

## **Diffusion of Japanese Sports Anime in France: Assessment and Review of Issues**

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### **Abstract:**

*In the late 1980s and during the 1990s, in France, Japanese sports-themed animated films were very popular among French children, to such an extent that French youth enrolments in certain sports clubs significantly increased. This phenomenon occurred in spite of the substantial differences between Japanese and French sport cultures; for example in Japan, sports are considered as a way of practicing discipline, while in France it is viewed as a recreational activity. This article examines our quantitative analysis of sports-themed animated films produced in Japan and assesses the impact of these animated films broadcast in France. Further, we will evaluate previous works on this topic with the aim of proposing new approaches for future academic projects.*

**Keywords:** animated films, sports, cultural dynamics, education through image, youth

### 要旨

1980年代後半から1990年代にかけて、フランスでは日本のスポーツアニメが子供たちの間で絶大な人気を博した。しかし、日本とフランスでは異なるスポーツ文化の価値観を有しており、例えば、日本では部活に代表されるような「精神鍛錬」の要素を含むのに対し、フランスでは「娯楽活動」の一環としてスポーツを楽しむ。日本とフランスのスポーツ文化にはこのような対立構図がとられるにも関わらず、またスポーツアニメにはこうした日本独自のスポーツ文化・イデオロギーが色濃く反映されているにも関わらず、フランスで日本のスポーツアニメが受け入れられ人気を博したのはなぜか。本稿は、身体を抛り所にした日本の文化が異文化として伝播し

た際、どのように解釈され変容していくのかを分析する日仏共同研究プロジェクトの端緒となるものであり、先行研究を再検討するとともに、新たな研究アプローチの提案を試みる。

キーワード：アニメ、スポーツ、身体、教育、若者

## **Introduction**

In the early 1980s, anglophones conducted their first influential research on the role of sports in broadcasting, studying the link between television broadcasts and transformation in sports (Rader 1984; Spence and Diles 1988). They also diversified their analyses by publishing works on the relationship between Olympism and the economy of television (Barney and Ali 2002; Wenn 2012). In France, the first publications of this type appeared in the late 1980s, for example in the economic studies carried out by Wladimir Andreff and colleagues (1987). During the 1990s researchers of information and communication sciences, such as Gérard Derèze (1996), contributed their views on the issue.

Andre Rauch (1998) was the first historian to deal with the question of sports in media. Published in the journal *Communications*, his article influenced several future works on the subject, as the works of Meryll Moneghetti and colleagues (2007) for example. Furthermore, books such as *Montrer le sport. Photographie, cinéma, télévision* co-authored by Laurent Véray and Pierre Simonet in 2002 and *Sports et Média* by Michaël Attali in 2010 helped towards broadening the scope of studies that addressed issues of the image of sports in television.

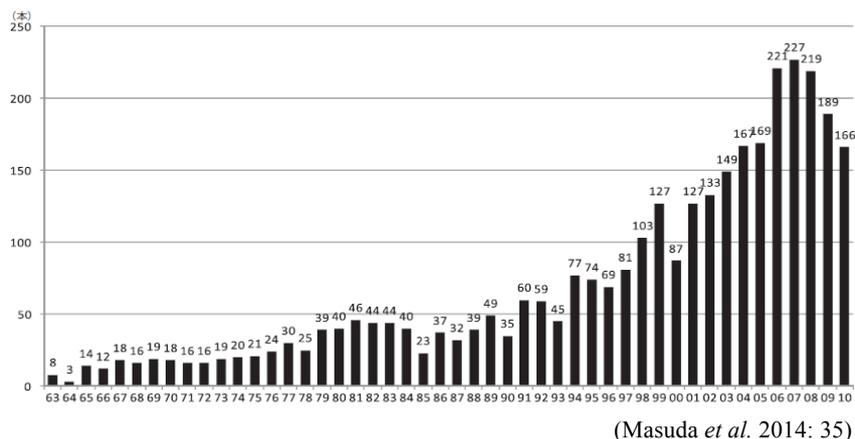
These works explored television media coverage of sports and its economic effect only through the analysis of programs for adults. However, there are some recent publications that have shown the entire educational range of illustrated books for girls (Vivier, Guillain and Renaud 2012) or the sporty exemplary comic heroes for young boys (Laffage-Cosnier, Loudcher and Vivier 2012; Laffage-Cosnier, Vivier and Thiébaud 2014; Vivier, Laffage-Cosnier and Thiébaud 2015). French academic works analysing sports designs for youth have substantially developed in recent years (Laffage-Cosnier 2015). If television has played a decisive role in defining cultural experience during childhood and youth (Poels 2013), then it seems

appropriate to also study the data of sports images seen by French youth on television. As recalled by the sports historian Christian Vivier, it is important to understand the representations of corporal practices from original iconographic sources and the use of generally neglected archived documents (photographs, films, comics, cartoons, etc.) by social scientists in sports (Vivier 2014: 108).

The exhibition *Une histoire du dessin animé japonais: trésors de la télévision de 1960 à nos jours* (The Art of Anime - A History of Japanese anime<sup>1</sup>) held in spring 2015 in the Paris suburbs, showed that the impact of Japanese anime was really topical. This exhibition paid tribute to those Japanese series that attracted a cult-like following among French youth, such as *Goldorak*, *Dragon Ball*, *Chevaliers du Zodiaque* and many others, that were globally distributed and viewed by millions of young people (Clements and McCarthy 2001). This article aims at making a quantitative analysis of sports-themed Japanese *anime* and to assess their diffusion in France. Furthermore, we would like to clarify the status of previous work in order to develop further research. Last, but not least, our objective is to identify the questions raised in the present research and to highlight their intellectual, cultural, political or economic interests.

## **1. Overview of the history of Japanese television anime**

We will start by overviewing the history of Japanese animation in Japan in order to gain an appreciation and understanding of Japanese anime. When dealing with the history of Japanese anime, it is customary to start with *Tetsuwan Atomu* 鉄腕アトム (*Astro Boy*) (1963-66) which set the format for current Japanese television anime; i.e. a weekly, 30-minute show series. From that point on, the number of Japanese television anime have increased. Figure 1 below, created by Masuda, Azuma, Inomata, Tanimoto and Yamanaka (2014), shows the number of new works of television anime aired in Japan from 1963-2010.



**Fig. 1: Number of Japanese anime series aired on Japanese television (1963-2010)**

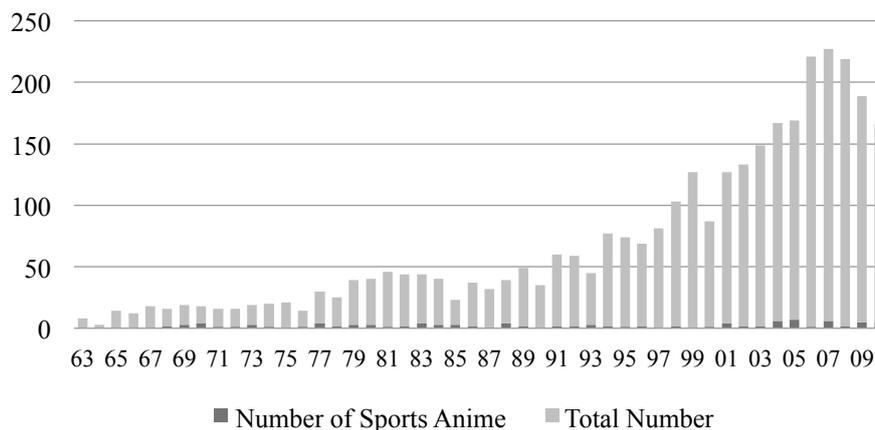
While there are some occasional lows, for the most part, the number of Japanese television anime steadily increased up until the peak of 2007. Masuda *et al.* mention that the increase in the 1990s was caused by the beginning of 24-hour broadcasting, and an increase in the number of cable television channels in 1989, and the peak of 2007 was caused by an increase in the number of late-night anime shows targeted at core fans and young adults (Masuda, Azuma, Inomata, Tanimoto and Yamanaka 2014: 35). As just described, in Japan, in order to increase their market share, television anime target not only children but also adolescents and young adults, in contrast to France where the target consumer group of animated films is specifically children.

Not only television anime, but also animated films, such as Studio GIBLI films, are released in cinemas every year in Japan. According to Tsugata (2005), there have been three animation booms in Japan. The first boom was in the 1960s, in the wake of the television anime *Astro Boy*, it was a time during which studios were producing one television *anime* after another, especially science fiction themed shows. The audience-base was mainly pre-adolescent children. In addition, marketing tie-ups were also introduced around this time; such as free stickers of *Astro Boy* included in chocolate packs. The second boom occurred from the second half of the 1970s through to the 1980s; *Uchu senkan YAMATO* 宇宙戦艦ヤマト (*Space Battleship YAMATO*) (1974-75) and *Kido senshi Gandamu* 機動戦士ガンダム (*Mobile Suit Gundam*) (1979-80) attracted a base of die-hard adolescent fans. In addition, *Kaze no tani no Naushika* 風の谷のナウシカ

(*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*) (1984) significantly helped expand the audience segment of anime. During this boom, sales of Gundam plastic models skyrocketed, with the audience strongly empathizing with the characters and the world view of the Gundam universe and yearning to pilot the robots themselves. The third boom happened from the late 1990s through to the 2000s, *Shin seiki Evangelion* 新世紀エヴァンゲリオン (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*) (1995-96), and *Mononoke hime* もののけ姫 (*Princess Mononoke*) (1997) enjoying great success not only in Japan but throughout the world. These hits gave the Japanese word *anime* global significance, so that Japanese anime has been recognized since as a part of globalized Japanese popular culture (Tsugata 2005: 181-183).

## 2. Discourse of sports anime

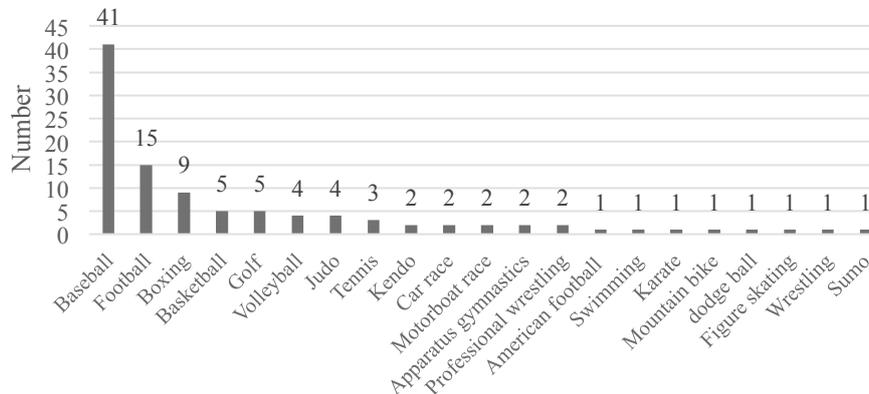
We compiled a list of sports anime utilizing Yamaguchi (2004) and data published on websites. In this study, different series of the same work are counted as separate entities. For the definition of sports anime we used the website *allcinema*, which categorizes anime into various themes, for reference. As a result of our own investigation, we found that from 1963 to 2010, 104 new works of sports anime were broadcast in Japan:



**Fig. 2: Number of sports themed anime on Japanese television (1963-2010)**

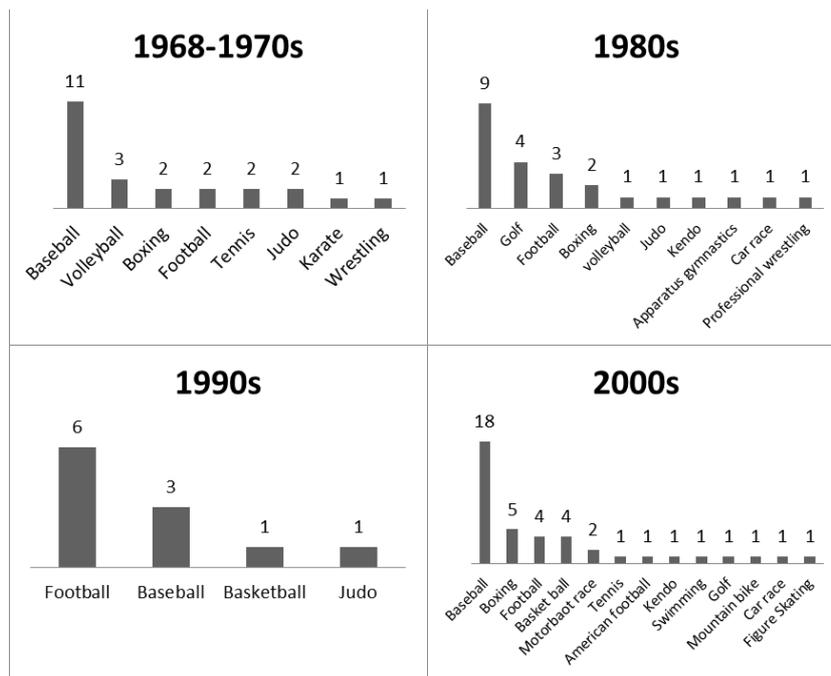
The number of broadcast sports-themed anime does not increase in proportion to the total number for each year; in other words, it keeps a small regular number and does not have peak periods. Regarding the classification of sporting events, as

shown in Figure 3, the most common sports anime aired in Japan is baseball, followed by football:



**Fig. 3: Classification of sporting events in sports anime aired in Japan (1963-2010)**

Baseball-themed anime count forty-one works and account for 39% of the total. Football-themed anime occupy 14% of the total, boxing 9%, basketball and golf 5% each, volleyball and judo 4% each. Guttman and Thompson state ‘Japan’s political, economic, social, and cultural institutions are by definition unique, but it is undeniable that they have become increasingly similar to those of the United States and Western Europe’ (Guttman and Thompson 2001: 211). Evidently, we can see that the sports represented in Japanese anime are essentially either of American (baseball, basketball, volleyball, American football) or European (football, golf, tennis) influence. This means these anime reflect the process of ‘Americanization’ and ‘Westernization’ of Japanese sports as described by Guttman and Thompson. In fact, Japanese or Asian traditional sports occupy a rather small percentage (judo 4%, kendo 2%, karate and sumo 1% each). Even finer analysis per decade (Figure 4 below), shows the domination of American and European sports.



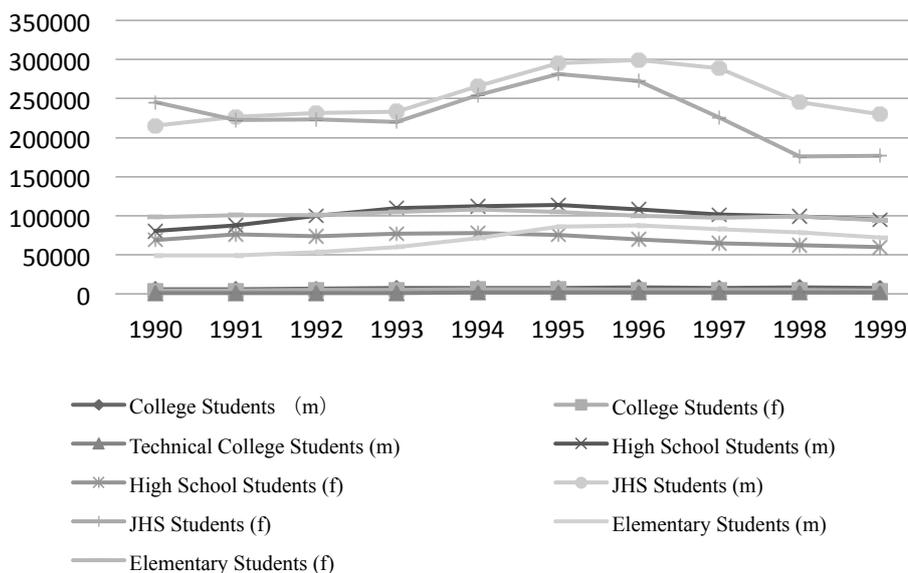
**Fig. 4: Classification of sporting events per decade in sports anime aired in Japan (1963-2010)**

Baseball is the most common subject of sports anime, with the exception of the 1990s when the most common subject of anime was football. To explain why there were more football anime than baseball during the 1990s: the six football-themed anime of this period were aired actually between 1991 and 1994, just around the time, 1993, when the Japan Professional Football League (J. League) was established sparking a big football boom in Japan. However, in the 2000s baseball anime regained the number one spot.

As observed above, several new sports anime are broadcast every year in Japan. Nevertheless, their characteristics have changed significantly from generation to generation. Tsugata (2014) mentions that “the heroes of past Japanese sports anime got their hands dirty and bloody in rigorous training under Spartan managers and coaches who spurred them on to victory, but today, they have become, in a word, clean” (Tsugata 2014: 81). Sports anime that incorporate the contents of the former are called *supo-kon anime* in Japanese. The expression is a mix of *sport* and *konjo* (guts) with *anime*. This type of anime depicts the efforts, complications, setbacks, growth and glory of the heroes. The first sports

anime broadcast in Japan was *Kyojin no hoshi* 巨人の星 (1968-71), a baseball anime. In this work, the hero is subjected at an early age to rigorous training by his father in order to become a star baseball player, indeed a ‘blood, sweat, and tears’ Spartan education. This is the epitome of *supo-kon anime*. The anime that followed, *Attack No.1* アタック No.1 (1969-71, volleyball), *Tiger Mask* タイガーマスク (1969-71, professional wrestling), *Ashita no Joe* 明日のジョー (1970-71, boxing) and *Ace wo nerae* エースをねらえ! (1969-71, volleyball) contain without exception the elements of *supo-kon anime*. Matsuda (2012) analyses that sports in these works propound an ideology and/or ethics which show viewers how to live in society, using ‘victory’ as a keyword and placing society within the framework of ‘strong/weak’, ‘rich/poor’<sup>2</sup>. In other words, they represent a concept of personal growth and rise in social status.

However, the content in sports anime gradually changed around the 1980s. For example, *Touch* タッチ (1985-87, baseball) enjoyed great success among teenagers. Works of this period show the viewers how to behave in daily situations by focusing more on the everyday life of the characters. In fact, in *Touch*, the hero’s romantic troubles occupy a central role in the story and the sport (baseball in this case) is just one of the aspects of his life. In the 1990s works with sports themes had a great effect on children and teenagers. For example, the work *Hono no tokyuji dodge Danpei* 炎の闘球児ドッジ弾平 (1991-92, dodgeball) became so popular among children that dodgeball, which had not been at all popular before in Japan, suddenly became a very popular children’s sport, so much so in fact that it became a national competition. A similar phenomenon resulted from the success of *YAWARA!* (1989-92) for judo, and *SLAM DUNK* (1993-96) for basketball (Matsuda 2012: 130-131). Evidently, Figure 5 below shows an increase in the registered members of basketball.



**Fig. 5: Changes of enrolment figures in basketball (Japan Basketball Association, 2015)**

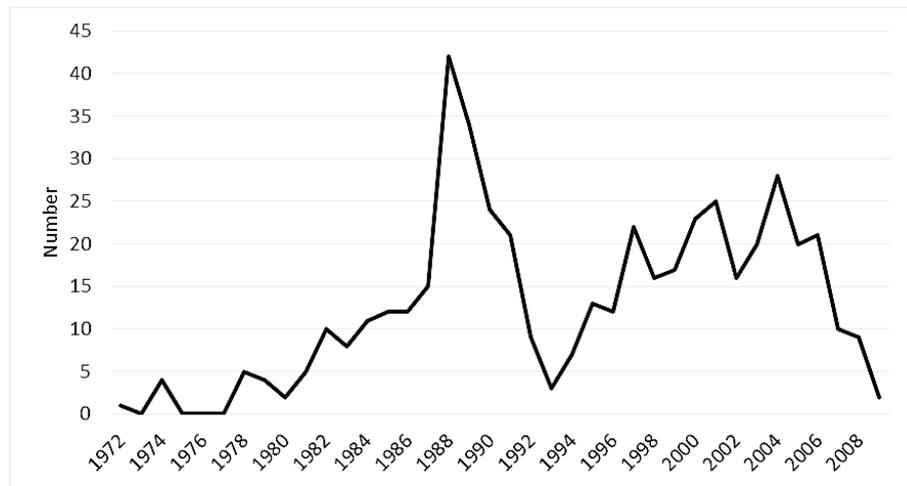
Since 1993, when *SLAM DUNK* was broadcast<sup>3</sup>, we can see that the number of elementary-school boys and junior high-school boys and girls playing basketball significantly increased. However, the story of this anime is set in a high school club activity environment, but we cannot observe a marked increase in high school numbers.

Incidentally, many Japanese sports anime were broadcast overseas and some of them enjoyed a great deal of popularity among young people. For example, it is commonly accepted that many football players in Europe were influenced by *Captain Tsubasa* キャプテン翼, a football themed anime. Considering the high popularity of football in Europe, the success of this anime is self-evident. However, to the contrary and interestingly, *SLAM DUNK* mentioned above, did not catch the hearts of young Americans, although basketball is a very popular sport in the U.S. (Tsugata 2014: 88-90). In France, a volleyball themed anime *Attacker YOU* アタッカーYOU, was a remarkable hit among French children, while this anime was not so popular in Japan. We will discuss the latter in greater detail below.

### 3. History of Japanese television anime in France

As Julien Simonpieri showed in his thesis, Japanese animation films appeared in France in the 1970s. In 1971, *Oum le Dauphin* (イルカと少年) was the first Japanese television anime to be broadcast in France. A French-Japanese production, the main character, a dolphin, is famous as he was the mascot of the Nestlé brand GALAK white chocolate. The following year, in 1972, *Le Roi Léo* (ジャングル大帝), based on the Osamu Tezuka manga published between 1950 and 1954 in Japan, was broadcast on the first channel of the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (ORTF) in the program *Samedi est à vous* hosted by Guy Lux, a famous French television host. However, this anime did not achieve great success in France. Since 1974, ORTF has also broadcast other productions from Japan, such as *Calimero* (カリメロ), *Barbapapa* (バーバパパ) and *Le Prince Saphir* (リボンの騎士). This latter anime, which is also the work of Osamu Tezuka, a true ‘god of manga and father of television anime’ (Koyama-Richard 2010: 114), was broadcast for almost two years. However these Japanese anime went almost unnoticed in France, probably because French viewers were not aware of the Japanese origin of these works. French broadcasters bought their works from British, American and Italian producers who had originally bought the rights from Japan (Simonpieri 2009: 70).

From then on, Japanese anime have held a dominant position in French television. On the one hand, their number has exceeded that of films and other video media (VHS, Laserdisc, DVD, Blu-ray Disc...). According to the thorough survey done by Julien Simonpieri, from 1971 to 2009, 484 Japanese works were shown either on television or in cinemas, or via video media: twenty of them were Live (live action) (4% of total); thirty original animated videos (6%); 116 films and feature films (24%); and finally, 318 were anime series aired on television (66%). This means that anime series made up about two-thirds of the total. On the other hand, as can be seen from this fact, the evolution in the number of Japanese anime broadcast on French television is striking. As shown in Figure 6, the golden age was in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was just before the 1990s-2000s rise of manga in France. During the 2000s, while lower than the previous peak, the number of television anime is considerable. This domination was eased by the decline of US production of animated films and by the almost total lack of production in Europe (Chalvon, Corset and Souchon 1991: 37).



**Fig. 6: Number of Japanese anime series on French television (1971-2009)**

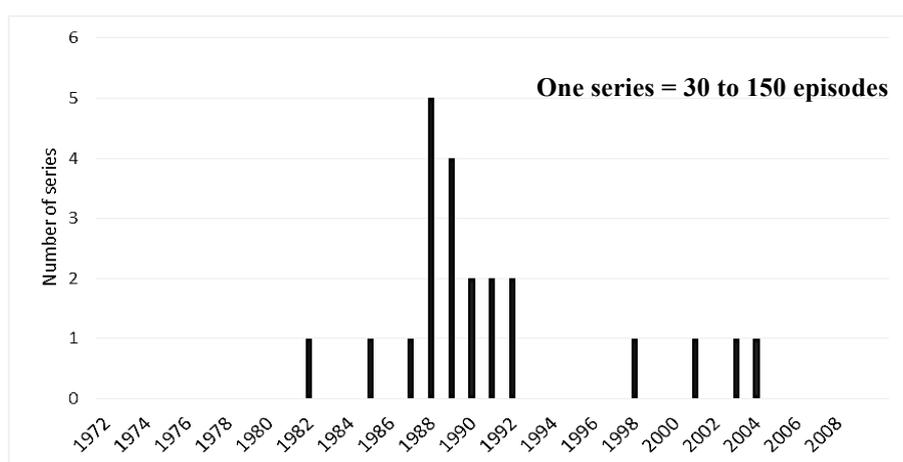
On July 3rd, 1978, there was a real breakthrough, when *Goldorak* (UFO ロボグレンダイザー) appeared on the second French channel *Antenne 2* in the program *Récré A2*. This anime, seventy-four 26-minute episodes, was produced by Toei Animation in 1975 and based on the manga of Go Nagai, which was published from 1975 to 1977 in Japan. This robot of a new era with multiple transformations had an enormous impact on French youth. So *Goldorak* paved the way for the release of many Japanese anime in France during the following years. In 1978 we can mention *Candy* (キャンディ・キャンディ) and *Heidi* (アルプスの少女ハイジ), in 1979 *Micky l'abeille* (昆虫物語 みなしごハッチ) and *La bataille des planètes* (科学忍者隊ガッチャマン), and finally in 1980 *Capitaine Flam* (キャプテン・フューチャー) as well as *Albator le corsaire de l'espace* (宇宙海賊キャプテンハーロック), all of which made a noticeable impact on the screens of *Antenne 2*. The French children of that period who discovered the first Japanese anime on television were called the *Harlock (Albator) Generation* or *Galactik Generation* (Dubost 2012).

The early 1980s clearly marked “the invasion of Japanese anime” in France (Chalvon, Corset and Souchon 1991: 37). *Ulysse 31* (宇宙伝説ユリシーズ 31) in 1981, *Rémi sans famille* (家なき子), *Bouba le Petit Ourson* (シートン動物記くまの子ジャッキー), *Tom Sawyer* (トム・ソーヤーの冒険) in 1982, *Les Mystérieuses Cités d'or* (太陽の子エステバン) in 1983, *Cobra* (スペースコブ

ラ), *Sherlock Holmes* (名探偵ホームズ), *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (ワンワン三銃士), *Les Quatre Filles du docteur March* (愛の若草物語) in 1984, *Edgar, le détective cambrioleur* (ルパン三世), *Alice au pays des merveilles* (ふしぎの国のアリス) in 1985, *Astro, le petit robot* (鉄腕アトム), *Lady Oscar* (ベルサイユのばら), *Signé Cat's Eyes* (キャッツ・アイ) in 1986, to reach *Dragon Ball* (ドラゴンボール), *Chevaliers du Zodiaque* (聖闘士星矢) in 1988; all of them were part of a common imaginary world of French men and women born in the late 1970s.

#### 4. Positioning Japanese sports anime in France

The evolution of the number of Japanese sports anime aired in France followed the general trend as shown in Figure 6. Most of the anime with a sports topic were broadcast during the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was the most fruitful time. As shown in Figure 7, after the 1990s, our results confirm that most of them were absent. The presence of sports in Japanese anime broadcast to children can be explained. In France, from the 1960s, under the leadership of General De Gaulle and Maurice Herzog, athletic methods were an important part of the official curriculum of the secondary school system (Martin 1999). Following the crisis of May 1968 and the generational criticism, recreational dimensions, transgressive and free expression of sports activities began to be developed in France during the 1970s.

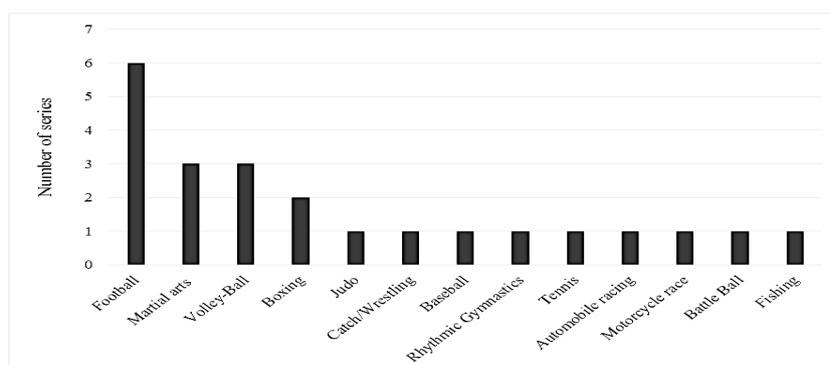


**Fig. 7: Number of Japanese sports-themed anime on French television (1971-2009)**

As a result of the considerable media impact of mega sports events such as the Olympic Games, “the 1980s, which correspond to an influx of Japanese sports

anime in France, are marked by spectacularization and commodification of sports” (Clément, Defrance and Pociello 1994: 159). Moreover, the depreciation of work allowed the rise of leisure activities. In 1985, 73% of French people practiced physical activities and sports (Irlinger, Louveau and Métoudi 1987). This democratization of sports encouraged those responsible for French television channels to offer sports-themed anime. Probably too, some scriptwriters were willing to take distance from the era of interplanetary heroes to find new ways of expression that could attract and make young readers dream. Sports and worship of champions would give a real opportunity for producers.

According to our analysis of Japanese sports anime broadcast in France, as shown in Figure 8, the most represented sports were football (8), followed by martial arts inspired by Japanese culture (3), and volleyball (3). Of course football is deeply rooted in France, as shown by the popularity of outside broadcasting of European Cups and the St Étienne football club saga during the 1970s. The sports-themed anime appeared on French television at very strategic times, during the most important sports events of the moment and thus opening up a large market for Japanese productions. It was also the time when the football World Cups were developed and changed through the effect of television broadcasting. The World Cup of 1982 enjoyed a viewership of 1.8 billion people who followed the different games; this represented almost 41% of the world population of the time (Dietschy 2010: 456). The anime *But pour Rudy* (がんばれ!キッカーズ) was televised a few months before the World Cup in Italy. Moreover, the year of the World Cup held in the United States in 1994, *Les enfants du Mondial* (サッカーフィーバー) revived the great historical matches from the 1930 World Cup in Uruguay up to the World Cup of 1994.



**Fig. 8: Type of sports represented in Japanese TV anime (1971-2009)**

After football, looking at the second category, namely the martial arts-themed anime, their links with physical and sports practice are more distant and complex. For example, *Samurai Champloo* (サムライチャンプルー) which was aired in 2006, mixed modern hip-hop dance with *chambara*, giving the viewers a feeling of anachronism. This is why there is no specific category for kendo or karate, but a more general martial arts category where the heroes use several martial art practices. Indeed, in France, martial arts can be defined as traditional combat activities from the Far East, such as: Japanese (judo, jujutsu, karate, aikido, kendo, iaido); Korean (taekwondo); Chinese (tai chi chuan); or Vietnamese practices (viet Vo Dao). These practices have an educational value as they are marked by moral, philosophical and spiritual aspects (Groenen 2010: 19-20). Even if we add *Judo Boy* (紅三四郎) in 1985 to the series depicting martial arts, only four series representing physical activities which come from Japan or Asia (Guttmann and Thompson 2001) were broadcast in France. This could be not only from parents and broadcasters concerned about the violence of certain anime (Chalvon, Corset and Souchon 1991: 137), but also from the censors (Pellitteri 2010). So telecasting of martial arts-themed anime which belong to Japanese or Asian culture was minimal. On the contrary, with *Genki le Champion de Boxe* (がんばれ元気) for boxing in 1988, *Muscleman* (キン肉マン) for wrestling in 1989 or *Ashita no Joe* (あしたのジョー) for boxing in 1991, some of the Japanese sports anime rather conveyed European sports practices (Loudcher 2000; Lamoureux 1993).

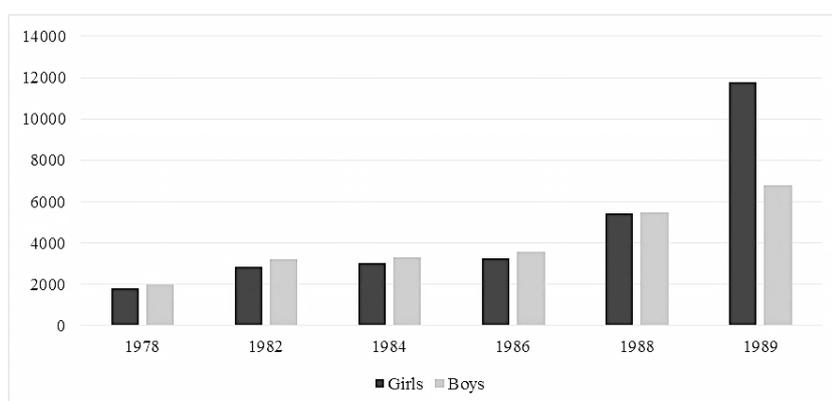
Finally, in the 1980s and the 1990s, Japanese sports anime occupied most of the young French viewers realm. Of course, internationally well-established sport-themed anime, such as football, were widely televised. Furthermore, anime on topics of popular sports in Japan, such as volleyball and baseball (Guttmann and Thompson 2001) were also telecast, and one of the volleyball themed anime enjoyed significant popularity with French youth.

**5. Which impact for French youth?**

In the framework of this article it would be difficult to explain the effect of all Japanese sports anime on French youth. However, we will summarize the

previous studies on *Jeanne et Serge* (アタッカーYOU!) aired on French television in 1987.

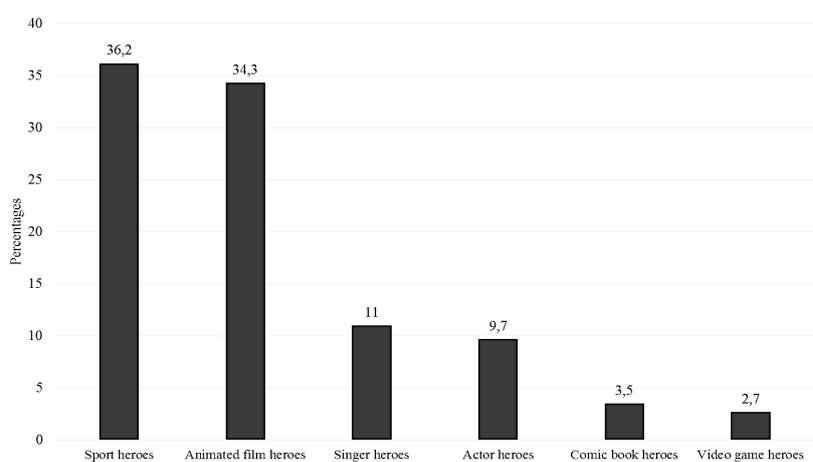
*Jeanne et Serge*, (along with *Olive et Tom* キャプテン翼), is among the most famous Japanese sports anime broadcast in France (Simonpieri 2009, Volume 1: 204). Telecasting of this anime increased the number of young people (8-12 year-olds) enrolling with the French Association of Volleyball in the following year. Furthermore, the number of girls practicing the favourite sport of the heroine Jeanne, almost doubled in 1989 (Figure 9). With such enthusiasm for the sport, the French Association of Volleyball charged the *National Institute of Sport, expertise and performance* (INSEP) with carrying out a survey to analyse social representations of young people (Duret 1991b). The aim was evident; they needed to understand the influx of young people in volleyball practice since 1988 in order to extend this phenomenon.



**Fig. 9: Number of volleyball sport licences for 8-12 year-olds in France (Duret 1991b)**

The survey conducted by Pascal Duret included 263 children aged eight to thirteen years old. The sample was taken from forty-six French volleyball clubs, and it allowed us to identify four main types of heroes among children (Duret 1993: 69). The most commonly identified heroes were real-life famous athletes (36.2%), closely followed by heroes from animated films (34.3%) (Figure 10). Following those two categories were singer heroes (11%), actor heroes (9.7%), comic book heroes (3.5%) and video game heroes (2.7%). In fact, Jeanne was known by 95% of the 263 children. Moreover, the first girl-heroine in the field of sports, Jeanne was also preferred by 35.4% of the French youth interviewed. The most remarkable result is the way these sample children became involved in playing

volleyball: 40% of them discovered volleyball on television (Duret 1991a: 59), other children were made aware of volleyball for the first time through friends (27%), teachers (14%), family (12%) and, finally, through watching a match (7%). Incidentally, Pascal Duret does not differentiate between girls and boys in his survey. It is a pity not to be able to accurately interpret the consequences of the presence of a sports heroine on the future desires of young girls and boys.



**Fig. 10: Classification of different types of heroes for children in France in 1991 (Duret 1993: 69)**

The study of Pascal Duret also shows that young people who discovered volleyball through television were mostly interested in the sport thanks to the anime. Indeed, while most of them knew of the anime *Jeanne et Serge*, only 8% were familiar with Alain Fabiani, an emblematic player of the French volleyball team, who at the time was regarded as the best setter in the world. When they discovered the sport through their families, 62% knew this player (Duret 1991a: 59). These results show that the anime was an incentive for French youth to practice volleyball. In his study Pascal Duret emphasizes the importance of the passion of challenges (Ehrenberg 1987) which were constantly represented in *Jeanne et Serge*. The anime kept young viewers glued to their screens from one episode to the next. *Jeanne et Serge* undoubtedly enjoyed popularity among girls because it blurred the manly references between men and women (Vigarello 2011: 241-242), Jeanne plays as well as a boy, she jumps very high and hits hard on the ball.

As a sociologist, Pascal Duret studied the relationship of main characters through structural analysis (Duret 1993: 94-98). Moreover he precisely examined how

children and coaches in volleyball reacted to this anime in order to show the differences between them. To explain their interest in *Jeanne et Serge*, children argue that they enjoy the love story between Jeanne and Serge (heroine and hero of the anime), and also that this anime explains well how to play volleyball (Duret 1991a: 62). The educational virtues of *Jeanne et Serge* are also identifiable by reading the interviews transcribed by Julien Simonpieri in his thesis: Suzanne K. is a volleyball player in the Boulogne Billancourt Club and has been practicing the sport since 1989, which was two years after the release of *Jeanne et Serge*. In her interview of January 2006, she said that she wanted to “do as Jeanne Hazuki in *Jeanne et Serge* and hoped to fulfil the same achievements as her heroine” (Simonpieri 2009, Volume 2: 259). Even in 2006, when Suzanne K. served, she always whispered ‘attack’ in the same way as the heroine did in the anime. However, teachers, and particularly teachers of physical education harshly criticize the educational impact of *Jeanne et Serge*. Teachers chiefly denigrate this kind of anime because they are afraid their monopoly on the learning process in school sports education will be challenged by these animated films (Duret 1991a: 62).

Incidentally, the pioneering study of Pascal Duret should be followed up by further questions. In fact, it seems that French girls did not only enrol in volleyball clubs because they were attracted by the love story between *Jeanne and Serge*, they were also interested in football through the achievements of *Olive et Tom*. A very short interview conducted by Julien Simonpieri for his thesis is enlightening: Norma Z., amateur player of a women’s football team, was interviewed at the Parc des Princes in October 2006. Her team is called ‘Tsubasa’s girls’ from Tsubasa Oozora, the name of young Olive in the Japanese original version of the anime. With great humour, Norma Z. said that one day she hoped to strike a ball powerfully enough to deform it and make a hole in the net (Simonpieri 2009, Volume 2: 262). There is no doubt that these representations of female strength and power were a real novelty in the 1980s in France. These anime questioned gender stereotypes associated with certain specific sports.

These various results are very informative. They show the many influences of Japanese sports anime on French television viewers. Therefore, we can question certain authors who insist on the significant role that schools have played in the development of sports culture over the years 1960-1970 (Attali and Saint-Martin 2007). The influence of school is real, but it is not the one and only. In fact, it

seems that the images of *Jeanne et Serge* helped the process of sport acculturation of French youth.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the analysis made by Pascal Duret was limited to the anime *Jeanne et Serge* and did not reflect the influence of other Japanese sports anime. Furthermore, his approach was mostly from a sociological point of view while these sports anime should also be examined using broader methodologies within the larger framework of *Cultural Studies*. In other words, the sociological approach of Pascal Duret can be completed with tools and theories borrowed from cultural anthropology, history, linguistics, semiotics, and arts.

For example, in our ongoing research, we will use an extensive analysis of anime studies, such as Gervereau (2000) and Duprat (2007), which describe how an anime was designed, to which genre it belonged, etc. Gervereau insists that context analysis enables an understanding of productions (who for? what for? ordered by whom?), as well as diffusion (viewer numbers and perception). Plastic analysis (Gervereau 2000) shows the artistic and technical characteristics of an author's works: who was the artist? why this topic? how was it set up? Linguistic analysis will reveal the sports ideology conveyed in the anime. Iconic analysis can also identify the symbols or myths brought up by an anime. Finally, the success of Japanese anime in Europe (Pellitteri 2006; 2014) provides the opportunity of further developing comparative studies. Indeed, the comparison of each opening title sequence of the French and Japanese versions of *Jeanne et Serge* shows many differences. The titles of episodes in each version, for example, do not suggest the same meaning.

In our research, the use of the above-mentioned methods will try to clarify how and why French youth was attracted to sports thanks to Japanese anime. Given the results shown in the present article, Japanese traditional sports were not widely spread by anime in France. This strengthens the assessment of Guttmann and Thompson who claim: "When we examine the balance of trade in sports, we find that the Japanese continue to import much more than they export" (2001: 211). However, if Japanese anime have certain effects on young generations of French people in sports, this dynamic French-Japanese study can help to understand with

no doubt the acceptance of Japanese specific sports cultures in France. Even if sports in Japanese anime are mainly American or European, these anime represent many Japanese ideologies. In other words, they have been part of the process of ‘Japanization’ of France during these last decades and therefore many new issues should be developed for future studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by authors.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Matsuda analyses this in relation to manga comics but as the original of these works are manga, we can use this analysis for television anime.

<sup>3</sup> This anime was published serially in a magazine from 1990 to 1996 and was broadcast from 1993 to 1996.

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