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The Stagnation of Japanese Journalism and its Structural Background in the Media System

1. Introduction

Journalism and the mass media in the present day are becoming increasingly inclined toward reflexivity. By this I mean that journalism and the mass media increasingly finds itself in the position of having to report, investigate and discuss incidents and issues that have arisen from within the world of journalism and mass media itself. In Japan, for example, a number of ›scandals‹ revealing lapses in the institution of journalism have recently emerged, and these have been the subject of intense coverage by the media themselves. There is now a growing consensus in civil society that the ability of journalism to perform its proper social function has been seriously compromised. Furthermore, the mass media industry is now in a state of structural turmoil, and this too has become a major subject of media attention. Recent bids by internet companies to buy out traditional media companies have made it into the news headlines and the outcome of these corporate battles have attracted much public interest. Thus, while journalism reveals its own failures, the mass media industry is faced with the prospect of major restructuring.

The relation between ›journalism‹ and the ›mass media‹ is very close. At the same time, we must be careful to differentiate them conceptually. Whereas ›journalism‹ is an activity that expresses social consciousness, the ›mass media‹ constitute a system mediating social communication. Therefore, when we consider journalism, issues of *function* come to the fore. When looking at the mass media, on the other hand, the issue is one of *structure*. At the point where function and structure meet, we find the composite which can be termed ›mass-media journalism‹.

The functioning of journalistic activity is regulated by the structure of the mass-media system. At the same time, the extent to which journalistic activity fulfils its function provides endorsement for the structure of the mass-media system as it pertains at any given time. This relationship between journalism and the mass media cannot be comprehended in static terms. The time dimension must always be taken into account, and the historical process of change from which present structures emerged must be born in mind. Furthermore, we cannot assume that the current structure will not be open to continuous change in the future. There is nothing universal about the current arrangement. Many factors are involved in the creation of structures, and the process of change is complex. When a part of journalistic activity demands innovation in the functional aspect, new structures in the mass-media system may be required in order to meet this demand. Conversely, when structural change occurs in some part of the mass-media system, pressure may arise for functional change in journalism. In this way, journalistic function and mass-media structure intermediate and interact with each other.

This chapter is premised on the above understanding of the relation between journalism and mass media. It seeks to demonstrate how this relationship works in the case of Japan. In addition, I address the need for policy proposals and theoretical observations aimed at institutional change.

2. The Historical Formation of the Post-war Media System in Japan

2.1 *Media Policy under US Occupation*

Following its surrender in August 1945, Japan was placed under the occupation of the victorious Allied Powers. The occupation was executed by American military forces under the command of General MacArthur. Unlike the case of Germany, which was divided and occupied by four countries, the occupation of Japan was conducted by the US alone.

The General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP) based its policy for information, media and public opinion in post-surrender Japan on two main sources. One was the Potsdam Declaration of July, 26th 1945, and the other was the initial policy on

the occupation of Japan adopted by the US government on August, 29th 1945. In accordance with these, the occupation authorities were charged with two main tasks. Firstly, they had to discourage militaristic and ultra-nationalist thought and eradicate the mechanisms of information and media control that had perpetuated such thought and suppressed the development of democracy in the past. The second task was to encourage the growth of democratic tendencies both in the media and by means of the media (GHQ/SCAP 1999: 5).

The organization with direct responsibility for the execution of this second positive policy objective was GHQ's Civil Information and Education Section (CIE). CIE issued and implemented various directives and measures in an attempt to construct the foundations for a free and democratic press. At the very outset of the occupation, however, GHQ also began operating a censorship system in order to counteract anti-democratic forces and protect itself against criticism and defamatory accusations. This function was carried out by the Civil Censorship Detachment of the Civil Intelligence Section (CCD/CIS). In other words, GHQ was pursuing policies for the encouragement of democracy while at the same time directly limiting the freedom of expression. The Japanese media were educated in the principle of free expression while at the same time being required (sometimes by choice, sometimes because they had no alternative) to follow the directives of GHQ. This applied to all areas and topics of media coverage. This situation had some advantages in so far as it facilitated the smooth running of the occupation. Meanwhile, it also had the distinct disadvantage of delaying full implementation of the principles of unimpeded coverage and free expression. A State Department document published in October 1947 (»The Development of Media and Information in Japan since the Surrender«, OIR *Report No.4246*, October, 1st 1947, Division of Research for the Far East, Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State) compared the advantages and disadvantages of the media policies then being pursued in Japan and concluded that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages (GHQ/SCAP 1999: 12). GHQ's media policy therefore contained a fundamental inconsistency from the outset. However, this was compounded by the radical change of direction that occurred through time as the occupation continued. The background to this change of direction was the growing seriousness of tensions between East and West in the Cold War. This had important domestic repercussions for Japan. In February 1950, the anti-communist campaign by Senator Joseph McCarthy began in the US. In June of the same year, the Korean War broke out, and in July, a red purge among corporate management began in Japan. The US-Japan Peace Treaty was signed in September 1951 amid this atmosphere of heightened ideological tension. These were the circumstances under which the occupation ended and Japan regained its sovereignty.

Let us now consider how media policy in Japan developed during this time. At the beginning of the occupation, the dominant faction within GHQ was composed of progressive ›New Dealers‹. A leading representative of this faction was the head of CIE, General Kenneth R. Dyke, who was mainly responsible for the initial policy of democratic media reform. In contrast to the contemporaneous situation in Germany, there was no purge of wartime newspaper publishers in Japan. Instead, a press code was issued, which the existing newspaper companies were required to follow. Meanwhile, internal democratization among newspaper company employees was encouraged (both openly and behind the scenes). At the Yomiuri Newspaper, a labour union was formed, which accused the company president, Shoriki Matsutaro, of war responsibility and demanded his resignation. However, Shoriki refused to resign and instead sacked the union leaders. This gave rise to a major struggle, which was resolved in December 1945 by the signing of an agreement between both sides and the formation of a joint managerial committee. Shoriki resigned the presidency and the union leader, Suzuki Tomin, became managing editor. The union took control of the editorial department and became an active participant in management of the newspaper. Capital and editorship were thus separated. This was the first round of the Yomiuri struggle. At another major newspaper, Asahi Shimbun, a discussion about war responsibility started. The internal developments at Yomiuri were taken further when the entire managerial team, including the president, Murayama Nagataka, were forced to resign in November 1945. Inherited capital was thus separated from management. These changes were supported by General Dyke of the CIE, and the head of the Press and Publications Division, Robert H. Berkov. They saw the labour struggle at Yomiuri as a model for democratization at other newspapers. Besides promoting the participation by labour in editorship and management, they also made proposals for the distribution of company shares, the setting up of new newspapers, and the reform of ›press clubs‹ (*kishakurabu*). However, after about the spring of 1946, with the threat of confrontation between

the US and USSR looming ever more ominously, CIE reversed its initial democratization directives and began instead to suppress the democratization movement.

The change of policy was given concrete form in the replacement of Dyke as head of the CIE. At a press conference in front of a gathering of 100 representatives from Japanese press companies, Dyke issued the following directions prior to his departure:

»1. It should be born in mind that newspapers are an important factor in the formation of public opinion. Press independence needs to be secured and developed.
2. Newspaper companies throughout the country should by their own initiative form themselves into a press association and urgently adopt a common press code.
3. Educational institutions for the training of the next generation of journalists should be established« (HARUHARA 1999: 43).

At the same time, he gave a hint of the new press policy about to be adopted: »Freedom of the Press is having men designated by publishers decide the editorial policy,« he told the group. »It is no more right for the Japanese government, or for the Supreme Command, except in broad policy, than for any other group to dictate editorial policy. Whomever the publisher may designate as the master must establish the policy of a newspaper« (COUGHLIN 1952: 84).

After the departure of the liberal faction, leadership of the CIE was inherited by Lieutenant Colonel Donald R. Nugent. The new head of the Press Division was Major Daniel C. Imboden, who became especially influential and steered a strongly conservative policy course. In response to the new anti-communist line adopted by General MacArthur and the conservative Japanese government under Yoshida Shigeru, the management of Yomiuri Shimbun, headed by Baba Tsunego, announced the dismissal of the managing editor, Suzuki Tomin, on June, 13th 1946. So began the second round of labour struggle at Yomiuri. The issue in this dispute was the influence of the political Left and Communist Party in the editorial department. On October, 5th 1946, the Japan Newspaper and Radio Workers Union called a general strike, but the response was only partial and failed to have any effect. The second round of struggle thus ended on October, 16th with Suzuki's dismissal. The leading part in this whole dispute was played by the head of the Press Division, Imboden. Whereas his predecessor, Berkov, had supported democratization, Imboden sided

with those seeking to suppress left-wing media activity. He made it his mission to persuade all newspapers to accept the concept of ›editorial rights‹, which meant that editorial policy would be determined by newspaper owners and managers (YAMAMOTO 1996: 376).

Thus it was that the concept of ›editorial rights‹ *(henshuken)* was introduced and promulgated throughout the post-war media. In response to a proposal by Imboden, the Japanese Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (*Nihon Shimbun Kyokai*) was set up in July 1946. »The formation of the association was plainly motivated, in part at least, by the new desire of SCAP to strengthen the hand of the publishers in the fight against the unions« (COUGHLIN 1952: 87). This association then issued a »Declaration on Editorial Rights« in March 1948, proclaiming that the ›editorial right‹ to ultimately determine the content of a newspaper lay with the commercial and editorial management of the newspaper company. The declaration includes the following words: »The commercial and editorial management of newspaper publishers will continuously take necessary measures to secure their editorial rights, and are charged with the duty of protecting those rights against all potential threats, whether these be from individuals or groups, or from outside the company or within. External interference will be resisted in all circumstances. Furthermore, measures will be taken to eliminate any elements within the organization, however numerous, who deliberately obstruct the truth and fairness, or the officially stated company policy, as regards reporting and commentary, or who fail to follow the formally decided editorial policy« (cf. http://www.pressnet.or.jp/info/seimei/shuzai/1201henshuken.htm).

Another often noted feature of the Japanese media is the institution of ›press clubs‹ *(kishakurabu)*. These came into being through a similar process to that of the managerial assertion of ›editorial rights‹ described above. The press clubs were organized by groups of reporters covering each government department and controlled the release of news from that department. In the post-war era, they have become even more influential than they were during war. Initially, GHQ saw the press clubs as an undemocratic influence preventing free and fare reporting of political news in Japan, because they were dominated by only a few metropolitan newspapers and excluded the new or provincial papers. It was recognized that governmental news sources had used the clubs to manipulate the flow of information and mould public opinion in a manner suitable to their own objectives. According to GHQ's analysis, press clubs were a

means of disciplining journalists and preventing individual initiatives that might contradict the club rules. Consequently, the official line, even under Imboden, was that the press clubs should be reformed. However, the directive calling for such reform was ignored and became little more than a dead letter. At an early stage, the Japanese media realized that GHQ did not have the will to carry out press club reform by force. Despite some early attempts to address this problem seriously, it was obvious that GHQ itself, including Imboden, was actively using the press club system and had found it highly useful for their purposes. In April 1946, journalists working on the GHQ news beat formed themselves into a SCAP Press Club. Journalists from 16 companies participated (YAMAMOTO 1996: 373). To quote the words of Yamamoto (1996: 373), »Just as MacArthur had seen use of the emperor as a necessity for indirect rule over Japan, the GHQ leadership also recognized the importance of using media groups as a means of controlling the media, and of the ruling the people through media control. Therefore, radical reform of media organizations was averted, and they were preserved instead. The same can be said of the press clubs«.

Censorship was initially carried out by CCD/CIS prior to publication. After the conclusion of the second dispute at Yomiuri, however, there was a gradual shift toward post-censorship. Yamamoto (1996: 382) describes the background to this as follows: »GHQ was reassured that the majority of the Japanese media were obedient to MacArthur's press code, and had been disciplined to be subservient to his objectives. The number of cases falling foul of the censors had fallen year by year. Even after the shift to post-censorship, major media organizations, including notably the Asahi Newspaper, set themselves diligently to self-censorship in order to curry favour with GHQ. By 1949, the system of gathering GHQ news at the centre through the major newspaper press clubs in Tokyo and then distributing it to the regions was firmly established«.

As already mentioned, the last of the three points enunciated by Dyke at his parting press conference was the need for the establishment of educational institutions for the training of journalists. He had in mind as a model the schools of journalism already established in the US. According to the »One Hundred Years History of the University of Tokyo« *(Tokyo Daigaku Hyaku Nen Shi)*, Dyke and Nugent together visited Nambara Shigeru (then president of the University of Tokyo) in the spring of 1946 to urge him unofficially to set up an American-style school of journalism

in the University of Tokyo. In reply, Nambara spoke about the history of the already existing journalism research department, and outlined plans to expand this into an Institute of Journalism Studies. This met with the immediate approval of the two visitors from GHQ (HANADA 1999: 127). According to GHQ documents, the Japanese Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association soon after its founding began a program of yearly financial support to universities for journalistic education. In 1947, a total of 553,200 yen was granted to eight universities, including the University of Tokyo, Waseda University and Keio University. This is about nine million Yen in today's currency value (about US$ 80,000). In March 1947, Frank Luther Mott, who was then dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, was brought to Japan as a consultant for the establishment of higher-educational institutions of journalism. His proposals were adopted in principle as a basis for the setting up of university curricula in journalism studies in Japan (GHQ/SCAP 1999: 152). However, in the event, things did not work out so favourably.

2.2 *Continuity and Discontinuity in the Post-war Period*

GHQ's initial policy was to democratize the Japanese media through education, but this policy did not last even one year. As the Cold-War situation worsened, the democratization process was suspended as a result of the switch to a policy of making Japan into an ›anti-communist stronghold‹. Newspapers managers and editors who had once been purged for their war responsibility gradually regained their former positions. Those who had been imprisoned on suspicion of Class A war crimes, including Yomiuri president Shoriki, were released and reassumed positions of authority in society. Before any liberal media reform had been allowed to take root, the tide changed in favour of the creation of a media system dominated by capital and proprietary interests, and liable to collusive interference by the state. In many respects, this amounted to a revival of the wartime system built up during the 1930s to mobilize the country for all-out hostilities. Although Japan's surrender and occupation in 1945 might have signalled a clear break with the past, in the event continuity, rather than discontinuity, became the dominant theme of post-war history. The newly established newspapers, which GHQ had encouraged, eventually lost GHQ support and collapsed. As a result, there was a return

to the wartime media market structure. This structure was the product of a pre-war programme of forced newspaper consolidations, which had resulted in a reduction in the number of newspapers from 1124 in September 1938 to 54 in October 1942. This was a deliberate attempt to create a ›One Prefecture – One Newspaper‹ system with the obvious aim of allowing the state to control the flow of information.

In 1951, Japan regained its sovereignty as a country allied to the US. What happened after that was a domestication process whereby the media policies bequeathed by GHQ/SCAP were selectively adopted and revised by the Japanese government and media organizations themselves, becoming firmly entrenched in post-war society. Here I will highlight three examples of how this process occurred.

Let us first consider the issue of ›editorial rights‹. The concept of *›henshuken‹* was introduced with the deliberate aim of excluding left-leaning labour unions from media organizations, and was a product of the heightened ideological tension between capital and labour during the Cold-War period. It has continued to be a factor in the Japanese media world to the present day, even though media labour organizations became far less radical than they were in the immediate post-war era. As in other industries, labour came to be organized at the company level, and tended to see itself as sharing a ›common destiny‹ with the company especially during the period of rapid economic growth. The idea of ›editorial rights‹ has contributed in a major way to the formation of a distinctive hierarchical structure of media organizations in Japan, and the development of a certain matching occupational consciousness. In accordance with the concept of ›editorial rights‹, commercial and editorial managers of media organizations relate to their journalistic or programme production staff not as colleagues in a common enterprise, but rather as adversarial partners. This induces a tendency toward ›self-regulation‹ and deference by the lower echelons toward those higher up. There is no space for any concept like that of *›Innere Pressefreiheit‹* in Germany. Individuals have little or no effective autonomy within the organization. Media activities take place fundamentally at the collective organizational level. The historical background to the notion of ›editorial rights‹ as invoked in Japan is often forgotten, and it is too easily (sometimes deliberately) equated with the rather different concept of ›newsroom independence‹ as used in the US.

The next example to consider is the press-club system. Press clubs were initially established in the 1890s by journalists seeking to bolster

their weak position with respect to the government by banding together and demanding the release of information. However, under the wartime political order this developed into a top-down system whereby the government actively dispensed information in the manner of its choosing and journalists simply transmitted what they had been told. At first, this arrangement came as some surprise to GHQ, but before long it was also being used by the occupation authorities. In the post-war era, press clubs came to function like local agencies of the ever expanding media corporations. A system of give and take developed between the major media organizations and the various government departments that dispensed information. Membership of press clubs became a privilege of newspaper companies, news agencies or broadcasting stations affiliated to the Japanese Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association. Correspondents of foreign media organizations criticized this system as a form of information oligopoly (FREEMAN 2000). In January 2002, the Editorial Affairs Committee of the Japanese Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association issued a set of new guidelines on the press club system. According to these guidelines, a ›press club‹ *(kishakurabu)* is defined as a »voluntary institution for news-gathering and news-reporting activities made up of journalists who regularly collect news from public institutions and other sources« (cf. http://www.pressnet.or.jp/englisch/about/kishaclub.htm). This definition is an attempt to loosen the degree of exclusivity, and has led to a slight opening of the door. However, there is still no change in the prevailing attitude of source-dependent reporting, known disparagingly as ›communiqué journalism‹ *(happyo janarizumu)*.

The final case is that of journalism education. The initial response to Dyke's call for the establishment of journalism schools was positive, and a number of universities did in fact set up programs in journalism studies. However, these did not grow into fully developed schools of journalism. Many universities do have programs and courses which teach about journalism and communications as part of general education, but nowhere is there yet a professional school specifically for the training of journalists. Even before the war, going back as far as the beginning of the twentieth century, there have been attempts to initiate professional journalism education in Japan, but all have so far failed in their ultimate objective of establishing a school of journalism on the American model. Writing specifically about the pre-war period, Uchikawa Yoshimi lists three reasons for this: (1) differences in social consciousness with respect to newspapers,

and differences in political climate; (2) different views of university education, and (3) different expectations by media companies toward journalism education in universities (UCHIKAWA 2003: 14). In my view, these same factors also apply to the post-war era. This is to say that neither society, nor universities, nor media companies have seen the need for a school of journalism. Media companies in Japan want journalists who are trained in their own distinctive ›corporate culture‹ *(shafu)* and they have achieved this up to now through in-house or so-called ›on-the-job‹ training. Therefore, they have seen little or no need for the universal training offered by universities. For their part, Japanese universities have not traditionally focused much on education for specific professions except for medicine. Finally, there is no strong awareness in Japanese society of the link between journalism and democracy, and therefore no popular demand for journalists to be imbued with the ethos of public service.

What can we conclude from these three examples? After recovering from the ruins of defeat, Japan experienced an age of unprecedented economic growth in the 1960s. During this period, the company (*kaisha*) became the centre of most working people's lives. The three pillars of ›Japanese-style management‹ were life-time employment, promotion according to seniority, and one-company labour unions. This produced a society dominated by the institution of the company, and an employment and work ethos also centred on the company. A mass consumer society also came into being to receive the products and services created by companies.

Japanese media companies are no exception to this pattern of corporate social organization. Journalists are recruited from among the graduates of ›renowned universities‹. They become members of the company that hires them and are trained to be journalists within that company. They remain in one company throughout their working lives without ever moving to work for a different employer. After the age of about 40, they are assigned managerial posts and cease to be writers. Even if the nature of their job changes they still remain within the company that first hired them. In contrast to trade unions based on a particular industry or profession, the company labour unions of Japan are organizations embracing all the employees of a single company regardless of the type of work they do. In Japan there is no general organization of the journalistic profession above the level of the company. As the three cases described above indicate, the company forms a complete self-contained entity in itself. This is how the media system in Japan is structured, and it is

against this background that Japanese mass-media journalism has developed. However, we are now on the brink of a significant historical shift.

3. The Emerging Structural Transformation of ›Mass-media Journalism‹ in Japan

3.1 *Environmental Challenges to the Media Structure*

The environment surrounding the media system is now undergoing major change, and this will in turn affect the way in which the media is structured. The two keywords are ›digitalization‹ and ›globalization‹. Digitalization is bringing about the convergence of computers, telecommunications and broadcasting, thus ending the vertical segmentation of the media characteristic of the analogue era. This process of media convergence is occurring at all levels, from production facilities to user terminals, from the means of transmission to the services provided. Concomitant changes are also occurring in the industrial and social structure, under the various influences of consumer desire, capital interests, and the state. Globalization, on the other hand, is a process of decentralization in the sources of power in the world, and is leading to greater diversity and the increased emphasis on identity. This is not merely an economic trend relating to the movement of capital and the structure of markets, since it also has important political and cultural aspects. Indeed, one could say that globalization is breaking down the divisions separating economic, political and cultural domains, and causing them to converge. Modern journalism developed within the framework of the nation-state, and its entire *habitus* was formed in this context. Globalization implies a rethinking of these fundamentals, and spurs us to consider the possibility of creating a transnational journalism.

Some of the specific problems these developments raise for the media structure (especially in Japan) are the following:

(a) With the growth of the internet, the mass media are no longer the only arena for journalism. New modes of journalism, such as net journalism and blog journalism, have emerged.

(b) Amid the trend toward deregulation and expansion of the market principle, it is highly likely that the fixed pricing system of newspaper sales will be abolished. Likewise, we may well soon see a reform of

the public broadcasting system in response to the growing refusal of viewers to pay the broadcast reception license fee.

(c) Venture businesses in the IT industry are beginning to bid for shares in commercial television companies, with the aim of buying out or forming partnerships with traditional and established media companies. This is motivated by the expectation that transmission of programmes over the internet would be highly profitable. In addition, foreign capital is gradually making an entry into the Japanese media industry.

(d) Established mass-media journalism, including especially (in the Japanese case) ›company journalism‹, is beginning to be challenged from the periphery. Even in Japan, freelance writers and independent journalists are being empowered, especially in the areas of war reporting and minority journalism.

3.2 *Internal Changes in the Media Structure*

Having considered the environmental challenges bringing about change, let us now consider what is happening within the media system. There has clearly been a reduction in media performance, and there are also signs that some measures are being taken to rectify this. As noted at the beginning of this paper, the media has recently been much concerned with its own internal ›scandals‹. Numerous instances have come to light of violations of journalistic ethics and criminal acts such as embezzlement by media company employees. Media companies have frequently found themselves having to issue apologies, and have become the subject of criticism by rival companies. Accusations are met by counter-accusations, leading to an overall decline in public image and trust. This has then provided government and politicians with the opportunity to exploit the weakened status of the media and rob it of its hard won privileges.

On the personal level, this reflects a failure of the existing ›on-the-job‹ training for journalists. Although this approach to journalist training might have functioned well in previous circumstances, it has become significantly dysfunctional in the new media environment. ›On-the job‹ training lacks any consistent programme or methodology, and fails to nurture skills with universal applicability. Despite the evident failure in

personnel training, media companies have so far done no more than treat the symptoms.

There are, however, the beginnings of change in recruitment policies. Rather than simply hiring graduates straight out of university, companies are beginning to take on people later in their careers where there is a requirement for an immediate input of specialized skills. The ›life-time‹ employment system is now coming to an end in the media industry, as it already has in other industries. A more open job market is developing, and people are more likely to change their employer in mid-career. This is altering the existing pattern of ›company journalism‹ and encouraging a more individualistic work ethos.

As already mentioned, the growth of free-lance journalism is another factor encouraging the development of professionalism independent of media companies.

3.3 *Practical Consequences*

As a practical response to the above changes, I make three proposals:

(a) The *Declaration on Editorial Rights* issued by the Japanese Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association should be withdrawn. Besides putting an end to one of the last remaining inheritances of the Cold War, this would enable journalists to act responsibly and ethically as individuals, and provide the conditions for the pursuit of free and independent journalism.

(b) Press clubs should be abolished. This would require individual journalists to polish their own skills in order to compete in an environment of open competition. It would also contribute to the recovery of public trust in the media by putting an end to the practice of ›communiqué journalism‹.

(c) Schools of journalism should be established. Besides reducing the cost to companies by outsourcing personnel training to universities, this would also strengthen the social role of universities by assigning them the task of providing systematic academically grounded education for those intending to enter the journalistic profession. Universities would also be able to contribute directly to innovations in journalism. Journalism education is a ›missing link‹ in the journalism institution of Japan that needs to be filled (HANADA 1999: 146ff.).

Measures such as these would finally bring the Japanese media world into the post-Cold-War era, and allow it to fulfil its social function more adequately.

4. Conclusion: the Need for Theoretical Reflection

The Japanese media system is now at a major turning point. The existing media structure was inherited from the occupation era and developed in accordance with a structure of conservative political domination following a brief period of liberal reform very early in the occupation. In the era of rapid economic growth, the media structure came to reflect the dominant economic and cultural structure centred on the company. Although the media industry once enjoyed great prosperity under this system, it is now showing distinct signs of failure. Journalism is unable to perform its proper social function, and has lost the trust of civil society. Meanwhile, digitalization and globalization present major challenges which must eventually bring sweeping change to the media structure.

As a key aspect of our theoretical response to this situation, we must once again draw a clear conceptual distinction between the ›mass media‹ and ›journalism‹. We must also consider both theoretically and practically how we can best take advantage of this opportunity for innovation in journalism. Another way of stating the contrast between mass media as ›structure‹ and journalism as ›function‹ is to say that the mass media form the ›infrastructure‹ while journalism constitutes the ›superstructure‹. Although the two entities are theoretically distinguished, they do not exist in total separation from each other. They are linked in what could be described as a ›relation of correspondence‹. Professionalism could be characterized as the mediating term between them.

The reassertion of journalism as a profession is supported by the recent trend toward individualization. This is a significant departure from the company-centred journalism that has dominated hitherto. Actors, who are ready to accept such change, are using the gaps left vacant by the failings of the existing system. It is worthy of whatever support policy can provide.

Theory predicated on the notion of ›mass-media journalism‹ needs to be reconsidered. It can no longer be assumed that journalism exists only within the arena of the mass media. As the media structure is transformed, journalism will be increasingly able to choose its own medium. This provides fresh impetus to the issue of journalism's function. Theoretical frameworks taking into account these new circumstances must be developed.

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