

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Target Of Hounding Not Unification Church But Japan's LDP

Knut Holdhus
February 29, 2024



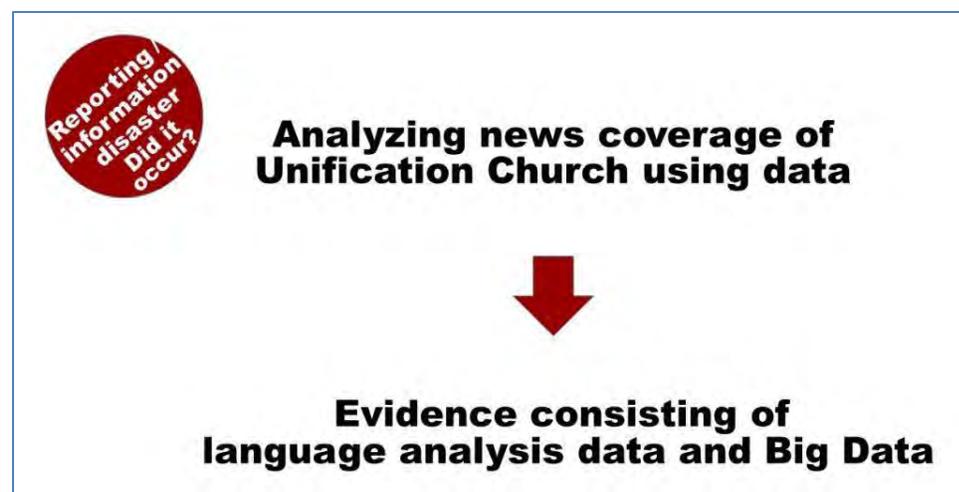
Japanese Word Cloud shown in one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Here with added English words translated from the most frequently occurring Japanese words

Author uses data to show that governing party was main target of hounding of religious minority

What was the reporting intended to convey? Report with data on the hounding of the Unification Church

Part 2 of a presentation by Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏), writer, author and and photographer, at a symposium on the theme "Why Did Reporting Go Astray? Thorough Examination by Journalists on Reporting on the Former [Unification Church](#)", (organized by UPF-Japan) held 20th January 2024 in Tokyo to investigate the media's continued coverage persecuting the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)).

See [part 1 "Author: Japan's 'Apartheid-Style Social Exclusion'"](#)



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiro Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

What was the intention behind the reporting, what was conveyed, and what really caused the information to run out of control? Instead of relying on my own thoughts or the thoughts of believers, I intend to seek answers through quantitative numerical data.

Reporting consists of information constructed with words. Therefore, we analyzed the words spoken by the media. Which words were frequently used? How frequently were those words associated with other words?

Analyzing those will make it clear what was intended and what was conveyed, without getting caught up

in subjectivity. In addition to this, utilizing Big Data accumulated over the past 20 years reveals the reactions of society. These are analytical methods that have become commonplace in academic research and marketing.

Now, let's examine the content of the actions. Domestic newspapers and news agencies have accounts on Twitter (currently "X") to promote their own articles. The introductory texts are concise and organized to attract readers. Moreover, by sampling and analyzing tweets, it's possible to handle cases where articles even have been deleted. By monitoring statements which include the [Unification Church](#), from the article introduction sites of major news agencies, there were 4,246 posts from 2009 to 31st May 2023.

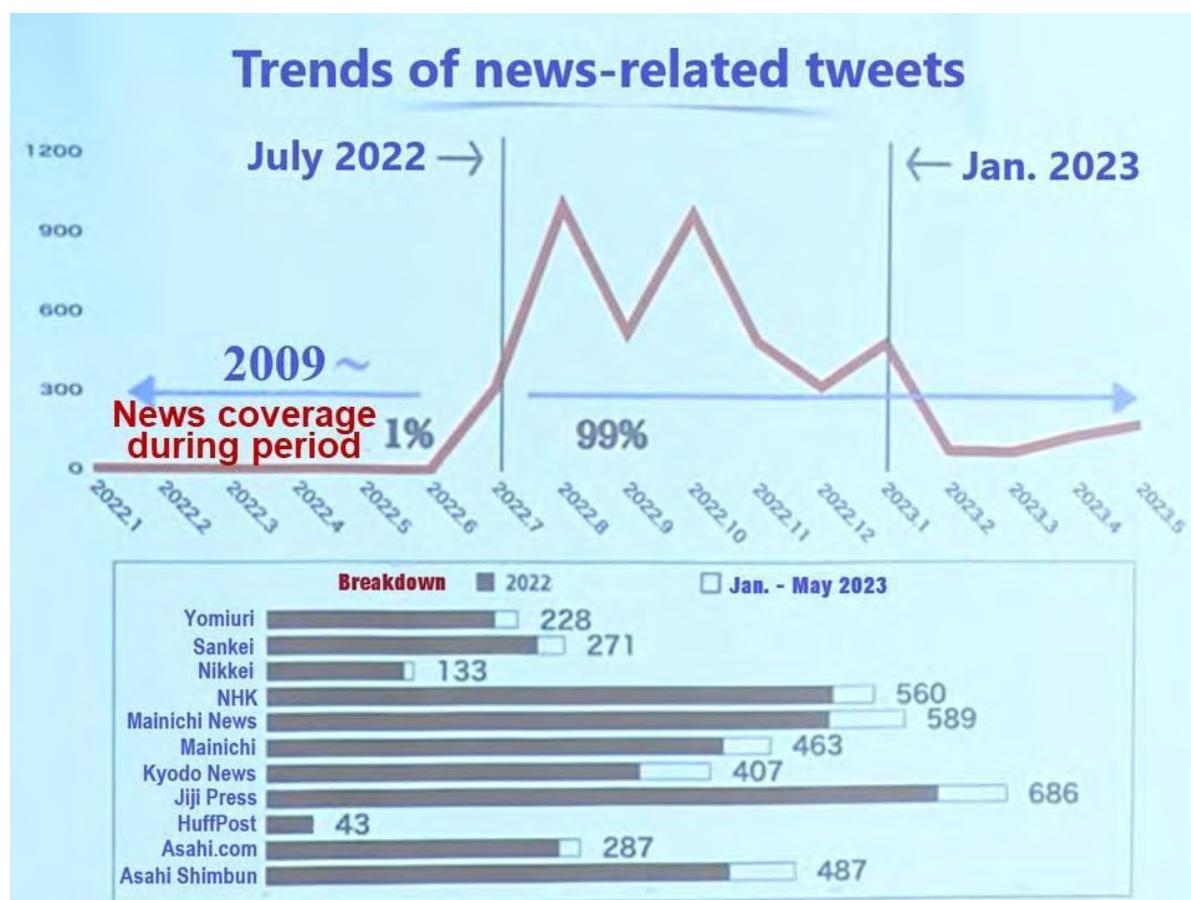
Out of these, 4,214 cases, which account for 99%, occurred after 2022. From 11th July 2022, all of a sudden, a flurry of reporting hounding the [Unification Church](#) began with the discourse that the assassin was a victim of the [religious organization](#). Now, let's take a look at the frequency of nouns, to see which words have been used frequently. This illustration shows statements including the [Unification Church](#).

Here are the top 200 repeatedly used words out of the 4,246 cases, represented using a method called Word Cloud. Please understand that the larger the font, the more frequent its appearance. Among the repeatedly used words, the top-ranking words are these.

The words "[Unification Church](#)" themselves have been omitted. What the reports frequently referred to was the Liberal Democratic Party and the Kishida administration. The hounding of the [religious organization](#) was supposed to have started with the aim of helping those who had suffered damage, but as pointed out by believers, almost all of it was criticism of the government. [...]

What was discussed in the articles was, indeed, the relationship between the [Unification Church](#), the Liberal Democratic Party, and the politicians, and that elections, events, and congratulatory telegrams were the points of contact. It is frequently questioned whether these connections were inspected, investigated, or disclosed. What deserves attention is that it hasn't been explicitly explained why having connections with the [religious organisation](#) and its believers is considered bad, illegal, or what specific impact it had.

This is not limited to Asahi Shimbun [large newspaper, regarded as the flagship of Japan's political left]. Religious groups and believers participating in election campaigns or lobbying politicians is not exclusive to the [Unification Church](#). However, without showing the basis for the hounding, such so-called "zubuzubu" (deeply involved) relationships were reported without explaining why they were bad, whether they were illegal, and what kind of impact they had.



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024

Next, let's take a look at the frequency of tweets introducing articles that include the [Unification Church](#). This graph represents the trend of tweets introducing articles written about the [Unification Church](#). The

peak was in August 2022, and except for October, when there was a national funeral, both the amount of coverage and promotional tweets have decreased. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology began exercising its right to ask questions on 22nd November 2022. The enthusiasm to report on the exercising of the right to ask questions and subsequent issues such as the second-generation problem was significantly lower compared to the enthusiasm for criticizing the government.

Let me just say that until the assassination, the press had barely reported on the [Unification Church](#). Is this because they were pressured not only by the Liberal Democratic Party itself, but also by the Liberal Democratic Party administration? Did the mass media succumb to pressure from the administration and refrain from reporting out of deference to the administration? Confessions of such deference have not yet come from the mass media.

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon. See [part 1 "Author: Japan's 'Apartheid-Style Social Exclusion'"](#)

Fumihiro Kato (加藤文宏) has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as "Chushi Ruro" (厨師流浪 - Wandering Chef), "Kakai Fuki" (花開富貴 - Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and "Denko no Otoko" (電光の男 - Lightning Man). Last year, he contributed with an article titled "[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)" in the February issue of Monthly Seiron (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).

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hounding of the Unification Church

a presentation by Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏), writer, author and and photographer, at a symposium on the theme "Why Did Reporting Go Astray? Thorough Examination by Journalists on Reporting on the Former Unification Church", (organized by UPF-Japan) held 20th January 2024 in Tokyo to investigate the media's continued coverage persecuting the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (formerly known as the Unification Church).

Part 1, see part 2.



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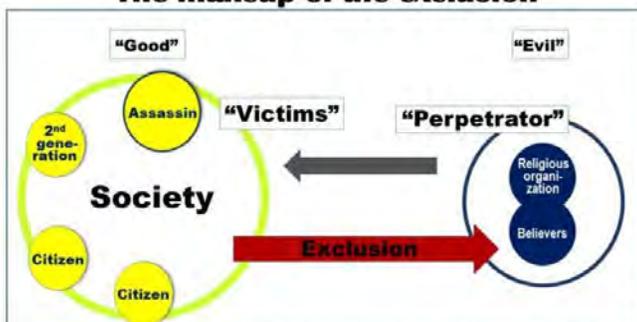
I intend to examine the media coverage hounding the Unification Church by looking at the data and asking, "What was the intention of the reporting, and what was being conveyed?" I hope that it can become evidence for both of you.

First, let me provide some background. Since the summer of 2022, I have been interviewing members of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (the former Unification Church). These believers have expressed concerns, stating,

- "The mass media only adopts one-sided testimonies."
- "The reports criticize the government while using the Unification Church and its followers, saying that the church is evil."
- "As a result of being used in this way, our faith has been exposed and made public, and we have been excluded from places of civic life."
- "There are even movements to limit our right to political participation, and violations of privacy and human rights occur."

They believe that these issues are a result of the media running wild.

The makeup of the exclusion



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

The human rights violations against the followers were carried out under the premise that "a good society is the victim" and "let's exclude the evil church and its followers because they are the perpetrators." It was stated that "the assassin is the victim," and "ordinary citizens are also victims." The situation where "followers are excluded from society because they are dangerous and abhorrent" reminds us of apartheid, which separated whites and non-whites.

Rights

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It's not just the followers who point out that they have been excluded from society. In the "Report on International Religious Freedom" by the U.S. State Department, which is responsible for managing the country's foreign policy, the history of the hounding of the **Unification Church** after the assassination of Shinzo Abe is thoroughly covered, along with issues of persecution of the Uighurs and Rohingyas. Furthermore, an organization with *Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations* quoted a statement asserting that "the followers have become victims of **intolerance, discrimination and persecution.**" The statement was quoted as **alarming** as it has become a Japanese social problem.

By the way, in Japan, if you speak or write about the same content as this State Department report, you tend to be called "tsubo" (壺 (ツボ) – pot, word used to mock followers) or "zubuzubu" ('corrupt relationships not easy to cut' or 'deeply involved') and your opportunities for speech are likely to be taken away. Entertainer Hikari Ota (太田光) has also been called a spokesperson for the **religious organization**. Until now, we have worked to solve human rights issues, such as discrimination and hate, as social problems. Regardless of the background, the side that discriminates, the side that is discriminated, the side that watches, all are members of society, so it is a social problem.

What is happening to society as a whole



English reconstruction of one of the slides Fumihiko Kato used 20th Jan. 2024. Illustration: FFWPU

If, as a result of **reporting out of control**, discrimination and exclusion against believers have occurred due to information running wild, then this can be said to be a **press disaster** and an **information disaster**. An information disaster is a concept that attracted attention through studies of the rumors and damage that occurred in the aftermath of the 2011 nuclear accident, and questioning the causal relationship between **rumors causing harm** and the **resulting damage**. Natural disasters are caused by nature itself. Information disasters are caused by information. And it is the **media that widely disseminates information to the public**.

Continued in [part 2](#).

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Featured image above: Fumihiko Kato 20th January 2024 in Tokyo. Photo: Screenshot from video recording by UPF-Japan.

“Author: Japan’s ‘Apartheid-Style Social Exclusion’” – text:
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