Public & Money Management* 15:1 (1995): 25-28.

Lee, Jung Bock. "The Professional and Economic Structure of the Japanese Press." *Journal of East and West Studies: Perspectives on East Asian Economies and Industries* 9:1 (1980): 77-95.

Leonardsen, Dag. "Crime in Japan: Paradise Lost?" *Journal of Scandlnavian Studies in*

Criminology and Crime Prevention, 7:2 (2006): 185-210.

——— *Crime in Japan: paradise lost?* London: Palgrave, 2010.

Lessig, Lawrence. *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress – and a Plan to Stop It.* New York: Twelve, 2011.

Liebes, Tamar and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. "It Takes Two to Blow the Whistle: Do Journalists Control the Outbreak of Scandal?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1153-1170.

Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion.* New York: McMillan, 1922.

Luhmann, Niklas. *The Reality of the Mass Media.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Lukács, Gabriella. *Scripted Affects, Branded Selves: Television, Subjectivity, and Capitalism in 1990s Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Lukes, Steven. “Political Ritual and Social Integration.” *Sociology* Vol. 9, No. 2 (1975): 289-308.

Lull, James. *China Turned On: Television, Reform and Resistance.* London: Routledge, 1991.

Lull, James J. and Steven Hinerman, eds. *Media Scandals: Morality and Desire in the Popular Culture Marketplace,* Oxford: Polity Press, 1997.

Lull, James J. and Steven Hinerman. “The Search for Scandal.” In *Media Scandals: Morality and Desire in the Popular Culture Marketplace,* edited by James Lull and Steven Hinerman, 1-15, Oxford: Polity Press, 1997.

Lynch, Gordon and Ruth Sheldon. “The sociology of the sacred: A conversation with Jeffrey Alexander.” *Culture and Religion* (2013): 1-15.

Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

MacDougall, Terry. “The Lockheed Scandal and Politics in Japan.” In *The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies*, edited by Andrei S. Markovits and Mark Silverstein, 198-210, New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

Maeda, Atsutoshi and Yoshinori Aoyagi. “Have recent corporate scandals fuelled the resolve for corporate governance reforms in Japan?” *Corporate Governance and Directors' Duties Multi-Jurisdictional Guide* 14 (2013): 1-4.

Maeda, Naoki. “Influence of Kotodamaism on Japanese journalism.” *Media, Culture & Society* 25:6 (2003): 757-72.

Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media.* Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001.

Manzenreiter, Wolfram. “Cracks in the Moral Economy of Sumo: Beasts of Burden, Sports Heroes, National Icons and Living Gods in Disgrace.” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 31:4 (2014): 459-473.

Marciano, Alain and Nathalie Moureau. "The Bright Side of Scandals: An Introduction." *Homo Oeconomicus* 30:3 (2013): 249-255.

Markovits, Andrei S. and Mark Silverstein, eds. *The politics of scandal: Power and process in liberal democracies.* New York: Holmes & Mayer, 1988.

Marshall, David P. "The promotion and presentation of the self: celebrity as marker of presentational media." *Celebrity Studies* 1, no.1 (2010): 35-48.

Maruyama, Masao. *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Marvin, Carolyn. "Media Rituals: Follow the Bodies." *Annenberg School of Communication Department Papers* (2002): 182-195.

Marx, David M. "The *Jimusho* System: Understanding the Production Logic of the Japanese Entertainment Industry." In *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture*, edited by Patrick W. Galbraith and Jason G. Karlin. 35-55, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2012.

Marx, Gary T. “Ironies of Social Control: Authorities as Contributors to Deviance Through Escalation, Nonenforcement and Covert Facilitation.” *Social Problems*, no. 28:3 (1981): 221-246.

Mast, Jason L. “The cultural pragmatics of event-ness: the Clinton/Lewinsky Affair.” In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 115-145. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Masterton, Murray, ed. *Asian values in journalism.* Singapore: AMIC, 1996.

Matsubara, Taeka. “Naibukokuhatsu wo tansho to suru hōdō no arikata – sono seitōka wo tampo suru jānarisuto no yakuwari” [How to Report Whistleblowing in the News: Justifying the Role of Journalists]. *Journal of mass communication studies* 84 (2014): 129-149.

Matsumoto, David. *Unmasking Japan: Myths and Realities About the Emotions of the Japanese.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies.* London: Cohen & West, 1966.

Maynard, Senko K. *Japanese Communication. Language and Thought in Context.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

McDonald, Fiona. "Greatest mistranslations ever." *BBC Online*, February 2 2015. http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20150202-the-greatest-mistranslations-ever (accessed on February 2 2015).

McChesney, Robert W. *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008.

McCormack, Gavan. *The emptiness of Japanese affluence.* New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.

McCurry, Justin. "Japan trade minister in conflict of interest row over Tepco shares." *The Guardian.* October 24, 2014.

McCurry, Justin. "Downfall of Japanese TV's girl next door highlights wider industry sexism." *The Guardian.* February 8, 2016).

McNair, Brian. "Power, profit, corruption, and lies. The Russian media in the 1990s." In *De-westernizing Media Studies*, edited by James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, 79-94, London: Routledge, 2000.

McNeill, David. "Waiting for the Dam to Break: WikiLeaks and Japan. *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol. 9, Issue 5, No. 1 (2011).

——— "Japan's contemporary media." In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, edited by Jeff Kingston, 64-76. New York: Routledge, 2014.

——— "False Down: The Decline of Watchdog Journalism in Japan." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* Vol. 14, Issue 20, No. 2 (2016).

McVeigh, Brian. "Ritualized Practices of Everyday Life: Constructing Self, Status, and Social Structure in Japan." *Journal of Ritual Studies,* Vol. 8, No. 1 (1994): 53-71.

——— *The Nature of the Japanese State: Rationality and Rituality.* London: Routledge, 1998.

——— *Wearing Ideology: State, Schooling and Self-Presentation in Japan.* Oxford: Berg, 2000.

McQuail, Denis. *Mass Communication Theory. An Introduction.* London: Sage, 1994.

——— *Media Performance. Mass Communication and the Public Interest*. London: Sage, 1992.

Merry, Sally Engle. "Rethinking Gossip and Scandal." In *Toward a General Theory of Social Control*, edited by Donald Black, 271-302, Orlando: Academic Press, 1984.

Merton, Robert K. *Social Theory and Social Structure.* New York: The Free Press, 1968.

Messersmith, Eric T. "Political Corruption in Japan: A Study of the Theory, Causes and

Effects with Particular Reference to the Yakuza Factor in Banking scandals and Prolonged Recession." PhD diss, University of Miami, Florida, 2003.

Meyrowitz, Joshua. *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Miller, Alan and Satoshi Kanazawa. *Order by Accident: The Origins and Consequences of Conformity in Contemporary.* Oxford: Westview Press, 2000.

Miller, Ruth A. *The Erotics of Corruption: Law, Scandal, and Political Perversion*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2008.

Mitchell, Richard H. *Political Bribery in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996.

——— *Justice in Japan: the notorious Teijin Scandal*. Hinolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.

Miyamoto, Masao. "Mental Castration, the HIV Scandal, and the Japanese

Bureaucracy." *Japan Policy Research Institute* Working Paper No. 23, 1996.

Molotch, Harvey and Marilyn Lester. "News as Purposive Behavior: On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents and Scandals." *American Sociological Review* 39 (1974): 101-12.

Moore, Sally F. and Barbara G. Myerhoff. "Introduction: Secular Ritual: Forms and Meanings." In *Secular Ritual*, edited by Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, 3-24. Assen: VAN GORCUM & COMP. B.V., 1977.

Mori, Tatsuya. "Dokyumentarīron" [Documentary studies]. Paper presented at the seminar for Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan, September 8-10, 2014.

Morikawa, Kathleen. "The Popular Media: Self-Appointed Public Avengers." *Japan Quarterly* 39, no.2 (1992): 211-217.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. *Re-inventing Japan.* New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.

Moses, Charles and Crispin Maslog. *Mass Communication in Asia.* Singapore: Amic:

1978.

Murphey, Rhoads. *A History of Asia*. New York: Pearson international, 2009.

Murphy, Taggart R. *Japan and the shackles of the past.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Nakane, Chie. *Japanese Society.* London: University of California Press, 1970.

Nakano, Minoru. "The changing legislative process in the transitional period," in *Japanese Politics Today: beyond karaoke democracy?*, edited by Jain Purnendra and Takashi Inoguchi, 45-74. South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1997.

Nashimoto, Masaru. *Sakai Noriko Kakusareta sugao. "Aoi usagi" ha naze mayotta no ka?* [The true hidden face of Sakai Noriko. Why did the "blue rabbit" go astray?]. Tokyo: Iisuto Puresu, 2009.

Neckel, Sighard. "Political Scandals. An Analytical Framework." *Comparative Sociology* 4, Issue 1-2 (2005): 101-111.

Nester, William. *The Foundation of Japanese Power: Continuities, Changes, Challenges.* London: Routledge, 1990a.

——— "Japan's Recruit scandal: government and business for sale." *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 12, Issue 2 (1990b): 91-109.

Newton, Lisa H. *Permission to steal: revealing the roots of corporate scandal.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.

Nick, Rainer and Hubert Sickinger. "Political Scandals as Indicators and Accelerators of Political Change in Austria. *The European Journal of Social Science Research* 2:4, (1989): 491-521.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. New York: Random House, 1966.

——— *The birth of tragedy and other writings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Nyblade, Benjamin and Steven R. Reed. "Who Cheats? Who Loots? Political Competition and Corruption in Japan, 1947-1993." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 52, No. 4 (2008): 926-941.

Obokata, Haruko. *Ano Hi* [That Day]. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2016.

Ogata, Kenji and Roppei Tsuda. "Crime boss: Several buyers of illegal drugs are in showbiz." *The Asahi Shimbun.* May 19, 2014.

Ogawa, Akihiro. *The failure of civil society? The third sector and the state in contemporary Japan.* New York: State University of New York, 2009.

Okuyama, Michiaki. "'Civil Religion' in Japan? Rethinking the Arguments and Their Implications." *Religious Studies in Japan* Vol. 1 (2012): 61-77.

Ozawa, Ichiro. *Nihon Kaizō Keikaku* [Blueprint for a New Japan]. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993.

——— “Watashi ga tsukaeta oyaji: Tanaka Kakuei no sugao” [In the service of the old man: the true face of Tanaka Kakuei]. *Shukan Shincho*. August 25, 2015.

Pak, Hung Au and Keiichi Kawai. “Media Capture and Information Monopolization in Japan. *MPRA Paper* No. 29686 (2010): 1-30.

Parsons, Talcott. *Essays in Sociological Theory.* Glencoe: The Free Press, 1954.

Pascha, Werner. “Corruption in Japan – An Economist’s Perspective.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Boston, MA, March 14, 1999.

Pharr, Susan J. *Losing Face: Status Politics in Japan.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

——— “Media as Trickster in Japan: A Comparative Perspective.” In *Media and Politics in Japan*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Ellis.S. Krauss, 19-44. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996.

——— "Officials' Misconduct and Public Distrust: Japan and the Trilateral Democracies." In *Disaffected democracies: what's troubling the trilateral countries?*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, 173-201. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Pinnington, Adrian. "Yoshimitsu, Benedict, Endo: guilt, shame and the post-war idea of Japan." *Japan Forum,* 13:1 (2010): 91-105.

Poerksen, Bernhard and Hanne Detel. *The Unleashed Scandal: The End of Control in the Digital Age.* Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2014.

Pontell Henry N. and Gilbert Geis. *Nihon no keizahanzai ni okeru paradokkusu* [The Paradox of Economic Crime in Japan]. *Shakaikagakuronshu* Vol. 123 (2008): 49-63.

Prasol, Alexander. *Modern Japan: Origins of the Mind.* London: World Scientific Publishing, 2010.

Preiss, Raymond W. et al., eds. *Mass media effects research: advances through meta-analysis.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 2007.

Prusa, Igor. “Theorizing about scandals and their mediations: the case of Japan.“ *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, Discussion Paper 1, March 2010.

——— “Megaspectacle and Celebrity Transgression in Japan: the 2009 Media Scandal of Sakai Noriko.” In *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture*, edited by Galbraith W. Patrick and Jason G. Karlin, 56-71. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012a.

——— “The Logic of Political Media Scandals in Japan and the Case Study of Ozawa Ichiro.” *Global Media Journal* special edition (edited by Anne Grüne, Carola Richter and Dirk-Claas Ulrich), Vol. 2, No. 2, Autumn/Winter, 2012b.

——— “Media, Scandals, and Society: A Theoretical Introduction.” *Tōkyō Daigaku Daigakuin Jōhōgakkan Kiyō Jōhōgaku Kenkyū,* Vol. 88, February 2015.

——— “Heroes Beyond Good and Evil: Theorizing Transgressivity in Japanese and Western Fiction.” *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*, Vol. 16, Issue 1, 2016a.

——— "Corporate Scandal in Japan and the Case Study of Olympus." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies,* Vol. 16, Issue 3, 2016b.

——— "Mediating Scandal in Contemporary Japan." *French Journal for Media Research*, Special Edition "Mises en scène du politique contemporain/Theatricalization of the Contemporary Politics" Vol. 7, 2017.

Pujas, Veronique. "Explaining the wave of scandal: the exposure of corruption in Italy, France and Spain. In *Political Journalism: New challenges, new practices,* edited by Raymond Kuhn and Erik Neveu, 149-167, London: Routledge, 2002.

Pye, Lucian W. *Asian Power and Politics. The Cultural Dimensions of Authority.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Raney, Arthur A. "Media enjoyment as a function of affective dispositions toward and moral judgement of characters." In *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media*, edited by Katrin Döveling, Christian von Scheve, and Elly A. Konijn, 167-178. London: Routledge, 2011.

Reed, Isaac. “Social dramas, shipwrecks, and cockfights: conflict and complicity in social performance.” In *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast, 146-168. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Reed, Steven. *Making Common Sense of Japan.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.

——— ed. *Japanese Electoral Politics. Creating a new party system.* London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Reed, Steven and Michael Thies. “The Causes of Electoral Reform in Japan.” In *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?*, edited by Matthew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg, 152-172. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Reischauer, Edwin O. *The Japanese.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977.

Ricouer, Paul. *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*. Chicago: The University of Chicago

Press, 1983.

Rothachter, Albrecht. *The Japanese Power Elite*. London: Macmillan Press, 1993.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on political economy and the social contract.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Rowe, David. "Apollo Undone: The Sports Scandal." In *Media Scandals: Morality and desire in the polular culture marketplace*, edited by James Lull and Steven Hinerman, 203-221. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997.

Rowley, G.G. *An imperial conbubine's tale: scandal, shipwreck, and salvation in 17th century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2013

Ruigrok, Nel. "Media coverage of scandals: A modern version of Greek Tragedy." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, CA, May 23, 2007.

Rupp, Katherine. *Gift-giving in Japan: cash, connections, cosmologies.* Stanford:

Stanford University Press, 2003.

Sabato, Larry J., Mark Stencel and Robert S. Lichter. *Peepshow: media and politics in an age of scandal.* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Sakai, Noriko. *Shokuzai* [Redemption]. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc., 2010.

Samuels, Richard J. *Machiavelli's children: leaders and their legacies in Italy and Japan.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Sapolsky, Robert. "On the Origin of Celebrity". *Nautilus.* September 5, 2013.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and nothingness: a phenomenological essay on ontology.* London: Routledge, 1956.

Sassa, Atsuyuki. *Waga kishakaiken no nouhau. Sukyandaru kokufuku no hiketsu* [The know-how of our press conferences: How to manage a scandal]. Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 2010.

Sato, Yoichiro. "Developmentalism, corruption, and marketization of public policies in Japan." In *Corruption and Good Governance in Asia*, edited by Nicholas Tarling, 23-38. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Sato, Hiroshi and Jay Doggett. "Japan Olympus Scandal and Houdini: Is Corporate Fraud or the Judicial Outcome More Shameful?" *Modern Tokyo Times*, July 5, 2013. http://global-security-news.com/2013/07/05/japan-olympus-scandal-and-houdini-is-corporate-fraud-or-the-judicial-outcome-more-shameful/ (accessed on May 1 2016).

Searle, John R. *Expression and Meaning. Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Sechiyama, Kaku. "Aitsugu Furin Sōdō to 'Shakaiteki Seisai' kara Kangaeru Nihonjin no Seiishiki" [Between Consenting Adults: Japan's Incongruous Celebrity Sex Scandals]. *Nippon.com,* April 11, 2016. http://www.nippon.com/ja/currents/d00214/ (accessed on May 1, 2016).

Sekiguchi, Toko. "Okinawa-gate: The Unknown Scandal." *Time.* May 1, 2007.

Senander, Angela. *Scandal: the Catholic Church and public life.* Minnesota: Liturgical

Press, 2012.

Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Stephen D. Reese. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content.* Auckland: Lognman, 1996.

Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Tim Vos. *Gatekeeping Theory.* New York: Routledge, 2009.

Schechner, Richard. *Between theater and anthropology.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

Schlesinger, Jacob M. *Shadow Shoguns: The Rise and Fall of Japan's Postwars Political Machine.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Schnell, Scott. *The rousing drum: ritual practice in a Japanese community.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Svet jako vule a predstava* [The World as Will and Representation]. Olomouc: Votobia, 1993.

Schudson, Michael. “Notes on Scandal and the Watergate Legacy.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1231-1238.

Schwab, Frank and Clemens Schwender. “The descent of emotions in media: Darwinian perspectives.” In *The Routledge Handbook of Emotions and Mass Media*, edited by Katrin Döveling, Christian von Scheve, and Elly A. Konijn, 15-36. London: Routledge, 2011.

Sherman, Lawrence W. *Scandal and Reform: Controlling Police Corruption.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Shiau, Hong-Chi. “The use of celebrity scandals and sensational news for identity negotiations: analyzing gossip among the queer within Taiwanese families.” *Chinese Journal of Communication* 7:2, (2014): 230-250.

Shils, Edward. *Center and Periphery, Esssays in Macrosociology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Sieg, Linda and Mari Saito. “Could Obuchi become Japan’s first female prime

minister?" *The Japan Times.* October 3, 2015.

Simmel, Georg. *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations.* New York: Free Press, 1955.

——— *The Philosophy of Money.* London: Routledge, 1978.

Sloterdijk, Peter. *Rage and Time: a psychopolitical investigation.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Smith, Nick. *I Was Wrong*: *The Meanings of Apologies.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Smith, Robert. "The Japanese Rural Community: Norms, Sanctions, and Ostracism." *American Anthropologist* Vol. 63, No. 3 (1961): 522-533.

Soble, Jonathan. "Olympus used takeover fees to hide losses." *The Financial Times.* November 8, 2011.

Stacey, Jackie. “Feminine Fascinations. forms of identification in star-audience relations”. In *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, edited by Christine Gledhill,141-163. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White. *The politics and poetics of transgression.* Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Steunebrink, Gerrit and Evert van der Zweerde, eds. *Civil Society, Religion, and the Nation. Modernization in Intercultural Context: Russia, Japan, Turkey.* Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2004.

Stevenson, Carolyn S. *Japanese popular music: culture, authenticity and power*. London: Routledge, 2008.

Stewart, Pamela J. and Andrew Strathern. *Witchcraft, sorcery, rumors, and gossip.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Stockwin, J. Arthur. *Dictionary of the modern politics in Japan.* London: Routledge, 2003.

——— *Governing Japan: divided politics in a resurgent economy.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.

Storm, Rasmus K. and Ulrik Wagner. “The Anatomy of the Sports Scandal: Outset, Development and Effect.” Paper presented at Play the Game 2011, Cologne, Germany, October 3-6, 2011.

Street, John. “Politics Lost, Politics Transformed, Politics Colonised? Theories of the Impact of Mass Media.” *Political Studies Review* Vol. 3 (2005):17-33.

Sugimoto, Yoshio. *An Introduction to Japanese Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Sugiyama, Mitsunobu. “Media and power in Japan.” In *De-westernizing Media Studies*, edited by James Curran and Myung-Jin Park, 168-177, London: Routledge, 2000.

Szasz, Andrew. “The process and significance of political scandals: a comparison of Watergate and the “Sewergate” epizode at the Environmental Protection Agency.”

Social Problems 33:3 (1986): 202-217.

Szasz, Thomas. *The Second Sin.* New York: Anchor Press, 1973.

——— Thomas. *Ceremonial Chemistry. The Ritual persecution of Drugs, Addicts, and Pushers.* New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974.

Tada, Minoru. "Ichiro Ozawa now isolated." *The Japan Times*, April 28, 2000.

Tachibana, Takashi. *Tanaka Kakuei Kenkyū: Zenkiroku* [Research on Tanaka Kakuei: Complete Documentation]. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976.

Taira, Koji. "Dialectics of Economic Growth, National Power, and Distributive Struggles" In *Postwar Japan as History.* Berkeley, edited by Edward Gordon, 167-186, Berkeley: The Regents of the University of California, 1993.

Tajima, Atsushi. "Amoral universalism: mediating and staging global and local in the 1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21:3 (2004): 241-260.

Takahashi, Toshie. *Audience studies. A Japanese perspective.* New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010.

Taniguchi, Masaki. "Changing Media, Changing Politics in Japan." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8 (1) (2007): 147-166.

Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 1995.

——— "Scandal and social theory." In *Scandals: Morality and desire in the popular culture marketplace*, edited by James Lull and Steven Hinerman, 35-64, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997.

——— *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

——— "The New Visibility". *Theory, Culture & Society* 22(6) (2005): 31-51.

——— "Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private Life." *Theory, Culture & Society* 28(4) (2011): 49-70.

Tiffen, Rodney. *Scandals: Media, Politics & Corruption in Contemporary Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999.

——— "Media escalation and political anti-climax in Australia's "Cash for Comment" scandal." In *Political Journalism: New challenges, new practices,* edited by Raymond Kuhn and Erik Neveu, 131-144, London: Routledge, 2002.

——— "Tip of the Iceberg or Moral Panic? Police Corruption Issues in Contemporary New South Wales." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1171-1193.

Tipton, Elise K. *Modern Japan. A social and political history.* London: Routledge, 2008.

Tomlinson, John. "And Besides, the Wench is Dead: Media Scandals and the Globalization of Communication." In *Scandals: Morality and desire in the popular culture marketplace*, edited by James Lull and Steven Hinerman. 65-84, Cambridge:

Polity Press, 1997.

Toomer, Jean. *Essentials,* edited by Rudolph P. Byrd. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

Tsukada, Jun. “What is My Role? Portrayals of Citizenship in Japanese Broadcast Journalism.” *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies,* Vol. 16, Issue 1, 2016.

Tsurumi, Shunsuke. *Genkai geijutsu-ron* [On marginal art]. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1967.

Tuchman, Gaye. “Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen’s Notion of Objectivity.” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 77, No. 4 (1972): 660-679.

Tumber, Howard and Silvio S. Waisbord. “Introduction: Political Scandals and Media across Democracies, Vol. I.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004a): 1031-1039.

——— “Introduction: Political Scandals and Media across Democracies, Vol. II.”

American Behavioral Scientist 47 (2004b): 1143-1152.

Tumber, Howard. “Scandal and Media in the United Kindgdom: From Major to Blair.” *American Behavioral Scientist 47* (2004): 1122-1137.

Turner, Victor. *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.

——— *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure.* Chicago: Aldine, 1969.

——— *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1974.

——— “Social Dramas and Stories about Them.” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 141-168.

——— “Are there universals of performance in myth, ritual, and drama?” In *By means of performance. Intercultural studies of theatre and ritual,* edited by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, 8-18, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Uesugi, Takashi. *Shimbun, terebi ha naze heiki de 'uso' wo tsuku no ka* [How come the newspapers and TV have no scruples about lying?]. Tokyo: PHP Shinsho, 2012.

Heeren, Achille Vander. "Scandal". The Catholic Encyklopedia. Vol. 13. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912.

Vasterman, Peter L.M. "Media-Hype: "Self-Reinforcing News Waves, Journalistic Standards and the Construction of Social Problems." *European Journal of Communication* 20 (2005): 508-530.

Virilio, Paul. *The Information Bomb.* London: Verso, 2000.

Vogel, Steven K. *Japan remodeled: how government and industry are reforming Japanese capitalism.* Ithaca: CornellUniversity Press, 2006.

Waisbord, Silvio R. "Scandals, Media, and Citizenship in Contemporary Argentina." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1072-1098.

Wakiyama, Maki. “The media is a mouthpiece for Tepco.” *No.1 Shimbun* Vol. 43, No. 6 (2011): 4-5.

Wargo, Robert J.J. “Japanese Ethics: Beyond Good and Evil.” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1990): 499-509.

Watanabe, Tsuneo. *Japan’s backroom politics: factions in multiparty age.* Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2013.

Watanuki, Joji. *Politics in Postwar Japanese Society.* Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977.

Watson, James. “Representing Realities: An Overview of News Framing.” *Keio Communication Review* No 29 (2007): 107-131.

Weber, Max. *On Charisma and Institution Building,* edited by Shmuel .N. Eisenstadt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

——— *Economy and Society.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1978.

West, Mark D. *Secret, sex, and spectacle: the rules of scandal in Japan and the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Wetherell, Walter D. *On Admiration: heroes, heroines, role models, and mentors.* New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2010.

Williams, Bruce A. and Michael X. Delli Carpini. "Monica and Bill All the Time and Everywhere: The Collapse of Gatekeeping and Agenda Setting in the New Media Environment." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47 (2004): 1208-1230.

Witt, Michael A. *Changing Japanese Capitalism: Societal Coordination and Institutional Adjustment.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1953.

Wolferen, Karel van. *The enigma of Japanese power*: *people and politics in a stateless nation*. London: Papermac, 1989.

——— *Dare ga Ozawa Ichiro wo korosu no ka?* [The Character Assassination of Ozawa Ichiro]. Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2011a.

——— "Get Ozawa." *Number 1 Shimbun*, Vol. 43, No. 9 (2011b): 6-8.

Wolff, Leon. "New Whistleblower Protection Laws for Japan." *J.Japan.L.,* No. 17 (2004): 209-213.

Woodall, Brian. *Japan Under Construction: Corruption, Politics, and Public Works.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Woodall, Brian. "Japanese political finance and its dark side." In *Party and Politics in Japan: Political chaos and stalemate in the twenty-first century,* edited by Ronald J. Hrebenar and Akira Nakamura, New York: Routledge, 2015.

Woodford, Michael. *Exposure. Inside the Olympus Scandal.* London: Penguin Group, 2012.

Wuthnow, Robert. “Trust as an Aspect of Social Structure.” In *Self, Social Structure, and Beliefs: Explorations in Sociology*, edited by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Gary T. Marx, and Christine L. Williams, 145-167, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Yamaguchi, Yoshimasa. *Samurai to Orokamono.* Tokyo: Kodansha, 2012.

——— *The Samurai and Idiots.* DVD. Directed by Hyoe Yamamoto. Paris: Point du Jour International, 2014.

——— “Orimpasu jiken to nihonmedia no sekinin: masumedia ha chekku kinō wo hatashiteiru no ka.” [Olympus Scandal Exposes the Shortcomings of the Japanese Media]. *Nippon.com*, December 27, 2011. http://www.nippon.com/ja/currents/d00013/ (accessed on February 2, 2015).

Yamamoto, Masahiro. “Examining Differential Gains from Mass Media in Japan.” *Keio Communication Review* No. 32 (2010): 85-103.

Yamamoto Yutaka. “A Morality Based on Trust: Some Reflections on Japanese Morality.” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1990): 451-469.

Yamazaki, Masakazu. *Individualism and the Japanese. An Alternative Approach to Cultural Comparison.* Tokyo: Japan Echo Inc., 1994.

Yanagita, Kunio. *Japanese Manners and Customs in the Meiji Era.* Tokyo: Obunsha, 1957.

——— *Teihon Yanagita Kunio Shu* [Collection of Yanagita Kunio's Original Texts]. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1962.

Yano, Christine R. "Letters from the Heart: Negotiating Fan-Star Relationships in Japanese Popular Music." In *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, edited by William W. Kelly, 41-58, New York: SUNY Press, 2004.

Yayama, Taro. "The Recruit Scandal: Learning from the Causes of Corruption." *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1990): 93-114.

Yoshida, Reiji. "Ministerial scandals highlight inadequate controls on political funding."

The Japan Times, October 29, 2014.

Yoshida, Shinichi. "Distrust in Politics: Will Voters Transform the Nature of Governance?" in *Japanese Challenges, American Experience*, edited by Thomas E. Mann and Takeshi Sasaki, 14-28, Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2002.

Yoshimi, Shunya and Shin Mizukoshi. *Mediaron* [Media Theory]. Tokyo: Hoso Daigaku Kyoikushinkokai, 1997.

Yoshimi, Shunya. "Television and nationalism: Historical change in the national domestic TV transformation of postwar Japan." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6 (4) (2003): 459-487.

——— *Posuto Sengo Shakai* [Post-poswar Society]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2009.

——— *Media Bunkaron* [Theorizing Media Culture]. Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2012.

Yukawa, Masao. "Japan's enemy is Japan." *The Washington Quarterly*, 22:1 (1999): 13-

15.

Zizek, Slavoj. “Good Manners in the Age of WikiLeaks. *London Review of Books* Vol. 33, No.2 (2011): 9-10.

——— *The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology.* DVD. Directed by Sophie Fiennes. London: P Guide / Blinder Films Production, 2012.