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The implementation of democratic values in the first post-war decade in Japan

Article: The article describes the problem of democracy in Japan as an external political system introduced after the end of World War II. The author tries to explore how deeply democratic values were rooted in Japanese society in the first decade after the war. The key objective of this article is to analyse how Japanese democratic values functioned at that time, how they influenced political attitudes and if they were coherent. There are three basic dimensions of the author's considerations: axiological, normative and institutional. To achieve this, the author describes democratic values, internal elements of Japanese political culture and the democratisation process as a single complex process.

Key words: democracy, Japanese post-war politics

Introduction

The key objective of this article is to analyse how democratic values were received by the Japanese in the initial period after the end of World War II. To find the answer to this question, it is necessary to consider several problems that seem essential. The first one is to show different models of democratic systems that were present in the times when the Japanese started to implement democracy as their own political system. The author takes into consideration the first decade after the end of World War II. The initial date is 1947 when the Japanese Parliament passed the Constitution, and the closing date refers to 1956 when Japan was granted membership of the United Nations. It is essential to describe the main democratic values that were introduced to the Japanese social and political systems: liberty, equality, the common good, pursuit of happiness, justice and popular sovereignty, and show their Japanese specifics. Then, the article presents the fundamental Japanese cultural values which are important in analysing the elements of internal Japanese political culture. Practical democratic values are reflected in the deep character of the nation that tries to follow their rules. The thesis of the article refers to how Japanese society internalised democratic values in the first decade after passing the 1947 Constitution.

After the war Japan was inspired by the concept of democracy. The Americans took control over Japanese policy. Democratisation was connected with other post-war problems, such as demilitarisation or overcoming harsh living conditions. All three problems became inseparable in the post-war history of Japan. While demilitarisation was placed in the Constitution as the famous Article 9, the improvement of living conditions was transformed into the economisation of social life. Democracy became the framework for polit-

ical life. In the period 1947–1956 one could observe the emergence of two major platforms that outlined the limits of the Japanese political system, both internally and externally. In 1951, Japan signed a Peace Treaty with 48 nations in San Francisco and simultaneously signed a bilateral Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with the USA. For a long time the so called ‘San Francisco System’ symbolised the post-war foreign policy of Japan. This country aligned itself with the Cold War policy of the USA. In the domestic sphere, 1955 was the time when the Liberal-Democratic Party was established, which governed Japan uninterrupted until the beginning of the 1990s. In 1956, Japan became a member of the UN. In the same year, the Soviet Union and Japan signed a Joint Declaration on 19 October, providing for the restoration of diplomatic relations and formally concluding World War II (Dower, 1993, pp. 3–33).

Democracy and democratisation

The level of democratisation in Japan can be estimated by different factors. We can refer to institutional and normative dimensions which constitute the content of internal elements in any political system that must be obeyed if a given system could be called democratic. In political science there are few concepts which include indicators of a democratic regime in a country. Democracy has deep roots and was present as a political system in ancient times. Yet, in those distant times democracy was different. As Giovanni Sartori states, in ancient times democracy embodied small and local social communities and it meant the rule of the people. Nowadays, people mean less in a democracy, because this system refers to whole, complex societies, and it is impossible for nations of many million inhabitants make everyday political decisions (Sartori, 1987, pp. 21–23). Ancient democracy was direct while the contemporary one is rather indirect. Even in ancient times democracy was not the most popular political system. It enabled people to govern themselves, but existed only in a few Greek poleis. The great philosopher Aristotle did not appreciate democracy; he pointed out the most distinctive democratic rules: egalitarianism, qualification based on property, the dominant position of rules which must be obeyed by all citizens, and that all people can rule. The problem that accompanied ancient democracy was the majority rule, which allowed political minorities to be oppressed by the tyranny of the majority in the absence of legal protection. Aristotle opposed democracy because he thought that the rule of all people meant the rule of uneducated and unskilled people, which he thought would lead in the end to total destruction.

After the end of ancient times democracy was not a popular subject of political and philosophical discussion. Then, several centuries later, we can observe both the practical and theoretical interest of some democratic values implementation by some theorists and nations.

It is impossible to refer to all those writers who mentioned the concepts of democracy. The most important theorists who contributed to the theory of democracy in the modern era were: John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Alexis de Tocqueville. The first one in his work referred to social contract theory; he believed that human nature is reasonable, yet selfish. In a natural state people were equal and independent, yet in order to live in a safe condition people decided to surrender part of their independence to create a state.

In such a state Locke advocated governmental separation of powers. Locke stated that in each state political power would consist of executive, legislative and federative spheres. In a democratic context, Locke's contribution was to link people's rights with liberty. He advocated human rights, such as an individual's possessions, freedom of religion and expression. Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that in primitive conditions people lived without law and morality, and when society developed law and private property, then it required people to adapt to that situation. Pressure threatened men's freedom. In order to live in this new situation people decided to abandon their natural rights and part of their freedom. The general will pushed to create a state which was to protect individuals against the mass. In a state, social loyalty to the good of all must be the supreme desire, a commitment by everyone. As a result, Rousseau was in favour of republicanism (Dickinson, 2011, p. 14).

In the context of the division of political power, we ought to focus on Montesquieu, who indicated that the balance of power is determined by the balance of judicial, legislative and executive powers, while Alexis de Tocqueville described the practical version of the early stages of democracy in the United States in the first half of the 19th century. He wanted to analyse the functions of political and civil society in the USA. He observed the equal rights in American society and thought it was the basis of society and state in America. He noticed the individualism, which helped to guarantee human rights and made people wealthier. Yet to overcome their selfish desires, Americans created associations which could guarantee safety. One danger of radical equality could be materialism and the creation of a new aristocracy connected with material goods. He stated that the negative consequences of democracy were the tyranny of the majority, the dominant position of materialism and human isolation. He also predicted party violence and the possible failure of wise human beings to the rule of the ignorant (Tocqueville, 2000).

We can say that at the beginning of the 20th century more and more countries became democratic, as the second wave of democratisation was breaking on the shore of new countries. As a result, more theorists became interested in exploring the phenomenon of modern democracy and trying to match the classical democratic theory with contemporary times.

The most important writers today who contributed to the theory of democracy were Joseph Schumpeter, Arend Lijphart and Robert Dahl. Generally, we can describe them as representatives of the aggregative theory of democracy. Joseph Schumpeter advocated a practical concept of democracy instead of totally axiological ideas of this regime. Democracy is not a state of life where people want to achieve the common good and can achieve it. In it, politicians assure them that they can serve the common good, but in fact manipulate people. According to Schumpeter, democracy is a mechanism for competition between leaders, as in the free market. By voting, people legitimise governments and allow politicians to rule on their behalf. Public participation is limited. Robert Dahl is the author of the model of polyarchy. Polyarchy refers to societies in which there are institutions and procedures leading to democracy: free and cyclical elections, division of powers. In his works, Dahl presents the full scope of indices which are responsible for a democratic system (Dahl, 1983, pp. 10–11).

Another great researcher who contributed his thoughts to this theory of democracy is Arend Lijphart. He created the theory of consociational democracy. This concept refers to segmented societies which are not unified by ethical, religious or regional factors,

yet live together in a single country. He contrasted this kind of democracy with the majoritarian one, called the Westminster model of democracy, which is appropriate for societies without ideological, social, ethical or religious splits. Lijphart described some of the factors which are present in consociational and Westminster democracies (Dirdala, 2009, pp. 170–182).

Post-war Japan was under American occupation. The US powers eventually decided that Japan should become a democratic country and their close ally. Referring to Samuel Huntington, Japan became a democratic state while the second wave of democratisation spread across some parts of the world. This wave began in 1943 and ended in 1962. Of course, Japan had had a short flirtation with democracy in the 1920s, but at the beginning of the 1930s a military government was established (Huntington, 1991, pp. 31–40). What happened in the period 1947–1956 could be called transition, which was then continued by transformation and democratic consolidation. As Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan put it, transition can be completed when there is common agreement on democratic political procedures, free elections and government and division of power. Yet, transition does not always lead to democracy, its aim is to replace an authoritarian system. The authors refer to democratic consolidation and state it consists of five elements: civil society, political society, legal guarantees for citizen's freedom and independence, institutional state bureaucracy and economic society (Linz, Stepan, 1996, pp. 3–15).

Democratic values and their normative dimension in the Japanese Constitution

If we want to talk about democracy, we have to be aware of the huge complexity of this concept. Firstly, there are many definitions of democracy. Secondly, democracy has several values that constitute its core and uniqueness. Thirdly, a lot of research has contributed to create different models of democracy. Fourthly, democracy is an ideal regime for a state, which can be achieved through long-term processes, and one has to remember that democracy, as a practical and theoretical problem has been perceived differently at different times.

It is both impossible and unnecessary to present the whole concept of democracy in this article. The problem that I would like to explore is connected with core values of democracy that make this regime distinct from others. Then, I would like to examine the post-war democratic mechanisms and procedures implemented by Japan which could show how deeply democratic values had taken root in Japanese society.

There are several basic contemporary democratic values that are essential elements of democracy. One of them is equality. If people are equal, they can self-determine their lives as they want to. Of course, full equality has never existed and never will, yet the concept of equality should be treated as an ideal. Democracy is a regime which tends to diminish inequalities in the social and political structure most. Governance in any state is always unequal because there are superiors and subordinates, yet a democratic state can limit the power of those who benefit from the privilege of ruling and allow subordinates to influence the decision-making process. So, in the political sphere people are equal to decide over the political course of their community.

The modern concept of equal rights was implemented in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. In the 1889 Constitution all Japanese were declared equal. Unfortunately, this right was presented in an indirect way in article 19: "Japanese subjects may, according to qualifications determined in laws or ordinances, be appointed to civil or military or any other public offices equally."

The 1947 Constitution clearly stipulated the equality of all Japanese. Article 14 says: "[a]ll of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin." Article 24 adds: "[m]arriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis" and article 26 says that: "[a]ll people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided for by law." In the political context it is important to note that article 44 says: "[t]he qualifications of members of both Houses and their electors shall be fixed by law. However, there shall be no discrimination because of race, creed, sex, social status, family origin, education, property or income." Apart from these articles on equality there are a few more that deny any inequality that was legal before 1945. Despite these constitutional provisions, we can still encounter examples of unequal treatment in Japan. That is why political and social movements aim at securing equality of gender, sex, opinions and more.

Let us try to consider why there may be examples of unequal attitudes in contemporary Japan. We have to go beyond the axiological surface. In Japan there is a long tradition of Taoist discourse, which is rooted in the intellectual sphere. It says that each being in the cosmos has its manifestation on earth. All universal beings can live and participate in eternal life. In this context, all Japanese are equal. But in the real world, if someone gets closer to the eternal being, he can become 'more equal' than the others. That is why some people can be 'more equal' and become superior. This is the core of the traditional legitimisation of power (Kyogoku, 1987, pp. 48–49).

The second contemporary value which is essential for democracy is freedom. We have to be aware that freedom had different dimensions in the past. In ancient Greece, rights depended on those who ruled. If people decided to live in democracy, freedom was widespread, but if democracy turned into tyranny, people lost their freedom because the law changed. Freedom was fragile and dependent. Even if freedom is an old and originally Greek and democratic principle, it started to appear more commonly as a human value after the French Revolution. Then, democracy became a political regime implemented by some European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries. More and more people were set free of their feudal chains and could decide their fate. Democracy was an ideal regime that suited capitalistic freedom.

If we state that freedom as a value is one of most important values in life, we must be aware of its theoretical and practical forms as well. In the political context, freedom means to govern your life and be sovereign as a citizen. In any democratic state, the law secures liberty for everyone. All human rights are protected from violation, so we expect security to result from political freedom. Contemporary democracy is a product of liberty, because we are supposed to be free to govern our lives. We, as free people, can influence public policy, and that is why government depends on free society. Yet, our freedom is limited due to respecting other people's freedoms. Secondly, in a democracy we have to

respect the voice of the majority, which limits our freedom, too. In fact, liberty as an ideal form of democratic life and governance remains rather as an operational ideal (Machan, 2011, pp. 58–61).

For the first time the rights of freedom in a liberal context were introduced into the Japanese political system under the Meiji Constitution in 1889. There were several articles on liberties. Article 22 said: “Japanese subjects shall have the liberty of abode and of changing the same within the limits of the law.” Upon this law the Japanese were able to make free social, political and other movements. Article 28 gave the Japanese religious freedom by stating: “Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.” Yet after the acceptance of the Constitution not all people could enjoy freedom, though social and political life started to change.

The contemporary judicial basis of freedom relates to the 1947 Constitution. In the political context, article 21 is the most important: “[f]reedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed. 2) No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated.” Then we can find other essential freedoms: article 19: “[f]reedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated,” article 20: “[f]reedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. 2) No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebration, rite or practice. 3) The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity” or article 23: “[a]cademic freedom is guaranteed.”

The common good is an ancient value which was appreciated by Aristotle. According to him, each society should live in a small community which aims at achieving the common good, shared by all. Individual desires should be less important than the common good. Nowadays, this problem stands in opposition to the liberal version of democracy because it is the individual who should be the most important, and therefore the whole of society relies on individuals. The concept of the common good was implemented by Karl Marx in communist ideology which was in favour of groups rather than individuals. The entire communist world accepted the dominance of the rule of society over individuals. Yet, many democratic constitutions guarantee the common good for whole nations, as the Japanese one does. The supremacy of the common good over individual needs is stated in article 15 “[a]ll public officials are servants of the whole community and not of any group thereof.” We can say that nowadays the common good is guaranteed by the State, which is the guardian of important spiritual and material values, and the Japanese Constitution says in article 25: “[a]ll people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavours for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.”

Interestingly, the pursuit of happiness is a democratic value. This right reflects the direct American interference in the normative Japanese version of democracy. Everyone has the right to pursue happiness in a legal way, as long as they don't violate the rights of others, or endanger the health, safety, and security of the country. The Japanese Constitution says in article 13: “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.”

Justice is a value whose importance goes far beyond the concept of democracy, but which is wholly connected with democracy itself. There are a lot of theories which try to describe justice and specify its meaning. We can say that justice can only exist within a context of equality, and nowadays it refers to the distribution of mental goods (feelings of wealth, respect, opportunity and, of course, equality). An egalitarian position includes demands for fair treatment, and matches individual rights to the concept of justice. Justice claims that everyone should get what they deserve. The Japanese Constitution has many references to the value of justice. Article 17 says: “[e]very person may sue for redress as provided by law from the State or a public entity, in case he has suffered damage through illegal act of any public official.” Article 31 states: “[n]o person shall be deprived of life or liberty, nor shall any other criminal penalty be imposed, except according to procedure established by law.” Articles 32–40 develop the judicial dimension of the value of justice in Japan’s highest legislation.

Democracy is a system of majority rule. Nowadays, this rule is restricted by the assurance of minority rights. The most important words connected with popular sovereignty in Japan are in the preamble to the Constitution. The Japanese people are sovereign, over whom powers are exercised by the representatives of the people elected to the National Diet. Popular sovereignty means that the legitimacy of the state is created by the nation, and in a democratic state, government is legitimate only if it rests on popular sovereignty. But today it is impossible for an entire nation to make everyday public decisions. So, collective sovereignty of the people is not really possible. This collective sovereignty is limited only to acts of voting. The Japanese Constitution says in article 15: “[u]niversal adult suffrage is guaranteed with regard to the election of public officials. In all elections, secrecy of the ballot shall not be violated. A voter shall not be answerable, publicly or privately, for the choice he has made.”

Japanese social values in public life

After World War II the platform which formed the basis of public life in the political system in Japan was constructed out of internal social elements as well as external values brought to Japan by an American wave of democratisation. It is obvious that the new elements were imposed on the traditional Japanese way of life. The traditional political and social structure underwent huge changes aimed at cutting any connections with the pre-war authoritarian regime. How can we measure the extent to which democratic values took root in the first decade after World War II in Japan? To answer this question, we have to refer to the political culture of this country. The political culture shows people’s mental attitudes towards politics and characterises and analyses structures or patterns in popular political choices. If we want to search for the depth of democratic values among the Japanese, we have to be aware of specific subgroups of the population: men, women, different age groups or urban and rural inhabitants. Their behaviour differed in the process of implementation of democratic values. Before we analyse patterns of political culture in the first years of Japanese democratisation, let us look at the internal Japanese cultural elements that influenced the Japanese in their political choices.

Of the many typical elements of Japanese social culture, there are several that influence political life: harmony, hierarchy, homogeneity and relativity. All of them were created through internal, historical processes and were not brought to the Japanese islands by other cultures. Consensus is the dominant decision-making style in homogeneous societies, like the Japanese. Consensus effects common agreement, yet the origin of consensus stems from harmony. In the Japanese language *wa* means harmony. The concept of harmony involves two different elements that agree to live together in unity. Examples of such dichotomies are: *tatema* (behaviour and opinions one displays in public) and *honme* (personal feelings and desires); *omote* (surface) and *ura* (internal side) or *uchi* (be inside a group) and *soto* (out of group) (Morsbach, 1984, pp. 205–214). The dominant position of harmony results from the weak role played by individuals in groups and the whole of society.

Hierarchy petrifies the social order in Japan and is the main platform that constitutes the individual reference to axiology. There are three important relations in the vertical structure that build the hierarchy: relations with a superior (lit. older colleague) – *sempai*, relations with a subordinate (lit. younger brother) – *kohai* and relations with a peer. Hierarchy affects family life as well as professional life. It is present in public interaction. Society makes up a network of vertical relations. In Japan, this vertical structure is very strong and causes that the Japanese are susceptible to classifying attitude and behaviour. It helps to maintain people's rigid position and makes it impossible to produce any unexpected situations. Japanese hierarchy glorifies seniority, the older you are, the more privileges you have.

The homogeneity of Japanese society results from three main factors. The first one stems from history, and particularly the Tokugawa period. The policy of isolation caused the strengthening of individual and unique qualities in this nation. It was impossible to exchange thoughts or technical innovations with other countries. The second factor was the insular character of Japan that made access to this country difficult. On top of these two factors, there is one more, which was developed inside society. Japan is an archipelago with four big islands, yet a decisive element of social homogeneity was created by the fact that the Japanese had to live together in a confined space. This was an effect of the fact that about 70 percent of Japan is forested and mountainous. Japanese behaviour and attitudes were created under such circumstances.

Relativity is another specific Japanese quality. We can say that the state of being relative means to be able to be judged when compared with somebody or something else. Although the ancient Chinese knew the concept of universality, they still strictly relied on relativity. They influenced Japanese intellectuals with their ideas about relativity. The direct impact of relativity on contemporary society is that it is thought immoral if someone treats members of other groups as equal to members of the group he belongs to. Yet, relativity does not create a whole, complex ideology, it is merely a set of different concepts that show and explain pragmatic ways of acting.

Codes of political culture in Japan

Observing public attitudes and processes in Japan, the sequence of people's and politicians' behaviour, and dynamic changes in politics, one can find two main, strong codes

that ruled and still rule Japanese politics. They are the collectivity code and paternalism, and both have deep historical roots. Their strong, traditional influence was weakened by democratic ideas. The two codes relate to and partly consist of the social components that were discussed before: harmony, hierarchy, homogeneity and relativity. Different combinations of internal qualities of the codes create inside-code paradigms. I shall try to explain what the codes and paradigms are.

I could describe a political code as a complex unit of a huge number of informal understandings and beliefs, as well as formal and legal institutions acting in political life and theoretical concepts. Any code is a solid set because it connects the normative sphere with a more dynamic one. Therefore, any code is coherent and mature. In the political field a code consists of common socio-political understandings, belief systems, social meanings, political values, goals, symbols, and signs that represent both emotional and rational forms of socio-political existence. It influences the existence of various patterns of behaviour that later become expected rules and petrify social and political structures. We can observe the process of transformation between the more dynamic and emotional side of a code into a rigid and normative structure. When the process reaches an end, then the code emerges. Why are political codes important? Simply because their historical and traditional basis can affect politics by providing scenarios for a sequence of events. As mentioned before, there are different paradigms inside codes. In short, a paradigm is a script situated inside a code that, due to its political relevance, can explain situations in a more detailed way than a code as a very complex unit can (Kyokogu, 1987, pp. 37–41).

The paternalistic code is not a new one and its existence goes back far before 1945. We can clearly state that the paternalistic code is a continuum of processes that had taken place in Japanese public life even before the Meiji Restoration began. The philosophical and psychological background of paternalism in Japanese politics matches two sides of everyday life in which one side is dominant and the other subordinate. We can observe paternalism in the following relations: politician – voter, state authority – citizen, public and local administration – enterprises. What is the purpose of such relations? The subjects that take dominant positions should ensure care, security and comfort, while subordinate actors play the roles of loyal, obedient and eager-to-help subjects. As was mentioned before, paternalism is not a new phenomenon in Japan because its contemporary form is derived from old familial relationship: *oyabun* – *kobun* which was widespread in many aspects of public life.

We can state that the political dimension of the paternalistic code influences several spheres: the coordination of economic activities with state aims; controlling and protecting society in all its ways of life; preferring consensus as a leading method in decision-making processes. If we agree that these spheres describe paternalism in a more specific way, then we can see that there are three main paradigms of the paternalistic code. The first one can be named the paradigm of economic subordination of public administration. After World War II, the Japanese state needed huge amounts of money and raw materials to establish an economy capable of helping people to survive. Those goods came from the USA, so Japan became subordinate and America was dominant. Yet inside Japan, the role of *kobun* was given to enterprises that had to reshape the destroyed economy. The authorities could manipulate taxes to make enterprises do what the state wanted them to do. One year after another, decade after decade, the relations between state administration and entrepreneurs became stronger and more dependent.

What is the effect of the paradigm of economic subordination on state-political decisions? In the post-war period we could observe the economisation of human life. The main aim of the social structure was to serve economic growth which was the most important goal of the state. For the state, it was more important to reach the highest possible level of economic growth than to take care of social development. One of the mechanisms which connect the public and private spheres is *amakudari*. Literally, this means to descend from heaven, and refers to the Shinto gods who came down from heaven to earth. But it has a more practical dimension. Retiring public administration servants start new jobs in private enterprises that are linked with the agencies that they were employed in before retirement. Then, they can cooperate with their colleagues who still work in the public agencies, influencing them to get benefits for private businesses. In addition, the *amakudari* use the knowledge gathered from their previous work in the public administration (Okimoto, 1989, pp. 161–165).

The second paradigm, “state security and control,” is connected with providing society with state care. This means that all human needs are expected to be fulfilled by public institutions. This concept has deep and wide consequences, and depends on the paternalistic relationship: *oyabun – kobun*. Because the state plays the role of provider of human needs, the Japanese become passive. They must be obedient, loyal and ardent at work. What is more, they have to play a strict role which has been set out and cannot go beyond social limits in which they are allowed to live. The Japanese are supposed to identify their goals with state ones. This leads to recognition of the economic aspects of life as more important than individual needs. Personal paternalism can be found at work more often than in the family home, because groups of co-workers are considered the most important environment in a Japanese person’s life.

Control over society is derived from the very basic, first relationship that every human being makes in life, and this is the relationship with their mother. A child’s need to be very close to its mother is the focal point in this theory. Later, when the child-mother bond weakens, the child tries to deny the fact of separation from the mother. In the Japanese language this situation is called *amae* and that turns into the verb *amaeru*, which means to depend on somebody else’s benevolence. Although the concept of *amae* is primarily created in child-mother relationships, it still exists in adult life as the desire of a person to be dependent on another’s will and receive security. The *amae* explains the psychology of dependence which is dominant in Japanese society (Milkov, 2009, pp. 146–148).

The third paradigm refers to consensus as a way of making decisions both in social and political life. Each group is institutionalised, yet if it encounters a new situation it has to deal with a totally new challenge. The implementation of democratic values in Japan led to growth in the number of people able to make decisions in public life. Yet, the development of civilisation means new situations arise more and more often, and it turns out that the ability of members of society to make decisions declines. Generally, people do not have the knowledge to make judgments on many political problems, so they have to trust their democratic representatives. The most important rule in the decision-making process in Japan is to reach consensus. This procedure has to be followed if any group in Japan does not want to put their existence at risk. In order to reach consensus the decision-making process depends on a technique called *nemawashi*. No-one in a group can be isolated or ignored during the decision-making process, even if it is a strong rule that

many people are reluctant to speak up and give their opinions. Conflict must be avoided and group unity and peace maintained. To reach consensus, time and care must be taken, the leader especially should talk to all group members, trying to convince them to agree on an idea. It is up to the leaders to draft a proposal, yet the final step is the formal decision. Of course, a group may or may not accept the proposal, yet it must maintain unity (Kyokogu, 1987, pp. 69–71).

The second code that we can find in Japanese political life is collectivism. Broadly, collectivism refers to a type of culture which is seen in some Far Eastern Asian societies, e.g. China or Korea. The collectivity code was very strong in the past, yet after the beginning of modernisation, and following industrialisation, urbanisation and recent globalisation it became weaker and weaker. Collectivism exerts its power on the behaviour of the Japanese, who are aware of the fact that their actions are guided by membership of a certain group. Although in contemporary social life collectivism is not as strong as it was, it remains a solid base in professional life. Each group organises communal life and controls its members' behaviour. Each member has to make a distinction between those who belong to his group and those who do not. In any group, members play their roles and cannot go beyond what is expected of them.

There are several paradigms that constitute the collectivity code. The first one is the unity paradigm. In each Japanese group a sense of identity must be conveyed. Before and after World War II the country developed, and is still developing, an educational framework making the Japanese conform. Yet we can also find the same process on the lower levels, e.g. in villages, families and enterprises. To strengthen identification, groups set up monuments to commemorate their founders and important heroes. The founding day is celebrated as a holiday and all members are expected to participate. Companies frequently organise meetings with employees to inform them about recent achievements and other important facts. Moreover, employees and other groups' members are brought up to compete against other groups. They own their symbols, they have songs and flags like countries have their anthems and flags. This is used to promote the uniqueness of each individual group. Each group strictly sticks to its internal policy and the eventual exclusion of those who belong to the group is seen as the most painful punishment. So, members have to remember to act in line with group policy. All external groups belong to the outside world. For a long time after World War II, Japanese regulations regarding citizenship treated refugees as total outsiders and promoted their isolation in the society. The effect of building internal unity is the production of people who are alike and see things alike. To emphasise this situation they dress similarly, so schools and sometimes companies provide an obligation to wear the same uniforms.

A natural effect of such a process is isolationism, which kills all forms of individual attitudes. Inside a collective group no individual can behave as he wants, because it is bad to make changes in the group. The tendency to deny any changes connects with a fear of the future. Yet, by contrast, the Japanese easily adopt advanced technologies and create newer and newer ones. To explain this dichotomy we have to remember that the concept of change can be regarded as an outside factor that lies behind the core of Japanese mentality. Group unity forces the members not to reveal the group's opinions and secrets.

The second paradigm can be called the paradigm of leadership in a collective. The role of leader is based on tradition and he is supposed to sacrifice his personal interest for the

group well-being. He should protect his followers, who, in turn, are to be loyal. The roles of leader and followers are complementary. The focal aim of collectivity is to maintain its unity and harmony. The role of group leader is to provide actions that stress the similarity of all the members' goals. So he has to make sure that sacrifices are made to provide security as a space to develop the group's existence within. Dedication to group matters is a virtue. Under such conditions, the authority of the leader is legitimised. Buddhism states that all human beings are believed to be manifestations of Buddha. It means that they can see one another as equal. In this context, the role of leader is to ask all members if they agree to a proposal. Of course, the average member is a small-fish, but in a collective group he has to be asked by the leader about his opinion of a proposal. There is another side to this process, people do not want to express their opinions to their superiors because they were brought up not to stand out. In companies, employees prefer to live like small fish, than to be fired from a post by saying something unpopular. So individuals adopt an opportunistic attitude.

Political culture as a democratisation process in the first post-war decade in Japan (selected factors)

Popular control over the political elite is one of the democratic principles. People can supervise political decision-making processes by different procedures. They can appoint their representatives, and then check if they act in a loyal and correct way. Yet, the control process is possible in full scale only in small associations. In huge societies popular control is limited only to cycles of elections and occasionally other forms of direct democracy. The cost of popular control is too high to implement all the time, which is why only a set of institutions can control the state. So, generally voting and limited legal procedures are the only tools used by entire societies to control the government. In post-war Japan, popular elections are held to two chambers of parliament: the House of Representatives (*Shugiin*) and House of Councillors (*Sangiin*) as well as municipal elections in regional and local structures. Universal suffrage of elections for all public offices is guaranteed to all Japanese who are 20 years of age and older, by article 15 of the Constitution of Japan. Since 1945 there has been no discrimination on suffrage.

The two chambers of parliament were introduced by the rules of the Japanese Constitution. Chapter 4 is devoted to the issues of the Japanese Diet (articles 41–64). The structure of the Japanese parliament is bicameral, both chambers' members are elected directly. The Diet has the legislative function. The House of Councillors can vote down the House of Representatives decision, yet the latter can override it. Executive power belongs to the government. The Prime Minister is appointed by the Emperor. The cabinet members must be civilians. The majority of the cabinet members must be elected from either house of the Diet. Parliament controls the government. Judicial power consists of several levels of courts with a Supreme Court. The head of state, excluded from any power, is the Emperor.

These briefly described elements of the political system must be completed by the political parties, whose actions shape political life. Shortly after the end of the war, several parties emerged on the Japanese political scene. These were the Japanese Socialist Party

(Nihon Shakaitō, 1945, which in the early 1950s divided into leftist and rightist wings), the Japanese Progressive Party (Nihon Shinpotō, 1945–1947), Japanese Liberal Party (Nihon Jiyūtō, 1945–1948), Japanese Cooperative Party (Nihon Kyōdōtō, 1945, in 1946 this party became the Cooperative Democratic Party, Kyōdō Minshutō and in 1947 it merged with the People's Party, Kokumintō creating the People's Cooperative Party, Kokumin Kyōdōtō, 1947–1950), Japanese Farmers' Party (Nihon Nōmintō, 1947–1949), Farmers' Cooperative Party (Nōmin Kyōdōtō, 1949–1952), Japanese Communist Party (Nihon Kyōsan-tō, 1945) and others. In the chaos of the first post-war years many political organisations tried to settle on the political scene, yet the process of unification led them to consolidate their forces. In 1955 a momentous event took place, when democratic and conservative forces merged, making the most powerful Japanese party after the end of war. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, Jiyū-Minshutō) was formed as a merger of two Japanese political parties, the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō, 1950–1955, led by Shigeru Yoshida) and the Japan Democratic Party (Nihon Minshutō, 1954–1955, led by Ichirō Hatoyama). The parties decided to unify against the popular Japan Socialist Party (JPS) which reunified in 1955. The other cause of the conservative merger was the failure to produce a stable majority after the 1952 and 1953 elections (Kataoka, 1992, pp. 1–15).

The most significant factor that shows the character of the political culture in a democratic country is the turnout data. We can follow this issue through participation in the elections to the Japanese Diet. House of Representatives elections are held every four years, while for the House of Councillors, every three years half the members are elected. In the first decade after World War II there were six elections to the lower chamber of the Japanese parliament: 1) 10th April, 1946 – 72.1% of turnout; 2) 25th April, 1947 – 68%; 3) 23rd January, 1949 – 74%; 4) 1st October, 1952 – 76.4%; 5) 19th April, 1953 – 74.2%; 6) 27th February, 1955 – 75.8% (Richardson, 1974, p. 9).

Voting rates were, and still are, exceedingly high than in comparable democratic countries. As a lot of research shows, the Japanese turnout reflects more the pervasive acceptance of the principle that voting is a duty, than it shows a real involvement in political life. This phenomenon is connected with traditional elements of Japanese culture that underline loyalty and duty as the most important human traits. An amazing factor was that the percentage of spoiled votes was very small: 1946 – 1.81%, 1947 – 1.57%, 1949 – 1.87%, 1952 – 1.15%, 1953 – 0.98% and 1955 – 0.86%. This was an effect of an electoral system that helped to accumulate votes by major parties.

Another tendency in the political behaviour in Japanese elections was the instability of aggregate electorate preferences during the first decade after 1945, and its stabilisation in the 1950s. The first element of instability was an effect of the high level of political parties acting on the political scene in the period 1945–1955. In the first six elections we can observe a declining number of parties running for Diet seats and elected to the lower chamber of parliament. The number of members not from the four contemporary major parties that had members in parliament declined as well. In 1946, the four major parties took 423 seats out of 464, in 1947 – 454 out of 466, 1949 – 409 out of 466, 1952 – 462 out of 466, 1953 – 424 out of 466 and 1955 – 459 out of 466. After the elections in 1958, the LDP and JPS dominated the Japanese political scene.

It would be interesting to follow the distribution of popular votes to major political ideological trends that emerged in Japanese politics after 1945. One of them is the conser-

vative trend (parties that were present before merging into the LDP in 1955 are representatives of that as well as the LDP itself) and the second one is the progressive trend, which includes the socialist organisations. In 1946, the conservatives received 46.3% of the votes while the socialists got 21.7%, in 1947 – 58.9% to 29.9%, 1949 – 63% to 26.6%, 1952 – 66.1% to 24.4%, 1953 – 65.7% to 29.5% and 1955 – 63.2% to 32%. The data reflect the dominant conservative attitude toward politics demonstrated by the Japanese in the first decade after the War (Kohno, 1999, p. 66). Support for conservative parties was a continuity of what was observed in the pre-war period. In the first few years new socialist ideas and other progressive trends were eagerly taken up by the Japanese, but when the US realised that Japan could be its most important ally in this part of the world, they insisted on Japanese conservative politicians fighting against the socialist camp. Introduction of the electoral system was one of the tools that strengthened the conservatives' position. The distribution of parliamentary seats favoured the conservatives, because the rural electorate got more votes than the urban one. It was a frequent accusation towards the conservative parties and the LDP that the electoral system guaranteed greater representation of the conservative electorate than there was in reality.

Conclusions

The clash between democratic values and traditional way of life in the first decade of post-war Japan in the long term led Japan into the family of democratic countries. Yet at the beginning, the Japanese had to make a firm redefinition of the background of commonly accepted rules and attitudes in everyday public life. Traditional values like harmony, hierarchy, homogeneity and relativity had to lose their importance and adapt to a democratic situation. It was not an easy task to reshape the Japanese mentality, especially as the nation was not initially prepared to take on the whole responsibility of its actions and preferred to depend on the authorities. That is why in political culture we could observe for a long time after World War II codes and paradigms that were highly influenced by traditional Japanese patterns rather than by democratic values. This changed with time.

Democratisation has two dimensions: normative and practical. On normative grounds, democratic values and procedures were introduced by the Constitution in 1947 and other acts, yet acquiring deeper internalised democratic values was a long term process for the Japanese. Post-war Japanese political culture showed high mass participation in parliamentary elections, which could be seen as a remarkably good democratic aspect. Yet, it rather reflected the traditional elements of Japanese culture connected with loyalty and obedience. The post-war Japanese preferred conservative values to more progressive ones. And when a progressive socialist force could count on better electoral results in 1955, the conservatives merged their power to overcome the danger.

The emergence of democratic values in the political system in Japan was an effect of American occupation. In the first post-war decade they could seem a bit exotic and odd, but with time they became more and more common and popular. The shape of the democratic political system had some resemblances to Arend Lijphart's Westminster model of democracy. After the war, the Japanese were a society without major ideological, social,

ethical or religious cleavages, and it seemed that rivalry between the conservatives and socialists would create a two-party system. The future showed that the system was rather a one-and-a-half party one, with conservative dominance.

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Streszczenie

Wprowadzanie wartości demokratycznych w Japonii w pierwszej dekadzie po zakończeniu II wojny światowej

Artykuł poświęcony jest zagadnieniu wprowadzania zasad reżimu demokratycznego do życia politycznego Japonii po zakończeniu II wojny światowej. Zamierzeniem autora była próba określenia spo-

sobu i poziomu zakorzeniania się wartości demokratycznych w świadomości społeczeństwa japońskiego. Dlatego też autor stara się określić wpływ wartości demokratycznych na postawy społeczne Japończyków w omawianym okresie czasu. W tym celu zostaje dokonana analiza kilku kluczowych dla zrozumienia problemu płaszczyzn: aksjologicznej, normatywnej i instytucjonalnej. Autor ukazuje także wpływ wewnętrznych postaw społecznych w Japonii manifestowanych w zakresie kultury politycznej na konwersję zasad i wartości demokracji i proces demokratyzacji.

Słowa kluczowe: demokracja, powojenna polityka Japonii