“Mothers, Menus & Methods: Keys to Household Rationalization in 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Japan”

Rationalization was a key theme of government policies in Japan throughout the Twentieth Century, but nowhere did these policies focus on such an intimate scale as programs directed at food production and consumption in individual households. These programs sought to help mothers and wives to make efficient use of household budgets, provide nutritionally dense meals to children, and, more generally, support varied state projects. Moreover, such policies found numerous entries into the lives of average Japanese with increasing intensity over the course of that century. One important conduit for ideas about the rationalization of household diets was (and, to some extent, continues to be to this day) magazines.

Some of the first million-seller periodicals in Japan were “Family Magazines,” like 	extit{Ie no hikari} (Light of the Home) and 	extit{Kingu} (King), that provided progressively more successful means for social and cultural meaning-making over the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century. In particular, 	extit{Ie no hikari}’s publishers, the Industrial Cooperative (Sangyō Kumiai), was acutely concerned with food production and consumption because of both its overlapping interests with government programs as well as its commitments to the communities of farmers and their families that comprised the vast majority of their subscribers.

This research seeks to illuminate ways in which discussions about the rationalization of food production and consumption were integrated into Japanese Family Magazines and how that resulted in specific representations of gender, home life, and community which had lasting impacts on Japanese culture more generally. In addition to the analysis of the textual content, it makes use of a number of images from the magazines, since many of the illiterate or poorly educated “readers” of 	extit{Ie no hikari}, especially, would have engaged with the publication via the illustrations, photos, and various visual components embedded throughout each monthly issue. The growing consumer culture which took root and expanded over the course of the twentieth century shines through the analysis of discussions about and representations of food production and consumption in these magazines. Furthermore, since 	extit{Ie no hikari} continues to be published to this day, it allows an extended opportunity for analysis and comparisons well worth our attention.
Amy Bliss Marshall
Sample of Images from *le no hikari*

(Clockwise from top left: Advertisement, May 1925; Cover June 1940; Pictorial Section, June 1925)
Sample of Images from *le no hikari*

(Selected articles, advertisements, and cover from January 2010)