**Smartphones versus NHK? Mobilization strategies of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement under Abe’s restrictive media policy**

*1. Introduction*

Since the nuclear accident at Fukushima in March 2011, Japan has dropped significantly in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index. While the country was 22nd[[1]](#footnote-1) out of 180 countries in the 2011/2012 Index, it ranks 61st[[2]](#footnote-2) in the 2015 Index.[[3]](#footnote-3) A principal reason for this change was the obstruction of freelance journalists who were researching the situation at the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, according to Reporters Without Borders. The organization claims that the situation for independent journalism in Japan deteriorated still further following the inauguration of Shinzō Abe in September 2012, and especially in connection with the Secrecy Protection Law *(Himitsu Hogo-hō*)[[4]](#footnote-4) that was initiated by the Abe government in December 2013. (Reporters Without Borders 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 15.12.2014, 2015).

That the situation in Japan renders critical reporting difficult is confirmed both by freelance journalists[[5]](#footnote-5) and in the interviews with social movement actors[[6]](#footnote-6) that are analyzed in this article. Since Abe’s assumption of office in particular, Japanese media circles have demonstrated an increase in self-control and even self-censorship in the reporting of issues that do not correspond to the government’s own political direction. This atmosphere of media (self-)control is created not only by the Secrecy Protection Law but also by appointments of media representatives within party and government offices, visits by government representatives to media editorial offices, and the questioning of media representatives about the ‘accuracy’ of certain broadcast content. These types of influencing, amongst others, can additionally be observed in the reporting of nuclear policy issues. Reporters Without Borders (2014) describes how freelance journalists conducting research on this topic have experienced arrests, house searches, questioning by the Office for Constitutional Protection and threats of legal prosecution . In addition, discrimination by press clubs[[7]](#footnote-7) against freelance and foreign journalists has increased and freelance reporters have been excluded from government and TEPCO[[8]](#footnote-8) press conferences. In the interviews conducted for this article, it also became clear that radio commentators were repeatedly urged to avoid the subject of nuclear power; among those who nonetheless reported on the issue, some even lost their jobs (M2).[[9]](#footnote-9)

For social movements like the Japanese anti-nuclear movement, the media play a key role in mobilization of the public. According to researcher of social movements Dieter Rucht (2004, pp. 200–201), media coverage is a major mechanism by which the movements initiate social or political change. The relationship between actors in the mass media and social movements is extremely complex, both groups of actors being strongly heterogenic in character. From the movement’s perspective, however, the media fundamentally represent a part of the conflict , given their tendency to interpret the movement’s issues and present them to the public according to their own perspectives. For movement actors, this means that cooperation with the mass media entails relinquishing, to a large extent, their control of the narrative. At the same time, however, the media are an indispensable means of reaching large numbers of people. For this reason, movements tend both to cooperate with the mass media and to produce their own media content.[[10]](#footnote-10) The relationship between the mass media and social movements is thus characterized by ambivalence, but it also demonstrates a clear imbalance of power. The mass media certainly need contacts among movement actors so as to obtain information and thus meet the public’s need for news, and to fulfill their task as the ‘watchdog’ of politics, but movement actors depend to a far greater extent on coverage by the mass media. This lends credibility and emphasis to their statements and demands, enabling them to reach previously uninvolved sectors of society (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993).

But what media strategies do movement actors develop when, as is currently the case in Japan, access to the mass media is increasingly restricted directly or indirectly by state intervention? Does movement-generated Internet-based media content offer an equal alternative to traditional media?

In this article, these questions are addressed on the basis of an evaluation of content analysis[[11]](#footnote-11) of 24 semi-structured interviews[[12]](#footnote-12) with Japanese anti-nuclear actors and through participatory observation[[13]](#footnote-13) of various movement events in the Greater Tōkyō Area between September 2013 and May 2014. The interviewees are mainly representatives of movement organizations critical of nuclear power, experts, and people active in the media.[[14]](#footnote-14) They support various goals, from improving the situation of those who fled the contaminated areas to the abolition of nuclear power and the strengthening of renewable energies in Japan. During field research in 2013 and 2014, i.e. about one and a half years after the nuclear accident, the Secrecy Protection Law discussed earlier was passed, meaning that interviews were conducted while this development was still recent.

After a brief description of the media landscape and changes within the media in Japan – the structural framework of the relationship between media and social movement – the following sections discuss three of the thematic complexes that emerged from the interviews with reference to dealings with the media from the perspective of movement actors. This includes interaction between media and movement actors directly after the nuclear accident (Section 3), the media strategies of movement actors (Section 4), and their reaction to the increasing media (self-)control (Section 5). Finally, the conclusion (Section 6) summarizes the results and places them in the context of the power relationship between media and social movement.

## 2. The media landscape, its changes, and civil society in Japan

Japan is considered a democratic state with few formal restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Its media landscape, however, is characterized by strong control of the release of information from the state to selected media organizations. Freeman (2003: 237–238) refers to these relationships as “information cartels” and identifies three formal institutions that are significantly involved in this: the press clubs *(kisha kurabu*), the newspaper industry trade association *(shinbun kyōkai*), and the large media corporations *(media keiretsu*). A key role in this structure is played by the press clubs, in which journalists from the mainstream media cultivate close relationships with their sources of information. These sources primarily include powerful actors from public administration, politics, industry, and the police. Within the press clubs, both access to sources and the media interpretation of the information passed on are subject to uniform control, constraints which are generally followed by the members. Much important information is passed on exclusively through the press clubs and is therefore not available to non-members. The newspaper industry and the major media corporations support this system by providing their members with exclusive access to the press clubs. Japan’s five major daily newspapers, Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, Nikkei and Sankei[[15]](#footnote-15), are the central focus of the large media concerns who additionally operate the majority of commercial television stations.[[16]](#footnote-16) As a result, the television channels are also subject to a considerable extent to the rules laid down by the press clubs. Only the public broadcaster NHK[[17]](#footnote-17) is independent, although its journalists are also members of the press clubs. These circumstances lead, according to Freeman (2003: 239–242), firstly to an excessive reliance by the public on official information because of its aura of objectivity; secondly, to a weakening of the media’s watchdog function because the release of information is controlled by the state; thirdly, to a limit in the media’s ability to influence the political agenda; fourthly, to a marginalization of alternative media, and fifthly, to a homogenization of news and public opinion.

In contrast to indirectly controlled reporting in the traditional or mainstream media, the Internet in Japan is a largely independent space. According to the Real Time Statistics Project’s *Internet Live Stats*, Internet usage has increased from about 30% of the population in 2000 to about 86% in 2014, with most access occurring via mobile devices such as smartphones (Internet Live Stats 2015; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication 2015). In view of this high number of users, Sugimoto (2010: 270) assumes that civil society organizations also make extensive use of this largely unregulated public space and seek contact with a broad public through it.

## 3. The ‘Fukushima Event’ – interaction of media and social movement

The events surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in March 2011 triggered an avalanche of interest from traditional media in the statements of civil society organizations. The focus of interest here was primarily on citizen science[[18]](#footnote-18) groups and their assessments of the situation at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima and the radiation exposure. Particularly in the first week after the ‘maximum credible accident’, television stations such as one of NHK’s regional channels and Nippon BS Broadcasting[[19]](#footnote-19), as well as some foreign media[[20]](#footnote-20), demonstrated interest in comments from citizen scientists too (SR3). The major news agencies Kyōdo and Jiji[[21]](#footnote-21) also asked for statements from citizen scientists. However, by far the greatest interest, according to the actors surveyed, was shown by newspaper journalists, especially the Tōkyō Shinbun, Asahi, and Mainichi newspapers. Nikkei showed only very limited and short-term interest, while the newspapers Sankei and Yomiuri had no contact at all with citizen science-focused movement organizations (SR4).

The public’s interest in accessing alternative information was enormous. For example, the number of hits received by an Internet site on the effects of radioactivity on children rose at times from 200 to 10,000 to 20,000 hits per day (SR1). This massive need for information led some citizen groups to provide direct broadcasts from their offices via U-Stream or YouTube with information and assessments of the accident. In some cases, citizens’ groups co-operated and developed common online broadcast channels. It was in this context that lectures and discussions featuring important alternative specialists as well as question-and-answer sessions with officials from central and local[[22]](#footnote-22) government *(seifu kōshō*) in Tōkyō and in Fukushima began to be broadcast on the Internet (E2).

However, the interest of the traditional media in statements by civil society actors declined relatively quickly. Only on the anniversary of the accident or during other major events with news value did the views of civil society receive further coverage. For the first three years after the accident, the only constant factor was the willingness of Tōkyō Shinbun[[23]](#footnote-23) to report on issues relating to the movement. The Mainichi and Asahi newspapers reports occur more sporadically. However, it is now mainly movement actors who contact the traditional media and invite them to events or press conferences (SR16).

Since Abe took office in 2012 especially, journalists sympathizing with the movement have been subject to restrictions. For example, a radio commentator in Osaka lost her job when she made remarks in a program about the situation at the Kaminoseki nuclear power plant in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Another prominent case is that of dual-language English-Japanese radio commentator Peter Barakan, who was advised by his superiors not to discuss the subject of nuclear power, especially in the period leading up to the Tōkyō gubernatorial elections in February 2014.[[24]](#footnote-24) Dissatisfaction was also spreading in some media circles. A case in point was the development of an initiative centered on the journalist Kinya Aikawa. Aikawa’s socially and politically critical talk show *Pakku in Jānaru*, canceled in April 2012 during the sale of Asahi News to TV Asahi, gave rise to another Internet TV station called DemokuraTV, which broadcasts critical evaluation of political and social content several times weekly (M2). In collaboration with civilian groups, the station is currently planning further training courses on media use, especially for local politicians (SR19). Frustration with the lack of coverage of demonstrations also led to the formation of a group of media professionals who charter a helicopter during large-scale demonstrations in order to film their size from the air and broadcast this on the Internet (SR16).

## 4. Media strategies of movement actors

Among the mass media, state television station NHK in particular is viewed negatively by movement actors. Since the appointment of NHK’s Chairman, Katsuto Momī, in January 2014, a process in which the Abe government played a decisive role (The Japan Times 26.12.2013; Zoll 08.02.2014), the direction in which NHK is developing is described as “dangerous” and the station itself as containing much of “Abe’s mind” (SR16). Another interviewee accused NHK of “reluctant propaganda.”[[25]](#footnote-25) NHK and the major TV stations, it was stated, possessed a great deal of influence on what would and would not become a political issue and they would refrain from politically controversial news as much as possible, especially during election periods. The broadcasters acted “as if they knew nothing” and instead reported on unimportant incidents. The interviewee also referred to a complete lack of sound scientific and investigative reporting (M2).

When it comes to newspapers, the Yomiuri, Sankei and Nikkei papers receive particular criticism by actors, on the grounds that these papers advocate the use of nuclear power in Japan and therefore report only rarely or not at all on the subject. The Tōkyō Shinbun, Asahi and Mainichi newspapers, on the other hand, are viewed more positively, especially the Tōkyō Shinbun, which has the most extensive coverage (SR4, SR20). Other regional newspapers are also rated relatively positively (SR12). Admittedly, the national editions of the Asahi and Mainichi were described as keen; however, it was frequently the case that they no longer dispatched journalists from the political desk to many movement events, instead sending journalists from the culture or economics desks, for example. This is judged critically by movement actors, on the grounds that if journalists are not really interested in the topics of their articles, the ensuing articles are frequently poorly written and therefore not printed (SR14).

Although the actors were strongly critical of reporting in the traditional media, the clear separation between sympathetic and negative mass media publications is not just evaluated negatively. One interviewee described how, during this period, the “individual media outlets have revealed their true colors” (M1). This situation has also “produced” a number of “good” journalists who are “wholeheartedly” involved and who make great efforts to place articles in newspapers or magazines (SR8, SR15). A large number of movement actors interviewed stated that they maintained close relations with sympathetic journalists; for some groups this also included informal contact, such as joint dinners (SR2, SR5, SR11, SR13, SR15, SR19).

This is closely related to the fact that access to the traditional media is a priority for the vast majority of movement actors. For them, the traditional media still have a greater impact and reach more people than Internet-based alternative media. Good relations with journalists are therefore a key focus for movement actors. Many movement actors are very sympathetic to the situation of journalists and acknowledge that journalists too must navigate the web of political and industrial interests and, beyond that, comply with the law of the market in offering information that possesses news value. For these reasons, movement actors pay close attention to when they contact journalists or call press conferences, knowing that timing plays an important role in whether their activities actually receive coverage (SR5, SR8). In addition, most movement actors prepare information or documents for journalists “with care” and with regard to the specific media outlet in order to make it “easy” for articles to be written on the basis of the actors’ output. (SR7). This strategy also makes it possible, among other things, to influence individual journalists’ scope for interpretation and to ensure that the actors’ message is conveyed.

As much as the movement actors judge the media system “disappointing,” the media as a whole represent important partners, even “friends” (SR15). The actors consider it extremely important that these partners convey the voices of civilians, in addition to the voices of government and industry, so as to present alternatives (SR12). In this context, the traditional media are held to be the media with the greatest influence, as they continue to have a high degree of credibility and the majority of Japan’s (predominantly) older population has no experience of dealing with alternative Internet media. The actors are aware, for example, that although there is an overlap between the consumers of traditional media and of Internet media, these are largely different target groups (E1). Overall, these statements give the impression that even if access to traditional media is difficult, despite the presence of friendly journalists, the actors make extensive use of the possibilities they offer. However, according to dual-language Japanese-English activist Aileen Mioko Smith, there is still a need for professionalization within the movement in dealing with international media, mainly due to the language barrier (Smith 08.12.13).

Also, and above all, because of the difficulties with access and with the control of reporting exercised by the state and industry within the traditional media landscape, Internet media are becoming increasingly important for the movement. In these circumstances, the ‘Fukushima event’ represented a significant breakthrough leading, for example, to a boom in the use of the Internet to provide information (E2, SR16). Online direct broadcasts of statements and updates on the situation in Fukushima, or discussion panels, question-and-answer sessions with the authorities, or even demonstrations and other movement events via the U-Stream, YouTube or TwitCasting platforms are now common. Furthermore, movement actors use social networks, especially Facebook and Twitter, to keep their followers up to date and to mobilize their participation in movement events. Newsletters and mailing lists are also used extensively to disseminate information. It is taken for granted that movement organizations will provide information and present their activities via websites. The Internet TV stations OurPlanetTV and IWJ[[26]](#footnote-26) are also present at important events and report on these (participatory observation 2011 to 2015).

In addition to alternative reporting, social networks play a decisive role in mobilizing participants for demonstrations. In order to mobilize the largest possible numbers, actors are using both traditional means of communication such as member mailing lists and flyers and, increasingly, social media. While some older activists are still surprised that social networks actually mobilize people to participate in demonstrations (SR15), some of the first demonstrations after the nuclear accident in March 2011 were organized exclusively via Twitter with mainly younger participants in Shibuya and Harajuku (Gotō 2012).[[27]](#footnote-27) There are therefore significant differences in the use of alternative Internet media among the actors, depending on the age of the individual and the type of group(s) to which they belong. However, the ‘Fukushima event’ has stimulated older groups and actors to make greater use of the potential of the Internet, which is free of state influence, while for younger people it is frequently social networks that first encouraged them to become active.

Although actors are making increasing use of Internet media, many doubt that this can replace traditional media. Alternative media alone “cannot move the world,” according to one interviewee (SR19). Specifically those actors who have been involved for many years have a nuanced view of the new media as having “good and bad sides.” On the one hand, stated an interviewee, Internet media broadcasts events as they are without interpreting them in a grand manner. On the other hand, they continued, it is often the case that personal rights, for example the right to one’s own image, are not taken into account, and the presence of cameras could also be a hindrance during question and answer sessions with officials, leading to the latter not telling the “truth” *(honne*) (SR11). In addition, some actors stress that the older, rural population especially has almost no access to alternative media and that here the traditional media still maintain great credibility (SR8, SR16).

Overall, activists integrate both types of media into their action strategy in different ways, due mainly to the different audiences they reach depending on the medium. One interviewee summarized the strategy as follows: Internet media are easily accessible and enable actors to transmit 100% of their message while the mass media reach people who had not previously shown any interest in the movement’s issues. Both types of media thus exert a different effect (SR2).

## 5. Media (self-)control and movement actors in Japan

The increasing (self-)control of the mass media is leading to pessimistic assessments of the overall political and social situation in Japan. One interviewee, for example, sees a “dark age” approaching, another judges the situation of the media in Japan to be “hopeless” (SR2, SR16). Despite these personal feelings, they do not limit their activities and continue their strategy in dealing with the mass media in order to make use of the scope this offers. It should be noted here that, from a movement perspective, critical discussion in the mainstream media of the topic of nuclear power and other alternative topics was difficult even before Fukushima (SR8). For example, reporting on nuclear power has actually increased overall compared to the time before the accident despite control-focused intervention by industry and the authorities (SR11).

As far as the effects of the Secrecy Protection Law are concerned, the opinions of the movement actors are very different and relate mainly to the direct effects of the law on the movement itself. Some expect that more difficulties could arise in future, particularly in the monitoring of nuclear power plant operations and administrative procedures. However, one interviewee stated that even before the law was passed, it was difficult to obtain information from TEPCO and the government. Another said that it was already possible to find ways around this law (SR16, SR6). However, fears were also expressed that the law could lead to radicalization of the anti-nuclear movement, since only people who were prepared to take the increased risk would become involved in future (SR14).

Despite or even because of these developments, alternative media like OurPlanetTV are beginning to demand equal rights to the mass media. In July 2012, the non-profit Internet TV station was not allowed to make recordings of Friday demonstrations[[28]](#footnote-28) against nuclear power from the roof of the Press Club for Reporting on the National Parliament *(Kokkai Kisha Kai*). The Press Club House is loaned by the State to the Press Club for business purposes. According to the government, the roof of the building is not intended to be used, but the Club holds keys as it is responsible for the roof’s maintenance. The broadcaster later took legal action against this decision, referring to the fact that in the summer of 2012 the Club had allowed foreign media such as Britain’s BBC to use the roof for recordings. For OurPlanetTV, the refusal to permit use therefore constitutes a violation of the freedom of the press. To date, the Tōkyō district court *(Tōkyō Chihō Saiban*) and the Tōkyō high court *(Tōkyō Kōsai*) rejected the charges in October 2014 and April 2015. This was on the grounds, inter alia, that fair and adequate reporting, which was based on consultation and standards established between the State and the Press Club, could not be ensured for Internet media due to the large number and diversity of the outlets. At the time of writing this article, the broadcaster is preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court *(Saikōsai*) (OurPlanetTV 14.10.2014, 16.04.2015).

One consequence of the restrictive media policy under Abe is thus the growing gap in reporting between traditional and alternative media. While the mass media are increasingly controlled and the tendency towards self-regulation continues to grow, Internet media can report critically and largely independently, even if they lack the same sources of information. The (self-)control of the mass media also affects society’s perceptions. The author Kei Nakazawa pointed this out in convincing fashion at a press conference at the *Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan* on February 25, 2015: “In Japanese society, there is a big difference between those who consume Internet news and those who consume news from traditional media such as television or newspapers”[[29]](#footnote-29) (The Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan 25.02.2015). This gulf between consumers of mass and Internet media also affects the social movement. While Internet media constantly report about the movement and are partly produced by it, the movement’s appearances in the mass media are limited. A viewer whose only source of information is the Internet may consider the movement to be larger than it is, while those who only consume mass media may consider the movement to be somewhere between insignificant and non-existent. This fact is known to some movement actors. Within their own context, they try to promote the development of “small” media and have started to get involved in the field of media education, for example through workshops held at universities (SR19, SR20).

## 6. Conclusion

The ‘Fukushima event’ and the associated increase in demand from the public for information on nuclear power and its risks, only partially served by the mass media, prompted the majority of the movement actors interviewed for this study to expand their activities in the field of Internet media. During the first three years after the nuclear accident, Internet media and social networks became an increasingly important pillar of activities. However, this development did not lead the movement actors to neglect their contacts with traditional media: on the contrary, relations with sympathetic journalists even intensified. One important reason for this is certainly the awareness of the movement actors that they cannot reach a large part of the population by relying solely on Internet media.

From the movement’s point of view, the ‘Fukushima event’ led to a clear separation within the mass media in Japan between media outlets that sympathize with the movement and those that reject it. The influence on or indirect control of mass media coverage exercised by the state through press clubs and media corporations has a long tradition in Japan (Freeman 2003; Pharr and Krauss 1996). However, since Prime Minister Abe took office in particular, this has taken on a new dimension. The subtle exertion of influence through indirect reprisals against critical journalists – exemplified by the Secrecy Protection Law or by (threatened) dismissals – is increasingly leading to self-control, if not self-censorship, even in traditional media that sympathize with the movement. As a result, the information gap between the “NHK generation” and the “smartphone generation” is growing (E1). The increasing difficulty in access to traditional media is an incentive for movement actors to intensify the development of Internet media and to become involved in the field of media education. Ultimately, however, even Internet media do not represent an escape from the dilemma of having to come to terms with traditional media. The need to reach the ‘NHK generation’ through the media weakens the movement’s opportunities to exert influence in comparison to the government’s. The intergenerational divide diminishes the movement’s mobilization potential and limits it to a relatively established group of already committed Internet users who access it mainly via smartphones, or to long-standing committed supporters.

From the movement’s point of view, the media are an arena for the dispute over control of the narrative when it comes to social or political problems. The way in which this problem is presented in the media plays a major role in the public’s evaluation of the issues and is thus closely related to the mobilization potential of a social movement. The data evaluated for this article clearly show the competition between government and the movement for control of the media narrative. The government’s response to the movement is to apply ever more pressure to mass media actors, while the movement, as well as maintaining its contacts with friendly journalists, is increasingly turning to alternative Internet-based portals.

However, the available data permits only a superficial interpretation of the reaction of mainstream media actors in this conflict between state control and the media’s role as the watchdog of politics. There remains scope for a more in-depth investigation, especially with regard to the different perspectives and experiences of the actors in this field. It remains the case that, just as a social movement involves a wide variety of actors embedded in multiple networks, media professionals likewise operate in an environment influenced by complex networks of relationships.

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1. Data collected for the period December 2010 to November 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Data collected for the period October 2013 to October 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In comparison, Germany moved from 16th place in the 2011/2012 Index to 12th in 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The new Secrecy Protection Law expands the possibility for government documents from various ministries to be classified as state secrets and increases the maximum penalty for disclosure of secrets from five to ten years. The charge of treason now extends to members of the press who publish information that is classified as secret, according to Repeta (2013) und Reporters Without Borders (15.12.2014). Critics of the Secrecy Protection Law such as lawyer and anti-nuclear activist Kaido Yūichi (2013) point out that this law also contributes to the further concealment of information concerning Japanese nuclear power plants and development of the nuclear industry, and hinders critical monitoring and reporting by civil society and the press. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This became especially apparent during debate about the historical revisionism sought by the Abe government, which is particularly concerned about positive portrayal of Japan’s imperialist past in history books; cf. Germis (02.04.2015), Yamaguchi (17.04.2015) und Hasegawa (11.12.2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Since those who were interviewed for this article are mainly representatives of organizations within the anti-nuclear movement (hereinafter referred to as movement organizations) that work using advocacy, i.e. as representatives of (a) group(s), the term ‘actor’ is preferred to the term ‘activist’ in order to emphasize a certain independence and individuality of action. Furthermore, for many Japanese movement actors, the term ‘activist’ (jap. *akutibisuto)* has negative connotations*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. As discussed in Section Two, journalist members of press clubs have particularly good connections to sources of information in politics and industry. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Tōkyō Electric Power Company, one of Japan’s ten largest electricity producers and operator of the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Code for the interview quoted, comprising a letter for the category of the interviewee and a number. The table in the appendix indicates when and in what format the interview took place. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Groth (1996, p. 219) also refers to the content generated by the movements as “mini media.” In the 1980s and 90s this was still primarily in the form of newspapers, pamphlets and handouts. Today, it increasingly appears in digital form. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Kuckartz (2012) and Schreier (2014) define qualitative content analysis as a systematic-interpretive procedure guided by a research question and aimed at capturing essential aspects of meaning in the underlying texts. For this article, the first step was therefore to highlight the text passages in the previously transcribed interviews that deal with the theme ‘media’. In a second step, these passages were then examined for their significance and three superordinate thematic categories were developed (see following sections). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. In semi-structured interviews, according to Blee and Taylor (2002), the interviewer follows some main points that cover specific questions and topics. However, he/she can react flexibly to the conversation and respond if it heads in an unexpected direction. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For this method of data collection, according to Lichterman (2002), the researcher participates in field events and records the observations in the form of field notes. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See table in appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Listed in order of circulation size (see *Yomiuri Shinbun* 2016)). Yomiuri is considered politically conservative and is close to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Asahi and Mainichi, on the other hand, are considered liberal and critical of the government. According to Akuto (1996: 319), the public classifies Sankei and Nikkei as conservative and with a focus on the economy. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Nippon TV is owned by Yomiuri, TV Asahi by Asahi, TBS by Mainichi, Fuji TV by Sankei and TV Tokyo by Nikkei (see Pharr 1996: 6)). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This term denotes both scientists engaging with civil society and laypersons engaging in science who offer an alternative discourse to industry-oriented scientists. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Subsidiary of the electronics company Bic Camera. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. British, French and German media representatives in particular. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. News agencies based in Tōkyō, supplying national and international media with news. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Such sessions must be requested by a Member of Parliament, who usually do so on behalf of movement actors and then allow these to conduct the interviews. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Tōkyō regional newspaper, owned by Chūnichi Shinbun (supplies the Nagoya metropolitan area). It can be located politically more towards the left wing. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. With two candidates for Tōkyō governor, Morihiro Hosokawa and Kenji Utsunomiya, having an anti-nuclear power platform, nuclear power was an important issue in this election campaign. However, the election was won by the pro-nuclear candidate Yōichi Masuzoe (*The Guardian* 09.02.2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Indirect propaganda by the withholding of certain information. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. OurPlanetTV is a non-profit news provider founded in 2001 with a special focus on topics such as gender, children, environment and human rights. The Independent Web Journal (IWJ) was founded in 2010 by the journalist Yasumi Iwakami and draws its information from civil society in particular. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Central Tokyo districts that attract young people in particular. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes *(Shutoen Hangenpatsu Rengō*), anti-nuclear demonstrations have been taking place every Friday evening since September 2011. In summer 2012, the Friday demonstrations attracted up to 200,000 participants (Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Netto jōhō o ete iru hitobito to, jūrai no terebi ya shinbun to iu media kara jōhō o totteru hitobito no aida de, hijō ni ōkina kawari ga kono nihon to iu shakai de umarete imasu.* [↑](#footnote-ref-29)