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# **Between the Private and the Public:**

Affective Politics, Media and Public Engagement  
in Contemporary Korea

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Thesis submitted February 2014 in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

## **Dedication**

In memory of my father Kim Min-hak

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my heartfelt thanks goes to my family, especially my mother Baek Kyung-ja, whose endless love and encouragement have sustained me throughout my PhD life.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors Kate Lacey and Michael Bull. Without their thorough reading and constructive criticism, combined with constant motivation, my thesis would have not been completed. I'm also indebted to Liesbet van Zoonen and Gholam Khiabany for their invaluable suggestions, which helped my work become more solid. In addition, I would like to use this space to thank to Kim Jeong-tak, my academic advisor at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, South Korea.

I would like to give thanks to all the people that I discussed my work with, and who inspired and helped me in various ways throughout the project. In particular, I appreciate the support and help from the *OhmyNews* including the CEO Oh Yeon-ho, for having enabled my participation in the Citizen Reporters' Forum in 2007 and 2008. Also my sincere thanks goes to the TVXQ teen-fans, who showed their passion and aspiration for democracy and a fairer, better society through the interviews, and also encouraged me to bear in mind how important and meaningful the research was and would be.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends all over the world, who have given morale support through the ups and downs of PhD life. My special thanks goes to my dear friend Ken, who has motivated me to uphold belief in my project whenever doubts arose and proofread my works at the final stages.

## Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:.....

University of Sussex

So Hyung Kim  
Doctor of Philosophy

Between the Private and the Public:  
Affective Politics, Media and Public Engagement in Contemporary Korea

Summary

This thesis aims to contribute to recent discussions in media and cultural studies and political communication about reconceptualising the relationships between politics, media and public engagement. It will do so by articulating the context and processes in which private citizens form political publics and the ways in which media genres beyond conventional news and public affairs encourage or enable civic engagement. It explores these issues in the context of the ongoing democratisation of South Korea since 1987, a nation with a particularly dynamic digital culture.

The thesis critiques the conventional binaries between the private (emotion/entertainment/fans) and the public (reason/news/publics), and articulates the mediating contexts and processes in which the private shifts to the public. It seeks to situate affect and entertainment (popular culture) as key agents in mobilising and sustaining citizens' political interest and participation.

The key research questions are therefore: in what context do media offer a discursive space to connect people's everyday lives to the public world as well as to recruit and sustain political interest?; how does affect play a critical part in making sense of the public world, and mobilising political participation?; and in what ways do private individuals come to shape the public?

These questions are examined in the context of ICT-based media environments and in relation to three empirical studies: 1) OhmyNews - a global icon of citizen journalism - in which the 'feminised' news produced by citizens (re-)contextualised private interests into public concerns, and allowed the public to make a real change in the 2002 Presidential election and the 2010 local elections; 2) online political satire, in which politics is situated in an entertainment mode through citizens' creative reinterpretation, and which helped mobilise citizens' political interest and action during the 2004 Presidential impeachment and general election; and 3) the politicisation of teen fandom, in which music fans were mobilised as political actors in the 2008 anti-US beef protest.

The thesis employs a wide range of research methods including participant observation, interpretive textual analysis, and semi-structured and in-depth interviews. In this way the thesis identifies a complex linkage of traditionally separated spheres, such as reason and affect, news and entertainment media, and expert and common knowledge.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBS Christian Broadcasting System  
DBC Daehan Broadcasting Corporation  
DBS Dong-A Broadcasting System  
EBS Education Broadcasting System  
GNP Grand National Party  
ICT Information and Communication Technology  
ITU International Telecommunication Union  
KBC Korean Broadcasting Commission  
KBS Korean Broadcasting System  
KCC Korean Communications Commission  
KCIA Korean Central Intelligence Agency  
KISA Korea Information Security Agency  
KOBACO Korean Broadcasting Advertising Corporation  
KPF Korea Press Foundation  
KPRI Korea Press Research Institute  
MBC Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation  
MDP Millennium Democratic Party  
MIC Ministry of Information and Communication  
MOI Ministry of Information  
MOCI Ministry of Culture and Information  
NEC National Election Commission  
OMN OhmyNews  
OUP Open Uri Party  
PAC Press Arbitration Commission  
PUC People's Unification Committee  
SBS Seoul Broadcasting System  
TBC Tongyang Broadcasting Company  
UGC User Generated Content  
YTN Yonhap Television New

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# 1. Introduction

Under the authoritarian regime that ruled South Korea in the 1980s, any political activities that could possibly be interpreted as dissident were prohibited<sup>1</sup> in the name of “social justification”. Despite this, I often witnessed my parents talking about the news they read or viewed, criticising the state affairs with their friends in the living room or at the dinner table. During those times our home, like many others, was a relatively safe place to accommodate the kind of political discussion that could be too dangerous to be spoken in public. That early eavesdropping on my parents’ discussions and later conversations with them in my early youth formed a large part of my developing political interest and sustained passion for democratic society.

As I pursued my academic career, I came to ponder these questions: Where would those passionate talks that my parents shared with friends and family at home be theoretically placed? And could that discursive situation be seen as the political? While I was observing recent pivotal events where civic participation in the new online media environment was helping to reshape the Korean political landscape, my questioning became intersected with a curiosity about the communicative mode of ICT-based media in which differing genres converged. In short, in what context do hybrid media connect private individuals to the public world, and allow them to act as citizens?

Such questions can be encapsulated into one key theme which is central to my thesis – how to conceptualise the relationships between media, public engagement and politics for enhancing democracy. In pursuit of inclusive, participatory democracy

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<sup>1</sup> South Korea had been under military dictatorship for nearly 3 decades until the 1987 democratisation. The political climate during that time was unimaginably oppressive. For example, the former President Kim Dae-jung, who was the leading opposition politician at the time, was sentenced to death for an alleged rebellion conspiracy and later was exiled to the USA for 2 years. After he returned in 1985, he was put under house arrest. More details of the authoritarian rule are charted with a focus on the relationship between the state and the media in Chapter Three ‘Mapping Out the South Korean Media Landscape’.

where diverse forms of mass participation in a political realm are encouraged, what matters is to identify the conditions (contexts) in which everyday communicative practices by means of media use enable civic engagement and participation in the public world. Many scholars stress the democratic potential of talk in enabling an intersubjective communication as an essential component for a public sphere, in setting political interest into motion and thus drawing political interest from apathetic participants in the course of conversation (Bohman, 1996, p.145; Calhoun, 1992; Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b, p.170; Dahlgren, 2006, pp.267-286; Gamson & Katz, 1992, cited in Dayan, 2001; Habermas, 1974, p.49; 1996).

Habermas's historical concept of the liberal public sphere has been perhaps one of the most frequently applied within South Korean media studies and in English-speaking counterparts by and large as Livingstone and Lunt (2013, p.87) termed 'the rise and rise of the concept' despite entailing many critiques and new public spheres advanced by globalisation and Internet use recently. The notion of Habermas's historical public sphere, in which private citizens come to form a public through critical-rational debates of the common concern mediated by the media, reaching a reasoned consensus, has been extensively acclaimed as contributing to theorising the relationship between the (mass) media and democratic politics (Bang, 1984, 1995; Buckingham, 2000; Calhoun, 1992; Curran, 1991; Dahlgren, 1995; Garnham, 1992; Livingstone and Lunt, 2013; McKee, 2004; McNair, 2000; Moon, 1996; Park, 1996).

Going back to my early ponderings, the discursive situation of my parents with friends and family at home can hardly fit in the public sphere manifested in Habermas's historical account, leaving that speech situation as only an occasion of a private, intimate sphere and thereby the pre-political, although he acknowledges how an interest, and ability to question and debate political and cultural questions is founded in the

private sphere. Under the repressive authoritarian rule in which public discussions and/or assemblages critical of the state were prohibited, the home acted as a public sphere because it was the only space (in conceptual sense) to have political communication and, contrary to European modernity which discredits emotion over reason as the secondary component of politics, passion significantly stimulated involvement in the public sphere.

Responding to many criticisms that his original public sphere attracted, Habermas revised it to be more applicable in the complex late capitalism – embracing plural public spheres, various forms and channels of deliberation in everyday conversation, and focusing less on the nature of place and more on the nature of communication (Habermas, 1996; Livingstone and Lunt, 2013, p.92). However, his deliberative democracy model, in which he continues to place rationality as the most important element, unavoidably limits alternative forms of democratic participation involving affective dimensions (Dahlgren, 2009, p.8; McGuigan, 2005).

I do not intend to put too much theoretical weight on Habermas's public sphere. Rather, in an attempt to critique the Enlightenment dichotomy, I would position him as one of those scholars maintaining the Enlightenment rationality along with Robert Putnam and Neil Postman. In this tradition, news and current affairs media have been conceived as the most important genre of political discourse to facilitate rational deliberation, degrading entertainment (popular culture) media as harmful to democracy. Moreover, dispassionate rationality and reasoned action are presupposed as a prerequisite qualification of a citizen (Ciarrochi, Forgas and Mayer, 2006; Mayer and Ciarrochi, 2006; van Zoonen, 2005). In reality, politics is often practiced around emotion. Especially during election periods, candidates endeavour to appeal to the electorate for emotional sympathy or solidarity in opposition to competing candidates

by making claims that appeal to the public sentiment rather than rationality. In a similar way, citizen's direct political participation, particularly of young people, in the form of protests and social movements is mobilised by emotional engagements (Gamson, 1992; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001, p.3; Gould, 2010; Hoggett and Thompson, 2012; Richards, 2007).

However, the dichotomy between the public (reason/news/publics) and the private (emotion/entertainment and popular culture/audiences), discrediting the private over the public, is still powerfully operative. The distinction, grounded in the Enlightenment rationality, was established not only as a supposedly universal foundation for such key concepts of political theory and social sciences as citizenship, public sphere and public/private dichotomy 'in both Europe and outside' (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.4; Wallerstein, 1997) in the rise of the capitalist economy (Duncan, 2007, p.39; Gal, 2002, pp.77-78) but also as a vehicle to constitute Eurocentrism with the proliferation of capitalist economy (Wallerstein, 1997, 2004). In addition, the distinction has been a foundational category in republican and liberal thought as well (Gal, 2005, p.24).

More significantly, the private/public boundary is an ideological, rather than empirical distinction as the dichotomy works as a normative and practical notion to rule our everyday routines of thinking and practice as well as in social and political scholarships. For example, in South Korea, Confucianism, introduced by the emperor of Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910) as an ideology to better control a newly unified state, is still strongly operating as a norm to govern every aspect of society such as human relationships and social behaviours. What underlies Confucianism is an "altered" yin (陰) – yang (陽) theory as Wang (2005, pp.209-231) argues. Unlike the accusation of the reason for gender inequality that many scholars make, yin-yang theory as an ancient

Chinese cosmology views ‘yin and yang as natural forces that confer life and cause things through a process and movement’ (Wang, 2005, p.211) and therefore through their interchangeable interactions everything in the universe comes into being. Thus it stresses the complimentary harmony of each part<sup>2</sup> and their relationship is in constant flux and dynamic. However, it was reconstructed as a definite dichotomy with hierarchical categories to place yang (man/husband/human nature and benevolence/the good/public) over yin (women/wife/emotion/the bad/private) when integrated into Confucianism (136 B.C.E.) as ‘the orthodoxy of the Han state at the expense of other schools of Confucius thought’ (Wang, 2005, pp.209-231).

In this light, it is of importance to note that feminist studies scholarship has persistently contested this distinction. They have shown that the ‘supposedly incompatible’ (Gal, 2002, 2005) boundaries between public and private are always in flux and thus continue to be negotiated (Landes, 2003), not static. The questions that Nancy Fraser (1992, p.597) poses illuminate that the ideological nature of the private/public dichotomy is interest- and power-laden.

Underlying all these questions are two more general problems that are centred on power and inequality: Who has the power to decide where to draw the line between public and private? What structures of inequality underline the hegemonic understandings of these categories as well as the struggles that contest them?

Similarly, yet distinctively, Susan Gal (2002; 2005, pp.24-30) approaches the private/public dichotomy from a semiotic perspective. In short, the divide, contextualised in language that we use in everyday routines, operates as an ideology that selects and identifies ‘what will count as public or private’. The content and

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<sup>2</sup> The original principle of yin-yang theory still remains effective in oriental medicine. It views everything in universe including a human body as having yin (cold) or yang (hot/warm) trait and the balance of the two characters should be kept, otherwise disease or illness would occur. Therefore, if somebody’s body has a surplus of yang quality, she/he is prescribed medicine having yin to balance the overall yin-yang property in the body (OrientalMedicine.com).

relations ascribed to the descriptions ‘public’ and ‘private’ can be recalibrated based on an actor’s interpretation that is largely laden by power and ideology in a given society and culture. Yet, ‘the underlying distinction between the public (any issue that requires common resolution) and the purely private remains important’ (Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b, p.6).

Despite the sustained critiques from feminist and media and cultural studies scholars, the mainstream scholarship continues to support the conventional separation and, more importantly, the supposed dichotomy remains powerful enough to necessitate ongoing critique. In this light, the thesis attempts to contest the gendered, hierarchical, fixed normative distinction between the public and the private in respect of the relationships between affect, entertainment and politics.

For this, this thesis attempts to build upon the recent work of feminist, and media and cultural studies, and political communication and psychology that have suggested reconceptualising the supposedly hierarchical distinction between the private and the public (Carter, Branston and Allan, 1998;Connell, 1992;Dahlgren, 1991, 1992, 2003, 2006, 2009;Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009;Gripsrud, 2000;Holland, 1998;Jones, 2010;Livingstone, 2005a, 2005b, 2005d;Livingstone and Lunt, 1994;Macdonald, 1998, 2000;Pantti and van Zoonen, 2006;Street, 1997, 2001;van Zoonen, 1991, 1998, 2004, 2005). These critiques offer theoretical and methodological frameworks to identify the relation between the supposedly differentiated categories complicated and negotiated in everyday politics in regard to affect, hybrid media and publics, which are central to the thesis. The detailed discussions of the rationale that underpins the thesis are charted in the literature review chapter Two ‘Affect, Entertainment and Publics in Everyday Politics: Internationalising theory within a Korean perspective’. Reflecting on the criticism of Euro-centrism in humanities and



social sciences, I will carefully employ Western theories by discerning their possibilities and limitations in examining South Korean cases.

Therefore, the thesis endeavours to articulate the mediating contexts and processes in which the private shifts to the public. It seeks to situate affect and entertainment (popular culture) as key agents in mobilising and sustaining citizens' political interest and participation. In other words, this work attempts to articulate the complex context and processes in which private citizens form political publics and the ways in which media genres beyond conventional news and public affairs encourage or enable civic engagement. The thesis explores these issues in the context of the ongoing democratisation of South Korea in which dynamic digital culture is thriving. Hence, the key research questions comprise three parts:

First, in what context do media offer a discursive space to connect people's everyday lives to the public world as well as to recruit and sustain political interest?

Second, how does affect play a critical part in making sense of the public world and mobilising political participation?

Last, in what ways do private individuals come to shape publics?

Chapter Two 'Affect, Entertainment and Publics in Everyday Politics: Internationalising theory within a Korean perspective' begins by raising an important question of whether Western theory is adequate to examine and explicate non-Western context such as the South Korean context. In an attempt to avoid the uncritical 'academic relevancy' (Khiabany, 2011, p.207) and 'avatars of Eurocentrism' (Wallerstein, 1997) that were prevalent in humanities and social sciences, it is argued that de-Westernising should be conducted carefully in respect of the ways in which Western theories are to be applied. These pages then go on reviewing the literature relevant to how the terms public and private have been deployed in media and political debates; the place of emotion in

political involvement, particular fandom and its relation to political participation; and a literature review of hybrid media forms, with a focus on those forms that are central to my thesis, like online satire and ‘feminised’ news of citizen journalism.

In order to provide contextual backgrounds for choosing three empirical cases, Chapter Three ‘Mapping out the South Korean Media Landscape: In relation to the role of the state’ comprises three parts of a different time span. The first part deals with the period from the Independence from Japanese colonisation in 1945 to the 1987 democratisation. Particular focus is given on the media policies of the authoritarian regimes (1961-1987), which structured the foundation of South Korean media landscape in a particular way, especially the heightened monopoly of information control and ownership by a handful of conservative media, namely *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A*, whose gigantic influence and power has continued to be operative in Korean society. This imbalanced media landscape and the subsequent public aspirations for media reforms offered a rationale for the rise of *OhmyNews* (OMN hereafter) and alternative ICT-based media to contest the conservative discourse manufactured by those dominant media. The second part is concerned with the new media landscape shaped by the media deregulation in the wake of the 1987 democratisation. On the one hand, it considers the emergence of the institutionalised alternative newspaper *Hankyoreh* and its impact on the establishment of small-scale alternative media. On the other hand, it deals with the aggravating concentration of the media monopoly and the intensifying market-driven journalism. The final part examines the state’s ICT-boosting policy that founded the nationwide ICT infrastructure enabling universal access and availability of high speed Internet at low cost, allowing the abundance of small-scale online alternative media (spaces) such as OMN, DC Inside and fan communities.

Chapter Four ‘Methodology’ is concerned with overall research designs and methods with particular emphasis on a qualitative approach. This chapter contextualises the key research questions with sub-questions posed in each empirical chapter. And these pages explicate multiple research methods employed to examine sub-questions in each chapter. They include interpretative textual analysis, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, and participant observation. The concluding part of this chapter considers ethical aspects that occurred in the research process.

Chapter Five ‘Ordinary People and OhmyNews: Reshaping the news in between the private and the public’ investigates OMN, a global icon of citizen journalism, in which the ‘feminised’ news produced by citizens (re-)contextualised private interests into public concerns and (re-)mediated private citizens to the political world so as to allow the public to make a real change in the 2002 Presidential election and the 2010 local elections. Moreover, these pages will discuss similarities and differences between tabloidization and OMN’s citizen journalism, both of which are alternatives to traditional standard journalism.

In so doing, the chapter aims to critique the challenges and the implications that OMN’s citizen journalism poses to the traditional normative values of what counts as news/journalism and who counts as journalists, as well as its challenge to the theoretically conventional divide between the private and the public, which sit at the centre of the tabloidization debate that is consistent even though the content and the players change over time.

Chapter Six ‘Online Political Satire: Placing politics in affect and entertainment’ critiques the modern dichotomy between news and entertainment, emotion and reason, through examining online political satire, in which politics is situated in an entertainment mode through citizens’ creative reinterpretation, and which

helped mobilise citizens' political interest and action during the 2004 Presidential impeachment and general election.

In doing so, these pages will rework the conventionally theorised relations of entertainment/affect/lay thinking and news/reason/expert's knowledge in terms of politics. Consequently, I will suggest that political satire, as a converged genre of the traditionally separated domains of news and entertainment, generates such emotionality as humour that inspires a "real", accidental conversation among the audience and contributes to connecting politics to the everyday.

Chapter Seven 'The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ' attempts to reconceptualise the relationships between fandom and politics, and audiences and publics. I will critique the normative political theorising that has charged popular culture with undermining the public sphere needed for a functioning democracy, leading to the conclusion of the death of democracy or publics. Instead of denouncing entertainment and popular culture for dumbing down the citizenry and denigrating audiences in negative terms, I would suggest that there is a need to seek not only a mediating domain in which popular culture offers a recurring opportunity for a conversation to activate audiences to engage in politics, but also to identify the context and process of the audience's shift to form a political public.

In this light, this chapter examines the politicisation of teenaged fans of popular music, particularly boy bands, focusing on how and in what context fandom provides a platform to contemplate current politics and to practice political citizenship. These pages investigate the 2008 vigil rally, which was organised against the government's hastily agreed US beef import deal and amidst fears of mad cow disease. The rally evolved into a significant and expansive space for political action. Interestingly,

teenaged students, especially teen girls, led those rallies to a large extent, and at the centre of these teen girls' activism were various teen fan groups of K-pop stars.

Therefore, this chapter aims to identify the contextual and processional dimensions of the fan-based politics in which teen fans' cultural and affective engagement transforms into political citizenship. For this, these pages will explore the ways in which the teen fans related to their pop stars in their everyday lives and within this political activism; which emotions play what kinds of roles in the process of teen fans' politicisation; and thereby what this fandom implies to the relationship between fans and publics, and popular culture and politics. Consequently, I hope I will locate the legitimate place of entertainment, fans and emotions in democratic politics.

The concluding part of the thesis, Chapter Eight 'Locating the Public in the Private', attempts to provide reflexive discussions of the key aspects of the empirical findings of the research in relation to the existing works and authors that were utilised in the thesis. In addition, these pages endeavour to discuss whether there are similarities and differences between the three case studies that could give more insight in the wider conditions under which entertainment or affect does become relevant in a political context. Consequently, the thesis will contribute to recent discussions in feminist, and media and cultural studies about reconceptualising the relationships between politics, media and public engagement by identifying the context and the process by which the private translates into the public.

## **2. Affect, Entertainment and Publics in Everyday Politics: Internationalising theory within a Korean perspective**

My thesis is concerned with a particular instance of the way in which the public and the private are being renegotiated in a particular time and place, and this needs to be situated within a much longer history of how these terms have played out in political, media and social movement theory, all of which are rooted in European<sup>3</sup> experience. This raises a significant question of whether Western theories are applicable to examine and explicate non-Western contexts like South Korea. The question is central to the increasingly growing concern of Eurocentrism, or ‘Western bias’ and thereby the call for ‘de-Westernising’ in media and communication research and social sciences in the recent decade (Chakrabarty, 2007; Cumings, 2007; Gunaratne, 2010; Khiabany, 2011; Park and Curran, 2000; Wang, 2011). The consciousness of ‘academic relevancy’<sup>4</sup> is also expressed by Korean scholarship in humanities and social sciences as the most problematic according to the recent survey (Kyosu Shinmun, cited in Kim, 2010b, p.vi). In this regard, Kim (2010b) calls for the need of ‘indigenisation’ of media and communication theory, questioning the firmly established US-centric theory largely focused on media effect and function which is still powerfully operative as mainstream even after more than 50 years of its academic foundation in Korea. It is, as many critics (Chakrabarty, 2007; Khiabany, 2011; Kim, 2010b; Lee, 2011b; Wallerstein, 1997) pointed out, grounded in the fact that Eurocentrism residing in science and social sciences were institutionalised and expanded after World War II through university education by native intellectuals trained in Western Europe but mostly in the USA.

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<sup>3</sup> Here ‘Europe’ primarily refers to Western Europe and North America (Wallerstein, 1997, p.93), specifically the USA and the connoted meaning of unique, superior, ‘eternal West’ in opposition to an artificial construct of ‘the Other (the Orient)’ (Amin, 1989, p.89).

<sup>4</sup> It refers to ‘the relevance and academic dependency’ of Western theories in the social sciences in the global south (Khiabany, 2011, p.207).

Then, what matters is how to proceed indigenisation, ‘a loose category’ dealing with ‘the problem of irrelevancy and the generation of alternative scientific traditions’ (Wang, 2011, p.3). Certain attempts unveiled their limitations: a ‘culture-general approach’ exposes the problem of an impetuous generalisation without consideration and examination of the particular of local contexts and ‘nativism’ overly emphasises ‘the unique, the different, and often the traditional’ (Wang, 2011, p.6). Consequently, it suggests the need of greater and more critical attention to locating the particular and/or the general of non-Western experience, in particular when selecting which Western theories to be applied for analysis and how. Because there are varying theoretical frameworks deployed in the name of Western theories, such as the positivist-scientific paradigm and the interpretative paradigm, de-Westernising should be carried out in a selective way best suited to a particular context in a particular time. In the sense that the Western critiques offer not only theoretical and methodological frameworks to identify the *relation* between the presumably differentiated categories complicated and renegotiated in everyday politics in respect of emotions, hybrid media and publics, but also that there has not been much developed discussions of those relations in Korean academia, the Western critiques are unquestionably the most useful way to approach the Korean material and experience. Therefore, in order to go beyond as ‘testing grounds’ (Miike, cited in Wang, 2011, p.1) for and ‘avatars of Eurocentrism’ (Wallerstein, 1997), and toward internationalising theories in the field of media, culture and politics, my thesis will aim to identify the particular in Korean contexts and its implications to Western theories that I will employ and critique.

In this light, here I will review the literature relevant to how the terms public and private have been deployed in media and political debates, including a discussion of how Western theories are relevant to the Korean context; the place of emotion in

political mobilisation, in particular fandom and its relation to political action; and a review of literature about hybrid media forms, concentrating on those forms that are central to my thesis, like satire and ‘feminised’ news of citizen journalism.

## **2.1. The Public/Private Dichotomy: A fractal opposition**

In envisioning a normative democratic society model, the Habermasian notion of the public sphere has profoundly contributed to theorising the relationship between the mass media and democratic politics (Bang, 1984, 1995; Buckingham, 2000; Calhoun, 1992; Curran, 1991; Dahlgren, 1995; Garnham, 1992; Kim, 1993; Livingstone and Lunt, 2013; McKee, 2004; McNair, 2000; Moon, 1996; Park, 1996). In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (STPS, 1989[1962]), Jürgen Habermas described the rise and decline of a bourgeois public sphere as a new discursive social space mediating between state and society from the nation state in the seventeenth century to the social welfare state in the mid-twentieth century in Western Europe, specifically Britain, France and Germany. The nucleus of this notion is a (political) public sphere in which private citizens come to form a public through critical-rational debates of the common concern (mediated by the media), reaching a reasoned consensus. Its ultimate end, therefore, is to make the state accountable to the informed and critical citizenry and to enhance democratic participation. Unarguably, this concept has been largely acclaimed as providing a sound critical theory not only of historical developments in the media and politics (Fraser, 1990; Garnham, 1992) but also of ‘political action necessary to rebuild systems of both communication and representative democracy’ (Garnham, 1992, pp.361-364). By the same token, drawing on the public/private dichotomy that separates the system (state and market economy) and the lifeworld (public sphere and private sphere), the concept



of the public sphere makes it possible to differentiate between state apparatuses, the official-economy, and the public sphere of discursive interaction that is essential to a working democracy as Fraser (1990, pp.56-57) acknowledges.

However, if an inclusive democratic society – in which diverse forms of mass participation in a political realm are encouraged – is pursued, this universalising concept of the bourgeois public sphere is problematic. By categorising certain normative specifications of social settings, qualities and activities, and modes of communication to construct the liberal public sphere, the public/private distinction deployed in Habermas's historical account as 'bourgeois masculinist ideology' (Fraser, 1990, p.77) de-legitimises some other alternatives as private. This has drawn many criticisms that will be charted in detail in the later sections. For example, it is assumed that a precondition of political subjectivity is economic independence that guarantees not only political consciousness based on class interests but also private autonomy un-subverted by power. Thereby, the non-bourgeoisie, such subordinate groups as women, servants, the propertyless and the uneducated, are inevitably disqualified to be a citizen to form a political public, and thus their voices are marginalised. Importantly however, Habermas has moved away from this singular conception of the idealised bourgeois public sphere as he admitted in his later works (1992, 1996). In a recent study, Livingstone and Lunt (2013) pointed to three main changes in Habermas's account of the historical public sphere in particular relevance to media and communication studies. Firstly, Habermas now accepts a plurality of public spheres whose legitimacy resides less in the nature of the physical place where communication takes place but more in the quality of communication itself, which enables a democratic, 'discursive formation of opinion and will on the part of a public' (Habermas, 1992, p.446). Secondly, with deliberation ideally orienting to mutual understanding instead of consensus and a sovereign public,

he adopts ‘the contested nature of public life, the importance of recognition of diverse identities and, therefore, the legitimacy of multiple forms and sites of deliberation’ (Livingstone and Lunt, 2013, p.92). Thirdly, he rather focuses on the conditions under which institutions can play a crucial role in generating and sustaining processes of deliberation and public engagement. Therefore, Habermas rather argues that the language of inclusion, which was developed to serve particular class interests in a particular historical moment as described in his historical account of the public sphere, contains within it a self-transformative potential.

In this light, it is of importance that we review Susan Gal’s argument of what the public/private distinction is and how to reconceptualise it. In short, the binary separation, established as a social analytical concept in the rise of the capitalist economy in modern Western society (Duncan, 2007, p.39; Gal, 2002, pp.77-78), has been a foundational category in republican and liberal thought as well (Gal, 2005). Gal (2002; 2005, p.24) approaches the private/public dichotomy from a semiotic perspective. In other words, the divide, contextualised in language that we use in everyday routines, operates as an ideology that selects and identifies what will count as public or private. She (2005, pp.26-30) explicates the way an “object” is categorised either as public or as private in communicative practices through the logic of ‘fractal recursions’ and ‘erasures’. That is to say, ‘fractal recursions’ means the repeated recalibrations by using the same distinction onto different scales of comparison and ‘erasures’ is the process of forgetting, denying or forcibly eliminating ‘the nested distinctions’ at different scales and thus simplifying into a single dichotomy that fits into an actor<sup>5</sup>’s perspective that is primarily shaped by an ideology in a particular society and culture. In this way, Gal offers a better understanding that the public/private

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<sup>5</sup> Here an actor can be a speaker – although Gal did not mention it, “researcher” could be categorised as a speaker in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘voicing’ – naming and semanticising (see Gal, 2002, p.81) or a participant in any form of communicative practices.

distinction is a fractal one, rather than a stable binary opposition, appearing in different guises in different times and places. Consequently, the relation is meaningful, even when the content ascribed to the descriptions ‘public’ and ‘private’ changes.

## 2.2. The Public Sphere and the Communicative Mode

In the sense that the public sphere is where interests of various social groups of private citizens are presented and (re-)negotiated in the process of intersubjective communication, the question is what kinds of communicative mode or media form enable the intersubjective interaction among people in a given society. In this light, my point is that it is meaningless to discuss the democratic role of media on the grounds of the hierarchical news/entertainment opposition. Rather, it needs sustained attempts to identify which particular mode of communication materialises the public sphere in a particular context. This corresponds to one of my research questions: In what context do media offer a discursive space to connect people’s everyday lives to the public world as well as to recruit and sustain political interest? This will be answered by examining varying media genres throughout the thesis such as citizen journalism *OhmyNews*, satire and fandom. In order to open up democratic possibilities of differing media, therefore, in this section I will critique the debates of democratic media based on the fixed opposition between news (information) and entertainment (popular culture) with focus on the arguments of Habermas, Postman and Putnam.

‘Talk’<sup>6</sup> – conceiving potential to enable an intersubjective interaction as an essential component for a public sphere – has long been underscored as central in

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<sup>6</sup> At the joint keynote speech with Nick Couldry (The Transforming Audiences 2.0 Conference at the University of Westminster in 2009), Natalie Fenton replaced conversation with ‘communication’, underscoring its democratic role in forming a discursive space. However, in my thesis the term ‘talk’ will be flexibly used together with ‘conversation’, ‘communication’ and ‘speech’ in the sense that all of these entail *democratic potential* of creating a discursive sphere in the process of intersubjective communication.

enhancing citizens' political engagement and action, and sustaining a working democracy (Bohman, 1996; Calhoun, 1992; Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007a; Dahlgren, 2003, 2006, 2009; Habermas, 1974, 1989[1962]; Livingstone, 1999; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994). Indisputably, the notion of Habermas's public sphere has enormously contributed to cementing the significant political role of conversation (Schudson, 2008, p.94).

Despite this broadly agreed conception of the democratic role of talk, there exists discrepancy about what kind of communicative mode is better suited to actualising the public sphere. Conventionally, news and current affairs media – specifically the newspaper press, which presumably deal with explicitly state-related concerns – have been conceived as the most important genre of political discourse (Delli Carpini, 2009; Delli Carpini and Williams, 2001, pp.160-161; Schudson, 1998; 2008, p.103; Sparks, 1991, p.58; 1992b, p.278). On the contrary, other forms of media genres, especially those mixed with or focused on entertainment, have been regarded as inherently harmful to a healthy democracy. This binary distinction is historically grounded in Enlightenment thought. With a firm emphasis on reason and science as a core impetus of historical progress and enlightenment, and with discredit placed upon emotion (Marcus and Mackuen, 2001, p.41; Mayer and Ciarrochi, 2006, p.xv), Enlightenment rationality was established as a supposedly universal foundation for such key concepts of political theory and social sciences as the individual, scientific rationality, citizenship, public sphere and the public/private distinction 'in both Europe and outside' (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.4).

Habermas's notion of the bourgeois public sphere epitomises the ideal of belief in the Enlightenment project. In respect of which communicative mode or genre is best suited to enable a political public sphere, Habermas's main arguments can be delineated

in two points: the newspaper press and the clear separation of a political public sphere from a literary public sphere; and an intimate private sphere. Firstly, he acknowledges that the political public sphere originated in an intimate sphere of the conjugal family – the home – and a literary public sphere in apolitical form. However, he clearly separated those spheres from the political public sphere as its precursor. Unlike the coffee houses in Britain and the *salons* in France, in which rational-critical debates of works of art and literature between the aristocracy and bourgeois intellectuals ‘extended to include economic and political disputes’ (Habermas, 1989[1962], pp.32-33), the bourgeois home ‘had lost its connection with’ the public sphere of noble society’ (Habermas, 1989[1962], pp.45-46). Therefore the home, the sphere of the family, is categorised as the intimate sphere as the core of the private sphere.

Likewise, the literary public sphere, constituted by a customary reading of novels in the broader strata of the bourgeoisie in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century when the first public library was established and the sales of the press increased, is secondary to the political public sphere.

The privatized individuals coming together to form a public also reflected critically and in public on what they had read, thus contributing to the process of enlightenment which they together promoted (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.51).

As such, many qualities of the literary public sphere meet the requirements for the bourgeois public sphere, mainly the enabling of the formation of critical publics to contribute to the enlightenment process.

However, what counts as “the political” is a decisive factor to determine if a discursive space can be classified as a political public sphere. For Habermas, the conception of ‘publicity’ or ‘publicness’ in contrast to ‘privacy’ is central to what constitutes to be “the political”. Fraser (1990, pp.70-72) untangled his notion of

‘publicity’ in four different ways, which I would synthesize into two points largely constituting my research themes: (i) the precondition of a political public and (ii) the nature of common concern or the subject of a conversation. The first point will be discussed in more detail in respect to current debates around the relationship between audiences and publics, and then how to define the qualities and requirements of citizens to form a political public. In this section, I would rather focus on the notion of an ideal public in his historical bourgeois public sphere and its problems in the light of inclusive democracy.

Firstly, although his ‘publicity’ still retained in the normative model means *open and accessible to all*, the prerequisite of citizens to form a political public in his historical public sphere is clearly defined as economic independence that secures private autonomy (Habermas, 1992, p.434). Thereby, his “everyone” is limited to middle-class, property-owning, educated and literate men, which is an exclusionary category demarcating from other publics such as women, servants and apprentices who were active participants in the literary public sphere but not having capacity to act like property-owners to influence the administrative power of a state in their common interest (Habermas, 1989[1962], pp.55-56). As such, he manifested his class and gender bias (Dahlgren, 1991, p.6) by regarding bourgeois men as a ‘universal class’ (Fraser, 1990, p.60), succumbing to ‘the problem of universalism’ (Dahlgren, 1991, p.3). He largely ignored the importance of alternative or multiple public spheres such as ‘counterpublics’ (Fraser, 1990, p.61), ‘proletarian’ (Negt and Kluge, 1993[1972]), and ‘popular or informal’ public spheres (Dahlgren, 1991, p.6). In addition, following Chakrabarty (2007, pp.9-16), I would critique Habermas’s historical exclusivity of non-bourgeois classes such as propertyless, ‘unlettered masses’ (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.xv) and women, which are firmly confined within the category of ‘pre-political’. By the

same token, his historical accounts also demarcate a literary public sphere – in which the non-bourgeoisie can participate through the medium of the written word and out of audience-oriented subjectivity (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.51) – as ‘pre-political’ on the grounds not only that its function is not ‘in the context of political emancipation’ through ‘the principle of publicity against the established authorities’ (p.56) but also its participants are understood as ‘pre-bourgeois’ (Chakrabarty, 2007). However, it is noteworthy that in his later work, Habermas (1992, p.434, 445) revised his view of ‘the propertyless masses’ as retaining the capacity of citizens to form a public opinion in a social-welfare state.

Secondly, the nature of common concern, manifested in the Habermasian public sphere, needs to be reconsidered in the light of democratic mode of the (mass) media. That is to say, what counts as the common concern and its relation to private interests? Whose concern comes to be presented as the public matter in what kinds of media genres? Is it something explicitly political or implicitly political and/or something personal? These questions, in short, bring back to one encapsulating question “what counts as the political?” Habermas (1989[1962], pp.159-175; 1999) argues that the common concern is what private persons deal with through critical-rational discussion so as to form public opinion, which has political functions of ‘criticism and control of organized state authority’.

In his view as illustrated particularly in the original public sphere, the newspaper press is of utmost importance as a crucial vehicle to provide explicitly state-related information to facilitate rational-critical discussions so as to form public opinion on the common concern. Accordingly, he lamented that the rise of the mass press (such as the penny press and yellow journalism in England, France and the United States since 1830s) and the further advance of the mass electronic media (representatively

television in the latter half of 20<sup>th</sup> century) had ‘re-feudalised’ the bourgeois public sphere. In other words, the press, as a political domain supposedly separate from literature and art, now became integrated together with concentration on entertainment and human interest for the purpose of promoting ‘a commercially fostered consumer attitude’ (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.169). Therefore, the expansion of a public sphere enabled by the mass media is ‘in appearance only’ and, what’s more, the critical discussion of a culture-debating public was replaced with ‘exchanges about tastes and preferences’ among the culture-consuming public (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.171).

The common concern is discursively constructed not through eliminating private interests to reach a presumed consensus, but through contestations among variously different private interests. In the later works, despite embracing such an idea of contested, multiple public spheres with focus on the democratic procedure of public communication, Habermas (1992, 1996) still maintains the emphasis on rational deliberation as a normative condition of communication. Inevitably, it leads to the limitation not only of possible or appropriate modes of communication and/or public engagement in the political realm (e.g. affective dimension) but also of participants as potential-citizens. Moreover, his seeming displeasure of the administrative intervention into the private sphere is in contrast to feminists’ perspectives. Feminists’ sustained challenges to subvert a conventional category of domestic violence as personal- or domestic-matters, for example, resulted in legitimating the personal as political (Fraser, 1990, pp.71-74; van Zoonen, 1991). In this sense, the distinction between the personal and the political is neither fixed nor firm, as shown in the Habermas’s historical category of the political that is something explicitly state-related and exclusively dominant. Therefore, what matters is the ways in which the media (re-)mediate between private interests and public concerns, and the people and the public world. As shown in



Habermas's historical account, the press, which facilitated the growth in print culture and literacy and thereby the emergence of a public sphere of informal discussion and debate, was assumed to best enable an informed and critical citizenry essential for a working democracy. This indicates an underlying assumption of an Enlightenment epistemology that places print-based reading as a prerequisite of critical-rational public debate (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.163, 172) and on the contrary television viewing as narcotizing and stupefying (Habermas, 1989[1962], p.170).

Habermas's pessimistic, elitist<sup>7</sup> view of the mass media and mass audiences manifested in his original public sphere, especially his overly simplistic analysis of the changed behaviour of the audience-publics from a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public, was greatly influenced by two others. One was his thesis supervisor Theodor Adorno whose elitist theory of mass culture (Habermas, 1992) views art not as a universal human capacity but rather as associated with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He argues that working-class culture, always mediated by the culture industry, cannot offer enlightenment – art with reflection resulting in freedom (Thomson, 2006, pp.70-76). The other main influence was by the research tradition of the linear mass media effect led by Lazarsfeld in the United States (Habermas, 1992).

Surprisingly, the Enlightenment distinction has survived so far into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond that the deprecating view of entertainment media – with television at the fore – and particularly infotainment Internet media today, remains (Delli Carpini, 2009). The scholars following this tradition underscored the harmful roles of such entertainment-centred media to diminish the sense of political citizenship among citizens and undermine the public sphere. In *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985), Neil Postman censured television as offering an epistemology that is 'inferior', 'dangerous

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<sup>7</sup> Following McGuigan's (1992, p.2) use of the term 'elitist', in my thesis, it is applied 'as convenient shorthand for ideological positions that are disrespectful of ordinary people's tastes' and opinions.

and absurdist' (p.27) in comparison with a print-based one that generates a coherent, 'serious and rational public conversation' (p.43). In a similar vein to Habermas's historical account, he idealised the print-dominant culture of the Enlightenment Age as promoting 'the objective, rational use of the mind and a public discourse with serious, logically ordered content' of facts and ideas (pp.51-52). He argues, on the contrary, that television news as entertainment offers only 'disinformation' that is 'misplaced, irrelevant, fragmented or superficial information' and thus forms emotions rather than opinions (p.107). Postman's conception of the media epistemology is firmly grounded on the rigid dichotomy between serious and non-serious ('amusing' and entertaining), rational and irrational, and the firm belief in news as a serious, rational and objective sphere separated from entertainment (Jensen, 1990, p.50).

In similar fashion, Robert D. Putnam illustrates, in *Bowling Alone* (2000, pp.216-246), the correlation of media consumption with social capital and civic engagement. Aligning with traditional scholars mentioned earlier, his argument is rooted in the print-based Enlightenment epistemology that "pure" reading (either book or newspaper) of information secures critical rationality as a guarantee of a public sphere in comparison with the visual media, television at the fore, in the irrational, depoliticized entertainment arena. Firstly, Putnam argues that newspaper reading better enables civic engagement and knowledge acquirement about the world than news consumption through television or the Internet. He insists that the rapid decline of newspaper readership in recent decades substantiates the decrease of civic engagement and social capital. Therefore, he argues that the differentiated news consumption appears generationally. That is to say, older generations whose main medium for information is the newspaper are more likely to engage in collective social, political associations than young people whose news consumption is conducted mainly through

visual media or the Internet. Secondly, entertainment media such as television is detrimental to civic engagement and social connections that are crucial element of political citizenship. This view is manifested as such.

Americans at the end of the twentieth century were watching more TV, watching it more habitually, more pervasively, and more often alone, and watching more programs that were associated specifically with civic disengagement (entertainment, as distinct from news). The onset of these trends coincided exactly with the national decline in social connectedness, and the trends were most marked among the younger generations that are distinctively disengaged. Moreover, it is precisely those Americans most marked by this dependence on televised entertainment who were most likely to have dropped out of civic and social life (Putnam, 2000, p.246).

Correspondingly, he maintains a pessimistic view of audiences of the entertainment media, as ‘isolated, passive, and detached from their communities’ (Putnam, 2000, p.246), which is consistent with Habermas and Postman’s conception of audiences of non-news, entertainment media.

### **2.2.1. Tabloidization within the News Genre**

This section aims to offer much information of the supposedly underlying rationale for the tabloidization debate in the late 1990s and 2000s, which is presumably paralleled to the recent debate of citizen journalism to be expounded in the Chapter Five “Ordinary People and OhmyNews: Reshaping the News in between the Private and the Public”.

The normative view of democratic media grounded on the hierarchical news/entertainment dichotomy was revisited in the 1990s and the 2000s by media and cultural studies, and media feminist scholarship. The issues can be encapsulated in two points. On the one hand, the issue is concerned with the synthesis of news and entertainment within journalism (news media), which is called by various labels – infotainment, tabloidization, feminisation, personalisation or popular journalism. On the

other hand, it is about the political potential of non-news modes in a broader definition that includes popular culture and entertainment genres such as talk show, satire, fandom, etc.

In regard to the tabloidization within journalism<sup>8</sup>, tabloidization means overall changes both in the format and content of the news media including the “quality” press. The main features of tabloids are: (a) ‘easy-to-consume formats’ (Rooney, 2000, p.91) such as big, bold headlines; an extensive use of photographs and graphics in colours; and vivid, emotive language; and (b) concentration on human interest in private lives and personalities (personalization); and on soft news on scandal, sports and entertainment (trivialization), instead of hard (serious) news on public life such as politics, economics and society (Sparks, 2000, pp.2-12). The debate on tabloidization is polarized. For those who maintain the traditional notion of news media, separate from entertainment and restricted to directly political matters as the public concern, the tabloidization is conceived mainly as the declining of established journalistic standards (Gripsrud, 2000, p.285; Sparks, 2000, p.2). Therefore, it results in the ‘disenfranchisement’ of people (Todd, cited in Sparks, 1992b, p.279) from consideration of serious, political matters, and the aggravating of ‘political apathy’ (Connell, 1991, p.237) and cynicism. In comparing the quality press with the popular one, Sparks (1988) argues that by giving priority to ‘the immediate issues of daily life’ over the traditional concerns assigned to the public sphere, the popular press or tabloids is ‘systematically depoliticized’. He further concludes that as the essential difference between the quality press and popular journalism, ‘the popular conception of the personal as an immediate and unmediated explanatory framework of the social totality’

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<sup>8</sup> Colin Sparks (2000) illuminates the definition of the term “tabloid” in three different senses, which are specific to (a) ‘newspapers and the journalistic output of broadcasting’, (b) ‘a shift in the priorities’ in the radio and television broadcasting, and (c) ‘the shifting boundaries of taste within different media forms’. However, his classification seems unclear and rather confusing since the categories (a) and (b), and then (b) and (c) are conflated.

provided by the popular press is not ‘the intellectual material for self-liberation’ but rather ‘politically reactionary’ (Sparks, 1992a).

As a reply to these criticisms, some media and cultural studies scholars view this tendency as having positive implications for the democratic role of the media. In the first place, contrary to the conventional assumption, the popular press is ‘not unserious’ (Connell, 1991, p.242) and ‘indeed stuffed with politics’ (Seaton and Pimlott, cited in Sparks, 1992b, pp.283-284). It is argued that the denunciation of the tabloids’ lacking of political information results from the narrowly defined conception of what counts as the serious and thus the political. That is to say, if the notion of politics is expanded to include a wide range of life experiences beyond the overtly state-related, or/and parliamentary politics, the supposedly non-serious media has political potential by ‘establishing or modifying acceptable values’ (Seaton and Pimlott, cited in Sparks, 1992b, p.284). In particular, the tabloid revelations of personalities not only serve to rupture their presumed ‘aura of respectability and authority’ (Connell, 1991, p.241; 1992, p.82) but also offer pleasure to see those in power brought down (Connell, 1991, p.252). Consequently, the debate of tabloidization is consistent even though the content and the players change over time.

Moreover, the trivialisation of the press has a long history, dating back to the ‘Yellow Journalism’ with the introduction of the penny press the *New York Sun* in the United States in 1833 (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey and Richardson, 2005, p.279) and the New Journalism in London in 1887 (Sparks, 2000, p.18). In a highly market-driven media environment intensified by the advanced technologies existing today, it is a necessarily ‘economic response to journalism’s difficulties’ (Dahlgren, 2009, p.45) in order to increase accessibility to larger audiences and thus secure advertising revenues (Sparks, 2000, p.3). More intriguingly, Bird (2003), in her study of audience perspective

on news, suggests that a growing trend of personalisation is also audience-driven. In the sense that news stories engage audiences most effectively when speaking about issues directly relevant to their personal concerns and experience – through ‘personalisation’ – the tabloid style news offers greater proximity to audiences’ everyday lives so as to engage audiences.

Some feminist media scholars persuasively explicate this overall shift as a ‘feminisation’ of news. The increasing female audience demographic owing to the rapid growth of women’s economic independence has partly contributed to the popularisation of the more intimate and personal mode of address and the lifestyle contents including the domestic concern (Carter, Branston and Allan, 1998; Holland, 1998) in news and current affairs genres. In addition, van Zoonen (1998) points out that the key features of the tabloids or popular journalism – ‘human interest, audience needs and desires, and emotional investment’ – have been conceived as the archetype of female journalists’ ‘role-conception’<sup>9</sup> (p.41), which has been despised by most traditional news journalists. The condemnatory view, she argues, should be seen as part of a ‘general patriarchal scheme’ that ‘most things women do and like are not valued very highly’ (p.46). Not surprisingly, it reconstructs the gendered category of the public sphere as described by Habermas, in which men are conceived as ‘properly political’ (Landes, 1988, p.4) dealing with ‘analytical and detached’ discourse in the public sphere (van Zoonen, 1991, p.228) and women as ‘naturally domestic’ (Landes, 1988, p.4) dealing with ‘emotional and involved’ discourse in the private sphere (van Zoonen, 1991, p.228). Notably, this gendered distinction has been challenged by sustained efforts of feminist critics and activists to realise the slogan ‘the personal is the political’ (van Zoonen, 1991, p.230). As a result, some of the previously assumed private concerns and values such as family

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<sup>9</sup> In the study of the Dutch television news, van Zoonen (1991) suggests that the feminisation of news did not result from the growing number of female journalists but rather the former affected the latter.

violence and sexual relations became legitimised as the public concern appropriate for political discourse.

In similar fashion, the media and cultural studies scholarship has questioned the public/private distinction in relation to media and democracy. As illustrated earlier, the tabloidization or the personalisation of news is seen as a blurring or collapse of the boundaries between ‘hard (serious, fact-based) and soft (light, interpretation-based) news’ (Carter, Branston and Allan, 1998, p.7), and thereby news/information and entertainment (Buckingham, 2000; Dahlgren, 1992, p.12; Rooney, 2000), ‘journalism and non-journalism’ (Dahlgren, 1991, p.14) and the public sphere values (‘abstraction and rationality’) and the private sphere values (‘instantiation and affectivity’) (Connell, 1991, p.251; Macdonald, 2000, p.251; van Zoonen, 1991, 1998). The question of the dichotomy should be ultimately extended to the democratic role of differing media not only within journalism but also beyond the news media genre. And this matter is not limited to communicative mode but intersected with the imminent issues that are also the themes in my thesis – who counts as publics and where is the “appropriate” place of emotions in politics. In the following section, I will review recent debates in media and cultural studies alternative to the traditional distinction in which news is placed in the centre of the political public sphere as a rational, normative, expert knowledge to be constituted by authoritative, objective, professional sources, deprecating the other media genres represented by tabloids or popular culture.

### **2.2.2. Beyond the News: Everyday Politics and Popular Culture**

In this section, I attempt to explore democratic possibilities for hybrid media forms beyond news and current affairs media to connect the public world to the people’s private lives. The review of literature in this section focuses on political satire and

popular culture, specifically fandom, which direct the Chapter Six “Online Political Satire” and the Chapter Seven “The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ”.

There has been increasing scepticism about the fulfilment of the democratising role of news and current affairs media. Recent research suggests that news and current affairs media are largely failing to connect politics to people’s everyday lives (Baym, 2010; Buckingham, 2000, p.27; Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009; Jones, 2005, 2010) by allowing no role for the people to play in the public conversation ‘except as an audience’<sup>10</sup> (Carey, 1993, pp.14-15). In the study of the television news portrayals of citizens in politics, Barnett (1998) argues that the news media usually circumscribe the world of politics as the realm of politicians and experts, rather than of the ordinary citizens who are represented as ‘passive observers’ (p.135) or reactionary, ‘apolitical and disengaged’ consumers (p.138). It is claimed that this is because the conventional news reporting of citizens’ views or political participation largely relies on journalists’ limited assumptions and biases or/and the traditional news organisation’s ‘reportorial shortcuts’<sup>11</sup> (p.11), not on empirical evidence. In particular, young people tend to feel alienated and excluded from the official discourse of politics<sup>12</sup> (Buckingham, 2000, p.25, 27, 29) in which conventional news outlets reside at its centre, and thus they turn to alternative news sources such as infotainment television programmes (Baym, 2010, p.2).

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<sup>10</sup> This might be seen to imply a negative conception of an audience in the opposite sense of a public. However, what James Carey attempts to mean by this is the critique of journalism’s practice in which news no longer enables a conversation or debate among the public by simply conveying the expert’s judgements as “scientific” knowledge to be accepted. In this way, he argues, the journalism reduced the citizen’s role to ‘a receptacle to be informed by experts and an excuse for the practice of publicity’.

<sup>11</sup> This is what news organisations have developed in order to make it easier and quicker to gather the information they need. Therefore the traditional news is inescapably inclined towards the statements, opinions and interpretations of the already privileged in the society as news sources.

<sup>12</sup> David Buckingham argues that young people’s stance of ‘boredom and deliberate ignorance’ of the conventional political debate presents ‘a strategic response’ to ‘a more general perception of their own powerlessness’.



In a broader sense, Curran (2011) argues for the necessity of reconceptualising the democratic role of the media. He suggests that entertainment media containing something inexplicitly political should be reconsidered to have democratic potential since it enables a discursive space especially about four main elements underpinning politics – values, social identities, cognitions (sense-making) and public norms, some of which might often intersect. He argues that entertainment can offer a more flexible way of engaging with the elements ‘informing politics than the official discourse of politics’ (p.67).

Peter Dahlgren has called into question the traditional distinction between the political, public world and the previously supposed private domains, on the grounds of ‘the empirical permeability’ (1995, p.95; 2006, p.276) in particular between politics and entertainment and other forms of popular culture. He suggests the notion of ‘civic culture’ as an analytic framework to focus on the processional and contextual dimension in which people develop into ‘the citizen-agent’ through diverse ‘modes and intensities of engagement’ in their everyday media use (Dahlgren, 2003, pp.152-153). Civic culture comprises six dimensions of identities, knowledge, practices (discussion or talk), trust (affinity), spaces and values, each of which can affect the others in various ways (Dahlgren, 2003, pp.156-160; 2009, pp.108-123). Identities, as a foundational dimension of civic culture for democracy, are to be based in the concept of ‘civic agency’ (2009, p.102), in which the people see themselves as meaningful participants and become motivated ‘via the interplay of reason and passion’. As Dahlgren indicated (2009, p.108), there are some similar dimensions between his civic culture frame and social movement theory, especially William Gamson’s (1992) collective action frame comprising injustice, agency and identity, which is carefully expounded in the later section “The Place of Emotions in Politics”. Here the key element of Dahlgren’s

identities is in the same line with Gamson's 'agency', in which 'working people' are seen or/and see themselves as acting agents to bring about social change for a better society. Gamson's identity component rather focuses on the process of identification. Highlighted as a key element for mobilising political participation, particularly in the protest, the injustice component can be incorporated into Dahlgren's value dimension<sup>13</sup>. The knowledge dimension entails the process of active 'appropriation of information' (2009, p.109), which is closely related to the dimension of practices that require specific skills, especially communicative competencies including literacy and education. Among practices, talk or discussion (that was dealt with as a separate dimension in 2003 but now incorporated in the practice dimension) is of importance, through which the other dimensions become substantiated. For example, knowledge-related skills enable the creation of spaces but 'communicative spaces' (Dahlgren, 2009, pp.114-116) can be actualised in various forms of differing media facilitating talk, especially informal, open-ended, 'meandering and unpredictable' everyday talk that bridges between the personal and the political (Dahlgren, 2006, pp.278-279; 2009, p.90). This approach much informs the thesis in that it inclusively broadens the scope of the form of democratic media and talks that anchor in everyday practices of lifeworlds of citizens, along with Livingstone and van Zoonen. The last civic culture dimension is trust among citizens, instead of which Dahlgren proposed 'affinity' in 2003. Employing Putnam's (2000, p.136) concept of 'thick trust' grounded in established personal relationships and 'thin trust' based on honest and reciprocal relationships with people whom we don't know personally but with whom we feel we can have satisfactory exchange, he underscores 'thin trust' as a more relevant and useful mode enabling 'the loose bonds

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<sup>13</sup> Dahlgren distinguishes the value dimension into 'substantive values' (such as equality, liberty, justice, solidarity and tolerance) and 'procedural ones' (such as openness, reciprocity, discussion and responsibility/accountability) but this dividing category is not useful for the analysis of the thesis.

and networking relationships of civic participation' in late modern society, rather than 'thick trust'. With Gamson's collective action frame, these frameworks were utilised for the analysis of teen fans' political mobilisation in the Chapter Seven 'The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ'.

In similar attempts to overcome the limits of deliberative democracy represented by Habermas's historical account of the political public sphere, Jim McGuigan (1996, 2005, 2010) suggests reworking the notion of a literary public sphere in a broader sense of a cultural public sphere. He points to Habermas's negligence of 'the rhetorical and playful aspects of communicative action' and its consequence of a clear-cut distinction between information and entertainment. This criticism can be somewhat resolved as Habermas admitted in his revised work (1992) that he was inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's work and came to recognise the democratic potential of popular cultural subversion of hierarchical power relations. Nonetheless, he clarifies his maintenance of the normative notion of the political public sphere with focus on communicative rationality elucidated in his early work. Through the notion of the cultural public sphere, McGuigan (2005, p.435; 2010, p.26) suggests expanding the Habermasian literary public sphere to include 'the various circuits and channels of popular culture and entertainment' as a source of 'emotional and aesthetic reflections on how we live and imagine the good life'. Consequently, in the sense that this conception proposes the democratic possibility of the supposedly apolitical genres, it is analogous to what Dahlgren means by the term 'civic culture' as addressed early on and to Sonia Livingstone's (2005c, 2005d) 'arational mode' or 'a mediating domain'.

Through the analysis of television audience participation programmes in *Talk on Television*, Livingstone and Lunt (1994) illuminate how the genre challenges the traditional distinction reproduced in the media as 'representations and legitimations of

the social order'. In the first place, they argue that the mixing genre of current affairs and game shows dismantles the binary opposition between information and entertainment. They point to the separation of the research concern in media studies by referring to John Corner's (1991, p.268) concepts of the 'public knowledge project' and the 'popular culture project'. In other words, on the one hand, the 'public knowledge project' is predominantly concerned with news and current affairs media and the politics of information, and the viewer as citizens. On the other hand, the 'popular culture project' focuses on 'the implications for social consciousness of the media as a source of entertainment' and the question of 'taste and pleasure within industrialized popular culture', and thereby the audience is seen as consumers. This echoes Dahlgren's (1995) critique of 'the labour of division' in media research between cognitive communications relating to the public sphere and affective communications of the pleasure of popular culture. According to Livingstone and Lunt, however, in infotainment or 'arational' mode, the audience discussion programme offers a connection between 'the cognitive and the emotional realms of the public sphere'. In addition, the genre suggests the repositioning of the relationship between experts and ordinary audiences by altering the formal arrangements of the seats of experts, which used to be staged on a raised podium, to one among audience participants. Also, by the host's mediation, the audience participant's 'ordinary, anecdotal account of everyday life' is emphasised over the expert's 'scientific, abstracted account'. In my view, nevertheless, it can raise a question whether giving a voice to audience participants through these new formal devices in the programme can make a real impact on the assumed hierarchical relationship between experts and ordinary people. According to Hart (1999, p.113), this sense of participation may only be the apparent effect of

‘remote control politics’, and thereby might lead to quiescence in real change of power relations in society.

In an examination of the way in which a mixed genre, namely political satire, presents and constitutes politics as a central concern in an entertaining mode, John Street (1997, 2001) contends that the conception of the political should be extended into something dealing with the implicitly political in diverse popular culture contexts. In satire, he argues that institutional politics, including politicians who are usually treated with greater respect as ‘legitimate and influential political actors’ in traditional news and current affairs media, is redefined to be despicable and ridiculous and becomes a part of pleasure. In this way, satire in general categorises society into two groups: ‘greedy, corrupt individuals’, who are typically ‘vain, stupid and corrupt’ politicians, and ‘honourable, ordinary people’ (Street, 2001, pp.63-73). Accordingly, this characteristic of the genre often leads to the most common criticism of political satire that it generates ‘a cynical superiority complex’ (Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009, p.7) in audiences, which distances people from politics (Baumgatner, 2007, p.320).

In response, through the analysis of the post-network, multichannel television satire in the US, some critics (Baym, 2010; Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009; Jones, 2010) contend that many such criticisms are built on false assumptions of the nature of politics, audiences, satire, humour and parody, and more generally entertainment. In particular, satire is traditionally conceived as ‘a subgenre of comedy’, and comedy and humour are typically portrayed as ‘the opposite of seriousness and rational deliberation’ (Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009, p.8). In a broad sense, they attempt to confront this distinction between news (the serious and the rational) and entertainment (the non-serious and the emotional), which Enlightenment thought assumed and is still so powerfully operative. Following media and cultural studies scholars (Delli Carpini and

Williams, 2001; Livingstone, 2005d; van Zoonen, 2005), they argue that the supposedly hierarchical fixed distinction is increasingly breaking down. Firstly, they argue that the divide is arbitrary and artificial in its origin and in the process of its reification. In addition to this, by following Susan Gal's (2002, 2005) idea of the distinction, I would argue that the divide is in flux, being recalibrated dependent upon a particular context, rather than dissolving or disappearing. Therefore, it should be underscored that 'the underlying distinction between the public (any issue that requires common resolution) and the purely private remains important' (Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b, p.6) and clearly meaningful. Secondly, the 'hybridization' of information and entertainment, in political satire talk shows and other forms of popular culture, has been widely seen in the wake of convergence of advanced communication technology. Jones (2010, p.13) underlines that such a binary categorisation necessarily makes us blind to the possibility of citizens' interactions and engagements with blended political television programmes. More significantly, in the comparative analysis of the lay people-based television show *Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher* and the pundit show *This Week with Sam Donaldson and Cronkite Roberts* focused around president Bill Clinton's sex scandal in 1998, Jones (2010, pp.93-109) argues that 'the language of common sense' constituted by lay people on the *Bill Maher* show offers a wider range of explorations and alternative ways through which publics can make sense of politics in their everyday lives.

In respect to the humour that is a critical element in political satire, Simon Critchley (2002) conceptualises it as critical practices that enable a 'profoundly cognitive relation to oneself and to the world' and to produce 'anti-rites' that reveal the nucleus of the situation and suggests how that situation can be reshaped. In other words, unlike the traditional conception, humour is considered to link to rational thinking.

Morreall (2005, p.68) also argues that as ‘our ability to enjoy the violations of our expectations and our conceptual schemes’ grows, humour has evolved ‘as part of human rationality and it involves thinking’.

By the same token, it is of importance to illuminate how Mikhail Bakhtin (1984[1965], 1998) theorises humour (laughter)<sup>14</sup>. Although the historical background is the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the political function that Bakhtin lays on ‘the folk humour’ has a meaningful implication to the question of how to define the emotional popular culture and “the people” in relation to politics, which is examined in Chapter Six ‘Online Political Satire’. In the first place, ‘carnivalistic laughter’ (Bakhtin, 1998, p.254) has democratic potential that is temporary but powerfully emancipatory and subversive. The existing hierarchy of class and political structure is maintained in the official feasts, placing people in unequal positions. On the contrary, ‘the people’s laughter’, as a basis to form the carnival<sup>15</sup> folk culture, embraces all the people as active participants without a division of performers and spectators, liberating them from ‘all hierarchical precedence’ (Bakhtin, 1984[1965], pp.4-10) that ‘determines the structure and order of ordinary life’ (Bakhtin, 1998, p.251). As Holquist (1984[1965], p.xviii) points out, Bakhtin’s remarkable book *Rabelais and His World* is a paean to the common people, in which Bakhtin conceptualises the people as ‘social agents’ (Dahlgren, 2009) to act as meaningful and active participants in the struggle for renewing power relations.

A primarily used modality for political satire, including Bakhtin’s carnival laughter, is parody. Parody is a vital and powerful vehicle for critiques of the vices or follies of mankind, and ‘unmasking the duplicities of modern society’ (Hariman, 2008; Hutcheon, 2000, p.xiv). In her detailed book *A Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon (2000,

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<sup>14</sup> Bathkin uses the terms humour and laughter together alternatively without differentiation.

<sup>15</sup> The celebration of carnivals took place in large medieval cities for three months of a year on average and thereby represented a substantial part of medieval life.

pp.xiv-32) defines parody as a form of ‘repetition with critical difference’ in ‘its ironic “trans-contextualization” and inversion’ and/or as contrast of one text to another with the intent of mocking or ridiculing it. She classifies the inseparably intersected and confusing relationship between parody and satire into satiric parody and parodic satire. Satiric parody, in my understanding, is close to the second meaning of parody, in which its main ridiculing target is conventions of another media form. Parodic satire, apparently common in modern satire, is the interactive mixture of ‘parodic forms and satiric intent’. In other words, it directs at something outside the text, not the text or genre itself, and utilises parody as a means of attaining satiric or corrective end (Hutcheon, 2000, pp.49-62). Therefore, by transposing political figures’ personae into the parodied texts or genres in a defamiliarised, ironic context, for example, political parodic satire offers audiences a playful means to question, examine and play with politics.

### **2.3. The Formation of Publics: (Ordinary) people, audiences and citizens**

Who can be categorised as citizens to form a political public? What are the qualities and requirements? What are the relationships between audiences and publics, and common (ordinary) people and experts? And whose knowledge plays out as legitimised authority? All these questions are encapsulated into one main theme of my thesis – the (working, ordinary, common) people are social (acting) agents – and accordingly direct the third research question: In what ways do private individuals come to shape publics? This conceptual position is a starting point of my journey to locate “the political (public)” in everyday communicative practices of the people’s private lives in the Korean context. Because how to view the people substantively affects how to conceptualise audiences (fans) and their practices of knowledge production grounded in



their reflection of the lived experience, thereby whether this knowledge gains legitimacy or is depreciated as unauthorised or ungrounded knowing. In this light, the concern of the legitimacy of common knowledge and its relation to expert knowledge will be investigated in detail in Chapter Five 'Ordinary People and OhmyNews'. And the concept of fans will be re-examined from this perspective in Chapter Seven 'The Paradox of Fandom'.

Raymond Williams (1976, pp.158-163) usefully expounds complicated meanings and uses of the keyword 'masses' that are in practice often intersected with audiences and ordinary or common people and other social groupings, although he does not address its direct relation to the audience. The term 'masses' is ambivalent. As Williams puts it, 'a temporarily dominant group may try to enforce its own uses as 'correct'' (1976, p.9). In other words, in much conservative thought, the masses is 'a term of contempt' but 'a positive term in much socialist thought'. Its negative senses from the former perspective are concerned with 'something amorphous and indistinguishable', which connotes base or low, ignorant and unstable, and parallels plebeian, mob and multitude as unstable common people or as the vulgar and the rabble. On the contrary, its positive senses are with 'a dense aggregate' paralleled to the people or common people, working people, ordinary people, who are seen as 'a positive or potentially positive social force' to act together and change their condition effectively.

The 'audience' or ordinary people can be seen to retain radically different qualities combined with the masses depending on traditions of academic disciplines. Whether audiences use news or entertainment media determines the quality of the audience either as a citizen to constitute publics or a consumer, the easily manipulated mass as some critics (Corner, 1991; Sparks, 2000) point out. In this tradition, the audience and common (ordinary) people are understood in the negative meaning of the

masses. In Habermas's historical account of the public sphere, a political public was limited to a male bourgeoisie who maintained economic independence, which secures access to a means of information acquisition – typographic materials such as books and newspapers, and education and literacy – and to a discursive space in which critical, rational public reflection on common concern takes place. This rigid analytic concept leaves many subordinate groups within the category of the 'pre-political' or under-citizens. In particular, his elitist and negatively stereotyped notion of audiences and common people as part of an uneducated, disqualified, reactionary mass is problematic. He grieved that the entry of many uneducated citizens into the political realm led to the deterioration of the exclusivity of the public and thereby the quality of the public sphere in which the bourgeoisie formulated. Despite his delayed recognition of propertyless, unlettered masses as maintaining the capacity of citizens to constitute a public, his view of audiences is pessimistic by regarding them as the consuming-public or 'a deferred "public" self' (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.35) whose reflection is not beyond the private experience of a novel reading.

To further Chakrabarty's (2007) incisive critique of Habermas's historical category of the "bourgeois-citizen", he posits the 'peasant-as-citizen' which incorporates the non-bourgeois, women, subaltern, plebeian social groups as part of the political to make their own fate in Indian history. This notion corresponds closely to the positive view of masses as acting agents in history as Williams explicated. Following Ranajit Guha, the founder of the Subaltern Studies group, Chakrabarty attempts to legitimise life-world everyday practices and body politics actualised by the "peasant" through emotional participation in modern India, and to bring these histories into the centre of the discourse of political history. For instance, through an analysis of various literatures with the background of 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal, Chakrabarty (2007, pp.214-236)

elucidates how Habermas's historical account of the public/private category does not fit, specifically in regard to the home and affects. Under the European colonial domination of public life and civil society, the home acted as a public sphere for Bengali nationalists: on the one hand, 'the only (conceptual) space' for Bengali men to act with autonomy; and, on the other hand, 'a space for reforms, where an educated and reformed mother was expected to prepare the Bengali Indian child to be the proper subject of nationalism'. Moreover, contrary to European modernity with reason as the essential impetus to form political-civil society, the development of "natural" sentiments of love of the family significantly contributed to mobilising political unity.

Yet, the elitist conception of ordinary people as the pre-political or under-citizens has been strongly maintained in political science scholarship. As Delli Carpini and Williams (2001) point out, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and the US, growing concerns about the appropriate role for both the media and citizens to secure the stability of democratic systems and competent citizenship led to greater emphasis on the role of and reliance on experts to identify and solve problems. The debate of publics between Walter Lippmann and John Dewey in the 1920s in the US is symptomatic of this concern. In *Public Opinion*, Lippmann (1922) pointed to the incapability of ordinary people to judge their own interests and make important decisions. And they were seen to perceive the world only through a media-created 'pseudo-environment'. In this way, ordinary people are conceived as an emotional, ungrounded, inchoate, disengaged, easily manipulated mass and therefore they need experts – professional elites such as media professionals and policy experts – who are regarded as indifferent in their own interests and informing citizens responsibly with their scientific, rational knowledge. Dewey (1927), in *The Public and Its Problems*, seemed to agree with Lippmann in seeing a public composed of ordinary people lacking of understanding and

interest in the political world. However, his conception of experts was not as romantic and idealised as Lippmann's: he recognised the nature of experts is oriented toward their own private interests, rather than for the public interest. Rather, he emphasised the necessity of effective communication between experts and the people for the making of informed citizenry and for informing the experts of the people's demands.

Daniel Dayan (2001, pp.744-761; 2005, pp.47-48) registers the stringent notion of Habermasian publics distinctively separated from audiences and/or fans. In other words, Dayan explicates the features of 'fully fledged publics' reflecting a set of normative standards: publics should embody rationality; retain certain values of a perceived common good or a shared symbolic world-view and a feeling of belongingness; commit to the practice of internal debates; engage in collective performance which is presented to themselves and others and display a collective autonomy, sociability and stability. In the relationship to the media, Dayan posits publics separated from viewers and fans, whose subjectivities take shape around a medium, specifically televised events. Despite the possible transformation of these audiences to publics, he argues, the shift results in the constitution of 'elusive' publics, who meet all the required qualities except stability to form 'real' publics, for the ephemerality of televised events. By the same token, fans meet nearly all the requirements for being a public – 'stable, self-aware, ready to confront other publics over matters of taste, capable of performance in public and possessive of an undeniable sociability' – but lack one essential element for a true public, that is, seriousness. Therefore, fans turn out to create only a 'make-believe' public.

As such, the normative binary opposition maintains radically different social formations and qualities between publics and audiences (van Zoonen, 2004, pp.41-42). In this distinction audiences are generally denigrated as private, emotional, biased,

trivial, passive, individualised, withdrawn and hidden, while publics are valued as rational, disinterested, active, shared, visible, participatory and engaged in rational-critical discussion in order to build consensus and legitimate democratic government (Livingstone, 2005c, p.11; 2005d, p.17). In short, these associations of audience versus public are ascribed to the valorisation of public over private, for instance, rational/emotional, visible/hidden, shared/individualised, and participatory/withdrawn (Livingstone, 2005c, p.2).

However, as examined earlier on, since the late 1980s and especially in the last decade, media and cultural studies, feminism studies, political communication and psychology scholarships have attempted to contest the rigid public/private categorisation institutionalising dominant values in trajectories of media, publics and politics, that is in the relationships between news and entertainment, audiences and publics, and reason and emotion<sup>16</sup>. In particular in respect to the audience/public relationship, media and cultural studies has made substantial efforts to establish a new perspective that ‘audiences are active, critically aware and discriminating’ (Jenkins, 2006b, p.135).

Sonia Livingstone’s and William Gamson’s studies challenge the disparaging view of audiences composed of ordinary people in opposition to experts. Particularly, these studies endeavour to legitimise people’s common experiential knowledge as significant resource in the sense-making and the connecting of the public world to their private lives. In the analysis of the audience participation programme, Livingstone and Lunt (1994) argue that the traditionally oppositional qualities assigned to laity versus expert – emotional, ungrounded, subjective versus rational, scientific, objective –

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<sup>16</sup> In respect of particular attempts to reconsider the supposedly normative distinction between reason and emotion in enhancing civic interest and participation in the public world, I will investigate in more detail in the following section ‘The Place of Emotions in Politics’. My special focus will be on the research outcomes from the scholarship of political communication and psychology as well as media and cultural studies.

became overturned. That is to say, common people's knowledge is revalidated as authentic, relevant, grounded in experience, meaningful and useful. On the contrary, expert knowledge is reconsidered as alienated, irrelevant, ungrounded, and empty of meaning. In *Talking Politics* (1992)<sup>17</sup>, Gamson, in an attempt to connect the study of social movements and media, seeks the way in which people use resources such as media-generated knowledge and their experiential knowledge acquired directly or indirectly through social networks in understanding of public issues, and how three components of the collective action frame – injustice, agency and identity – are presented in media discourse and the focus group's conversation. Throughout his study, he observes 'working people' as an acting agent for social change, not merely as objects of history, which is a quite different story from social and political science scholarships. In relation to mediated knowledge, people are neither passive nor so dumb. Therefore they negotiate with media messages in complex ways in which they utilise alternative resources like experiential knowledge, despite the media's important role in their framing of the issue. In a word, the people are regarded as acting agents or 'social agents' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.102) to see themselves as meaningful participants for social change.

In an attempt to redefine who counts as publics in highly complex, ambiguous communicative situations, especially in the recent ICT-based circumstance, Livingstone (2005a, 2005b, 2005c) proposes a more practical, inclusive sense of publics, which demands to satisfy only one of the various requirements for the public and thereby includes diverse forms of social activity that are public. In other words, the private space of our everyday life such as the home is ever more pervaded by new, diversified

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<sup>17</sup> The following section deals with more details of how the study directs my research, especially of teen fans' politics, methodologically and theoretically. In particular, three components of the collective action frame that supports political consciousness and thereby mobilisation for collective participation – injustice, agency and identity – will be closely examined.

forms of mediation, by which ‘the diffused audience’<sup>18</sup> (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998) constitutes self-mobilising, imagined collective publics. Here, what determines the quality of a mediated public is activities that are sustained and resourced by performance of audiences. Therefore, Livingstone (2005c, pp.11-12, p.16) and Dahlgren (2003, 2006, 2009) advocate for recognition of the particular yet everyday ways of actual practice of political citizenship. In other words, it is necessary to seek the procedural and contextual dimension of a mediating domain in which a specific performance of particular, located audiences in the everyday matters for the public sphere (Livingstone, 2005c, p.33), and their cultural, affective involvement transforms into a public activity.

In a similar manner to the way in which audiences were treated as part of an undifferentiated, easily manipulated mass in early mass communication scholarships, fans often suffer from negatively stereotypical images as mindless followers of their heroes without criticism; as emotion-oriented rather than rationality-based (Jenkins, 1992), or ‘make-believe’ publics (Dayan, 2001, pp.752-761), especially when they have to do with politics. In sharp contrast, Liesbet van Zoonen (2004, 2005) has inspiringly illuminated the positive relevant connections between fandom and politics, which much informs my study of teen fans’ politicisation in Chapter Seven. She points to three resemblances between fandom and political citizenship. Firstly, both fan communities and political constituencies have similar structural formations and come into being as a result of various appeals and performances. Secondly fan activities are equivalent to political practices: a vast array of fan activities – a passionate individual investment (in the text), active engagement in public discussions and deliberations (about the qualities

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<sup>18</sup> Abercrombie and Longhurst identify three phases of the audience: the simple co-located face-to-face audience, the mass audience and the diffused audience. The diffused audience is no longer containable in certain times and places but rather part and parcel of all aspects of daily life in industrialised nations and increasingly globally.

of the text), proposal and discussion of alternatives – are paralleled to all civic virtues as essential for democratic politics. Thirdly fan and civic participation are both maintained by emotional investment. Although emotions are ritually manifested in political practices, affect has not been assigned to a deserved place in politics as ‘indispensable, desirable, and commendable components of political involvement’ (van Zoonen, 2005, pp.64-65) yet in spite of an indication of some endeavours in the recent decade. Therefore, my focus will be on current debates of the possible linkage between emotion and politics in the following section.

## **2.4. The Place of Emotions in Politics**

This section deals with the second research question of the thesis: How does affect play a critical part in making sense of the public world, and mobilising political participation? A particular focus is given on the literature review of the significant role of varying emotions in political mobilisation and thereby its indispensable linkage with rationality in the process of political involvement. This will be explored through an analysis of teen fans’ politicisation in Chapter Seven ‘The Paradox of Fandom’.

Some scholars (Hoggett and Thompson, 2012, pp.2-3; Kuklinski, 2001, p.7) venture to differentiate affect and emotion. Yet, there seems no consensus in conceptualisation. It is understandable since the study of emotion is in its infancy despite the rapid growth of emotion research in various areas in the recent decade. In my thesis it would be meaningless to distinguish these two terms. Therefore, I will use affect and emotion interchangeably in order to mean “mediated” feelings elicited largely by differing media genres and communications.

Emotions have long been theorised as secondary to reason in politics. Habermas (1989[1962], 1999) acknowledges the plausible role of emotions in



motivating 'novel' readers' engagement in a literary public sphere. He describes how activity in the literary public sphere, involving discussions of taste and manners and the pleasurable enjoyment of conversation among equals, spilled over into the political public sphere as it became a forum for the discussion of social, economic and political questions. Nonetheless, his main argument is centred on the firm emphasis of reason and the suppression of emotion. Accordingly media research, concerned with the notion of a public sphere extensively following Habermas, 'excessively' focuses on the cognitive and rationalistic aspects of news and neglects affective communications as McGuigan (2010, p.25) critiques. This also reflects 'the division of labour' in media research as Corner (1991, p.268) and Dahlgren (1995) have underscored.

Likewise, the study of emotions had been marginalised in political scholarships in which the rationalistic, structural, and organisational models dominate as Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2001) elaborated in *Passionate Politics*. According to them, Max Weber paved the way to associate emotions with irrationality although he appreciated passion as an important element for political commitment. In general, he believed emotional actions could not be rational and vice versa, which has a bearing on social and political science traditions. In these traditions, whereas emotions were considered as crucial for understanding all political action outside institutional politics, political participants in protests were pathologically stereotyped as a mob or a crowd easily driven by anxiety and fear, anger and violence and spurred by rumours and demagogues, all of which were regarded as irrational and immature. This negatively stereotyped image of protesters is still often presented in the Korean conservative media, which is charted in the analysis of the dominant media discourse of teen activism in Chapter Seven.

In the recent decade, however, robust research in various fields including media and cultural studies has re-focused on emotion as an essential and/or rational constituent of politics. Distinctively, some political psychologists (Marcus and Mackuen, 2001; Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse and Stevens, 2005) have attempted to reconceptualise affect as inescapably linked to rationality through the concept of 'affective intelligence' (Marcus and Mackuen, 2001, p.41) in which affect maintains our capability to use reason 'in precisely those circumstances when the benefits of reason are most required and most wanted'. They argue emotions – representatively anxiety and enthusiasm – can play positive roles in democratic decision-making and participation. In other words, anxiety of present or possible threat or danger facilitates 'reflective, deliberative' (re)consideration of contemporary information and 'standing decisions (i.e. predispositions)' (Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse and Stevens, 2005, p.961) and enhances political learning for new information in order to respond to the threat. And enthusiasm promotes active engagement in the democratic process.

In respect to the role of emotions in political mobilisation, Gamson's (1992) study has much significance in my thesis. Through the analysis of mass media and focus groups composed of working people, he articulates how the components of collective action – injustice, agency and identity – are manifested and how people use resources such as media discourse, experiential knowledge and public wisdom in order to understand an issue. Particularly the collective action frame impinges on the analysis of the process of teenaged fans' politicisation in the Chapter Seven. Injustice, as a powerful constituent of political consciousness supporting collective action, is a 'hot cognition' he argues. In other words, injustice is laden with 'the righteous anger' (or moral indignation, rage, resentment, grief) toward a concrete target of human actors (such as corporations, government agencies or specific groups rather than individuals)

who cause harm and suffering. As Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2001, pp.16-17) explains, in the process of transformation of such emotions as anger, indignation, hatred or fear into cognitive beliefs of unfairness, 'demonization' is needed. That is to say, it needs typifying an adversary's action completely negatively, assigning immoral motives to the opponent, and augmenting the enemy's power. As such, the experience of anger motivates people to engage in political action in order to overcome perceived injustice (Thompson, 2006).

In addition, agency is also an essential consciousness that people, as 'potential agents of their own history' (Gamson, 1992, p.7), can change existing conditions and terms of their daily lives through collective action. In contrast, a huge obstacle to collective agency is the sense of 'collective helplessness', which social structure and political culture combine to produce (Gamson, 1992, pp.59-83). In centralised, hierarchical national political and economic structures in which working people can hardly find opportunity to participate in any of the institutions setting the conditions of their daily lives, they unavoidably come to feel helpless. And a political culture engendering passivity and inaction exacerbates this pessimism. For example, the news production culture hugely dependent on a small group of power elites serves to establish their 'self-serving' announcements filling the news pages. It is noteworthy that he acknowledges collective significance of individual actions having no organised plan, which can be found as a characteristic of many online political actions.

The process of becoming a collective agent necessitates identification, 'the process of defining "we", typically in opposition to some "they" who have different interests or values' (Gamson, 1992, p.84). The injustice element facilitates personal identification as well. In the identification process, this "they" should be demonized as a concrete target as explained above. With respect to the strategy of how working people

use media, experiential knowledge and public wisdom for their sense-making and their political engagement, Gamson stresses the concept of issue proximity – the degree to which an issue has ‘direct and immediate consequences for one’s personal life’ – as an important factor along with an interest to encourage issue involvement. The issue proximity brings out people’s existing anger, which they experience over the hardships and pains in their everyday lives, within the injustice frame. Consequently, he concludes that experiential knowledge contributes to concretising injustice with the emotion of moral indignation, and media discourse offers a tool for the framing of an issue in a broader picture as well as for the shared understanding.

As such, emotions, as the motivational ground for political action or/and as ‘feeling rules’ (Hochschild, 2012) that determine the extent and time of publicity of a particular emotion, are culturally and socially constructed and (re-)negotiated through contesting discourse framed enormously by the media. As Richards (2007, p.5) underscores, in media studies, news, conventionally regarded as the traditional, rational public sphere of political process and debates, should be also examined in the aspect of an emotional public sphere as ‘a discrete object of study’. Through an analysis of the construction of the British people’s response to Princess Diana’s death in 1997 and public debate about the fate of the British monarchy that followed, McGuigan (2005, 2010) also argues for situating affect at the centre of communication and democratic participation. In this light, Pantti and van Zoonen’s study (2006) calls for greater attention. Through a qualitative content analysis of four Dutch newspaper articles around recent political assassinations, they attempted to unveil ‘the implicit rules of feeling’, that is to say, how, which and whose emotions were reported as appropriate to which contexts. In their conclusion, they argue that the different and contradictory emotions they identified in their analysis imply that public emotions do not necessarily

have ‘a unifying effect’ by pointing to this diversity as a cause for the disruption of inclusive political, cultural citizenship and lamenting the temporality of citizens’ emotional participation.

Pantti (2010) examines how compassion and anger have been constructed and managed as a vehicle to construct social solidarity and to express criticism toward political authorities in the British disaster news coverage. Pantti employs a cultural approach, Sarah Ahmed’s (2004) model of the ‘sociality’ of emotions, in which emotions become ‘constitutive of subjectivity and of boundaries between ‘we’ and ‘them’ and function to both move us and hold us in place’. This is consistent with the collective identity frame that Gamson (1992) stresses as a crucial component of political mobilisation. In her findings, she highlights that the compassion discourse enhances a sense of moral national community and works to rebuild collective identity and promote cultural values, and stories of heroes and ordinary people’s altruistic actions build moral solidarity. The anger discourse shows ‘mediated disasters can be less consensual’ yet offers an occasional space in which ordinary people (and journalists) hold those in authority accountable for their actions.

## **2.5. Recalibrating the Distinction**

Thus far, I have striven to examine current debates of the trajectories of communicative mode, publics and emotions in enhancing democratic politics. On the one hand, I explored the normative dichotomy between the public and the private sustainably maintained by the notion of Habermasian public sphere and his followers. On the other hand, extensively yet not exhaustively, I endeavoured to critique the traditional distinction by investigating rigorous research in various scholarships including media and cultural studies and political communication and psychology in recent years. Some

of these studies are indispensably valuable and meaningful with empirical evidence, which have provided models or frameworks for me to pursue in my research. Although there has been academic abundance of well-developed critique of the relationship between media, public engagement and politics in respect of this dichotomy, empirical studies to scrutinise the concerned matter are insufficient. In reply to urgent academic calls (Kuklinski, 2001, p.13; van Zoonen, 2005, p.56) for empirical studies, my thesis, especially from a perspective of the distinction as a fractal rather than a binary opposition, aims to contribute to recalibrating the distinction assigned to the main themes of my research – communicative modes, the composition of publics and the place of emotions in politics – by identifying the context and process in which the private translates into the public, or/and the public is constructed in the private.

### **3. Mapping Out the South Korean Media Landscape: In relation to the role of the state**

This chapter attempts to foreground historical contexts of the Korean media landscape that has been, by and large, structured by the media policies of the state. The chapter is divided into three parts around the following periods: the authoritarian era (1961-1987), the market-driven journalism (1987-1998), and the online media (1998 up to present). A particular focus is given on the authoritarian era for two reasons. Firstly, because a handful of conservative media conglomerates have continued to impinge on the formation of public opinion to a great extent and this has gravely resulted from the media policies executed during the authoritarian era. Secondly, after the 1987 democratisation, the firmly structured media power of those conservative media offers a rationale for the people's aspirations and sustained efforts to seek alternative media spaces that are now afforded by the Internet Communication Technology (ICT) to some extent.

For a better understanding of the relationship between the state and the media that will be charted in the chapter, it is useful to note that from 1948 – the First Republic after Independence from the Japanese colonial rule – to 1987, the political and legal system had been maneuvered by the authoritarian rulers' ambitions to perpetuate their power and to justify its unlawful legitimacy, and thereby media and communication policies had been operated to those ends. It was in the wake of the 1987 democratisation that the current single-term five-year presidential system, in which the president is elected directly by the people, was established.

Therefore, by illustrating that the democratisation was achieved by an alliance among various civic forces such as students, religious groups and ordinary citizens, and reinforced by the global move toward democratic states in such places as the USSR,

Eastern Europe and East Asia in the 1980s, this chapter attempts to elucidate the Korean particulars underlying the historical relationship between politics, media and citizens.

### **3.1.Korean Transition in the Wave of Global Move toward Democratisation**

*A final factor working in favor of Korean democratization is that the people took direct action in a revolutionary situation and forced political reform. It was not something bestowed by a foreign conqueror (as in Japan) or from above by a liberalizing but still dominant elite (as in Taiwan)...The best thing going for democracy in Korea is that the people themselves were involved in its creation and have a stake in its survival (Johnson, 1993, p.107).*

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the world witnessed a grand political transition from authoritarian to liberal democratic regimes in a number of regions such as East Asia, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Mikhail Gorbachev pushed forward economic and political reforms – the so-called *perestroika* (economic restructuring) and *glasnost* (political openness) – during 1986 to 1991. The main goal of the reforms was to recover from a long economic stagnation. However, *glasnost*, entailing freedom of speech (albeit the limited freedom to the extent that criticism of Gorbachev and his inner circle was banned), abolition of censorship of art, and adoption of plural candidacy in a local communist party with secret voting, contributed to expanding the degree of freedom and democracy in Russia. Moreover, the failure of *perestroika* resulted in the weakening influence of Russia on the satellite Soviet Republics and eventually the dissolution of the USSR through secession of the Soviet Republics. In the later months of 1989 in Eastern Europe (e.g. Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania), people overthrew communist party-states with demands for a free press, and political and other basic reforms through diverse means of communication (Wasko, 1993, p.163).



Similarly, there were comparable democratisations in East Asia. In 1986, popular protests toppled the Marcos dictatorship that had ruled the Philippines for over thirteen years (Fukuyama, 1992, p.14). Under President Corazon Aquino, the Philippines restored democracy and became a part of the 'third wave'<sup>19</sup> of democratisation. Taiwan had been under an authoritarian regime led by Kuomintang (KMT) that owned 2 national newspapers, controlled 5 military-owned newspapers and had close connection with the majority of national newspapers for forty years until 1987 when martial law was lifted. This followed the 1986 political reform when the one-party state of KMT was ceased by the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). However, it took another ten years until the Taiwanese experienced full democratic transition for the first time in history through direct participation in elections for the President and Vice-President (Rawnsley and Rawnsley, 1998, pp.106-124).

Enumerating a series of historical, political transitions in the 1980s, Fukuyama (1992, pp.8-16) argues that the innovations resulted from tremendous weakness and crisis within the core elites whose cohesion is essential for an authoritarian regime to hold a monopoly of coercive power. And he interprets these global moves in a broader sweep:

Chief among the surprises that have occurred in the recent past was the totally unexpected collapse of communism throughout much of the world in the late 1980s... Authoritarian dictatorships of all kinds, both on the Right and on the Left, have been collapsing. In some cases, the collapse has led to the establishment of prosperous and stable liberal democracies. In others, authoritarianism has been followed by instability, or by yet another form of dictatorship. But whether successful democracy eventually emerged, authoritarians of all stripes have been undergoing a severe crisis in virtually every part of the globe (p. 12).

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel P. Huntington (1991) coined the 'Third Wave' to mean a global democratisation of over thirty countries between 1974 and 1990.

Arguably, in contrast to Fukuyama's analytical point, South Korea has achieved democratisation not by a decline of core elites' power, but by a coalition of pro-democracy forces such as students, citizens, activists, religious groups and political opposition. Without the persistent, passionate mass participation in a series of protests in June of 1987, the ruling party leader Roh Tae-woo's Declaration of 29<sup>th</sup> June 1987 could not have been achieved. The main points of the declaration were: to allow press freedom; more significantly, to have a direct presidential election, which was a primary demand of mass protests; and to grant amnesty for lifelong political opposition leader Kim Dae-jung<sup>20</sup> and other political dissidents with the restoration of their civil rights. Hence, after about thirty years of military authoritarian rule, South Korea made the transition to a democratic political system that paved the way for full-fledged democracy and civil society.

Some scholars explain the 1980s' global transition by the notion of 'demonstration effects' (Huntington, 1991, p.102; Diamond, cited in O'Neil, 1998, pp.12-13). The transferred information about the political transition in one state makes impacts on the minds of political and intellectual leaders as well as the minds of ruling elites in another. In other words, on the one hand, changes realised elsewhere convince societal actors of possibility and hope for change and inspires them to press for change at home. On the other hand, the ruling elites become 'more conciliatory or reactionary, either of which may spark mass mobilization' (O'Neil, 1998, p.12). For example, mass action in Chile or the Tiananmen Square movement of 1989 in China were influenced

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<sup>20</sup> Kim Dae-jung won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his lifetime contribution to Korean democracy and sunshine policy of North Korea during his presidency (1998-2003). The sunshine policy sought to build a peaceful relationship between the two Koreas through cultural exchange and economic trade programmes such as the Gaeseong Industrial Complex in North Korea, which is a collaborative venture in which South Korea invests capital and technology and North Korea provides cheap labour and land (KLHC). In April 2012, 123 South Korean companies are in operation, 51,518 North Koreans are employed and the cumulative production output is 1.66billion USD (Kong, Park and Lee, 2012, p.75). It is argued that the Complex offers superior competitiveness for South Korean companies in comparison with China and Vietnam (Lee, 2011a, 2013).

by the changes in the Philippines, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Huntington, 1991, p.102; Calhoun, cited by O'Neil, 1998, p.12). Likewise, the collapse of Marcos's authoritarian regime by the people's power in the Philippines encouraged the opposition party and civic activists in the process of the 1987 democratisation in South Korea (Kim, 2007b, p.56).

As such, the Korean transition to the democratic political system in the late 1980s was part of a larger phenomenon of a global move towards liberal democracy in that period. In the later section, I will delineate the particular conditions of Korean democratisation with focus on the ways in which the people became informed of current socio-political events and collaborated to achieve the June 29<sup>th</sup> Declaration. The following sections are concerned with the relationship between the state and the media from 1945 to 1987, with focus on the period of the military authoritarian rule.

## **3.2. The Role of the State and the Media Landscape before Democratisation (1945-1987)**

### **3.2.1. From Independence to the Administration under Prime Minister Chang Myun (1945-1961)**

The Republic of Korea was established under the Rhee Syngman government in 1948 in South Korea after the 3-year U.S. occupation following the Japanese colonial era (1910-1945). Unlike North Korea, which had eradicated the influence of Japanese colonialism<sup>21</sup>, South Korea cleansed little of it (Cumings, 2007, p.22). During the U.S. occupation period from September 1945 after the U.S. decided to 'make the 38th

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<sup>21</sup> The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was formed under Kim Il Sung's leadership in September 1948 in North Korea. North Korea had a separate institution including a powerful political party since early 1946. In cooperation with the North Korean Workers' Party which later merged with the Korean Communists' Party, the Interim People's Committee led by Kim Il Sung executed several reforms including redistribution of land, nationalisation of industries that were formerly owned by Japanese and a 2-year economic development programme based on the Soviet's central planning. Despite the Soviet Union's wish to control North Korea, most of the Soviet occupation forces were withdrawn at the end of 1948 (Savada, 1993).

parallel the dividing line between the Soviet and the U.S. zones in Korea'<sup>22</sup>, the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) concentrated on sustaining the status quo by repressing various radical movements<sup>23</sup> that they interpreted as pro-Soviet activities (Savada, 1993). Moreover, soon after a short period of granting press freedom through the registration system of periodical publications, USAMGIK reintroduced a permit system 'Proclamation No. 88' that revived the press control system utilised in the Japanese colonial era. Allowing USAMGIK to withhold and cancel permits to the media that were considered to be left wing or critical, and to arrest left-wing journalists (Chang, 1994, pp.250-251), resulted in a sharp decrease of the dominant nationalist and socialist press (Kang, 2005, p.77). In regard to the broadcast media, Kyung-sung Broadcasting System, which began radio broadcast from 1927 for the purpose of Japan's efficient colonisation and attempted elimination of Korean national culture and identity, continued to serve the diffusion of U.S. capitalism and the Cold War ideology for the 3-year USAMGIK (Oh, 1995) under the name of KBS (KBS).

The First Republic under Rhee Syngman (1948-1960) legislated the constitution that guaranteed freedom of the press, but the main policy was anticommunism. The Rhee government, based on former pro-Japanese collaborators (Byun, 2005, p.104; Kang, 2005), enacted the National Security Law in 1948 that prohibited 'any sign of a leftist orientation' under threat of a jail term or death<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> As a result, 25,000 U.S. soldiers occupied the Southern part of Korea. Unlike the U.S. in South Korea, however, the Soviet Union established neither a central administration nor an army in North Korea (Savada, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Such movements were the establishment of an interim people's republic and people's committees by nationalist leaders or the cleansing of the Japanese colonial legacies through rebelling against the conservative landed factions blocking redistribution of land to peasants or through ousting landowners or police officers who were believed to work at the forefront of suppressing Korean people during the Japanese rule.

<sup>24</sup> The best well-known example was that the progressive nationalist Cho Pong-am was accused of being a North Korean spy and was executed in 1958 (Cumings, 2007, p.22). He had been elected as a Member of

(Cumings, 2007, p.22) in order to smokescreen the purpose of invalidating the law punishing Koreans who had collaborated with Japan during the colonial era (Byun, 2005, p.85). Given the divided, antagonistic relations of two Koreas, the National Security Law provided a powerful ideology tool for the Rhee regime to repress critical anti-government voices and control the public opinion in an easy, efficient way so as to enable his long-term control of power. Byun (2005, p.111) described the then socio-political climate as so restrained by the security law that opposition politicians and MPs themselves were very much cautious and anxious not to be accused of being Reds or communists, and thereby for the ruling party the law was regarded as a sort of the almighty instrument to silence opposition. Accordingly, no left-wing newspapers remained by 1949 (Chang, 1994, p.251) and a leading critical newspaper *Kyunghyang* was closed down in 1959<sup>25</sup> (Han, 2010b). Intriguingly, the law has still continued to function as a political apparatus for the conservatives to control Korean society as examined in the Cheonan sinking section of Chapter Five 'Ordinary People and OhmyNews'.

In the meantime, KBS vested in the Ministry of Information (MOI) under the Rhee regime in 1948 so as to serve as a vehicle of propaganda of the state policy. In 1954, the first private radio broadcaster Christian Broadcasting System (CBS) was launched and the first black and white television broadcast began by HLKZ-TV in 1956. HLKZ-TV was operated by KORCAD, the Korean division of the U.S. electronic manufacturer RCA, and was reshuffled to DBC (Daehan Broadcasting Corporation) owned by the general-circulated newspaper *Hankook Ilbo* in 1957 and closed down in

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Parliament in 1948 and worked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Agriculture Minister and Vice-Speaker in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parliament. During his ministry, he implemented the land reform that dispossessed land from the owners and redistributed it to peasants but it did not last long. With 30 percent of the vote he gained in the 3<sup>rd</sup> presidential election in 1956, he emerged as a rival to President Rhee, which was widely believed to be the main reason for his execution (Kim, 2010d).

<sup>25</sup> Sometimes a newspaper was closed for several months for a minor error. In 1955, *Dong-A* was closed for several months due to typographic error of President Rhee's title (Henderson, 1968, p.172).

1960 after a fire. Most staff was recruited for the launch of KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) in the following year.

Consequently, the accumulated discontent with the Rhee government culminated in the election fraud of 15<sup>th</sup> March 1960<sup>26</sup>. Infuriated as a result of a high school student's death by a tear gas bomb during protest in the Masan area, a number of citizens' protests, including university lecturers joining soon after, expanded into a nationwide protest against the fraudulent presidential election. Eventually the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1960 Democratic Revolution brought down the Rhee regime and the cabinet government under Prime Minister Chang Myun (1960-1961) came into power. The 'first experiment with democratic life' (Sohn, 1989, p.18) under Prime Minister Chang implemented economic and political reforms such as an economic development plan, transparent bureaucracy and the police's political neutrality. In particular, the registration law replaced the permit law, allowing freedom of speech by means of the simplified provision for publication of a newspaper or journal, that is, only basic information such as the title, the location and the frequency of publication was needed. Therefore, by the end of 1960, the number of media reached 1,609 including 389 dailies, 476 weeklies, 470 monthlies and 274 news agencies, all of which had increased over twofold from 600 (Kim, cited in Youm, 1998, p.173) and the number grew until April 1961. Cumings (2007, pp.22-23) illustrates that the capital city, Seoul, was one of the most intellectual and dynamic cities in the world at that time: 'more college students per capita than England, more newspaper readers per capita than almost any country in the world, and a concentration of administrative, commercial, industrial, and educational energies'. As such, people enjoyed democratic values such as freedom of

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<sup>26</sup> In 1952 while the government retreated to Pusan during the Korean War (1950-1953), President Rhee threatened to dissolve the Parliament by using political hoodlums and put the opposition politicians under house arrest or imprisonment (KDFA).

speech and expression. However, the Revolution was foiled, and the short-lived parliamentary government under Prime Minister Chang Myun was overthrown by General Park Chung-hee's military coup on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1961.

### **3.2.2. Media Landscape under the Park Chung-hee Regime (1961-1979)**

With a strong push of economic growth and export-led development, the Park regime (1961-1979) is considered to have contributed to the fast achievement of modernisation and industrialisation in comparison with other countries (Bedeski, 1993, pp.61-63; 1994, pp.121-123). However, many critics have argued that for the sake of the 'forced-space' (Cumings, 2007, p.23) economy priority policy, the development of democracy and other values or alternative voices of the civil society were severely clamped down (Cho, 2010; Kang, 2009). Within the goal of the industrial modernisation project, the main objective of the regime's media policies was to enforce the media to be a key player not only in mobilising the entire nation for economic development (Kang, 2005, p.78; Yu, 1991, p.56) but also in manipulating ideology in order to legitimise and maintain unlawful power (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.112). Chang (1994, p.253) points out Park's overall view of the press as such:

His idea of the press ... was that it should not be a critic, but a participant in the government program of rebuilding the nation... He had little tolerance for opposition party media, and was determined either to have the entire media on his side or to silence those not favorably inclined to the government.

The first repressive measure to control the media was the forceful restructuring of media organisations by means of the Decree No.11 'Facility Standard for the Newspaper and News Agency' (Chang, 1994; Youm, 1998), which was issued right after the coup. As a regulation for production machinery and facilities, its alleged cause was to wipe out quasi-journalists and media organisations misusing freedom of the press. In practice,

however, it served as a means to cease the publication of media unfavourable and critical of the government. It cancelled the licence of the media stating that it fell short of the required production machinery and facilities (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.113). Accordingly, 1,200 periodicals and news organisations were closed down and only 44 dailies, 65 weeklies, 270 monthlies, 34 quarterlies and 72 miscellaneous publications survived (Chang, cited in Youm, 1998, p.173) which was less than one third of those during the Chang Myun regime. Considering that out of the 44 surviving dailies, 15 were concentrated in the Seoul capital area and 29 were distributed among 7 provinces, the media could hardly deliver diverse voices and interests of various groups, nor of local people. In addition, 960 *allegedly* corrupt or pseudo-reporters were arrested 'on charges of blackmail, fraud, menacing, and forgery of official documents' (Chong, cited in Chang, 1994, p.254).

In December 1961, KBS, having been placed under the MOI since 1948 of the Rhee regime, began television broadcast service, maintaining its propaganda role of disseminating and publicising government policies. In 1963, Dong-A Broadcasting System (DBS) launched radio service and Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC), owned by *Joong Ang* (owned by the Samsung Group), began radio and television broadcast service in the following year. In 1969, Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC, later renamed Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation) started television broadcast service. The precursor of MBC television was Hankook Broadcasting Company that businessman Kim Ji-tae owned along with Pusan Daily and MBC radio in the Pusan region. In 1962, after the coup, the Park Chung-hee regime wrested Kim Ji Tae's properties, including the above-named media along with the Pu-il Scholarship Foundation with the accusation of accumulation of wealth by illicit means. Park ascribed them to the May 16 Scholarship Foundation which he chaired at that time and



later renamed the Chungsoo Foundation after Park Chung-hee and his wife Yuk Young-soo in 1980 under the Chun regime (Bang, 2008; Hankyoreh, 2004; Han, cited in Park, 2012b). As MBC's finances worsened, Park forced 11 business companies, including Hyundai Engineering and Construction, Haitai Confectionary and Dong-A Construction, etc., to buy 70 percent of its shares under the condition that they could neither sell the stocks nor request dividends. The consortium lasted until 1980 when it was handed over to the Chun regime and was later owned by KBS in accordance with the 1980 Press Merger. Eventually, 70 percent of MBC ownership was maintained by the government-controlled Foundation for Broadcast Culture from 1989, and the remaining 30 percent continued to be in the hands of the Chungsoo Foundation (Bang, 2008; Park, 1990). These commercial television broadcasters were kept under the control of the Park regime. For example, they were required to report summaries of their broadcasting activities on a monthly basis (Kwak, 2012, p.14).

Interestingly, in 1964, KBS launched a long-lived television drama *Nonfiction Theatre*, which was co-produced with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) for the purpose of anticommunist propaganda. Although the title of the drama changed over time, its key message of anticommunism was maintained until 1985, and it prompted a series of anticommunist television dramas in the 1970s such as TBC's *Chase* and MBC's *113*<sup>27</sup> *Investigation Headquarter* (Oh, 1995). According to the revision of Broadcasting Law in 1973, KBS, separated from the Ministry of Culture and Information (MOCI, previously MOI) that had subsidized KBS, transformed to a public broadcaster. The main reason was to establish a rationale for the introduction of the license fee collected directly from the audience in order to resolve financial difficulties

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<sup>27</sup> The phone number 113 is for the report of North Korean spy.

and secure sufficient funding<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, the conservation of KBS as a public service provider guaranteed its previous role as the state apparatus of propaganda.

The Park regime's coercion of the media culminated when the Yushin Constitution [Revitalizing Reforms] was proclaimed in October 1972 in an attempt to prolong the reign of Park indefinitely. The key elements of the Yushin Constitution included: a change from the second term 4-year presidency to the unlimited term 6-year one, and from the direct presidential election to the indirect one by the Tong-Il-Chu-Ch'e-Kook-Min-Hoi-Ui [People's Unification Committee (PUC)] in which the president Park chaired; one third of the MPs were elected by PUC with the recommendation of the president; and the presidential right to dissolve the parliament and to appoint judicial officers at all levels. In order to repress any possible contestation against the Constitution, Park issued Martial Law Decree No.1 to outlaw all public speech and statements opposing the Yushin Constitution, and forced the parliament to dissolve immediately, banning all indoor and outdoor political assemblies and demonstrations, as well as censoring speeches, publications, press and broadcasts. Emergency Decree No.2 allowed the state power to put violators of Decree No.1 into custody without an arrest warrant and to be jailed for up to 15 years (Oh, 2013). Eventually, the constitutional amendment bill was passed in the Emergency State Council meeting in December 1972. Accordingly, the Yushin Constitution intensified the presidential authority and power by severely reducing parliamentary sessions and authority, and empowered the regime to establish 'a generalissimo system' (Kang, 2005, p.78).

Outside the regime, there had been a growing opposition and resistance to the Yushin system. Beginning with the Seoul National University students' protests on 2<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The number of television sets reached nearly 1million by that time (KBC, 2002).

October 1973, a series of students' anti-Yushin protests took place. Soon after, the People's Association for Protection of Democracy, organised by a coalition of diverse pro-democracy forces, announced their opposition to the Yushin system. Moreover, the 1 million people's petition campaign for a revision of the current<sup>29</sup> Constitution was initiated by Chang Joon-ha on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1973 and 30 intellectuals from diverse areas conducted the campaign with Chang. Within 10 days 0.3million people signed. This nationwide campaign reactivated debates on the constitutional amendment and focused people's aspiration to democracy. In the following year, nonetheless, this struggle was foiled by the Presidential emergency measure to prohibit any addressing of the amendment issue (KDFA).

Inside the official media, there was also a massive protest against the despotism and the suppression of press freedom under the Yushin system. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 1974, 180 *Dong-A* and *Chosun* journalists carried out the Free Press Movement at the *Dong-A* newspaper's headquarters, announcing their determination to practice 'a free press' as a substantive condition of the liberal democracy and to stand against every form of repression. And as more detailed action plan, they declared to stand together and oppose all external interference with the press including newspapers, broadcasting and magazines, and to reject the inspection of KCIA, as well as an unlawful arrest of journalists (Youm, 1998, p.179). Not surprisingly, the official media had been a target of public criticism and distrust for failing to fulfil their social responsibilities to inform citizens. The declaration was an expression of the journalists' self-reflection on the situation, which was somewhat encouraged by the increasing demands of the restoration

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<sup>29</sup> As it was illegal to raise a question of the Yushin in public at that time, the campaign was inevitably named "current" in order to mean "Yushin". Moreover, despite the announcement of the campaigning by those intellectuals, they could not set up an official headquarter and so each person acted as a micro-headquarter. Chang Joon-ha was killed under suspicious circumstances in August 1975 (KDFA).

of press freedom and the awakening of the journalists' social responsibilities by the publics such as religious groups and college students.

While *Dong-A* newspaper and *Dong-A* broadcast journalists successfully took the plan into action, the government attempted to put *Dong-A* under their control by threatening the main advertisers of *Dong-A* media group (i.e. *Dong-A Ilbo*, *Dong-A* broadcast, *Shin-Dong-A* monthly and *Yu-Seong-Dong-A* women's monthly) to cancel their advertising contract with *Dong-A*. By January 1975, one month after the government's economic sanction on the group, *Dong-A Ilbo* lost 98 percent of its product advertisement contracts (Youm, 1998, p.179); the broadcast wing lost 92 percent of total advertisements; and in March 90 percent of *Shin-Dong-A* advertisement contract was cancelled. With strong criticism and detailed stories of the advertisers' contract revocation revealed through *Dong-A* broadcasts and newspapers, the journalists appealed to all opposition groups to support their protest.

Nonetheless, on the sixth morning of their sit-in protest, the *Dong-A* media group expelled 130 journalists including broadcast producers and presenters and reporters from the workplace (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.119) by hiring 200 gangsters and distribution agents. The dismissed journalists' protests in front of the *Dong-A Ilbo* headquarters lasted six months, distributing flyers of their criticism of the *Dong-A Ilbo*'s subjugation to the illegitimate, repressive regime and condemning its dismissal of journalists (Chung, 2008c).

### **3.2.3. Media Landscape under the Chun Doo-hwan Regime (1980-1987)**

On 26<sup>th</sup> October 1979, the head of the KCIA, Kim Jae-kyu, assassinated President Park. The people's hope for democracy revived and there were abundant discussions of how to proceed with the abolishment of the Yushin Constitution, how to realise the freedom

of speech and expression, and other democratic values restrained under the Park government. The parliament was undergoing discussion of amendment of the Constitution and the then acting President Choi Kyu-ha<sup>30</sup> was also very supportive. However, on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1979, the head of the joint investigation into President Park's homicide, General Chun Doo-Hwan seized military power by mutiny with the unlawful arrest of the chief emergency martial law administrator and the Army Chief of Staff, Chung Seung-hwa. On 13<sup>th</sup> December, without President Choi Kyu-ha's approval, Chung was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on a charge of conspiracy to commit to the Park assassination.

With the purpose of extending their illegitimate grip on power within the army to the entire nation, Chun and his conspirators forced the Choi government to approve the expanded martial law on a national level on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1980 by barricading the parliament with the army. The nucleus of the martial law was the Decree No.10 that entailed the prohibition of any political activities including of parties and politicians, the temporary closing of universities, the reinforced pre-censorship of the press, and the banning of any assembly or demonstrations. Thousands of army soldiers were dispatched into universities in order to quell students' protests that had become intense and 2,699 pro-democracy students and politicians including Kim Dae-jung were arrested without a warrant. More dreadfully, in order to wipe out any potential defiance or resistance, on 18<sup>th</sup> May Chun dispatched armoured and airborne troops to Kwangju, where the opposition leader Kim Dae-jung was politically based and the active democratic movement took place. The Kwangju Democratic Movement ended on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1980 with over four thousand civilian casualties. At that time, the public did not know about this incident since all communications, including telephone and electricity,

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<sup>30</sup> Choi Kyu-ha was elected as President by the PUC and his presidency lasted from 21<sup>st</sup> December 1979 to 15<sup>th</sup> August 1980.

were cut off and the army surrounded the entire city. Moreover, even before the incident, the Defence Security Command agents were stationed inside the press organisations, conducting prepublication censorship in order for any anti-Chun news or pro-democracy article to be unreported. Even after the tragedy, such mainstream, official media as *Chosun*, *Dong-A*, *Joong Ang* and broadcasters (public broadcaster *KBS*, apparently private-managed but practically state-own broadcasting company *MBC*, private-run broadcaster *TBC*) kept silent to the truth of the massacre for their own sake and security.

### **3.2.3.1. Coercive media policy**

Chun Doo Hwan, who became President through the fraudulent election of the PUC, which had practically replaced the role of the parliament and had elected Park Chung-hee President under the Yushin system, took several oppressive measures for the elimination of resistant groups within the media organisations to facilitate control of the media. Firstly, an immense dismissal of journalists was carried out. From July to August 1980, the Chun regime forced media organisations to sack 711 journalists from across the media spectrum (Won, 1998, p.95), including those who had waged a nationwide campaign for the withdrawal of the censorship and for the free press, and who appeared to maintain critical views of the Chun government. At the end of the year, the number of forcefully fired journalists reached 933 (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.113). Furthermore, on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1980, the government cancelled the registration of 172 periodicals (12 percent of all titles). As a result, the most progressive and influential magazines in Korean intellectual society, such as *Ssialui Sori* [Voice of the People], *Bburikipum Namu* [Deep-rooted Tree], *Changjakkwa Bipyong* [Creation and Criticism]

and *Wolgan Joong Ang* [Monthly Joong Ang] were compelled to cease publishing. In four months, further 66 periodicals were forced to shut down.

Secondly, newspaper and broadcasting companies, and news agencies were forcefully merged, allowing only one local newspaper for each province, except in the Seoul area (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.113). As a result, 64 media organisations reduced to 18 media. For the purpose of censorship and control of the flow of foreign news, the government repealed six news agencies including Tong-Yang and Hap-Dong, and let the Korean Association of Newspaper and the Korean Broadcasters Association set up a sole news agency, the Yonhap News Agency. The merger of broadcasters was more wide-ranging: TBC and DBS merged into KBS and were renamed KBS2 television and KBS radio respectively, and CBS was banned from broadcasting news and current affairs programmes and instead had to focus on religious broadcasts only (Bang, 2008; Oh, 1995). Seventy percent of MBC's shares were sold to KBS and in effect state-owned public broadcaster KBS controlled the overall programming of MBC broadcast. Eventually the broadcast industry was restructured into the binary broadcasting system, i.e. KBS and MBC. Moreover, the newscast of the two broadcasters was programmed exactly in the same way that the first five or ten minute coverage focused on President Chun's activities of each day, making effect as a pro-Chun propaganda (Youm, 1998, p.175).

Thirdly, as a more efficient institutional device to minimise critical media coverage of the unlawful ruling, as well as of restricting the public access to information and therefore their right to know, the government passed the Basic Press Law in December 1980 (Chey, 1990, pp.100-103; Won, 1998, pp.100-103). On the surface, the law was to emphasise the social responsibility of the press but practically it served as the main means to control press freedom. At first, any periodicals were obliged to

register ensuring certain conditions of machinery and facilities were met, which required a fair amount of capital. In addition, the suspension and cancellation of the registration of periodicals were at the discretion of the Minister of MOCI. For example, if the purpose and the content of a publication were concerned with political affairs and if they were not favourable for the government, the registration was not issued. Moreover, for the purpose of lawful control of broadcasting and newspaper media, the government established several government-funded organisations such as the Korean Broadcasting Commission (KBC), Korean Communications Commission (KCC), Korea Press Research Institute (KPRI), Korean Broadcasting Advertising Corporation (KOBACO) and Press Arbitration Commission (PAC) in March 1981.

Finally, the Media Policy Office of the MOCI issued the ‘Reporting Guidelines’ that sought systematic control of news reporting. The detailed daily guidelines directed what should be reported and what should not, as well as the priority of news stories through the size of headlines and news articles, pictures and reporting terminology. The news stories of university students’ protests and opposition party and leaders were most frequently regulated (Chey, 1990, pp.104-105; Kim, 1989, pp.207-208). For example, one of the guidelines was to order the press to label anti-government protesters as “pro-communist” (Youm and Salwen, 1990, p.314). For this, the government kept KCIA officials to station inside the media organisations to monitor journalists, as well as the contents of the daily news.

### **3.2.3.2. Appeasement media policy**

Along with the repressive measures, the Chun government executed a broad range of appeasement policies in order to tame the surviving media (Chey, 1990, pp.106-107; Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, pp.113-114; Yu, 1991). Firstly, the government



amended a provision of the Customs Law in 1981 to reduce the customs tax rate for the rotary press from 20 percent to 4 percent during the following year. With the tax exemption, a total of twelve newspaper companies bought around thirty up-to-date printing machines during that period. For the establishment media journalists, the government offered reduced income tax and even postponement of interest payment on loans (Kim and Shin, cited in Youm, 1998, p.178), and sometimes cash or gifts were given in return for writing news favourable to the government (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.114).

Secondly, KOBACO set up a public fund. The fund, formed with a part of the commissions KOBACO collected from broadcasting companies for arranging advertisements, was officially aimed at returning some of the profits of broadcasting companies to the society for their use of public airwaves. In practice, however, the fund was used to finance journalists' training programmes (overseas trainings and observation trips) and promote their welfare (loans for housing and education of their children).

Thirdly, the Chun government often offered journalists ministerial posts in the MOCI or other ministries, or posts as presidential secretaries, spokesmen, etc, as rewards for cooperating with the government. There were also quite a large number of former journalists among MPs. Such journalists appointed as politicians or government officials served to open channels of dialogue between the government and media companies, helping the media acquire highly confidential and exclusive information, and thus more chances to get the inside scoop. As such, journalists emerged as the privileged intellectual group with the highest wages, a variety of material rewards and easy access to information and power resources.

With such various benefits and financial support under the Chun government, a selective number of media voluntarily came to serve to justify and reinforce the authoritarian rule. Consequently, the coercion and appeasement policies of the Chun regime helped to establish a strong coalition between the authoritarian government and the media, leading the domestic media industry to be more monopolised, centralised and homogenised (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, pp.114-118). Under the protection of the state, in particular, the considerably increasing revenue following the fast growing Korean economy and the subsequent expansion of the domestic advertising industry aggravated the monopolistic-oligopolistic feature of media industry and ultimately created a handful of gigantic media conglomerates. For example, three national newspapers, namely *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A* shared the market and secure advertising revenue, and made any newcomer's entry into the market difficult. In this way, the Korean establishment media, that survived the crackdowns of the Park and Chun regimes with political cooperation and favour, had moved away from their 'watchdog role, choosing to form close ties with political power and thus limiting the degree of critical analysis within the news' (O'Neil, 1998, p.2), as well as serving as a state apparatus to discipline people to become subordinates having a belief in the regime's false legitimate authority.

### **3.3.Alternative Media and Civic Action to Realise the 1987 Democratisation**

South Korea has often been touted as a showcase of successful change from military dictatorship to civilian democracy (Chung, 1995; Youm, 1998, p.171). The 1987 Democratisation was a genuine product of coalition by various oppositional forces such as students, white- and blue-collar workers, religious groups and radical journalists. Not only did citizens support journalists' fight for press freedom and democracy but also

they were highly critical of the dominant media's misleading role. There was a university students' protest against the malfunctioning dominant media, which stimulated the 1974 Free Press Movement organised by around 180 journalists of the two major newspapers Chosun and Dong-A (Han, 2012). On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1971, 50 Seoul National University students made a bonfire in front of the Dong-A building, distributing the message of public distrust of the journalists serving the authoritarian government on the flyers and pamphlets that they distributed in the streets. Moreover, various forms of public support were shown during the Free Press Movement: university students, writers, lecturers and religious groups protested against the government's coercion and the advertisers' cancellation of contracts with *Dong-A*; numerous readers encouraged the movement by making supportive phone calls, placing personal advertisements in the affected newspapers, and fundraising for the campaign. However, the movement ended with the unprecedented mass dismissal of 163 journalists (although 134 journalists sacked during the free press movement continue to protest today in the name of the Committee of Dong-A Free Press) (Chung, 2008c). As illustrated in detail in the previous sections, with various benefits for the media complacent to the government, the business of Dong-A media group expanded on a large scale.

In addition to the movement for press freedom orchestrated by such social forces, there was another remarkable campaign demanding the democratic television broadcast media to deliver fair, diverse voices of the people, instead of serving as a mouthpiece of the authoritarian regime. In April 1984, the Catholic churches<sup>31</sup> and

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<sup>31</sup> The Catholic Church was founded by a small group of Shirak [Practical Science] scholars who tried to introduce the Western modern thought in 1784 under the Chosun Dynasty and had been persecuted for their beliefs for about 100 years. As of December 2011, the number of Korean Catholics reached 5 million, about 10% of the whole population. Notably, the Catholic Priest Society for the Realisation of Justice (CPSRJ) founded in 1974 has contributed to enhancing justice and democracy in the Korean society, by unveiling truths especially under the authoritarian regimes (CPSRJ).

farmers' council in Wanju county of Cholla-do province (rural, south-western part of South Korea) boycotted the license fee of the public service broadcaster KBS on the grounds of KBS not reporting the needs and demands of ten million farmers, and, more importantly, because of its propaganda of the Chun regime. They demanded the immediate suspension of distorted, biased news broadcasts, as well as the return of seized property due to KBS license fee arrears. The local community's boycott campaign prompted the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC) to expand the nationwide campaign in August 1985, and eventually in September 1986 a wide range of civic groups organised the 'Joint Committee for the KBS Subscription Boycott and Free Press', which gained extensive support from the public. Statistics show that 52 percent of the households having a television set at home participated in the campaign. As a result, the government reduced the subscription defaulters' penalty rate from 10 to 5 percent and combined the subscription fee into the bills of water and electricity in the metropolitan area in November 1986. Whereas the campaign failed to establish the accountability and remit of KBS as a public service broadcaster, it contributed to the formation of a base of solidarity among grassroots democratic movements nationwide leading up to the 1987 democratisation (Byun, 2012).

As Randall (1998, p.3) points out, 'under repressive regimes it is in any case by definition extremely difficult for the media within a country to live up to the media's ideal roles'. This rather offers the rationale for the need of alternative media critical of the illegitimate power and instead providing the possibility of the imagination of a democratic society in such a repressive society as South Korea under the military regimes. Unquestionably, the unregistered bimonthly *Mahl* [Speech] epitomises the alternative media during the Chun regime. The Association of Democratic Press Movement of a group of fired journalists during the 1980 journalists' massive dismissal

launched *Mahl* in December 1984 (Choi, 2000). *Mahl* unveiled the ‘Reporting Guidelines’ in its special issue on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1986, which included almost 600 reporting guidelines issued by the MOCI between 9<sup>th</sup> October 1985 and 8<sup>th</sup> August 1986 (Mahl[Speech];Min, 2003;Youn, 1998, p.180). Park, Lee and Kim (1994, p.286) notes that:

When the opposition parties, civic organizations, students and media critics loudly cried for restoration of press freedom, the [establishment] press as a whole acted like disinterested onlookers. Furthermore, curiously enough, the press did not complain of the government short- and long-term guidelines for press reporting, the existence of which had long been an open secret. Thus, when an anti-establishment watchdog journal *Mahl* exposed such guidelines, the publication in effect was accusing the press of faithfully following the government’s directives for news management.

*Mahl*’s detailed revelation of the Chun regime’s coercive control of the media on a daily basis fuelled the citizens’ democratic struggle in June 1987 (Choi, 2000). The magazine was officially “unregistered” yet maintained its distribution with the subscription among certain groups of like-minded people. As a phenomenal example of alternative media, *Mahl* magazine informed citizens of the otherwise-unreported truth of the relentless authoritarian control of press freedom and thereby allowed a formation of a public sphere in which citizens shared their critical, dissident views “publicly” in a certain circle of audiences.

Among the various groups of pro-democracy forces, college students were at the forefront throughout the military authoritarianism (Choi, 2005, pp.96-97). They were the first to put into question the legitimacy of military regimes and to resist any forms of oppression. As a critical weapon of their struggle, clandestine, alternative media in a variety of forms were systematically produced and circulated by students. For example, there were illegal publications (e.g. forbidden books labelled as

encouraging ideas disturbing the social order), and underground production of booklets and videotapes (e.g. video footage of the 1980 Kwangju genocide taken by foreign photo-journalists which aroused widespread wrath against the Chun regime). Distribution systems for these products were often formed among student bodies, as well as progressive social groups, but the coverage of these kinds of media was not far-reaching. Their reading and viewing was generally limited to those communities due to the government's relentless surveillance and control.

Moreover, students' frequent street rallies for democracy offered an important channel for ordinary people to get information and knowledge to make sense of the political world, especially of wrongdoings of the regime. In addition, they served as a public sphere of critical, rational and passionate debates on socio-political affairs, focusing on the state's oppressive policies. In this way, such alternative media as small pamphlets, flyers, rallying words and posters distributed in the process of the students' democratisation movement extensively helped to inform many citizens of the illegitimacy of the ruling power and to unite for democratisation.

It is broadly acknowledged that among a series of remarkable events in 1986 and 1987 contributing to the rapid disintegration and the eventual collapse of the Chun regime in June 1987, the two most dramatic and critical blows to the political longevity of the Chun regime were the Sexual Interrogation Incident of July 1986 and the Park Jong-chol Torture Death incident of January 1987 (Bedeski, 1994; Dong, 1993). The first incident took place at the Puchon police station near Inchon, where a Seoul National University student named Kwon In-sook, who was disguising her identity<sup>32</sup> as

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<sup>32</sup> At that time there were mainly two branches within the students' movement, one focusing on national democracy and unification, the other on class struggle; but there was a sole common consciousness of their aspiration for democracy. The students of the latter branch often took undercover work in factories, educating and helping labourers to organize trade unions and struggle for their interest and fair treatment. The Kwon incident ended in 1989 with the court's sentence of a five-year imprisonment to the police interrogator and compensation for Kwon In-sook.

a factory worker, was sexually assaulted while undergoing police interrogation (KDFA). Following her courageous disclosure of the incident, a wide range of social movement rallies took place, criticising the sexual torture and harassment by the state.

The second incident that helped cause the downfall of the Chun regime was another explosive case involving an extreme human rights violation. The death by torture, on 14th January 1987, of Seoul National University activist student Pak Jong-chol, at the hands of several police interrogators, was revealed to the public by a Catholic priest in the middle of mass at Myungdong Cathedral in May 1987. This revelation was carried out following an investigation by the CPSRJ (Hwang, 2008). The revelation of these two brutal incidents executed by the state shocked the whole nation. Instantly, it became the instant '*cause célèbre*' of the nationwide democratic movement which was mobilised by many members of the public, from students and intellectuals, to the urban poor, farmers and factory workers, until Roh Tae-woo, the leader of the ruling Democratic Justice Party and presidential successor hand-picked by Chun, accepted the citizens' demands for democratic reforms, including direct presidential elections as well as press freedom (Dong, 1993, pp.87-88), and consequently initiated the Declaration of 29 June 1987<sup>33</sup>. Youm (1998, p.188) elucidates that:

The people's power revolution, in which the middle-class Koreans played a significant role in mid-1987, resulted in a series of concrete democratic reforms to bring Korea closer to recognizing a free press as being essential to its political openness. In particular, the alternative press were critical in challenging the government-dictated news reporting of the establishment media.... The "citizens' press movement" of many Korean civic organizations during the 1980s epitomized the growing assertiveness of ordinary Koreans in forcing the often complacent Korean press to be aware of its supposed watchdog role.

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<sup>33</sup> For details of the Declaration, see the Appendix 1.

In this way, a wide range of democratic forces of all social strata – including student activists, dismissed journalists, and other progressive social groups – exchanged and shared their hopes and aspirations for democracy, and united to take them into action. Eventually they achieved the dramatic transition to procedural democracy in 1987 and a free press essential for the realisation of the full-fledged participatory democracy. In this process, any forms of publication in the category of ‘alternative media’, including some newspapers and periodicals, have been a major forum for voices from outside the ruling system, offering a channel for allowing dissident views on focal socio-political matters. Without these alternative public spheres, the 1987 democratisation may not have happened, since the institutional media served mainly as a faithful mouthpiece of the ruling power in an attempt to justify its legitimacy, while pursuing their own corporate interests.

### **3.4. Media Landscape Reshaped in the wake of the 1987 Democratisation (1987-1997)**

#### **3.4.1. Institutionalised Alternative Media**

The 1987 democratisation, achieved with the people’s long-standing movement and sacrifice, brought about considerable changes, not least in communications such as extensive new freedom of speech, press, and in society more generally. In particular, it opened the way for the institutionalisation of alternative radical media, representatively *Hankyoreh* [One Nation] *Shinmun* [Daily] (*Hankyoreh*<sup>34</sup> hereafter), in which open criticism of state affairs took place. The 196 journalists, who had been dismissed by *Dong-A and Chosun* in 1975 and 1980, established *Hankyoreh* on 15th May 1988 with the slogan ‘the newspaper of the people, by the people’ in the name of 3,344

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<sup>34</sup> In 1996 *Hankyoreh Shinmun* changed its name to *Hankyoreh* that will be used throughout the thesis.



intellectuals. *Hankyoreh* aimed to not only realise a free and independent press from political and economic forces, but also enhance democratisation and the reunification of the two Koreas. To this end, *Hankyoreh* ran a nationwide fund-raising campaign that ordinary people could become a shareholder with 10,000KRW (10US\$) at minimum and successfully collected the seed money of about 4.7 million US\$ from 27,223 shareholders. In order to secure editorial independence, the paper unprecedentedly institutionalised the election system of the editor-in-chief and the CEO by the staff, rather than appointment by the publisher. With a total circulation of 440,000 in June 1989, *Hankyoreh* proved itself as a truly progressive, alternative newspaper to articulate diverse experiences and interests of citizens on a wide range of levels (e.g. urban labourers, farmers, students, the poor and various civic activist organizations) who had been systematically excluded from, and/or often misrepresented in, public spaces of institutional media. Moreover, *Hankyoreh* attempted an unprecedented news format of exclusively Korean characters and left-to-right printing, which made news reading much easier and accessible and thereby helped to increase the readership and more importantly contributed to democratising the public access to news information. The ways in which *Hankyoreh* facilitated news literacy as a crucial vehicle to enhance ‘informed citizenry’ will be charted in detail in the Chapter Five ‘Ordinary People and OhmyNews: Reshaping the news in between the private and the public’.

In addition, as Park, Kim and Sohn (2000, p.120) noted, *Hankyoreh* facilitated the emergence of a number of alternative media conveying progressive ideas and beliefs, which eventually broadened and diversified the media landscape. For example, a weekly current affairs magazine *Sisa Journal* was established in October 1989. Moreover, the Association of Media Labour Unions established in 1989 published the first issue of the Labour Unions’ Newspaper in the same year, and later renamed it

*Media Today* in 1995, which played an important role of media criticism, especially of the dominant media – Chosun, Joong Ang, Dong-A, KBS and MBC.

### **3.4.2. Market-driven Journalism and Public Aspiration for Media Reform**

In the wake of the democratisation, in December 1987, the Periodical Registration Act and the Broadcasting Act replaced the 1980 Press Basic Act and therefore many regulatory measures were lifted to guarantee a free press. Correspondingly, the number of periodicals including newspapers increased rapidly and new broadcasters were set up: the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS) in 1990 and a new private-owned broadcaster Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) in 1991 (Won, 1998). Moreover, numerous cable television companies sprang up, including local television with the advance of new communication technologies like cable and satellite television.

The surveys that the Korea Press Foundation (KPF) have conducted over the last 10 years in respect of the perception of audiences towards the media performance explicitly show the deep-rooted public disgust in the established media and politics. In general, most audiences considered politicians and journalists as the most influential but untrustworthy groups in the society. 46.0% of respondents observed journalists as unreliable (2002) and 79.1% pointed to politicians as untrustworthy (2008). Notably, the 1998 survey showed the strong public demand for media reform: 93.4% of respondents pointed to the back-scratching alliance between politicians and journalists as the most urgent area needing to be rectified.

The public mistrust in the established press resulted from the heightened monopoly of information control and ownership by a handful of conservative media, namely *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A*. The ‘big three’ players accounted for 75 to 80 percent of the newspaper market share (Kim, 2002, p.10) and particularly *Chosun* took

up the largest share with nearly 2.5 million readers (2005)<sup>35</sup>. There are two sets of causes for the formation of this imbalanced media landscape – the media policy of the authoritarian governments and the market-driven media in late capitalism. As the authoritarian media policies were examined in detail in the previous sections, here I will focus on the market-driven journalism.

After the 1987 democratisation, the surviving conservative media continued to expand the control of information and market share. In particular, the deregulation policy of civilian governments after 1993 and the fast expanding advertising industry alongside the growing Korean economy intensified the competition among media players to increase readership and subsequently advertising revenue as the main source of income. The year 1999 marked the fiercest competition among the three major newspapers. They executed various strategies to maximise advertising income. Representatively, they expanded the number of pages to enlarge the advertising space (44 to 52 pages) and solicited potential subscribers with luxurious free consumer products to raise the sales of newspapers. As the competition became relentless, and eventually resulted in a scandalous fight between sales agents of the rival newspapers, the Kim Dae-jung government introduced the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) system to make the newspaper market transparent and abate the heated competition. However, the government's efforts resulted in no outcome since the three big players avoided providing the precise numbers of their circulation to ABC in order to make it easier to manipulate their circulation (2001, pp.11-12). Consequently, the increasing competition among the big three players reshaped the newspaper landscape toward more commercial-driven journalism.

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<sup>35</sup> In general, *Chosun*, KBS and MBC are regarded as the leading players in the South Korean media industry.

Moreover, commercialisation and commodification of news media heightened by the market-driven journalism solidified the privileged position of professional journalists. In particular, the journalists of the mass-circulated conservative media not only secured high wages and access to restricted information sources such as politicians, high bureaucracy and Chaebols<sup>36</sup> but also enjoyed a strong connection with those elites in power. Furthermore, these journalists themselves became powerful elites (Kang, 2004b) with their own 'self-assigned authority' (McNair, 2000, p.79).

Despite the Korean specificity of the structuring of the imbalanced news landscape between the conservative and the liberal factions, the public distrust in institutionalised media and politics is not Korean-specific but pandemic in most industrialised democracies<sup>37</sup>. In many countries, citizens are increasingly withdrawing from the official political arena, leaving its management to 'the political class', which Hobsbawm (1994) describes as 'a special-interest group of professional politicians, journalists, lobbyists and others whose occupations ranked at the bottom of the scale of trustworthiness in sociological inquiries.' Such depoliticization includes on the one hand the affluent, who have the private means and influence to pursue and satisfy their interests, and on the other, those among the majority who increasingly feel they have nothing to gain from participating in a game they view as rigged against them (Dahlgren, 1995, p.1).

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<sup>36</sup> Chaebol refers to the South Korean specific form of a conglomerate that is run by family members of the company owner. With the governmental policy for modernisation and economic development in Park regime (1961-1979), the Chaebol-led industrialisation accelerated the monopolistic and oligopolistic concentration of capital and economically profitable activities in the hands of a limited number of conglomerates - Chaebols. Eventually this resulted in a structural problem in the economy including non-transparent business administration, corruption, etc.

<sup>37</sup> Many studies show this phenomenon as a global trend in most developed countries. For example, the Pew Center's survey in the US shows American's negative feelings about their political institutions and leaders (Gans, 2003, p.18). In addition, MORI opinion polls over the last 25 years demonstrate that journalists and politicians have been placed 'at the bottom of professions that people trust' (cited in Davis, 2010, p.122). For more discussions, see David Buckingham (2000), British Social Attitude Survey (cited in Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b, p.148), Herbert Gans (2003) and Philip Meyer (1990, cited in Woo, 2000, p.22).

The Edelman firm's recent survey (2008)<sup>38</sup> shows that things are worsening; people trust their family and friends as the most credible source of information rather than traditional institutions and elites. In respect that the erosion of public trust in institutions is a universal phenomenon in the later stage of capitalism, Habermas's notion of 'legitimation crisis'<sup>39</sup> is useful to understand this phenomenon in South Korea in the 1990s, although he was analysing the West in the 1970s. Habermas argues that the economic and political systems require legitimisation through communicative action – the discursive process of reaching a common understanding. In late capitalism, however, economic and political systems use administrative power – sanctions, money or power – to achieve their ends of 'legitimation'. As a result, the communicative sphere (lifeworld) becomes colonized or disturbed by the market economy and political system, which results in the crisis of legitimacy in institutions.

As a response to the 'legitimation crisis' in Korean news organisations, particularly in the conservative mainstream media that had been structured through Korean specific political backgrounds and intensified by the market-driven journalism, there were actual attempts from the civil society to disrupt the heavily conservative news landscape. In the late 1990s an abundance of civic groups were established by the so-called '386 generation'<sup>40</sup> who had been at the forefront of the pro-democracy, anti-government protests throughout the 1980s dictatorship. For instance, 47 civic groups and media-related professional associations founded the People's Coalition for Media Reform on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1998 in pursuit of advancing fair, credible and balanced

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<sup>38</sup> The global PR firm Edelman carried out a survey among middle-class, college-educated and media-savvy adults in 18 countries like Brazil, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the US (cited in Deuze, 2009, p.259).

<sup>39</sup> See Habermas's discussions in his books '*Legitimation Crisis* (1975)' and '*The theory of Communicative Action, Vol I* (1984)'. Also see '*Legitimation Crisis in the Later Work of Jürgen Habermas*' (Heath).

<sup>40</sup> The term '386 generation' began to be used as a journalism buzzword in the 2002 presidential election. It represented those who were then in their 30s, college-educated in the 1980s and born in the 1960s. They were also labelled the '1987 democratisation generation'.

journalism. At the practical level, the organisation conducted a wide range of activities – media watch projects, media education schemes in primary and secondary schools, promoting public access to broadcasting, and demands for the amendment of the Broadcasting Act and Periodical Act. Nonetheless, these efforts resulted in no definitive impact on the existing news media landscape.

### **3.5. The ICT-boosting Policy and the Online Media Landscape (1998-2010)**

Despite such sustained efforts, the unresolved and cumulated public distrust of politicians and particularly professional journalists, and the public aspiration for the breakdown of the imbalanced media landscape offered the socio-political rationale for such online alternative media as OMN to gain popularity and thrive in early 2000s. In addition, the easy access and availability of the advanced communication technology Web 1.0 and further 2.0 allowed ordinary citizens to make their voices heard publicly in various online public spheres. Therefore, in what follows, I will examine the role of the state in respect of communication technology policy, with focus on Kim Dae-jung government's ICT-boosting policy which allowed the rise and prosperity of numerous online media such as the websites of my case studies – OMN, DC Inside, and online fan community.

#### **3.5.1. Early Adoption of the ICT and the Online Media Landscape (1998 to mid-2000s)**

The state-led advancement of the ICT infrastructure and the nationwide spread of high speed Internet provided economic conditions to launch and operate online media with incredibly minimal budgets compared to offline media. Kim Dae-jung, who was elected as the first President (1998 - 2003) from the liberal democratic opposition party right

after the 1997 financial crisis<sup>41</sup>, strongly pushed forward a series of ICT-boosting projects such as Cyber Korea 21 (IPC, 1999) and Building Up e-Korea (MIC, 2001). The primary purposes were economic recovery and enhancement of national competitiveness by building up the ICT infrastructure and fostering ICT-based ventures (Choi and Kim, 2005; MIC, 2002). Those schemes aimed at an increase in Internet penetration and the speed of digital take-up at regional and socio-economic levels. With the launch of high-speed Internet service in 1998, the government focused on the nationwide supply of inexpensive personal computers, a low cost broadband subscription<sup>42</sup> and narrowing the digital divide. With the budget tripled from 499.3 billion to 1.6 trillion won (US\$ 0.5billion to 1.6billion) during the period 1996 to 2002, the government funded ICT-based facilities and educational programmes at all levels from primary school to university. In addition, to reduce the digital gap between the haves and the have-nots, the government set up 4,937 free information centres in both rural and urban areas during the period 2000 to 2002, in which free Internet access and use, and free ICT-related courses were available (2003).

As a result, by the time of OMN's launch in 2000, 144 major cities nationwide were broadband networked and the Internet penetration rate rose to 33 percent of the population (13.93 million users), which was a sharp increase from 7.40 percent (3.10

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<sup>41</sup> The Asian financial crisis that started in Thailand in July 1997 affected many Asian countries and most gravely Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea. Most of the affected countries heavily relied on the export-led industry that was largely affected by the foreign exchange rate of US dollars and foreigners' capital investment in stock markets. In this light, the US Federal Reserve Bank's raise of its currency's interest rate in the early 1990s made the US a more attractive investment destination than Asian stock markets and eventually made Asian exports pricey thereby slowing growth down. In the wake of Asian markets' downturn, moreover, Moody's credit rating agency devalued the credit rating of South Korea from A1 to A3 in November 1997 and further to B2 in December. These contributed to the economic crisis manifested in the Korean Won's devaluation (to 1,700 per US dollar from around 750), numerous companies' bankruptcies, a credit crunch in the housing market, the falling of the stock market and the doubling of the national debt-to-GDP ratio (from 13% to 30%). Eventually, South Korea had to receive the IMF's bailout on the condition of drastic economic reforms. These included the 'structural adjustment package' with a cutback of government spending to reduce deficits, bankruptcy of insolvent companies and banks and an aggressive raise of interest rates.

<sup>42</sup> According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Internet report of 2006, Korea's Internet subscription fee per 100kbit/s was the second lowest at US\$ 0.08 after Japan (ITU, 2006).

million) in December 1998 (MIC and NIDAK, 2005). By 2002, about 80 percent of households had a personal computer and the high-speed Internet penetration rate reached nearly 60 percent (KCC and KISA, 2010; KISA, 2002) (see table 1), which excluded numerous users at the Internet cafes.

Table 1.  
Number of Internet users and Internet penetration rate in Korea (1998-2010)

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
User (million)	.1	0.86	9	4.4	6.3	9.2	1.6	3	4.9	5.59	6.19	6.6	7
Rate (%)	.4	5.8	4.7	6.6	9.4	5.5	0.2	2.8	4.1	5.5	6.5	7.2	7.8

Source: *The Survey of the Internet Use*,  
KCC & KISA (2010)

In addition to the government's policy, there were some other factors contributing to the fast growth of Internet usage. Firstly, the socio-geographically dense population and housing had made it easier, quicker and more cost-effective to build the ICT infrastructure. At more than 470 people per sq km Korea is the third-most densely populated country in the world after Bangladesh and Taiwan. Moreover, about 42 percent of the population lives in the Seoul metropolitan area including Gyeong-gi province and Incheon port. Secondly, Confucianism and the hierarchical army culture<sup>43</sup>, both of which give first priority of speech to a person of a higher social class and/or age, caused many young people to seek online space for free communication without such social barriers.

The state-led growth of the Internet along with these socio-geographical and cultural factors accelerated the advance of online media in diverse forms. The first computerized news service dates back to 1986 when the financial daily *Han-kook*

<sup>43</sup> This resulted from a complicated confluence of Korean history. When King Lee Sung-kye founded the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), he introduced Confucianism as a fundamental ideology to govern a newly unified state, which placed the king at the pinnacle of power and established a rigidly hierarchical social class system. In addition, the 36 years of Japanese colonization (1910-1945) and the military dictatorship of three decades (1961-1987) contributed to internalizing the hierarchy in the public and private spheres.



*Economy* provided news by Personal Computer communication. However, the access and use of PC service was limited to a small number of early adopters. In the late 1990s, along with the fast implementation of high-speed Internet service, online news media grew rapidly. In March 1995, one of the three major newspapers *Joong Ang* initiated an Internet news service *Joins.com*. Soon thereafter *Chosun* (*Digital Chosun*, October 1995), *Hankyoreh* (*Internet Hankyoreh*, April 1996), and *Dong-A* (*Dong-A.com*, June 1996) launched their online news websites. In the following years, most national and local newspapers began online news services. Even so, most online news websites were merely the online version of the paper's news content.

Unlike the redundant edition of mainstream online news service, various unique forms of webzines and independent online newspapers flourished by the time of OMN's launch. For example, *Daejabo*<sup>44</sup> ([www.jabo.co.kr](http://www.jabo.co.kr)) was established in January 1999 by a small number of 'media reformists' who used to write progressive opinions on the PC online forums like *Hitel*, *Cheonlian*, *Nownuri*, etc (Oh, 2005). In pursuit of facilitating media reform, the founding members wrote most of the news contents themselves. Later it became a prototype for a political website *Seoprise* ([www.seoprise.com](http://www.seoprise.com)). It was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2002 by seven columnists who had become famous by writing political critiques on the PC online forums (Kim, 2002). As a primary purpose, *Seoprise* announced their strong support for Roh Moo-hyun in the 2002 presidential election and therefore served as a public forum mainly for the Roh supporters, rather than embracing people having different political dispositions in a broader and more inclusive sense. In addition to such politically oriented dailies, online newspapers focusing on a specific topic like money and investment, ICT technology, etc were burgeoning, for example, *Moneytoday* ([www.moneytoday.co.kr](http://www.moneytoday.co.kr), January 2000), *INews24* ([www.inews24.com](http://www.inews24.com),

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<sup>44</sup> In April 2003, it renamed to *Breaknews* ([www.breaknews.com](http://www.breaknews.com)) and in October 2005, it began a daily news service.

March 2000), *eDaily* ([www.edaily.co.kr](http://www.edaily.co.kr), March 2000) and *EBnews* ([www.ebn.co.kr](http://www.ebn.co.kr), March 2000). *Pressian*, launched in September 2001, pursued in-depth and investigative news rather than breaking news. For this, professional journalists, who had many years working experience in mainstream media, wrote most articles and sometimes, depending on the nature of the topic, external experts provided the content. The readership was limited to a small number of target audiences such as journalists, bureaucrats, educationalists, scholars and entrepreneurs. Later, on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2002, *Ewincom*, *Joseilbo*, *Dailypharm* ([www.dreamdrug.com](http://www.dreamdrug.com)), *Pressian* ([www.pressian.com](http://www.pressian.com)) and OMN set up the Korean Association for the Internet Newspapers (Cho, 2002).

What stood out among a host of webzines launched during the early years of the ICT-based media was *Ddanzi Ilbo* ([www.ddanzi.com](http://www.ddanzi.com)). Its extraordinary way of skewering corrupt society, the pretentious reverence and seriousness of politicians and particularly the conservative journalism of *Chosun Ilbo* via its main weapon of blistering remarks, satire, vulgar and swearing language and twits drew enormous attention from young readers. In particular, office workers in their thirties consisted of two thirds of its rapidly growing readership (Lee, 1998). Within a month of its launch on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1998, it had recorded over 130,000 hits and within a year, this had reached over 10 million with a daily average of 50,000 hits. Unfortunately, *Ddanzi Ilbo* could not substantiate its popularity as a daily newspaper to fit its title '*Ilbo*' [daily]. As the CEO Kim Uh-joon admitted, he did not have a long-term business plan to make sustainable revenues even after registering it as a corporation with 24 staff and 1.2 billion won in 2000 (BizSeoul.net; Oh, 2005, p.88; Roh, 2000). Moreover, most of its content was parodied articles that demanded pre-reading of newspaper articles in order to understand the underlying twisted meaning. This eventually decreased its readership to a limited number of loyal readers.

Its novelty gradually waned but facilitated the boom of hybrid, entertainment-based genres in online spaces. For instance, fake newspapers *Mang-Chi Ilbo* (<http://www.hammer.co.kr>) and *Galdo Ilbo* (<http://www.galdo.co.kr>), parody web-casting sites like *XNews* (<http://www.xnews.co.kr>) that provided altered flash animations with satirical commentary on current affairs or flash games to hit corrupt politicians with a pair of slippers, and other spoofs that circulated on the Internet. With the availability and accessibility of advanced ICTs that made the creation of user-generated content (UGC)<sup>45</sup> much easier and virally spread across varying online spaces, there was a huge boom of political satire during the President Impeachment in 2004, particularly in such websites as DC Inside and Liveis.com. In particular, DC Inside needs more attention in that netizens not only posted their own parodied works relating to the political event but also formed online public spheres in the process of exchanging thoughts and feelings aligned with those political parodies, which offered me a rationale for choosing DC Inside as one of my case studies. There appeared infotainment media on the Internet, whose main focus was on fun and entertainment but still provided news and current affairs content at the same time. Representatively, the entertainment portal website Pullbbang.com ([www.pullbbang.com](http://www.pullbbang.com)) was launched in 2005 and Pandora.tv ([www.pandora.tv](http://www.pandora.tv)) began its service from October 2004.

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<sup>45</sup> The term is often used with the user-created or citizen-generated contents, which users can easily produce and upload by Web 2.0 technology. Web 2.0 Technology makes it much easier to interact and collaborate in producing and sharing information. In comparison with Web 1.0 as the information source, Web 2.0 is the platform for collaborative participation.

### 3.5.2. The Reshaping of the Online Media Landscape (mid-2000s to 2010)

Along with the growing appeal of infotainment websites to netizens, particularly young people, the remarkable change in the online media landscape took place. OMN's remarkable influence and readership heightened through the 2002 election have weakened since 2006. According to the *Sisa Journal* survey, its ranking dropped down to eighth in 2006 and 2007, ninth in 2008 and has remained outside the top ten since 2009. This decline has resulted from several reasons, which tell a lot of stories of how the online news media landscape was reshaped. They are the waning of OMN's novelty due to other media's adoption, the rise of new forms of media having similar features, and the changing pattern of news production and consumption particularly among young people.

Firstly, the emergence of portal websites as news outlet has significantly reshaped the news media landscape since 2006. In 2003, the major Internet portals *Daum* and *Naver*<sup>46</sup> launched full-scale news services to offer around 7,000 news articles a day that were provided by over 70 news outlets and content providers. The news articles are placed according to the portals' editorial teams. In addition, they provide online forums in which users are allowed to post life stories, photos or petitions and commentaries, all of which were regarded as the novelty of OMN's distinctive features<sup>47</sup>. Notably, Daum's online space Agora played an important role in raising public issues and mobilising protests in the 2008 anti-US beef protest. According to a *Sisa Journal* survey, these Internet portals entered the top ten of the most influential news media in 2006 and continued to sustain their influence. 2008 was a landmark year

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<sup>46</sup> Statistics show that 76 percent of whole population over 7 years old use the Internet and 97 percent of them use those portal websites as of 2008 (JoongAng, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> The detailed examination of distinguishing features of OMN's citizen journalism is charted in Chapter Five 'Ordinary People and OMN'.

that the portals ruptured the rigid news landscape shaped by the five mainstream media (i.e. *KBS*, *Chosun*, *MBC*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong A*) with *Naver* taking fourth place and *Daum* the sixth (Ahn, 2009). This was when OMN was driven out to tenth place. The portals' successful positioning as influential news media partially resulted from users' changing pattern of news consumption due to the increased availability and convenience of the news services.

Secondly, young people's way of news consumption and production has shifted. In general, they tend to use news at the infotainment websites based on the UGC, rather than news media websites. Moreover, they prefer to take the full control of the content from production to distribution. Thus, they run self-organised/controlled media such as personal blogs, or post contents on blog-aggregation websites. These patterns were confirmed in my interviews about political interest and online news consumption with citizen journalists in their 20s who participated in the 2007 OMN International Citizen Journalist Forum. Their most visited websites were the UGC-aggregated websites with focus on fun such as *Pandora TV*, *Media Mob* or *Daum Bloggers*. During times of few particularly volatile political events, news websites like *OMN* and *Pressian* were not as attractive to young people unless they were highly politically aware and interested. Interestingly, the interviewees pointed out that they had distrust and cynicism in traditional politics but it did not necessarily mean they were indifferent to the socio-political issues they emphasised. As evidence, they recalled their participation in the 2002 memorial vigil rally of two middle-school girls and the 2004 anti-impeachment protest. Strikingly, this tendency was clearly reaffirmed in the 2008 anti-US beef protest, in which a personal blogger's UGC of the rally, webcasted at the newly emergent UGC-aggregated website *Afreeca*, played an important role in

mobilising protesters in a short time and served as ‘news source organisations for the dominant media’ (Dahlgren, 1991, p.14;Nip, 2009, p.97) such as MBC<sup>48</sup>.

Thirdly, the re-emergence of SNS communication has also influenced the way of news consumption. Since 28<sup>th</sup> November 2009, when the smartphone was launched in Korea, the fast adoption<sup>49</sup> and the heightened immediacy and accessibility of interactive communication facilitated the use of SNS such as Twitter and Facebook<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, the government’s intensified crackdown<sup>51</sup> of online political content since the 2008 anti-US beef protest contributed to the increasing use of the foreign SNS which the domestic law, such as the Internet Real-name Act, is not subject to. The intensified real-name system was executed by the KCC from January 2009, extending the affected websites to the ones of over 100,000 users, requiring users to register with their real name matching their National ID number when posting contents on a bulletin board. Accordingly, the use of domestic Twitter has rapidly grown since 2009. The click rate per day was 780,000 in September 2009 and increased to 6.40million in October 2010 (Lee, 2010, p.2). Thus, news is increasingly consumed and reproduced/recycled through tweeting and re-tweeting in social networks. In the process of news tweeting and re-tweeting, a user’s social influence is indicated by the number of followers and plays a role in agenda setting of a particular issue. In this way, the user plays the role of gatekeeper by screening news values to some extent.

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<sup>48</sup> The anti-US beef protest and the role of new forms of media, specifically *Afreeca*, in its mobilisation is examined in the section ‘7.2.2. Candlelit Vigil Spreads Nationwide Like Wildfire’ of Chapter Seven ‘The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ’.

<sup>49</sup> The number of early adopters was only 1% (47,000) of the South Korean population in 2009. However, the number of users grew rapidly: 10 million in March 2011 and 58% of the population within 3 years of its launch (Chung, 2011;Park, 2012a).

<sup>50</sup> The most visited domestic SNS Cyworld (<http://www.cyworld.com>) has been losing the popularity since 2001 and the adoption of the Internet portals’ SNS Yozm and Me2day has stagnated (Lee, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> The Lee Myung-bak government’s Internet censorship is detailed in the section ‘7.3. Revived Censorship’ in Chapter Seven.

### 3.6. Conclusion

How the state implements various kinds of media policies has shaped the media landscape to a greater extent. In a strong government, especially of the military authoritarian rule, the degree of the freedom of speech and expression was largely limited and the media were forcibly and/or *voluntarily* mobilised to serve the ruling ideology of the state. As shown by the effect of the strong coercive and appeasement media policies executed by the Park and Chun government, the surviving media from the relentless censorship received considerable financial rewards from the state in return for their cooperation. Democratic forces of the critical media repressed by the authoritarian state transformed into clandestine forms of alternative media like the underground magazine *Mahl* under the military rule. With greatly extended press freedom in the wake of the 1987 democratisation and the rapid growth of South Korean economy, the surviving conservative media expanded to the media conglomerates by increasing their market share in media and thereby the advertising industry. And those media, which had maintained strong connections with inner political circles of the conservative party under the authoritarian era through having their previous journalists in ministerial positions, had rendered strong influence on public opinion, especially in the elections, playing as king makers. In response to the dominant media's concentration on market-driven journalism and the imbalanced media landscape, democratic forces such as dissident journalists, citizens, civic groups and intellectuals collaborated to generate various alternative media, representatively *Hankyoreh*. However, in such circumstances where the size of a media economy considerably impinges on its influence on the formation of public opinion, it was nearly

unimaginable for small-circulated media like *Hankyoreh* to rupture the imbalanced media landscape.

In this regard, the general access and affordability of the ICTs facilitated by the civilian Kim Dae-jung government opened up great opportunities for democratic forces. On the one hand, it substantially enabled small-sized alternative media to set up at low cost. On the other hand, the sustained public demands and aspirations for alternative, diverse public spheres offered a rationale for the emergence and the prosperity of various forms of online media and communications such as OMN, DC Inside and online communities of personal tastes and concerns like fan community Yuaerubi. Consequently, in such hybrid media genres (spaces), afforded by these newly emergent and rapidly mature online media environments, the ways and contexts in which the private connects and translates to the public are central to the thesis.



## **4. Methodology**

This chapter begins by illustrating an overall approach to the study and research questions, and then moves on to a more detailed account of the main method and secondary sources that inform the analysis, if any, in accordance with each case study. Ethical issues that I encountered in the process of the research will be discussed in a reflexive account, especially in respect of the interviews of teenaged fans.

### **4.1. Overall Research Design and Research Questions**

To reconceptualise the relationships between the private and the public through identifying complicated mediating contexts and processes in which the private shifts to the public, I posed research questions in alignment with three key themes – the communicative mode of hybrid media, affect (emotion) and politicisation (the formation of publics). The research questions comprise three parts:

1. In what context do media offer a discursive space to connect people's everyday lives to the public world as well as to recruit and sustain political interest?
2. How does affect play a critical part in making sense of the public world and mobilising political participation?
3. In what ways do private individuals come to shape publics?

These questions are examined in the context of ICT-based media environments and in relation to three empirical studies. Firstly, I will examine OhmyNews – a global icon of citizen journalism – in which the “feminised” news produced by citizens re-contextualised private interests into public concerns, and allowed the public to make a real change in the 2002 Presidential election and the 2010 local elections in South

Korea. Secondly, I will explore online political satire, in which politics is situated in an entertainment mode through citizens' creative reinterpretation, and which helped mobilise citizens' political interest and action during the 2004 Presidential impeachment and general election. Thirdly, I will analyse the politicisation of teen fandom, in which music fans were mobilised as political actors in the 2008 anti-US beef protest. I set out sub-research questions under each empirical study that will be discussed in alignment with research methods in the later section.

In a broad sense, the epistemological position in this research is in the interpretative research tradition. Interpretative approach is 'predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action' as Bryman (2008, p.13) explained.

For the research, multiple methods were utilized. First, I used an ethnographic design and approach in order to articulate social acts in the context of the everyday through the people's own narratives, although my approach lacked features of ethnography in the sense used in anthropology. This demands an 'ethnographic gaze' (Machin, 2002, p.3, 5, 129), which involves data collecting and presenting in a way that the relevant details are reassembled in a sense of the people's culture and experience, e.g. teen fans' politicization. This research is not intended to generalise but to offer a better understanding of and insight to the way of the people's behaviour in a particular context (van Zoonen, 1994, pp.130-139).

While having employed ethnographic approaches such as participant observation and interviews, I have also undertaken other multiple techniques such as interpretive textual analysis and basic content analysis to gather data for textual analysis. The textual analysis was carried out in order to identify media discourse and conduct an

examination of online communication of OMN and Daum Agora as well as teen fans' online communication. In the sense that the (mass) media are 'the site of a complex symbolic contest over which interpretation will prevail' (Gamson, 1992, p.xii), the theme categorised by textual analysis presents useful information about how the media frame a particular issue, or/and of how netizens' discourse was formed around the issue. In addition to the analysis of text as a central data, the study attempted to consider the socio-political contexts in which the texts have been produced. In the following section, I will delineate the details of the ways in which the sub-questions of each empirical study were examined.

## **4.2. Research Questions and Method Designs Chapter by Chapter**

### **4.2.1. Chapter Five 'Ordinary People and OhmyNews: Reshaping the news in between the private and the public'**

This chapter aims to examine the ways in which OMN's citizen journalism (re-) contextualised private interests to the public concern, and (re-)mediated private citizens to the political world so as to allow the public to make a real change in the 2002 presidential election and the 2010 local election. Therefore, I posed sub-research questions as below:

1. What are the distinguishing features of OMN's citizen journalism? In what ways do these features challenge the existing norms of traditional journalism? And what implications do those challenges offer to the supposedly fixed relationship between the public (the serious/the political) and the private (non-serious/the personal)?
2. In what ways did OMN mediate private individuals to the public concern and form the public sphere in the 2002 presidential election?

3. In what ways did new communicative possibilities afforded by new media such as OMN and Daum Agora contribute to the unexpected result of the *Cheonan* sinking and the 2010 local election, in comparison with the dominant traditional media *Chosun*?

Multiple methods were utilised for the analysis of OMN's citizen journalism. For a better understanding, the methods used in the chapter will be mapped out in accordance with the research question. First of all, extensive but not exhaustive review of domestic and overseas literature was carried out from both academia and newspapers with focus on the OMN citizen journalism. For the examination of the research questions 1 and 2 as indicated above, the date for the data collection focused on the period of the launch of OMN to the OMN's reasonably sustainable influence in the media market, that is 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2000 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007. The reason for the chosen date was that the quantity of relevant articles to focus on OMN's citizen journalism was rapidly decreasing and there was not much new information since. OMN's remarkable influence<sup>52</sup>, that had maintained ranking sixth for 3 years from 2003, fast dwindled to ninth in 2008 and has remained outside the top ten since 2009. For the data collection of domestic newspaper articles, KINDS (Korea Integrated Newspaper Data System)<sup>53</sup> was used with the search word "OhmyNews" for the 10 general-circulation newspaper articles. An initial full-text search yielded 2,041 articles. To collect more useful articles closely relevant to the OMN citizen journalism, I conducted a further search within the initial search result with the search word "citizen", which produced 507 articles. After eliminating unrelated or duplicate items in particular respect of the content, 49 articles,

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<sup>52</sup> The OMN's changing popularity and influence in terms of the public opinion formation and its factors are delineated in the sections '5.4.2.1. Entering the mainstream' in Chapter Five 'Ordinary People and OhmyNews', and Chapter Three 'Mapping out the South Korean Media Landscape: In relation to the role of the state'.

<sup>53</sup> The Korea Press Foundation (KPF) operates KINDS and its URL is <http://www.kinds.or.kr>.

which informed the analysis of the research questions 1 and 2, were eventually collected. A close reading of the full-text of the articles produced 4 main themes: operational system of the OMN citizen journalism; the emergence and success of OMN as news outlet; tension between OMN and the dominant media; and globalisation of OMN's citizen journalism. Along with the close examination of the OMN website, this information was referred to the section '5.3 OMN's Citizen Journalism' which responds to the research question 1.

Also regarding the research question 1, I conducted an email interview with the editor-in-chief Kim Hee-sun. The interview focused on the status of OMN's readership, the demography of the citizen journalists, the standards and procedures of placing citizen journalists' articles, the source of revenue, the citizen journalists' editorial committee system, and voluntary subscription payment system. To ensure the information provided was sufficient, several follow-up email interviews were conducted from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007. By and large, the interview outcome was referred to the section '5.3. OMN's Citizen Journalism'. In addition, a face-to-face interview with the CEO and founder of OMN, Oh Yeon-ho, was carried out on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2007 during the 2007 OMN's International Citizen Journalists' Forum. The interview questions focused on the key notion of operational philosophy, OMN's further plan to sustain and improve citizen journalism and readership, and whether there was any strategic plan to deliver the 2007 Presidential election. The interview was taped and transcribed later for analysis. The interview result was referred to the section '5.3.1. Citizens' News Production in Cooperation with Professional Journalists' of the chapter.

In particular respect of the ways in which OMN's feminised news enables the public connection between the private (the personal and private concern of ordinary people) and the public (the political and public matter), I selected two articles of the

citizen journalist Kim Hye-won. There were two reasons for choosing Kim's articles. Firstly, Kim has prominence as a citizen journalist – she was selected as one of the 68 best citizen journalists who wrote over 100 main top stories or over 1,000 news stories from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2000 up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. Out of 6 female citizen journalists including 2 overseas correspondents who register as best citizen journalists, Kim received numerous awards for her news stories. For example, the article “I wished we could have lived like a wood-seller and a nymph in a fairy tale” received the highest manuscript fee from the readers in 2005, which reached 17million KRW (15,000US\$). She was also chosen as one of the 15 important figures representing Time magazine's People of the Year in 2006. Secondly, Kim's prominence in news production of OMN's citizen journalism has significance for this study because her biography, especially as the homemaker-Adjumma, substantially represents “ordinary people” whose opinions are typically depreciated or/and unreported in the traditional media in sharp contrast to “experts” and power elites. Since April 2003, she has written over 500 articles including over 100 main top stories from her lived perspectives as a homemaker and Adjumma, daughter or local community member. Her 100-plus articles in particular shed light on the redefinition of homemaker-Adjumma. In Korean context, homemakers, the staying-home housewives in particular, are socially deprecated selves insofar as they are often called “so-and-so's mother” or “so-and-so's wife”, whereas their familial roles as caring wife or ‘professional mother’ – as ‘a systematically personalized, educational coordinator’ of their children, specifically in the case of educated middle-class mothers (Kim, 2006b) – are appreciated within the family relations. Moreover, Adjumma, as a particular collective of married women in their 20s to 60s including homemakers with/out work (Choi, Kim and Kim, 1999, p.56), carries a socially embedded, deprecating stereotype: “unwomanly” strong and aggressive, insensitive and thick-

faced, inelegant and unfashionable, socially unconscious and shamelessly brave to the family ends (Choi, Kim and Kim, 1999, 2001; Kim Cho, 2012). In particular this negative image is usually concentrated on the middle-aged Adjumma, which has discrepancy from their own self-image (Kim, Sung and Kim, 1999). In this light, her 2 articles were selected. The first article “Do not ignore the real power of Bundang city, the Apron Troops of Adjumma” was chosen for the analysis of how “feminised” news of OMN served to actualise democratic potential of the media, which was to contribute to the re-conceptualisation of marginalised social groups. The second article “I wished we could have lived like a wood-seller and a nymph in a fairy tale” was chosen in order to examine how a private matter can transform into the public concern through instantiated and affective personal stories. Along with Kim’s exemplary articles, Joo Kyung-shim’s article “I felt sorry for my middle-aged husband” was selected to explore how OMN’s distinctive writing style of self-storytelling, frank narrative grounded in the author’s lived experience engages readers to the news story.

In order to investigate the research question 2, I conducted textual analysis to compare OMN and the largest-circulated traditional newspaper Chosun in respect of how the then political outsider Roh Moo-hyun, who became the president-elect in 2002, was portrayed. I chose two crucial events: the presidential candidate election of the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) through which Roh Moo-hyun was elected as the official candidate of MDP; and Chung Mong-jun’s (the presidential candidate of the People’s Uri 21 Party) cancellation of a single candidacy with Roh one day before the presidential election. In the case of the MDP primary, I analysed news articles that appeared on the last day of the primary and the following day (27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April). I chose the day as the significant moment for framing Roh’s image as the official MDP candidate, which would direct the later images of Roh. An initial search generated 12

articles of Chosun and 16 articles of OMN. After removing unrelated articles, the final sample for the analysis was 8 articles of Chosun and 11 articles of OMN. The textual analysis of the sample articles created these themes: impatient, political novice constructed by Chosun; and clean, progressive reformist and warm-hearted human rights activist by OMN.

For the analysis of research question 3 – relating to the Cheonan sinking and alternative, emotion-charged response (yet layered with the ordinary citizens' rationality) – the discourses of Chosun, OMN and Daum Agora were compared. I selected citizen journalist Hong Ji-deuk's article and readers' commentaries to examine how citizens contextualised the Cheonan sinking and the 2010 election from the view of ordinary people by means of news production, which formed a counter-discourse of the official discourse forged through the governmental authority and the mainstream media, representatively Chosun. The reason for the choice of Hong's stories was that he had prominence in terms of the public presence of ordinary people's viewpoints and feelings since his analysed article was on the main top and received 16,185 points from the readers as a good article, ranking 16<sup>th</sup> in 2010.

#### **4.2.1.1. Secondary sources that inform the analysis**

The participant observation of Nosamo<sup>54</sup> [People who love Roh Moo-hyun] was carried out for the short period of May 2002. In mid-April 2002, I signed up for a Nosamo membership of the Seoul community at the website (<http://www.nosamo.org>) and I attended offline meetings several times. The meetings took place casually, often in a small pub. Normally the participants introduced one another as a member and often took his/her friends or new members along. The participants had dinner with some

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<sup>54</sup> 'No' means Roh of Roh Moo-hyun, 'sa' means love and 'mo' is the first letter of 'mo-im' in Korean, meaning community. Nosamo should have been named Rohsamo but the community has used Nosamo in English and thus Nosamo will be used in the chapter.



drinks and talked freely on any subject including how to support Roh and his visions for the nation, as well as private matters. As a researcher, I strived to observe an objective perspective in the process of this participant observation of Nosamo.

OMN held the International Citizen Journalists' Forum from 2005 to 2008. I registered as a citizen reporter of OMN in 2004. I had already been a reader member from 2002. Therefore, it was a simple procedure to be entitled a citizen journalist by providing personal details such as real name, national ID number<sup>55</sup> (if applicable), a telephone number, an email address, job position, home/office address and the like. I participated in the 2007 and 2008 OMN's International Citizen Journalists' Forums as a citizen journalist. The number of citizen journalist delegates at the Forum was 150 on average. To obtain the place as a delegate, citizen journalists sent applications with a statement of main motive for participation via email. Then the editorial team sent the notice of whether or not an application was accepted. The standards for the selection were the extent of citizen journalists' contribution and the reason for attendance.

Participating in the forum as a citizen journalist helped to collect relevant materials for the discussion of citizen journalism of OMN and in general. Moreover, another benefit for participating in the Forum was that a round-table talk was conducted with 5 citizen journalists in their 20s who attended the Forum on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The key question was about their pattern of news consumption – how and where they used news on- and off-line. The result of the open-ended form of interview refers to the section of changing online news landscape in Chapter Three of the South Korean media landscape.

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<sup>55</sup> This is obliged by the law 'Internet Real-name Act' that came into effect in July 2007 and has become more austere since January 2009 after the 2008 anti-US Beef protest. The law stipulates that any Internet organisations of over 100,000 members should ensure that any content in their sites should be posted after verifying the uploaders' identification (i.e. the real names and national ID numbers) although the content can be shown with a user name. OhmyNews shows citizen reporters' real names when they submit articles to ensure transparency.

#### 4.2.2. Chapter Six ‘Online Political Satire: Placing affect and entertainment in politics’

Firstly, I examined the relationship between the freedom of speech and the development of Korean political satire in diverse forms of media from 1961 to the early 2000s. In so doing, I explored how political satire opens up a discursive space through facilitating various forms of talks – informal or formal – among participants and engaged people to the political world.

To do this, I examined relevant articles ranging from newspaper archives and scholarly writings to internet-based articles through using KINDS with the keywords “political satire” or “political parody”.

Secondly, I analysed online political satire focused around the 2004 President Impeachment bill and the 17<sup>th</sup> general election. For this, I chose the three most viewed online satire artworks: Tanhaek – Flying Ruinous National Flag, Memory of Tanhaek and Water is Self-served.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004, when the President Impeachment bill was passed in the parliament, the Internet was flooded with various forms of political communication. According to a survey conducted by the website analysis company Metrix (<http://www.metrixcorp.com>), the traffic frequency of the internet press *OMN*, *Pressian* and *Ddanji Ilbo* increased by 100% over the previous week. In addition, the page view of politics-related websites like the portal website Naver’s general election site increased by 1.8 times in March over the previous month (Kang, 2004a). And the 17<sup>th</sup> general election was drawing nearer, the theme of online political satire was refocused from the Impeachment to the general election.

During the anti-Impeachment protest, *DC Inside* (<http://www.dcinside.com>) was at the heart of the online political satire boom at that time. *DC Inside* is a laptop-

related contents provider at the portal website Hitel, which was launched in July 1999. In 2000, Hitel's CEO Kim Yu-shik launched *Digital Inside* which was renamed *DC Inside* later. At an early stage of its development, the majority of parodied artworks were dealing with popular film posters of celebrities or pictures of pet animals that were parodied, far from the political world (Lee, 2004). In late 2003, when the Public Prosecutor's Office's investigation of the GNP's acceptance of illegal funds from business people became a heated public issue, *DC Inside* came to serve as a public space for political parody. Most politics-related parodied artworks were concentrated in *DC Inside* and distributed virally into a wider range of personal blogs, portal websites, online communities and the like. Moreover, in the period of the President Impeachment rally and the general election, its members launched an offline campaign for the promotion of voting. On 19<sup>th</sup> March 2004, the number of its daily users reached between 350,000 to 400,000 (Kim, 2004).

Moreover, I examined the ways in which the recurring casual conversation stimulates political activities such as online communication to encourage voting in the 17<sup>th</sup> general election. For this, I examined both the online communication and offline campaign actions of *DC Inside* members in terms of the Impeachment and the general election.

#### **4.2.3. Chapter Seven 'The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ'**

In order to identify the context and the process of the TVXQ teen fans' politicisation in the 2008 anti-US beef vigil rally, my research questions in the chapter focus on:

1. The view of the teen fans' political participation through which the concept of fans can be reconstructed:

- 1.1. How did the media shape the teen fans' political involvement in the 2008 anti-US beef candlelit vigil rally?
- 1.2. How did the fans see themselves and their political activism?
2. The way that the teen fans related to their pop stars in the everyday and within their political activism in particular:
  - 2.1. What did the stars mean in the fans' everyday lives?
  - 2.2. Did the fans' cultural, emotional engagement with the stars relate to their political participation? If so, how and in what context?
3. The role of emotions in the process of the teen fans' politicisation:
  - 3.1. What kinds of emotions were identified that would play out to mobilise teen fans' political interest and action? And in what ways and roles?

Methodologies used in this chapter will be detailed in relation to each research question. In order to investigate the research question 1.1, I examined 10 Korean general-circulation newspaper articles published between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008. 10 national newspapers include *Chosun*, *Joong Ang*, *Dong-A*, *Hankyoreh*, *Kyunghyang*, *Hankook Ilbo*, *Kookmin Daily*, *Munhwa Ilbo*, *Seoul Shinmun* and *Sekye Times* in order of circulation. The first three conservative newspapers have dominated 75% of the market share and still enormously affect the public opinion despite their weakened influence under the internet-based media environment. To identify items for analysis, I used the KINDS Korean newspapers database and the *Chosun* and *Joong Ang* websites since these two newspapers articles were not serviced by the KINDS. I selected this time frame because 3<sup>rd</sup> May was the day following the first anti-US beef candlelit vigil rally and 24<sup>th</sup> May was when protesters began occupying the road, the riot police cracked down and the teenaged student participants were apparently replaced with adults including university students, and thereby the number of articles related to 'teen(-fan)s'

political activism' decreased noticeably. An initial full-text search using the key words 'candlelit vigil rally' and 'fan' yielded 9 articles only with 0 article of *Chosun, Joong Ang* and *Dong-A*. Another search using the key words 'mad cow disease' and 'fan' yielded 19 articles. In order to obtain a fair number of articles for analysis, I used the extensive key words 'mad cow disease' and 'adolescent', which yielded 112 articles containing previous search results. However, the phrase was mentioned in ways unrelated to the teen(-fan) activism and the 112 articles contained duplicate items. To ensure that the articles in my sample represent a view of the teen participants in the candlelit vigil rally, I conducted a close reading of the full-text of the articles and eliminated the duplicate and irrelevant items from the study. Eventually I examined the final sample of 54 articles using interpretive textual analysis.

A close reading of the news articles enabled me to identify 6 themes related to teen(-fan) participation in the anti-US beef protest.

Table 2. Themes in teens' anti-US beef protest news

Theme	Number of articles in which theme appears
Teen protesters influenced by celebrities	11
Reason for teens' protest	11
Teen protesters swayed by Internet rumours of mad cow disease	10
Teen protesters instigated by leftists and anti-Americans	8
Need of surveillance and guidance of teen participants	8
Praise of teens' political participation	6

These thematic threads were woven together into two central discourses of teen(-fan) protesters as conveyed by 10 Korean national newspapers: (1) emotional crowds; and (2) rational political actors.

In order to examine whether, how, and in what context teen fans' cultural, affective engagement with their stars shifted into political participation (as expounded in the research questions 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1), I conducted interviews with the TVXQ teen fans of online fan community Yuaerubi (<http://cafe.daum.net/soul48>). The reason that I selected TVXQ over other K-pop bands such as Shinhwa, Super Junior, SS501, Wonder Girls and Big Bang, whose fan members were also known to participate actively in the protest, was that TVXQ had the largest number of fans at 800,000. In addition, I chose Yuaerubi among many TVXQ online fan communities including Dong Ne Bang Ne and Icadong because Yuaerubi, established in December 2003, had the biggest fan members estimated at 818,047 as of January 2009 and was known to retain the largest number of teenaged fan members. Dong Ne Bang Ne consisted of women in their 20s and 30s, and Icadong<sup>56</sup> in their 20s mainly. In this light, the TVXQ online fan community Yuaerubi would offer a greater sample of teen fans that participated in the protest.

To carry out interviews with the Yuaerubi teen members, I used an ethnographic design and approach. In spite of lacking features of ethnography in the sense used in anthropology, my ethnography with focus on the teen fans is best suited to articulate the teen fans' politicisation in the context of their everyday lives through their own narratives, which calls for an 'ethnographic gaze' (Machin, 2002, p.3, 5, 129). The ethnographic gaze involves collecting and presenting data in a way that the relevant details are reassembled in a sense of the teen fans' culture and experience. Moreover, this research is not intended to generalise but to offer a better understanding of and insight into the way that teen fandom relates to their political participation and that a

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<sup>56</sup> Icadong (<http://cafe.daum.net/20cassio>) members raised £1,660 to provide protesters with food, drinks and other necessities in the course of the rallies.

specific emotion plays a particular role in the process of the teen fans' politicisation in Korean context of the 2008 anti-US beef protest.

To gain access to Yuaerubi, where I could get teen fans of TVXQ to communicate with me and get a sense of their online fan culture and communication, I applied to become a Yuaerubi member. In theory, Yuaerubi is an open community but in practice only a limited range of postings, mainly notifications or the publicised media news of TVXQ are available publicly. Only with a full membership is reading or writing a post or access to another member allowed. Therefore, in order to get a full membership, I had posted an application on the bulletin board, which was processed by the operating committee (usually done on the first day of each month). With the full membership, I first examined Yuaerubi online communication, which included the key words 'candlelit vigil rally' and 'mad cow disease' from 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 in order to get a sense of the flow of communications related to the anti-US beef import and mad cow disease. The total number was 213 postings. From 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> May, at the early stage of the protest, there were around 10 to 15 postings per day on average and a few postings until late July and over 20 postings on the candlelit vigil rally of 31<sup>st</sup> December. Moreover, I selected the popular teen writer Canta's fan fiction "Happy Days" in order to make sense of the way in which teen fans related TVXQ to the topical issue. I chose this fan-created artifact because it was posted on 1<sup>st</sup> May, one day before the beginning of the protest, and among relevant postings it recorded the largest number of page views (300) and positive comments from fellow fans (29) as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008<sup>57</sup>.

In order to conduct interviews, firstly I consulted with the Yuaerubi operator by explaining the purpose and procedure of my research in detail and reassuring her of its

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<sup>57</sup> For the entire story of this fan fiction, follow the link <http://cafe.daum.net/soul48/490835>.

pure academic end. With her approval, I sent an email invitation to 250 members, whom I selected through the examination of online communication and whom I felt were actively engaged in discussions of the focal issue. From 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009, I received only 5 useful responses out of 13. To the Yuaerubi moderator, I carefully addressed the importance of this research and sincerely requested her cooperation in my project. On my behalf, she posted an invitation on the 'Tearoom Coffee' bulletin board to recruit volunteer interviewees. In her invitation, she explained what my research was about, and asked members to send her an email addresses via messaging service or email within Yuaerubi if there was anyone interested in partaking in the interview. This time the moderator sent my 'semi-structured interview' (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.65) sheets to 73 volunteers who had shown their interest. In the interview sheet, I requested participants to describe their experience and any thoughts and feelings freely in as much detail as possible, and to send it back to me. I did not designate any specific deadline for response in the hope of more responses. Eventually I received 44 email responses from 1<sup>st</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009. I excluded 19 responses because either the respondent's age was over 19, they had participated in the protest neither on- nor off-line, or their response provided insufficient information for this study. Therefore, 30 interview subjects including the previous 5 respondents were identified for final analysis. To gather further data, I had several additional email exchanges. Then, I conducted one-to-one in-depth interview with 10 volunteers who had been actively engaged in the rally offline, by using Korean online messaging software Nate On. As soon as I received consent from the active participants, I started carrying out in-depth interviews from 30<sup>th</sup> January to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. I did one-to-one interviews because some interviewees had expressed discomfort and a lack of confidence in a group conversation. Also this form of interview using a chat programme,



offered the teen participants comfort and freedom in expressing their opinion by means of anonymity to some extent and a greater convenience in respect of time. The overall process of the in-depth interviews was unstructured and open-ended as the interview subjects were not all asked the same questions but were allowed to talk and develop their own views on the subject. The data collected through the in-depth interview was automatically recorded and saved in the programme. Later I stored the data in the form of printed materials.

Interview themes and relevant questions are delineated as below.

### TVXQ

- What does TVXQ mean to you?
- How long have you been a TVXQ fan?
- Is TVXQ related to your participation in the anti-US beef candlelit vigil rally? If yes, why and in what way?
- In the beginning of the anti-US beef protest, a video clip of TVXQ teen fans, claiming that they took to streets to save beloved TVXQ from mad cow disease, was virally spread on the Internet. What do you think of them?

### Everyday media use and Yuaerubi

- Where did you get information of the US beef import and/or the protest?
- How often do you use Internet? What do usually you do?
- How long have you been a Yuaerubi member?
- How often do you log on Yuaerubi? What do you do then?
- Have you talked with Yuaerubi members about the current event or participated in the protest with them? If yes, please describe the details of the conversation and the process of your participation. And how did you feel?

### Agency

- The conservative mainstream media claimed that the teen(-fan)s participation in the protest was influenced by ‘mad cow disease rumour (e.g. mad cow disease can be infected via cosmetics or sanitary towels)’, ‘negative remarks of celebrities’ or ‘instigation of leftists or/and anti-Americans’. What do you think of them? Have they affected your participation in a way?

### Actions (on- and off-line)

- Have you ever participated in the vigil rally offline? If yes, when and why?
- If not, what was the reason?
- What did you do to express your objection to the US beef import?
- With whom did you talk about the US beef import?
- Is there any other reason for your participation in the rally except the anti-US beef import? If yes, please describe as much in detail as possible.

- How did you feel while participating in the rally?
- Please describe any on- or/and offline actions you took in opposition to the US beef import except a direct participation in the protest?

After participating in the protest

- Any feeling after experiencing the current event?
- Through your experience of participation in the protest, is there any change in your thought or behaviour in respect of socio-political issues?

Also for the analysis of the teen fans' political action relating to the research questions 2.2 and 3.1, I used Gamson's (1992) collective action frame in which injustice, agency and identity play out to support political consciousness. And I also attempted to examine if any dimensions of Dahlgren's 'civic culture' (2003, pp.153-160; 2009, pp.102-125) – knowledge, values, trust (affinity), spaces, practice (talk) and identities – are identified in the fan activism and what this means for the relation of popular culture to democratic politics. In so doing, I hope I will locate the legitimate place of entertainment, fans and emotions in democratic politics.

### **4.3. Ethical Considerations**

From an ethical viewpoint, the procedure, that I took in order to research teen fandom and their politicisation examined in Chapter Seven, cannot be completely free from the criticism that I took advantage of a fan community and its members. However, in the course of my research of examining postings, interviewing the teen fans, reading and viewing TVXQ concert video clips, I became a TVXQ fan, that is a 'scholar-fan' in Matt Hills' term (2002, pp.8-13). As a 'scholar-fan', academics take on fan identities. Hills underscores that the scholar-fan must observe the regulatory norms of academic performance and be cautious not to present too much of their enthusiasm. And, as Hills (2002, pp.6-8) criticises 'moral dualism' of academic discourse of fans or fandom, a 'scholar-fan' researcher must try to avoid rationalising fandom within an 'academic

intellectual value system', which observes fandom as 'good' or 'bad' phenomena and gives high regard to fan culture fitting the 'good' phenomena in order to legitimise academic practice.

Keeping these ethical norms as a researcher in mind, I endeavoured to observe teen fandom from a necessary distance to avoid overly enthusiastic involvement and instead to rationalise the fan narratives and action in alignment with academic norms and on the fans' own terms.

## 5. Ordinary People and OhmyNews: Reshaping the news in between the private and the public

### 5.1. Introduction

As a global icon of citizen journalism, *OhmyNews* (OMN) has drawn enormous attention academically and otherwise over the last decade. There have been two key factors for this attention. On the one hand, OMN is widely believed to have played a critical role for the success of the then political outsider Roh Moo-hyun in the 2002 presidential election. In a rigidly established mediascape, in which a handful of conservative newspapers, namely *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A* had held around 80 percent of the overall circulation and had acted as king makers, OMN positioned itself in an unprecedented way as a newly emergent online news site to compete with the mainstream media and de-marginalise Roh Moo-hyun's candidacy. On the other hand, its actualisation of citizen's participation in journalistic practice has shown a new democratic potential of ICT-based media. Since then, OMN's citizen journalism has been widely adopted by traditional media and has inspired followers in the West. For example, global media such as BBC and CNN have allowed readers to post videos, photos and comments alongside news articles (Lee, 2007). In addition, *The International Herald Tribune*, which was owned by the *New York Times*, provided news stories of *OhmyNews International* (Johnson and Fitzpatrick, 2006). Moreover, like *iTalkNews* and *Gotham Gazette* in the US (Mattin, 2005), Japan's *JanJan* (Japan Alternative News for Justices and New Cultures) and many similar online newspapers were launched adopting OMN's citizen journalism model. As exemplary 'contra-flows'<sup>58</sup>, these phenomena have significance for the academic discourse on media

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<sup>58</sup> The notion of 'contra- or counter-flows' was introduced to challenge the position of earlier communication theorists who argued that the flow (of media contents such as visual images, news, television programmes) was only one-way from the West to the rest of the world (Rantanen, 2007, p.146).

globalisation, which conventionally focused on the one-way flow of industrialised Western media content, more accurately the US-led media, to the rest of the world.

More significantly, OMN's success has brought up robust discussions of citizen journalism's role for democracy. For instance, the staff of *OhmyNews*, including the founder and CEO Oh Yeon-ho were invited to many international conferences such as the World Editors Forum in Istanbul (2004), the Online Publishers Association in London (2006) and Lift in Geneva (2010) to deliver its citizen participation model. Besides, Oh gave a talk to 30 CEOs of Norwegian newspapers in Seoul (2004). Despite a general recognition of the citizen's growing appearance as an actor in news media, opponents claim that citizen journalism undermines quality or standards of professional journalism by its lack of accuracy, objectivity and accountability. Moreover, they argue that citizen-generated content or commentaries are overly personalised, emotional or 'opinionated'<sup>59</sup> and therefore distance citizens from serious news with focus on the broader public interest. In contrast, advocates argue that citizen journalism contributes to facilitating an engaged citizenry by opening up new opportunities for citizens to participate in the process of news production. Besides, it contributes to help professional journalism to be 'more publicly responsive' (Allan, 2006; Bird, 2009, p.295; Pavik 2001, cited in Davis, 2010, p.123; Fenton, 2010, p.10; Gillmor, 2004; McNair, 2006) and accountable to readers.

Those debates call for a rethinking of citizen journalism in relation to the tabloidization debate in the 1990s and early 2000s. In spite of a distinction between citizen journalism and tabloid newspapers in terms of the nature of their rise, some analogies underlie the debates. Firstly, the criticism that both receive from mainstream media as regards the role of the press for democracy is grounded on the divide between

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<sup>59</sup> See Reagan (2003, cited in Nip, 2006, p.229) In a similar way, Silvia (2001, cited in Fenton, 2010, p.10) criticised blogosphere as 'the floodgates to unverified, de-professionalized gossip'.

the serious/the public and the non-serious/the private. Secondly, as a consequence of the development of new communication technologies, competition deepens and accompanies the declining readership of the existing media. Therefore, I will critique these points through examining OMN's citizen journalism.

Meanwhile, there was another unforeseen event in Korean political history around the 2010 local elections. About 10 days before the election, the government announced that the sinking of the *Cheonan* patrol ship in March resulted from a North Korean torpedo attack. The government's subsequent sanctions against North Korea and the following mainstream media discourse instantly overshadowed policy-based agendas of the election, and instead created a fear of a second Korean War. War discourse had significantly contributed to the conservative party's victory in the past elections, given the uneasy truce between the two Koreas since 1953. However, this time it turned out to be the opposite resulting in the highest electoral turnout in 15 years - especially among new-media savvy young people - and the ruling conservative party's failure to hold the majority.

In this light, firstly, through exploring distinguishing features of OMN's citizen journalism, I will analyse the ways in which OMN challenges the existing normative values of traditional journalism – what counts as news and who counts as journalists – and what those challenges imply to the binary opposition between the serious/the political /the rational and the non-serious/the personal/the emotional, which sit at the centre of the tabloidization debate. I will subsequently discuss similarities and differences between tabloidization and OMN's citizen journalism, both of which are alternatives to traditional standard journalism. Secondly, as a remarkable turning point for OMN's success as a news outlet, I will examine the 2002 presidential election with emphasis on OMN's mediation between private citizens (the private) and the political

world (the public). Thirdly, with focus on the *Cheonan* sinking and the 2010 local election, I will explore the ways in which new communicative possibilities afforded by new media, such as social networking service (SNS), Agora a portal website online forum as well as OMN, contributed to the unexpected turn of events. In doing so, I aim not only to identify democratic possibilities to construct participatory citizens beyond being ‘informed’ through institutionalisation of citizens’ knowledge (re-)production within OMN’s citizen journalism, but also to critique the theoretically conventional distinction between the private and the public in respect of the news media genre.

## 5.2. The Launch of OMN

While the state-led advancement of the ICT infrastructure in the late 1990s and the early 2000s and the subsequent nationwide popularisation of high speed Internet providing economic conditions to launch and operate online media with incredibly minimal budgets compared to offline media, people’s distrust in the existing dominant media and politics offered the rationale for the establishment of online progressive media such as OMN.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2000, Oh Yeon-ho launched OMN with three staff and a fund of 100 million Korean Won (approximately US\$95,000). Until 1999, when he began preparing the launch of OMN, he had been working as a so-called ‘anti-Americanism journalist’<sup>60</sup> for a progressive monthly magazine *Mahl* [Speech] for 12 years. In his book *OhmyNews – Korea’s Unique Product* (2004), Oh recalled two critical events that convinced him about OMN’s launch. In 1994 while working for *Mahl*, he reported on a massacre by US soldiers of over 300 innocent Korean civilians in 1950 in No Gun Ri, in the southern part of Korea, during the Korean War. It was an unreported event until he

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<sup>60</sup> This nickname accounts for his 10-year career since 1988 investigating unreported atrocities by US soldiers during the Korean War.

disclosed it with in-depth interviews with survivors. Due to the marginalised readership of *Mahl*, the public barely knew his news at that time. However, in 1999, when the Associated Press won a Pulitzer Prize for their report on the same event that he had reported five years earlier, all the mainstream media welcomed it as if it were a completely novel story and took it seriously as public agenda (Lee, 2003). Following this experience, Oh became more determined to push forward his launching plan of OMN.

Another incident was the great success of online parody newspaper *Ddanzi Ilbo*. Oh (2004, pp.36-38) recollected that its success not only gave him hope and the possibility to push forward his plan to set up OMN but also influenced much of the OMN model. By the autumn of 1999 when he was preparing to set up OMN, he and some staff visited *Ddanzi Ilbo*'s founder and CEO Kim Uh-joon to get some ideas and advice. To put it simply, his advice was to make a website produced not by costly advertising, but by netizens' word of mouth, which would be a key to a successful website. His suggestion shed light on where to focus - the provision of unique and substantial content and the establishment of loyal readers with a sense of fellowship, all of which later took shape in OMN's citizen journalism.

Interestingly, it is notable that *Ddanzi Ilbo* initiated a citizen reporter system, which inspired OMN's citizen journalism. *Ddanzi Ilbo*'s citizen reporter system was an unprecedented experiment that anyone could become a journalist only with a qualification proven by his/her own writing, not by institutional education or examination or titles. However, the opportunity was limited to a small number of appointed reporters<sup>61</sup> who passed through the application process and who had a duty to

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<sup>61</sup> As a response to a recruitment advertising of 6<sup>th</sup> July 1998, over 700 people applied – 684 applicants for a practice reporter, and 87 for an overseas correspondent. Eventually *Ddanzi* appointed 200 reporters including trainees .



write bi-weekly. Unlike *Ddanzi*, OMN leaves the door open to anyone who wants to become a journalist with a simple step of registration anytime and gives autonomy to citizen journalists as regards the subject and deadline, more details of which I will examine in the later sections.

On 21<sup>st</sup> December 1999 when Oh Yeon-ho published the first issue of the pre-launch newspaper, the number of professional staff was only three. Two staff were once his students of the course ‘Oh Yeon-ho’s making a journalist’ held at the civic group Citizens’ Association for Democratic Media Movement in 1999 (Oh, 2004, pp.21-23). On New Year’s Day of 2000, Oh and his staff published the second issue online and put in an advertisement to recruit citizen reporters with a slogan “Every citizen is a reporter”, which drew huge public attention quickly. Within a week of the first issue of pre-launch service, over 6,000 hits were recorded and in the month after the recruitment advertisement, over 700 people joined to become a citizen reporter. Eventually on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, OMN launched as an online daily with 727 citizen reporters and 4 staff including the founder and CEO Oh Yeon-ho.

### **5.3. OMN’s Citizen Journalism**

IndyMedia and The Drudge Report have often been cited as Internet-based, participatory journalism in which the members’ input sits at the centre of the content. However, OMN is notably distinguished from them in respect of who constitutes the membership and how the websites operate. The Drudge Report<sup>62</sup> is a news aggregation website founded in 1997 and provides links to the US and international news websites and columnists mainly of the mainstream. Occasionally, founder Matt Drudge and two

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<sup>62</sup> The website originated from the founder Matt Drudge’s personal weekly-email newsletter to the media industry insiders in 1996 and became famous by breaking the news of US President Bill Clinton’s sex scandal with the White House intern Monica Lewinsky in 1998.

other editors post headlines of news links. Similarly, IndyMedia, which was founded in November 1999 in order to deliver coverage of anti-WTO protests in Seattle in the US, is a collective news network of various anti-capitalist organisations in the world, operating by an open publishing system that allows anyone to post a story, which is published without filtering. As such, the participation of The Drudge Report and IndyMedia was limited mostly to professionals who belonged to institutional organisations whereas OMN materialised the inclusive notion of ordinary citizens' direct participation in news production. In the following sections, I will examine distinguishing features of OMN's citizen journalism in relation to the tabloidization debate and the traditional standard journalism.

### **5.3.1. Citizens' News Production in Cooperation with Professional Journalists**

The founder and CEO Oh unveiled his key notions of operational philosophy in an interview with the Associated Press (2003), which was emphasised in my personal interview with Oh at the 2007 OMN's International Citizen Journalists' Forum.

With *OhmyNews*, we wanted to say goodbye to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century journalism where people only saw things through the eyes of the mainstream, conservative media (in Korea). As our main concept that every citizen can be a reporter suggests, we put everything out there and people judge the truth for themselves.

OMN sought a departure from traditional journalism in two respects. On the one hand, OMN aimed at changing the existing news landscape in which the conservative media had played a dominant role in setting the socio-political agenda and manufacturing public opinion. As discussed previously, the imbalanced relations between the conservative and the progressive had been structured by the political economy of the Korean media industry. In pursuit of progressive journalism, OMN operates a small number of professional journalists who write 30 percent of the entire articles with focus

on two or three imminent, pressing issues, generally of politics, society or NGOs that require immediate access to credible sources. In particular, whenever focal events take place, OMN dispatches professional journalists to deliver prompt, on-the-spot and in-depth coverage with real-time video footage, often lasting over five hours. For example, OMN aired the confrontation between the former president Kim Young-sam and the Korea university students on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2000 when the students protested his visit to lecture. OMN aired 14 hours of live coverage, which was an unprecedented media event and drew 35,000 views and 583 readers' opinions on that day. This feature remained as OMN's distinguishing strength until personal bloggers armed with Web 2.0 technology and hand-held cameras took hold of online news space during the 2008 anti-US beef protest. In addition, in respect to local-based issues or events, the professional journalists work in cooperation with citizen journalists as was seen in the Democratic Party's Primary, which I will examine in a later section.

More significantly, OMN challenged the normative notion of who should count as journalists through the citizen journalist system. In Korea, it is extremely competitive to become a professional journalist, particularly for the mainstream media, for two main reasons. Firstly, working for mainstream media guarantees higher wages and welfare benefits in comparison with the progressive media. Due to the market-driven nature of the industry most progressive media, such as *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, have marginalised circulation with low advertising revenues and therefore suffer economic deficits. Wages and benefits for journalists in those media are thus relatively poor. Secondly, in general, in order to become a professional journalist applicants spend years to prepare for a required exam, which is said to be like one of the hardest state-run

national exams<sup>63</sup>. However, with the slogan “Every citizen is a journalist”, OMN removed the existing high standard to become a journalist and to some degree rejected the privileged authority and power of professional journalists that had been conventionally taken for granted. Instead, anyone is allowed to be entitled as a journalist with no specific required qualification but only with a simple sign-up procedure to provide personal details such as real name, national ID number (if applicable), a telephone number, an email address, job position (if applicable), home and/or office addresses. OMN’s employment of a citizen journalist system was certainly not new in the sense that *Dhanzi Ilbo* initiated a limited citizen reporter system at its launch in 1998. However, its approach to institutionalise a citizen journalist system fully within a media organisation and therefore to grant citizens a legitimate public presence in the media was a radical novelty that appealed to the mass public. Accordingly, the number of ‘news guerrillas’<sup>64</sup> rapidly increased: from 727 at the time of its launch to 20,000 by September 2002 to 47,318 in April 2007 (Kim, 2007a), and to 67,481 in 2010.

Meanwhile, in order to secure the accuracy and accountability of citizen journalists’ news articles, which have been criticised as deficient and debasing of the standards of journalism by critics and traditional professional media (Fenton, 2010, p.10; Singer and Ashman, 2009, pp.239-242), OMN operates several devices at different levels. At an individual level, a citizen journalist is required to observe the code of conduct and ethics. For example, high priority is given to the accuracy and originality of articles. To prevent plagiarism, when citing some part of other authors’ writings, sources should be disclosed and also whether the article is their own discovery or based

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<sup>63</sup> The representative state-run exams include the bar examination to get qualified as a lawyer – a solicitor and a barrister, an attorney and a judge, and the examination to become a civil servant. In fact, the examination to become a journalist is not a state-run one but it is socially assigned as one of those exams: on the one hand, the exam is relentlessly hard to pass and on the other hand, a secure social position with economic comfort is guaranteed after passing.

<sup>64</sup> In the sense that citizen journalists should infiltrate their own community and therefore deliver eyewitness accounts on the spot instantly, Oh Yeon-ho named a citizen journalist a ‘news guerrilla’.

on publicised report material. In addition, if they deliver an inaccurate report, they should correct it immediately. At an organisational level, OMN operates a professional editorial team. Their main responsibilities are to screen, edit and place citizens' articles, which are analogous to the roles of a gatekeeper in traditional journalism. However, in general, their authority is limited to the minimum level: fact- and libel-check for accuracy; and credibility and proofreading of grammar. Only when a citizen's article has enough significance to be placed as a main top story does the editorial team actively intervene to revise the title or request the author to supplement the article with additional coverage if needed (Kim, 2007a). On average throughout OMN's growth, citizen journalists upload 150 to 200 stories on a daily basis, which covers 70 percent of all articles (Kim, 2007a). Relying on the result of the editorial team's screening, the submitted articles are classified into two: *Ing-geol* [the state that the firewood is burning in great flames], which has passed the screening process and *Saeng-na-mu* [green wood that is not ready to burn], which has failed the check or is still awaiting review. *Saeng-na-mu* articles are shown on the site, but the responsibility for the articles remains solely on the author. As regards the editing procedures and decisions, OMN provides a bulletin board for citizen and professional journalists to exchange interactive communication. Finally at the educational level, OMN offers various training programmes about news gathering and writing for public and citizen journalists through OhmySchool, which comprehends OMN's overall educational projects on- and off-line. Most of the training programmes for citizen journalists take place offline at the Ganghwa-do citizen journalist school, which opened on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at the site of a closed primary school. The programmes are various: children and teenager's programmes about how to interview and write news; Oh Yen-ho's tour lecture about the making of journalists in

major cities; an editorial journalist's talk about how to write to be selected as *Ing-geol* and the like.

Arguably, the critical factor to determine the accountability and credibility of news is the reliability of sources journalists have access to. Traditionally, a limited number of press cards had been granted to journalists whose entrance to the press conference room of governmental offices was permitted only through agreement or voting among the related officers. This restricted press conference system institutionalised inequality of assemblage and dissemination of information, by which conservative mainstream journalists had taken prioritised positions in comparison with marginalised progressive media journalists. There was a landmark event on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2001 during the opening ceremony of the Incheon international airport. Then citizen journalist Choi Kyung-joon, who now works as a professional<sup>65</sup> journalist, was ousted from the press conference room on the grounds that he was not an accredited reporter with a press card. Immediately Choi filed for an injunction upon the airport to allow him access to the press conference room. The court ordered that the airport should not disturb the reporter's entrance to and reporting in the related press conference room, which made a good precedent for access to other governmental offices. Soon after, in 2003, President Roh Moo-hyun abolished the press card system as permission to the press conference room of the Blue House and opened it through a registration system. Correspondingly, in 2004, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism declared that every governmental office should run an open press conference room. Eventually, OMN's achievement of allowing citizen journalists' access to the press conference room in governmental offices and the following policy reform during the Roh government broadened the scope of the traditional notion of who can have access to credible sources

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<sup>65</sup> In this context, the term 'professional' means 'employed and regularly paid'. After a few years working as a citizen journalist, Mr Choi succeeded in his application for a professional journalist position at OMN.

which overcame citizen journalists' far limited access to 'routine source-controlled exchanges'<sup>66</sup> (Nip, 2009, p.102; Reich, 2008), enabling citizen journalist's credibility to be secured.

As such, OMN breaks down the rigid boundary between reader and writer of news by opening up the opportunity to anyone who wants to deliver 'stories'. This deconstruction challenged the linear relationship between professional journalists and citizens, which had been institutionally set up as producers and consumers. In other words, by institutionalising citizens' participation in news production, that was once regarded as 'the exclusive domain of the professional' (Allan, 2009, p.18), OMN's citizen journalism not only expanded the role of citizens as consumers to 'prosumers'<sup>67</sup> but also diminished the traditionally privileged position and authority of professional journalists. Moreover, through the cooperation with professional journalists and the previously mentioned strategies to enhance the accuracy and accountability of citizen journalism, OMN dismissed the doubts and accusations from professional media. Much of the criticism comes from 'a perceived crisis in the ethos of traditional journalism' among professional journalists as they take citizen's direct participation in news production as a threat to their existing authority and profession to set the public agenda and shape public opinion (Bailey, 2009, p.134). In addition, the development of this collective psyche revolves around the rapid decline of newspaper subscriptions in changing media environments. In Korea, the readership of offline newspapers dropped from 69.3% in 1996 to 48.3% in 2004 (2005), which resulted mainly from the high competition with other media outlets that were thriving in accordance with the

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<sup>66</sup> Examples are official sources such as press conferences, press releases, and updates of government-controlled areas.

<sup>67</sup> The term indicates the hybrid nature of audiences/users promoted by new ICT technology, which means producers and consumers.

advancement of communications technology, i.e. the rise of the Internet and the expansion of cable and satellite television.

Intriguingly, the criticism of citizen journalism by professional journalists and some scholars demands rethinking citizen journalism in the context of the tabloidization or feminisation debate in the 1990s and early 2000s. In the following section, through exploring OMN's distinctive departures from traditional journalism, I will analyse the implications for the conventionally normative divide between the public (the serious/the political/the rational) and the private (the non-serious/the personal/the emotional) in relation to the tabloidization debate of news.

### **5.3.2. Another Tabloid Tale?**

#### **5.3.2.1. The everyday and the personal: (Re-)feminisation of news content**

The normative notion of traditional news values has been established as a set of criteria in journalists' daily practice to assess the newsworthiness of events. In other words, the conventional news values are 'in part *de facto* justifications of non-negotiable imperatives' (Dahlgren, 1992, p.10) or grounded on 'the passive exercise of routine and highly regulated procedures in the task of selecting from already limited supplies of information' (Golding and Elliott, 1979, p.114), enabling journalists to perform their work with limited time and resources (Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005, pp.5-17). Moreover, the focus of 'newsworthiness' is typically on those in power and authority such as politicians or experts with institutional titles who are represented as key actors in the public world. Even if traditional journalists write people's life stories in the newspaper feature section or magazines, they are likely to rely on their own stereotypical ideas and assumptions (see King and Schudson, 1995; Sumpter, 2000) that are close to the view of the power elites and distanced from people's genuine feeling



and thinking. Or rather, they focus on human interest of weirdness or abnormality. Not surprisingly, ordinary people are often misrepresented or excluded from the main scene of the public world (Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2005, p.138; Turner, 2010).

In sharp contrast, by allocating 50 percent of the space to citizen journalists' life stories, OMN validated the everyday and the private that had been degraded as dumbed down or tabloidization. In a broad sense, the basic criteria to determine where to place citizens' *Ing-geol* articles either as main top, main sub or section top stories or on the *Ing-geol* article list are not significantly different from the normative news values such as timeliness, clarity (un-ambiguity), continuity (follow-up stories) or relevance (meaningfulness)<sup>68</sup> (Kim, 2007a). However, OMN's notion of newsworthiness focuses on the events of heightened relevance or proximity to the lifeworld of ordinary people by placing the same weight on "soft" news of the everyday and the personal of the people as on "hard" news of the state affair and those in power. In this sense, OMN's citizen journalism is parallel to tabloidization's concentration on the people's taste and concern as of great importance. However, OMN attempts to legitimise ordinary citizens' common 'experiential knowledge' (Gamson, 1992; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994) as a significant resource in making sense of the world. This is articulated through citizens' own perception and lived experience on the ground, whereas those concerns are still selected and manufactured by professional journalists, often in the bubble

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<sup>68</sup> In 1965, Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge identified 12 news values based on their study of three international crises. The news values are 'frequency (events favoured over processes), threshold (intensity)', un-ambiguity, 'meaningfulness (the relevance of a news story to the readers' frame of reference), consonance (the build-up to an expected event), unexpectedness, continuity, composition (a balance of stories), reference to elite nations and people, personification and negativity (bad news)' (Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey and Richardson, 2005, p.174; Niblock, 2005, p.76). Harcup and O'Neil (2001) re-tested Galtung and Ruge's news values and suggested 10 news values: 'reference to the power elites (individuals, organisations and nations), reference to celebrity, entertainment' (e.g. human interest), 'surprise, good news (e.g. personal triumph) and bad news, magnitude, relevance (cultural proximity and political importance), follow-up stories, and the newspaper's agenda'.

newsroom, as is the case with hard news and tabloids that are easily inclined to political economy forces.

In the gate-keeping process of traditional hard news, in which hierarchical, bureaucratic and male-dominated organisational customs and norms sit at the centre, these personalised stories, women's stories in particular, easily slip through the net of newsworthiness as private, unimportant and trivial subjects. The binary separation between the public and the private, the serious and the non-serious, rationality and emotionality, which are grounded in Enlightenment values, evaluates the arena of the personal, the non-serious and the emotional as tabloidization or feminisation of news to undermine established journalistic standards (Gripsrud, 2000, p.285; Macdonald, 2000, p.251; Sparks, 2000, p.2) that is the core value of the serious media. According to Habermas's notion of the public sphere, detached, objective hard news is crucial to enable informed and engaged citizenry whereas "feminised, soft" news, characterised by 'more attention to 'human interest' news, a greater care for audience needs and desires, and a less detached and rational mode of reporting' (van Zoonen, 1998, p.41), is detrimental to the formation of the public sphere which requires a rational, critical discussion to take place. However, human-interest stories are not symptomatic of tabloidization but rather 'the central component of news' (Bird, 2003, p.67) and personalisation of public affairs facilitate audiences to understand the possible effect of the event on their day-to-day lives and help to engage them with the issue (Bird, 2003, pp.68-69; Tomlinson, 1997, p.73)

Moreover, the terms "detached, objective, hard versus feminised, soft" as ascribed to the quality of news are gendered, hierarchical associations (Holland, 1998; Landes, 1988; Macdonald, 1998; van Zoonen, 1991, 1998). In other words, the disdaining view, of the characteristic of news that many female news journalists

conceive as their ‘role-conception’ (van Zoonen, 1998, p.41), should be understood as part of a ‘general patriarchal scheme’ (van Zoonen, 1998, p.46).

In addition, it is questionable whether the journalistic standard of objectivity or detachment contributes to the enhancement of democracy as traditionally theorised. Unlike the alleged democratic role of objectivity, the origin of objectivity as journalistic ideology dates back to the mid-nineteenth century with the growing emphasis on scientific expertise and technology and, even more significantly, commercial reasons (McNair, 2005, pp.31-33; Steiner, 1998, pp.146-147). Market-driven journalism needed objectivity as a ‘strategic ritual’ (Tuchman, 1972) in order not to antagonise advertisers, who were providing the main source of revenues, and to fit into the ideology of middle-class power elites pursuing objective science and technology. Moreover, the premise that news is characterised by disinterested truth on the ground of objective fact is no longer persuasive and sustainable. Firstly, journalism cannot avoid having ‘a certain degree of relativism and subjectivity’ (McNair, 2005, p.32). Secondly, the democratising news media have a role in connecting and engaging private individuals to the public world by providing a mediated sphere where the private and the public cannot be separated.

In this light, a citizen journalist Kim Hye-won offers a good example of how “feminised” news of OMN serves to actualise democratic potential of the media. As a female citizen journalist herself, on the one hand, she provides a new, positive perspective of marginalised social groups such as the female elderly and “Adjumma” on the grounds of her day-to-day lived experience as Adjumma, daughter and local community member. She has written special feature life stories of the elderly, who had sacrificed their individual lives to meet the traditional expectations of ‘being there for others’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002), then found new joy of living their own life

and identity in their 70s by investing their resources of time and money in themselves such as learning written Korean and/or new hobbies or doing charity works.

As an observer in the by-election of her local community in April 2011, Kim conveyed substantial interest in public policies and active voting of Adjummas in their 30s and 40s in her article “Do not ignore the real power of Bundang city, the Apron Troops of Adjumma”, whose excerpt is illustrated as below:

In most mainstream media the focus was on the contribution of white-collar male office workers to the unexpected victory of the Democratic Party in Bundang area in which the conservative Grand National Party had been traditionally strong...But I observed a procession of apron troops of Adjumma to vote before their children came back from school...Bundang Adjumma is computer savvy, actively engaged in online discussions on various subjects including public policies particularly relating to the children's education and home economics...I would argue, therefore, their rational choice resulted in the unpredicted turn of the by-election.

In this way, she presented a new affirmative view of Adjummas as politically aware and ‘informed’, ‘monitorial’ (Schudson, 1998; 2000, p.16) and engaged citizens who examine diverse information sources in a wider range of politics that is directly relating to their private matter of the day-to-day lives – the familial roles of childbearing and home management – and identify danger to the personal and public good and commit their time and energy to political participation.

On the other hand, Kim's article exemplifies the ways in which personalised, emotive stories engage readers with a broad scope of public matter and the subsequent public action. One article entitled, “I wished we could have lived like a wood-seller and a nymph in a fairy tale”, disclosed a heartbreaking story of a family man who had to send his cancer-suffering Philippine wife to the Philippines for care due to extreme poverty and no national health benefit for his wife. Readers' responses varied from

affective sympathy to reasoned resentment of the current social welfare conditions of such deprived families and to discussion about amendment of the immigration law:

“As a father of two children, I am so sad about the situation of this family (Father Bear).”

“Thank you so much, Kim. I can feel we still live in a beautiful world in which this private story has high news value to the extent that it is shown as a main top. Owing to OMN, we can have hope for the future (New hope).”

“The government should bring Seung-hyun’s mother back to Korea and provide medical treatment. Otherwise, we will provide her medical treatment. She must be given Korean citizenship as she was married to a Korean man and delivered two children (Lee Jung-hee).”

“Our immigration law should be amended for foreign spouses to benefit from the national health care at least. In comparison with developed countries’ social welfare systems for immigrants, Korea is far behind (Nevy).”

Subsequently, not only did the news mobilise readers’ emotional rapport so as to raise 20 million KRW (19,000US\$) for the wife’s medical cost but it also awakened public attention about deprived ‘multicultural families’<sup>69</sup> whose social welfare conditions are deficient due to the complicated procedure and assessment for a foreign spouse to acquire Korean citizenship<sup>70</sup>. As a response to the readers’ growing concern, OMN delivered a series of follow-up feature reports dealing with the far limited social welfare conditions of non-Korean spouses or immigrants without citizenship, i.e. no public health benefit.

This news event shows how a private matter can transform into the public concern through ‘instantiation and affectivity’ (Macdonald, 2000, p.251) of personal stories and how readers’ emotional engagement substantiates their extended social

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<sup>69</sup> As the number of couples in marriage with foreign spouses increased, the government officially designated those families as ‘multicultural family’. The large number of wives in the rural areas is multinational but mostly from South East Asian countries such as Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, or China.

<sup>70</sup> Since 2005, the minimum period of legal marriage for a foreign spouse to apply for Korean citizenship was reduced from 5 years to 2 years. Without the citizenship, foreign spouses have no social welfare benefits such as National Health Service or Income benefits, etc.

interest into public action of ‘the diffused audience’ (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998). Here a temporal yet powerful mass of private, physically distanced and scattered individuals gathered in online space to pursue a public purpose, for which private individuals came to form a public. At OMN, the sharing of information and elicited feelings such as compassion and empathetic grief mobilised instant social action of donating through online immediacy and interactivity between journalists and readers, and between readers through the commentary space alongside the article. The readers’ commentary space has a similar function to Readers’ Letters to the Editor in traditional journalism in the sense that it provides an important public space to present the public view. However, it is of importance to note that OMN’s commentary space represents the direct, unmediated, or more precisely, unfiltered sense of public rationality and sensibility whereas the traditional Readers’ Letters section is the outcome of the gate-keeping process regarding content and style. Therefore, the sharing and mobilising of emotionally engaged public action through communicative immediacy and interactivity, and its direct presentation in the public sphere of readers’ commentary space is another feature of OMN’s citizen journalism in stark contrast to the objectivity-oriented traditional journalism.

#### **5.3.2.2. Emotive, colloquial, interpretative self-storytelling: (Re-)tabloidisation of news style?**

Another departure from traditional journalism is to deconstruct the conventional news-writing formula based on objectivity or detachment. Hence, citizen journalists are encouraged to write as they feel comfortable whether it is in first person accounts, letter-style or in a conversational way. The founder and CEO Oh (Oh, 2005, p.98) clearly delineated this point in the launching plan:

We seek to demolish the normative writing style established in traditional journalism. Our experiment aims to deliver news in an easier, more interesting, more meaningful and accurate way. It entails diverse writing styles such as conversational or letter-writing style as well as straight news writing style.

As such, OMN liberated news writing from the serious, hard news style full of esoteric jargon in abstract language. In a radical approach, OMN adopted the style of the tabloid news approach using emotive, colloquial language and interpretative writing. Moreover, it heightened the first-person storytelling of concrete, substantial emotionality with a base on lived experience. Kim Hye-won's articles examined in the previous section demonstrated how OMN's "citizen-centred" approach served to allow 'imaginative proximity' (Tomlinson, 1997, p.77) for audiences to take a certain, private concern as "our" public matter. In another example, the citizen journalist Joo Kyung-shim's article entitled "I felt sorry for my middle-aged husband", which received readers' third highest manuscript fee<sup>71</sup> in 2006, narrated an emotional account of the author's experience as a poor wife who had to watch her sick husband overcome post-surgery pain without painkillers and return to work the following day to earn money and pay for living expenses. This emotional self-storytelling narrative immediately engaged readers and mobilised 358,000KRW (330 US\$) of readers' voluntary manuscript fee with 45 responses showing sympathy and support for the couple's predicament. The self-narrating, instantiated personal story with frank emotional depth became a prototype for citizen journalists' news writing. This radical writing style has paved the way for citizens to write news in easy, comfortable ways. More significantly, by making it easy not only to consume but also to produce news, it practically removed the threshold

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<sup>71</sup> The readers' voluntary manuscript fee is one of the indexes to gain readers' perception of a particular article along with the number of hits, the texted commentaries, and approvals and disapprovals that are similar to likes and dislikes of the Facebook.

between journalists and consumers and advanced citizens' participation in news production.

Not surprisingly, in the mainstream traditional media, citizen journalism is criticised as 'poorly written, self-absorbed and hyper-opinionated' and mostly non-objective (Reagan 2003, cited in Nip, 2006, p.229), all criticisms that OMN too received. Strikingly, the question of the news writing style and objectivity sits again at the centre of a discourse of tabloidization in the mainstream. According to mainstream thinking, the tabloid-style of writing mainly degrades the journalistic standards by overly simplifying the public issues and focusing on private matters. Accordingly, it results in diminishing the ideal role of media for promoting democracy and dumbs down the citizenry. In securing journalistic standards, objectivity has been traditionally regarded to be a critical factor along with accuracy and credibility. As discussed earlier, however, objectivity as a journalistic standard is questionable. Moreover, hard news of common concern with a focus on objectivity and abstract reasoning tends to fail in enhancing informed and engaged citizenry. As many studies suggest, hard news tends to work well only to a particular group of people who are already informed and politically aware and engaged. In contrast, it makes people outside this circle feel distanced and irrelevant (Hargreaves and Thomas, 2002, p.80; Norris, 2000). In this sense, the theory that hard (fact-based, serious) news is in a prioritised position over soft (interpretation-based, human-interest) or tabloid-style news as democratising media is losing its ground. Moreover, the clear divide between the two has been diminishing as the serious news adopts the news values of tabloid or feminised journalism and shifts toward the form of 'tabloid-launders' (Sharkey, 1997, p.6) or 'infotainment' in which news/information blends with entertainment. The fast-changing, highly competitive media environment, elevated by the newly emergent media technology and the



subsequently declining readership of newspapers along with the heightened profit-oriented forces, expound not only tabloidization as a common phenomenon both in quality press and tabloids but also generate hostility and criticism such as ‘inherently untrustworthy and lacking in objectivity’ (Allan, 2009, p.20), which professional journalists express toward citizen journalism. This recalls the criticism that print journalists directed at early television newscasts in the 1950s (Naughton, 1999) and at tabloids or tabloidization in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In Korean context, as described in Chapter Three ‘Mapping out the South Korean Media Landscape’, it was after the 1987 democratisation and the adoption of new media technology such as cable television and video media in the 1990s that the increased competition began to pressure the media industry with deregulation. More significantly, economic growth increasingly expanded the advertising industry, which exacerbated the competition among newspaper media whose readership was already in a rapid decline<sup>72</sup>. Correspondingly, as a viable strategy to expand advertising revenues and reach larger audiences, 10 national daily newspapers with *Joong Ang* in the lead (1994) adopted a section edition with large and colourful photographs in 1997<sup>73</sup>. The additional edition mainly consisted of the non-serious news such as culture and entertainment, travel<sup>74</sup>, ICT, domestic finance, lifestyle and women’s issues, since women were emerging as a significant demographic having purchasing power. Yoo (2001) noted that despite the increased volume of women-related news stories, the approach of most national dailies focused on a patriarchal perspective mainly dealing

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<sup>72</sup> The population of newspaper readers rapidly declined from 54.0% in 1995 to 40.8% in 2000 while the population of terrestrial and cable television viewers grew from 32.8% (11.4%) in 1995 to 39.9% (17.4%) in 2000 (KPF, 2001).

<sup>73</sup> In 1995, *Kyunghyang* launched an additional section edition titled *X-Magazine* and in 1997, all the other national dailies including *Chosun* and *Dong-A* began to provide a separate edition in addition to the regular edition.

<sup>74</sup> The Roh Tae-woo government (1988-1993) removed restrictions on travelling abroad in 1989, which paralleled Korea’s economic growth. The liberalization of travelling abroad accelerated the public interest in leisure and travelling.

with such commercialised interests as fashion and diet. Many critics argued that the tendency towards the soft news approach had not contributed to the diversification of perspectives or the appropriate delivery of readers' demands but had instead resulted in the heightened competition and the debased quality of journalism (Chung, 1997; Nam, 1998). Eventually, in 1999, the deepening competition among the mainstream motivated *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A* to bring about an increase in the number of pages to 48 on average from 16 to 24 on average during the authoritarian regimes.

As another manoeuvre to increase readership and expand advertising revenues, national dailies launched tabloids with a focus on sports and celebrity. For example, *The Sports Seoul Daily* (1985) of *Seoul Shinmun* took the lead, followed by *The Sports Chosun* (1990) of *Chosun*, *The Sports Hankook*<sup>75</sup> (2005) of *Hankook*, *The Sports Khan* (2005) of *Kyunghyang* and *The Sports Dong-A* (2008) of *Dong-A*. In addition, they made business partnerships with online sports newspapers (Hwang, 2003). For instance, *Joong Ang* acquired some stocks of *The Daily Sports* along with the exclusive right to use its news content in 2003 and eventually took it over in 2005. *Hankyoreh* also increased the infotainment news by receiving sports and entertainment news from an online tabloid *Good Day*. As such, the tendency of infotainment in national dailies has become as common as market-driven journalism. Therefore, the supposedly hierarchical oppositions between news/the serious/quality journalism/good journalism and entertainment/the non-serious/tabloids/bad journalism are dissolving, and are 'so characteristic of journalism's self-legitimizing discourses' (Dahlgren, 1992, p.14).

One of the most remarkable events in democratising newspaper media was *Hankyoreh*'s full introduction of the Korean language with horizontal printing at its launch in 1988. Certainly, *The Sports Seoul Daily*, aiming at young male readers who

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<sup>75</sup> In order to target the niche market, *Hankook Ilbo* distributed the tabloid free.

had received education with Korean textbooks in horizontal printing, had initiated those printing formats at its launch in 1985 as a tabloid newspaper<sup>76</sup>. However, the normative print style of national dailies was still predominantly a combination of Korean and Chinese<sup>77</sup> with vertical writing from right to left, all of which made news reading difficult and time-consuming. Hence, the accessibility and consumption of newspaper news had been limited to a restricted number of intellectuals or the well educated. By the time of *Hankyoreh*'s launch, the usage of Chinese letters in newspapers gradually decreased but was still dominant (see below).



Figure 1. The Dong-A Ilbo (14<sup>th</sup> May 1988)  
Source: The Korea Press Foundation (KPF)

Historically this journalistic practice originated from the Japanese colonisation, during which the Japanese government banned the Korean language in public spaces such as schools, publications, etc in order to obliterate the Korean identity and culture. During the colonial era, Japanese mixed with Chinese letters was the official language taught in

<sup>76</sup> Immediately, its popularity outran the first tabloid *The Daily Sports* and it continued to sustain as the largest-circulated tabloid, followed by *The Daily Sports* and *The Sports Chosun* (1990). In 1990, *The Daily Sports* employed horizontal writing followed by *The Sports Chosun* in 1999.

<sup>77</sup> In a sentence, most nouns were written in Chinese letters and the suffix in Korean.

educational institutions and therefore the poor and the uneducated remained excluded to a great extent. Vestiges of Japanese colonialism remained after the 1945 Independence and the Japanese writing style and size of newspaper continued as a norm in the national dailies. Because of this, the founding members of *Hankyoreh*, who had fought for democratic journalism, aimed at raising accessibility of news and information as a key factor to enhancing democracy. Consequently, *Hankyoreh*'s innovation of using solely Korean in horizontal printing radically improved the newspaper's accessibility and fostered literacy in people who were poorly educated, particularly in those over 40 at that time, and in the young generation who were educated after Independence. In the 1990s, the 20 to 50-year-old Korean-educated generation constituted the majority of the newspaper demographic along with a growing number of female readers. Because of this, all the national dailies came to adopt the *Hankyoreh*'s easy and reader-friendly printing style: *Joong Ang* (1994), *Seoul* and *Munhwa* (1996), *Kyunhyang* (1997), *Dong-A*, *Kukmin* and *Hankook* (1998), *Chosun* and *Sekye* (1999). Consequently, *Hankyoreh*'s radical innovation in printing format substantially democratised news reading by enhancing newspaper literacy as an important tool for 'knowledge acquisition' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.108) in order to participate in the public sphere. Likewise, OMN's new writing style using first person, emotive and colloquial storytelling with the adoption of soft news approach democratised news production by radically broadening the possibility of styles.

### **5.3.2.3. Similarities and differences between OMN's citizen journalism and tabloidization**

To examine similarities and differences between OMN's citizen journalism and tabloidization, there is a need to differentiate terms used together with tabloidization. Those terms include personalisation, popularisation, and feminisation, all of which are typically criticized by the traditional standard journalism as debasing journalistic standards. However, in highly competitive media industries attempting to gain larger audiences for secure advertising revenues (Sparks, 2000, p.3), tabloidization (or tabloids) is better understood as 'its excesses' and direct exaggerations of some of the conventions and codes of traditional news (Langer, 1992, p.128) or 'an extreme form of popularization' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.46). Moreover, as indicated through some scholars' arguments in an attempt to see the democratic potential of tabloidization (see Bird, 1990, 2003; Carter, Branstom and Allan, 1998; Connell, 1991, 1992; Dahlgren, 1992, 1995, 2009; Gripsrud, 2000; Holland, 1998; Macdonald, 2000; Tomlinson, 1997; van Zoonen, 1991, 1998), the terms 'personalisation, popularization and feminisation' are used instead of 'tabloidization' in order to connote the positive sense when it plays a democratic role to connect ordinary people to the political life – which is a 'fundamental role of journalism in democracy' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.48) – and/or to extend the horizon of the political beyond the explicitly state-related.

In this light, OMN's citizen journalism shares some of the key features of tabloidization in a positive sense. Distinguished from the traditional standard journalism of a detached, objective and rational mode of reporting, they seek audience/citizen-centred journalism that is reflected in the writing style and content. On the one hand, compared with the more traditional standard news with a focus on privileged elites, national and world politics, much attention is given to the events of an immediacy and proximity to everyday lives of ordinary people both in OMN and tabloids. In doing so,

people's taste and private concerns, such as women's personalised, domestic stories that were regarded as the matter of private realm, are recalibrated as 'important and contestable topics within the public sphere' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.46). Moreover, ordinary citizens' 'experiential knowledge' (Gamson, 1992; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994) is legitimised as significant resource in making sense of the world. On the other hand, OMN and tabloidization employ 'easy-to-consume formats' such as vivid, colloquial language and storytelling of concrete, emotionally charged mini-episodes grounded in ordinary people's lived experience. Therefore, they allow social groups marginalised by traditional, elitist, detached formats and styles in abstract language to feel incorporated within the society as citizens (see the OMN's news stories of Adjumma and the working poor).

However, there are three salient differences between OMN's citizen journalism and tabloidization, most of which are related to the negative characteristics of tabloidization. Firstly, as a key strategy to achieve larger audiences, tabloidization implements sensationalism and thereby concentrates excessively on personalised, private scandals of celebrities or politicians, and specifically on 'victimage stories' (Dahlgren, 1995, p.61) of ordinary people often in disastrous tragedy or crime news without providing concrete social, political circumstances. In contrast, OMN's citizen journalism rather focuses on authentic and frank revelations of ordinary people's lived experience with reflexive, emotional depth within the wider contexts of political economic conditions, whose understanding becomes deepened and supplemented via immediate, interactive discursive commentary space formed by fellow citizens (see Kim's second example article). Secondly, and most saliently, ordinary people's view on various topics, ranging from their everyday lives to politics in the OMN, is articulated directly through first person, interpretative narratives with a base on their own

perception and experience (see Kim's first article and Joo's article) and not by professional journalists, as in the case of traditional journalism and tabloids. Thirdly, in comparison with tabloids that pay relatively little attention to political processes, economic developments and social changes, and instead focus more on diversions like sports and celebrities, OMN's reportage of explicitly state-related affairs and politics, and ordinary people's everyday life stories are given more importance than any other news<sup>78</sup>. Consequently, it would be of importance whether or not the particular media provide relevant information, that is useful to citizens, and 'communicative spaces' (Dahlgren, 2009, p.115), where civic engagement and participation in the political are enacted regardless of what forms the media may take.

## **5.4. Remarkable Turn: The 2002 presidential election**

### **5.4.1. Mediating the Public Sphere**

Despite several events<sup>79</sup> in which OMN drew public attention with its on-the-spot and in-depth report, it was during the 2002 presidential election that OMN gained critical popularity and success by rupturing the rigid news landscape as an influential news outlet. It is widely understood that OMN had played a crucial role in the late former President Roh Moo-Hyun's success in the election<sup>80</sup>, in which he had little support even from his own party and no spotlight from the mainstream media. In this section, I will examine the ways in which OMN mediated private individuals to the public concern in the election and formed the public sphere.

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<sup>78</sup> On 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011, OMN launched *OhmyStar* dealing with popular entertainment.

<sup>79</sup> OMN had become known by providing exclusive news of several events. These included the '386 generation' politicians' drinking party after the worship at the Gwangju Memorial (2000), the Korea University students' protest of the former President Kim Young-sam's visit to lecture (2000), the questioning of the Samsung corporation's illegal inheritance transfer (2000) and etc.

<sup>80</sup> Also see these articles (Chang, 2005; Chang and Lee, 2006; Kim and Hamilton, 2006; Park, 2002; Park and Joo, 2004).

Among a series of political events during the election that enabled OMN to concentrate massive public attention, most notable was the MDP's<sup>81</sup> open primary. The 70,000 electorate for the election of the party's presidential candidate consisted of the party representatives (20%), party members (30%), and non-party members (50%) (Chang and Lee, 2006, p.156) who were unprecedentedly allowed to vote. Moreover, 2.5 percent of non-party members (1,750) were selected by online voting in pursuit of encouraging young people's participation. In order to report on the MDP open primary, which was run in the form of a tour across the nation in 16 regions from 9<sup>th</sup> March to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2002, OMN utilised local-based citizen journalists to team up with professional journalists. Particularly, for the Gwangju primary where the MDP was originally based, OMN dispatched 20 citizen and professional reporters to webcast 5 hours of on-the-spot and in-depth live coverage, which was novel at that time. During the 16<sup>th</sup> March Gwangju primary, OMN's live webcasting recorded 3.24million page views. On 30<sup>th</sup> April, after the confirmation of Roh's presidential candidacy and an exclusive interview with him, OMN again broke its own record with 6.15million page views (2.05million users) (OMN, 2002).

As such, the new method of news delivery provided audiences with a substantial sense of presence and engagement with the event on the scene. Particularly, OMN focused on a growing phenomenon around Roh in the political geography, which was marginalised in the mainstream. For example, there was no *Chosun* article on the day of Seoul primary (27<sup>th</sup>) in sharp contrast to OMN's 6 articles delivering it in detail ranging from Roh's public speech and political philosophy and vision to his family stories. This indicates that the dominant media ignored the Roh phenomenon until he was elected as the official MDP candidate whereas OMN accorded enormous

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<sup>81</sup> Until the 2004 general election when the Labour Party formed a negotiating body in the Parliament by winning 9 seats, Korean politics was run under two party systems.



newsworthiness to it. Moreover, the textual analysis of those articles shows that *Chosun* articles framed Roh in a very hostile, negative way. For example, nearer to the time of the election, one article titled “The physiognomy of the presidential candidates”<sup>82</sup> metaphorically constructed a strongly positive image of the conservative GNP candidate Lee Hoe-chang as a king whereas denigrating Roh’s image.

“Lee has a physiognomy of a falcon or an eagle, which means *dignified and clean*...Lee’s mouth has a monkey’s physiognomy, which means *extraordinarily wise*...Meanwhile, the MDP’s candidate Roh Moo-hyun has a lynx’s physiognomy, which means an *infighter*. Its character is rather *self-reliant, not in harmony with others*... The deep wrinkle on his forehead tells his *stubbornness*.” (28<sup>th</sup> November 2002, *Chosun*, emphasis mine)

It is worthwhile to note that the article, although placed in a small space, had some importance as a regular daily section article; it spoke to people’s stereotyped perceptions lurking in the collective consciousness and associated Lee or Roh with the desired image according to their purpose. For example, nearer an election day in 2002, there was continuous gossip about presidential candidates’ physiognomic perception as stated in the *Chosun*’s article. It was argued that the rumoured perception of a candidate had played a significant role for some older generation’s voting decision. Interestingly, in contrast to *Chosun*’s physiognomic traits of the presidential candidates there was also a rumour spread that Roh’s distinct single wrinkle on the forehead was extremely rare as an indication of king’s fortune.

In addition to what people wanted to know about but could not get from the mainstream media, OMN provided a discursive space for interactive and immediate - or sometimes prolonged - exchanges of communication to take place among news

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<sup>82</sup> The stereotypical perception of people based on physiognomy is still influential in many aspects of Korean life. For example, it has been said that some big companies hired well-known fortune-tellers to view job interviewees’ physiognomy, e.g. whether or not an applicant will not leave the company and indeed work hard.

audiences through a 100-word readers' commentary space alongside each article. Particularly during the MDP primary, the commentary space alongside the live webcasting transformed to a more dynamic, emotional public sphere to express and share passions for socio-political change.

With respect to this active, vibrant citizen participation, it is notable to address how the fan community Nosamo played an important mobilising role, and how OMN contributed to foster that. Nosamo formed in the aftermath of Roh's defeat after taking a risk by running in the traditionally conservative Pusan province<sup>83</sup> in the 2000 general election. In the 2002 presidential election, Roh strove to fight the antagonistic regionalism between Kyungsang-do and Cholla-do provinces that had been long-rooted in Korean politics, and underscored a vision for socio-political reforms. During the 2002 election, Nosamo – 77 percent of whom were in their twenties and thirties, and armed with Internet and mobile-based communications<sup>84</sup> - waged a nationwide campaign on-and-offline to spread his reformist image and vision for socio-political change. Consequently, the initial membership of 7,000 rapidly grew to more than 49,000 by July 2002 (Kim, Moon and Yang, 2004, cited in Kang and Dyson, 2007) and 73,000 by November 2002.

From my participant observation of Nosamo in May 2002, mainly through online forums of the website, Nosamo recruited new membership that was reassured and enhanced through offline meetings. The online sub-community held regular or informal offline meetings on a regional level in which the scope of topics ranged from socio-political issues to trivial, personal events of the everyday just as in communities

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<sup>83</sup> Pusan province is one of the main cities in Kyungsang-do province where traditionally the conservative GNP is based. In the 2000 general election, Roh Moo-hyun took a risk to run in the province as a democratic MDP candidate in an attempt to demolish the conventional separation and antagonism between those two provinces – Kyungsang-do and Cholla-do (where traditionally the MDP was based) although he could have chosen another easier constituency to help him win.

<sup>84</sup> For more details about Nosamo's activities for supporting Roh Moo-hyun, see Chang and Lee, 2006, p. 156.

of private interests. The discursive space, in which continuity of these virtual and face-to-face meetings took place, was often extended to the OMN commentary space as an online forum for the discussion of social, economic and political issues at stake. Through the instant and interactive conversation, the participants reassured their shared hope for socio-political change and strengthened their solidarity.

It was an example of retrieved citizenship or social capital, the death of which Robert D. Putnam (2000; 1993, with Leonardi & Nanetti) lamented in modern society. Putnam argues that the social capital as a substantial component for democracy such as trust and civic engagement has been seen in decline today in spite of abundance of new media. Certainly, there were other online political forums such as Nosamo or Seoprise in which discussions of imminent issues took place but these spaces tended to exclude antagonists or floating voters. OMN overcame the limitations that Nosamo or Seoprise showed as fan-communities and offered an inclusive public sphere for coalition of the oppositional forces desiring change. In so doing, OMN mediated a shared dialogue and consciousness of socio-political reforms.

Another focal event during the election was the death of two schoolgirls knocked down by a US armoured vehicle on 13<sup>th</sup> June. Unlike the mainstream media that treated it as one straight article, and instead focused on the World Cup football tournament, OMN delivered a series of special reports of the event and the SOFA (South Korea-US Status of Forces Agreement)<sup>85</sup> for over a year<sup>86</sup>. Although there were

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<sup>85</sup> After the accident, the South Korean police had to hand over custody of the US soldiers who ran over the victims to a US military court without any criminal investigation. A 2001 amendment to the agreement says that South Korean authorities, upon their request, will be given custody of US service members and others covered by the SOFA following indictment for serious crimes such as murder, arson, rape and illegal drug trafficking. Otherwise, South Korean authorities must transfer them to US custody upon request. However, in practice, the procedure for the South Korean authorities to request custody of the suspected US soldiers was complicated and impossible without the US military's cooperation (Military.com, 2011). Regarding the two girls' death, the US military court acquitted the two responsible soldiers of negligent homicide and sent them to the US.

continuous protests of small groups, it was after an OMN reader Ang-ma suggested a vigil rally in memory of the victims that thousands of citizens took the street to demand the US to hand over the soldiers to the South Korean court. At this time, once again OMN provided a public sphere for reflexive discussions and mobilisation. The massive protests took place every weekend from 29<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002, and expanded to more general anti-American protests. Eventually, the anti-American sentiment disseminated among the public helped anti-American reformist Roh Moo-hyun to stand out in comparison with opposition candidate Lee Hoe-chang, whose first son was suspected to have received an unjust exemption of military service during his term as a justice of the Supreme Court.

Around one month before the election, a remarkable political event took place. Roh Moo-hyun and Chung Mong-jun of the People's Unity 21 Party agreed to a single candidacy following a survey of public opinion, which had been Chung's proposal. According to the public survey, Roh became the sole candidate of the two parties as of 25<sup>th</sup> November. However, Chung cancelled the agreement on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2002, one day before the election. On that day, OMN registered as many as 20 million page views in a country of only about 40 million at the time. In addition, the OMN's news of Chung's withdrawal received 1,810 readers' commentaries. Over 1,500 commentaries were posted about the election, most of which were passionately encouraging voting for Roh.

I shouldn't sleep at all just like the readers who wrote below.. I too will go for voting. (Anti-conservative at 05.36am)

It is a shame that we as Korean nationals abroad cannot have voting right but we strongly support Roh and thus we successfully persuaded our parents in Korea to vote for him... Dear young voters in Korea, I

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<sup>86</sup> The 259 special reports were conducted from 14<sup>th</sup> June 2002 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2003, when was the first anniversary of the memorial vigil rally for the two girls.

beg you to vote please. Please let us persuade floating voters and parents who considered voting for Lee to vote for Roh. Thus, let us make our new history with our own hands. (Korean resident abroad, Kang Woo-suk at 05.40am).

I came back after planting hope. And I will do my duties.. Let us call our friends and family to persuade them to vote for Roh....I just want my 3-year-old daughter to grow in a hopeful country. I, who am not a Nosamo member at all but just love my wife and a daughter, am sincerely asking you to vote for Roh (Citizen of Cheonan city at 07.24am).

As such, Chung's abrupt reversal heated the online space with netizens' discussions. Interestingly, it contributed to dramatically consolidate the forces of pro-democracy and socio-political reform to vote for Roh and to make many undecided voters, as well as supporters of the Democratic Labour Party candidate Kwon Young-gil, turn to support Roh in order to prevent the GNP candidate Lee from winning the presidency. As addressed in the readers' opinions above, the Roh supporters including Nosamo actively mobilised voters by online texted communication at OMN and otherwise, mobile messages and phone calls, or MSN messenger communication on election day. In the end, the MDP's Roh Moo-hyun dramatically won the GNP over hopeful Lee Hoe-chang by over half a million votes. Strikingly, the then elected President Roh gave an exclusive president-elect interview<sup>87</sup> to OMN for the celebration of its third anniversary in February 2003.

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<sup>87</sup> This interview was not Mr. Roh's 'presidential' interview as so many academic articles described – Mr. Roh was inaugurated as President on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and the interview was conducted on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2003.

## 5.4.2. From the Margins to the Mainstream

### 5.4.2.1. Entering the mainstream

Through the rapidly growing readership and volume of readers' opinions across a series of political events during the election, OMN had successfully positioned itself as an influential news outlet. According to the survey of *Sisa Journal*<sup>88</sup> (Ahn, 2009), one of the most influential current affairs magazines, OMN had expanded its influence on the formation of public opinion since 2000 when OMN became the first online newspaper to enter the top ten ranking, at number ten. From 2003 to 2005 following the 2002 presidential election, it took sixth place at the height of its success after the terrestrial television broadcasting media KBS and MBC and the dominant newspapers *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A*. This had immense significance in the sense that a progressive Internet-based news outlet had entered the mainstream, leaving behind the other competing progressive newspapers such as *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang*.

By the same token, OMN expanded on a nationwide scale. It launched local editions covering five regions including two different parts of the south Cholla-do province (2000, 2002) and the north Cholla-do (2000), the north Kyungsang-do (2000) and the south Chungcheong-do (2002). Moreover, in 2004, it launched a full-fledged operation of the podcast OhmyTV in November 2002 and, in 2004, began an English language edition of OMN. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2004, at the peak of the anti-Impeachment protest<sup>89</sup>, OhmyTV aired the demonstration on the spot and remarkably received 85,000 texted commentaries alongside the live webcast.

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<sup>88</sup> *Sisa Journal* is a weekly current affairs magazine. Since 1991, it has conducted a survey about the influence of news and current affairs media including newspapers and broadcasting media, the Internet-based newspapers and portal websites. The respondents consist of 1,000 experts who were selected from 10 expertise areas such as politics, law, medicine, business, etc.

<sup>89</sup> The parliament passed a bill to force President Roh to stand down on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004. The anti-Impeachment protest began from the following day and lasted until the general election day of 15<sup>th</sup> April. More details are charted in the Chapter Six 'Online Political Satire'.

OMN's augmented influence and success was reassured through its profitable business as well. Unlike most alternative online media adopting citizen participatory journalism, OMN had a profitable business model: a voluntary subscription payment system along with commercial advertising and news sales. In general, 70 to 80 percent of OMN's revenue comes from commercial advertising and 5 percent comes from subscription fees of the weekly<sup>90</sup> and voluntary subscription payment. The remainder comes from the selling the news service to portal websites and mobile phone providers (Kim, 2007a). What was unique about OMN's revenue model was the voluntary subscription payment system, which was initiated by a reader's suggestion on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2002. OMN collected readers' opinions by emails and through the readers' commentary space and eventually 74.8% approved the suggestion. Hence, OMN implemented the scheme from 30<sup>th</sup> December 2002, which allowed readers to choose one of the four subscription options – 3,000KRW per month, 15,000KRW for 6 months, 30,000KRW per year, and 50,000KRW per year including the weekly – if they were willing to pay. Within 5 days of its execution, a subscription was collected from 2,627 readers totalling 66,143,000KRW (approximately 60,000US\$) and it continued to increase. In addition to the rapidly growing readership and influence, OMN's advertising grew steadily enough to generate profits from December 2003<sup>91</sup> that were sustained until 2007.

However, from the 2008 inauguration of the Lee Myung-bak administration, the governmental advertising revenue of OMN rapidly decreased. From 2008 to June 2009,

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<sup>90</sup> OMN's interview of the MDP's presidential candidates scheduled on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2002 was cancelled by the National Election Commission. According to the Periodical Registration Law, as an Internet website OMN should not be regarded as the press and thus should not be granted to deliver a talk or an interview with candidates. Therefore, on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2002, OMN published an offline weekly *OhmyNews 2002* with focus on the election. The publication of the weekly enabled OMN to carry out an interview with the MDP presidential candidate Roh on 30th April. Its yearly subscription was 50,000KRW (approximately 46US\$).

<sup>91</sup> According to the CEO Oh (2005), OMN had suffered a deficit of around 30millionKRW until then.

OMN received no advertising order from the central government at all (Oh, 2009), and instead most of governmental online advertising concentrated on conservative news websites<sup>92</sup> (Choi, 2009). Consequently, in 2009, OMN's advertising revenue rapidly declined by 70 percent against the previous year. In order to overcome this deficit, OMN started a campaign in July 2009 to attempt to reach 100,000 subscribers within three years and asked that each new subscriber pay 10,000KRW (10US\$) per month. From their 2009 base of about 2000 subscribers the number reached 5,380 on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and only 7,352 in May 2011. Despite the efforts to (re-)draw public attention and support, OMN's overall outlook is deemed to be uncertain.

#### **5.4.2.2. Counter-flow of globalisation**

The imbalanced flow of global communication has been discussed since the MacBride Commission of UNESCO (the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) announced by NWICO (New World Information and Communication Order) in the late 1970s (Nordenstreng, 2010). And NWICO called for a revitalisation at the MacBride Roundtable on Communication meeting in 1989 (Wasko, 1993, p.164). As this counter-flow of globalisation discourse strengthened in the mid-1990s and the early 2000s with the emerging Bollywood market in the western world, the flow of media content from the mainstream to the margins had been a focus in academic discourse. In this regard, it is noteworthy that OMN has vastly influenced prospective imitators with a small capital but a big hope for alternative journalism, as well as mainstream media players both domestically and globally. Firstly, readers' 100-word

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<sup>92</sup> The Democratic MP Choi Moon-sun released the analysis of the distribution of governmental advertising during this period. While most of governmental advertising went to conservative online news sites such as *New Daily* (75.50), *Dailian* (64.00), *Frontier Times* (43.70) and *Digital Chosun* (41.10), online news sites that were critical of the government received few advertising orders - *Pressian* (zero) and *Media Today* (2.20). The top online newspaper OMN barely managed to receive local government advertising order (120.85) but none from the central. The unit used in here is million KRW.



commentary space alongside a news article has been adopted in various ways. For example, the largest-circulated newspaper *Chosun* employed it in their online version *Chosun.com* in March 2002. In 2005, *BBC*, *CNN* and *The Los Angeles Times* (online editorials) allowed audiences to post comments, photos and videos (Lee, 2007). Soon the readers' commentary space alongside an article became the norm in most online news websites worldwide. Secondly, OMN's citizen reporter system has been adopted by differing media: *Hankyoreh*'s Hani Reporters consisting of 617 citizens (April 2000); broadcasting media *MBC*'s iMNews Citizen Reporters (2003); and *SBS*'s U-porter (2005) (Sung, Kim, Kim and Im, 2006, p.26).

Strikingly, OMN's citizen reporter system has been variously implanted in citizen-based news websites in the world. In the US, *iTalkNews* (2005) was operated by six full-time staff of editorial team for checking style, grammar and accuracy of citizens' stories. More significantly, in Japan, several online news outlets were launched in pursuit of providing socio-politically progressive views that were marginalised in the mainstream. For example, *Nikkanberita* ([www.nikkanberita.com](http://www.nikkanberita.com)) was launched in June 2002. One full-time staff and five to six part-time volunteers co-work with citizen reporters to deliver alternative news in the world (Park, 2006). In February 2003, with the slogan "Let's make genuine press with the power of citizen reporters", *JanJan* (Japan Alternative News for Justices and New Cultures) was launched. In addition, in August 2006, a Japanese corporation, Softbank, invested 11billionKRW (11million US\$) for launching *OhmyNews Japan* ([www.ohmynews.co.jp](http://www.ohmynews.co.jp)) in cooperation with OMN (Lee, 2006). However, these news websites seemed to struggle. In comparison with OMN steadily publishing around 150 to 200 citizens' articles per day, *JanJan* had only about 50 articles sent to the editorial team and its page views reached less than 0.5% of OMN's. In order to overcome sluggish growth, Ohmynews Japan reorganised

to focus more on citizens' life stories rather than hard news and cut back 20 employees and wages in 2008. There could be many factors for this slump such as the thriving blogosphere, etc. However, the main reason seems the lack of Japanese people's passion and desire for change, which might well be inspired and expanded through direct participation in news (re)production. Japanese social activist Ishizu's claim in *Japan Media Review* (2003) is noteworthy. He explains that without a change in the chronic political apathy of Japanese people, there would be no social change no matter what kind of media may emerge (cited in Kang, 2003).

## **5.5. The *Cheonan* Sinking and the 2010 Local Election**

In the following sections I will examine the ways in which the new communicative possibilities afforded by new media such as Daum Agora and Twitter as well as OMN contributed to the unexpected turn of the 2010 local election surrounding the *Cheonan* sinking.

### **5.5.1. The Official Discourse: The North Korean Torpedo Attack**

#### **5.5.1.1. The JIG announcement**

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010, the *Cheonan*, a South Korean patrol ship monitoring North Korean submarine activity, "was split in two and sank" near the contested maritime boundary between the two Koreas. On 20<sup>th</sup> May, the first day of the official local election campaign, the Joint Investigation Group (JIG) – consisting of military experts and civilians from South Korea and some advisers from the US, the UK, Australia and Sweden – announced that a North Korean torpedo was responsible for the death of 46 crewmembers. The key evidence for the claim were torpedo fragments having the same dimensions as North Korean torpedoes (as seen in North Korean munitions pamphlets)

and ink marking ‘number 1’ written in North Korean style found on the fragments (Cyranoski, 2010; Yoo, 2010). On 24<sup>th</sup> May, at the Korean War memorial hall, President Lee Myung-bak strongly denounced North Korea for the *Cheonan* sinking as a profoundly provocative act of war. Moreover, the ministers of National Defence, Reunification and Foreign Affairs had a press conference to announce several austere measures to sanction North Korea. These included the prompt suspension of all joint ventures such as Gunkang Mountain Tourism (excepting Gaesung Industrial District<sup>93</sup>) and of the aid programmes for infants, the banning of all traffic of North Korean ships in the South Korean sea area, and the restart of propaganda in the military demarcation zone, which had been ceased since the 2004 Agreement. In addition, joint military drills between South Korea and the US were re-commenced (Hwang, 2010).

#### **5.5.1.2. Mainstream media discourse: retaliation and warfare**

Instantly, the entire nation was shaken up with a flood of news related to the *Cheonan* sinking. Notably, the discourse of retaliation for the North Korean attack and warfare dominated the news landscape. It is worthwhile to examine how the mainstream media constructed the discourse. On the day of the government’s announcement of stringent sanctions, a *Chosun* article supported the government’s authority and affirmation by asserting the militant measures to undertake and denouncing citizens’ questioning of the JIG claims.

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<sup>93</sup> As the largest joint project between the two Koreas, the building of the joint industrial district in the Gaesung area in North Korea was initially launched in 2000 by the founder and CEO of Hyundai Asan Corp, Chung Joo-Young (who came from North Korea during the Korean War) and the North Korean leader, Kim Jeong-Il. Its key objective was to promote the economic cooperation between the two Koreas and with foreign nations, as well as to aid co-prosperity of the two Koreas, and to secure competitiveness in the global market. Under the agreement, North Korea leases the land to South Korea for 70 years and South Korea constructs the free economic zone and sells the area to South Korean and foreign companies (Chung, 2006).

The government promised to take drastic measures to prevent North Korea's further provocative actions. However, I am *very much concerned...* [that] According to a survey of public opinion, *only 72 percent of respondents trust* the JIG's report and 59 percent oppose military confrontation... This time we must take all possible measures to discontinue North Korea's intention of invasion that has lasted for the past several decades... *The most effective steps would be military operation...* It is *experts' consensus* that we would be able to pave our new future if we resolve this matter. If we are afraid of the small price to pay now, our tomorrow has no hope and needs bigger, harsher sacrifice (Kim, 2010a).

On the following day, the tone of a *Chosun* editorial to instigate warfare became acute.

By signifying a military operation and confrontation as a right of self-defence, *Chosun* manufactured the warfare discourse as a righteous reaction. Its excerpt is as follows:

At the 1974 general meeting, the UN stipulated, "Regardless of declaration of war, the attack by one nation's land/air/naval forces, fleet or aviation is clearly the action of *invasion*." It is the case of the North Korean torpedo attack... According to the Act 51 of the UN Charter, South Korea has the right of self-defence. The US *invaded* Afghanistan one month after the September 11 Terror *for the reason of self-defence...* Now is the best time that *South Korea should declare the self-defence right...* In order not only to eliminate anxiety about domestic and global security but also to prevent North Korea's misjudgement, *the 7<sup>th</sup> fleet of the US navy should be placed in the Peninsula waters and the Korea-US joint drill should be conducted at once*. Now is the moment *we must confront North Korea with all our strength* (21<sup>st</sup> May 2010).

Likewise, *Chosun* negated citizens' questioning of the government report as 'groundless rumours' that 'doers' spread on the Internet. In contrast, it placed much weight on the JIG report as a 'scientific, objective' probe and thus backed up the government's measures. The *Chosun* articles argue as follows:

*'Groundless rumours'* (24<sup>th</sup> May 2010)  
It has been only two years since the ill-found rumours of mad cow disease were prevailed on the Internet, and now *the groundless, nonsensical rumour* focused around the reason for the *Cheonan* sinking again continues to spread... Since the JIG discovery of the fragment of torpedo propeller at the accident site was released, there are *some people who are questioning whether the marking 'Il-bun' on the inside of the propeller was truly written by North Koreans, and how the*

*propeller remained intact in the explosion of the torpedo...* In respect to the JIG report of ‘scientific’ scrutiny, the US said, “Admirable.” Even the Chinese government demanding the ‘scientific, objective’ probe did not deny the JIG analysis. *Only* some of ‘doers’ in our society *raise doubts* at the level of ‘groundless rumours’.

‘Scientist Yun Duk-Yong’s response to the ‘groundless rumours’ of the Cheonan sinking (1<sup>st</sup> June 2010)  
The head of the JIG, Yun Duk-Yong, said, “When a scientist writes a thesis, he/she is always concerned that it will be published to the world and recorded for good. I took the inspection of the sunken ship with the scientist’s attitude.” He reaffirmed *in the name of a scientist* that the JIG report was true. That is *the Cheonan ship was torpedoed by North Korea*.

As such, the dominant war discourse in the mainstream media eventually overwhelmed the policy- and issue-based discussions that were expected to take place nearer the election. Until the JIG announcement, the opposition parties and civic groups had robustly raised questions about the Four-River Restoration Project and the Sejong City Project, and claimed the full-fledged implementation of free school-meals from primary to high schools. However, the JIG report and the mainstream war discourse constructed strained political situations and thus even the opposition parties became very cautious not to be mistakenly accused of supporting North Korea. Notably, the political editor-in-chief of *Hankyoreh*, Kim Chong-Chul, said in late April that the *Cheonan* sinking delayed the feature story about the local election that focused on topical issues. In addition, *Chosun* addressed that they anticipated issue-based stories would be largely delivered nearer the election but if the crucial evidence of the reason for the sinking was released before the election, then perhaps the *Cheonan* issue would overwhelm the election once again (MediaToday, 2010). Eventually, these worries turned out to be true.

## 5.5.2. Citizens' Counter-Discourse

### 5.5.2.1. Agora

Citizens' genuine search for the truth about the *Cheonan* sinking grew exponentially after 26<sup>th</sup> March. In particular, netizens persistently questioned the blue marking 'number 1' (its Korean pronunciation is *Il-bun*) on the torpedo fragment that the JIG provided as a crucial evidence for the North Korean attack. At the most visited portal online forum *Agora*, that had provided a discursive public sphere during the 2008 anti-US beef protest, were diverse investigations and analyses conducted by netizens. For example, 475 posts were uploaded on a single day, 20<sup>th</sup> May, the day of the JIG announcement. To illustrate some of the netizens' critical insights from *Agora*:

The JIG asserted that the marking *Il-bun* proved that the *Cheonan* ship was torpedoed by North Korea... but the marking on the North Korean drill torpedo which was collected by the navy was written *Sa-ho* ('Sa' means 4 and 'ho' means number)...and certainly its marking was rusted away... but *the marking* that the JIG submitted as crucial evidence was *so clear that it looked newly written..* The JIG must explain the reason for the discrepancy between the styles of marking numbers on the North Korean torpedoes...One more thing... *why is there no one that apologized, or any military authority that took responsibility for the event..* How on earth could the Ministry of National Defense, who said would resign because of the event, still *shamelessly* direct the army and have a meeting with President, pretending nothing happened...As a member of the nation, I will fight for the truth of the *Cheonan* sinking (*Soulmusician*).

Soulmusician pointed out two things. Firstly, the JIG claim that the blue marking *Il-bun* was key evidence for the North Korean attack was not convincing because the writing style did not fit into the traditional North Korean style and the letter looked re-written. Secondly, the government authority should have taken responsibility for the death of the soldiers. Particularly, the JIG's weak, unclear argument about the marking aroused intense reactions like Soulmusician's. For instance, the post "Oops! Navy's critical mistake" of netizen Saengnamul suspected that the marking seemed to be written over

the rusted torpedo propeller after it had been salvaged from the sunken ship. Within a day, the post was viewed 11,134 times and drew 56 readers' responses. Likewise, the commentaries varied from a fact-based analysis, a satirical scorn of the JIG review to the promotion of participation in the upcoming local election:

Given the 200kg gunpowder explosion, it is preposterous that the torpedo could be undamaged and furthermore the marking remains intact, which is as paradoxical as surviving crew members with no injury (*Ddamjaengi*).

Today I saw the best comedy ever (*Bugsoo; hee*).

Hush.. if this information leaks, they might do repainting tonight (*Yahwoori*).

After watching two hour live coverage, I concluded the JIG announcement was nonsensical (*Mawoori*).

I guess the government may have provided wrong evidence – the marking *Il-bun*... all of which made me think the quality of the North Korean products – torpedo and the marking ink that stays intact even in an intensively heated explosion – is excellent! (*Early-Summer*)

The best North Korean marking pen ever... it should be granted a Nobel Stationery Prize! (*Baram*)

I thought the government is campaigning for a no.1 GNP candidate in the election<sup>94</sup> (*Spring of Prague*).

Even if what we think is the truth, what could we do.. All we can do is to vote. Let's all vote! (*Bungauhppang*)

Moreover, there arose a conspiracy theory among netizens largely at the *Daum Agora* and personal bloggers' pages about the timing of government's investigation and announcement. They questioned that although the salvage of the *Cheonan* was conducted nearly two months after the sinking, the JIG disclosed the report just 5 days

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<sup>94</sup> In Korean politics, a candidate is numbered according to the size of a party's parliamentary seat. Accordingly the ruling party is usually given the number 1 (*Il-bun*), and the second largest opposition party is numbered 2. In addition, the conservative party GNP has reigned for over three consecutive decades and thus its candidate's number was *Il-bun* and the party logo has been 'blue'. In the 2010 local election, the ruling party GNP's candidate's number is 'Il-bun with blue logo'. In this sense, netizens are metaphorically ridiculing the government's announcement about the crucial evidence for the North Korean torpedo attack – the 'blue' marking *Il-bun*.

after the ship was salvaged and only 10 days ahead of the election. In addition, the government announced the austere measures one day after the late former president Roh's 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary. In other words, the netizens claimed that the government and the GNP tried to use the *Cheonan* sinking as a political manoeuvre to win the local election by manufacturing a collective fear.

Consequently, unclear and insufficient disclosure of relevant information to the public only resulted in exacerbating netizens' doubts and distrust of the government authority. The traditional way of manufacturing public opinion by means of a warfare discourse forged through the mainstream media no longer worked well. Citizens' rational questioning about the JIG report and vibrant communication on the Internet seemed to neutralise the political manoeuvre. As users' commentaries at *Agora* illustrated above, the mockery of the unveiled evidence for the *Cheonan* sinking was so playful that it maintained readers emotionally engaged and interested enough to read through others' responses. Moreover, those commentaries provided alternative views and analytical information of the issue that were not available in the mainstream conservative media. In the sense that news provides information and interpretation of an event, *Agora* space played an important role of a news medium by which citizens acted as key players to question the truth of the JIG announcement and bring up conspiracy theories.

#### **5.5.2.2. OMN**

Despite its declined influence and readership since 2006, OMN still played an important role in arousing public attention at a time of particular socio-political unrest like the 2008 protest. In addition, in the sense that OMN provided a public sphere for common people who were not technologically skilful and preferred institutional media for



writing, it is worthwhile to examine how citizens shaped the *Cheonan* event with relevance to their everyday lives. An excerpt of an OMN article titled “A 70 year old common folk’s letter to the *Cheonan* ship sellers” (Hong, 2010b) is illustrated below.

I am in my 70s, born in the 1930s during the Japanese colonial era and witnessed our country’s independence. *In the Korean War, the North Korean communists killed my grandfather, father and uncle. My sons and I all served military service* as we believed it was the duty of the people. Therefore, *I am one of common people* who underwent massive upheavals of Korea’s modern history... I have carefully observed the current events of the *Cheonan* sinking... I was convinced that the *Cheonan* was sunk by North Korea as they proclaimed revenge last November when they lost the naval battle of Daecheong in West maritime...

In the *Cheonan* sinking, *46 seamen were killed (not a single officer was killed) and 10 more victims died during the process of the JIG investigation..* Moreover, my conviction of the North Korean attack became gradually uncertain since *the JIG failed to clarify* neither the North Korean submarine’s penetrating route nor the demolition method.

It seems that we are in a defenceless state, given that the North Korean submarine blew up our warship and disappeared so swiftly *in the middle of the Korea and US Joint drill* with two US Aegis destroyers and ten warships...

*Most common people are the former ranks like me unless they are awarded a medal for death in a battle.* To you officers, the lower ranks may look like insignificant beings but you must know that the majority of *the people now holding sovereign power* were once the lowest ranks in military service just like me...

It was terribly *shameful* that the president demanded North Korea to account for the sinking... but avoided *the responsibility of military authorities in charge of the tragedy...* I hope that *he will not drive the nation into war* in order to show his confidence of victory despite his military service exemption. *If a war broke out, we, the majority of common people, would be simply dead since we have no capability to escape abroad at all.* Most importantly, *the government should reassure that the military authority will take responsibility for the sinking and that we will be safe as the first priority.* As a finalising remark, you, who are able to escape from this country if in war, *do not sell war* anymore. That makes me *shudder*. (Emphasis mine)

The author's personal background – 70 years old with experience of military service and the Korean War – drew readers' rapport to form a base to build an understanding. Contrary to the stereotypical image of over 50-year-olds with experience of the Korean War, the citizen author challenged the authority of the government and the GNP. In other words, he provided a critical reason for citizens' distrust and constant questioning of the JIG review by delivering additional information that had not been revealed by the authorities, which was that the ship had been sunk in the middle of a Korea-US joint naval drill. In this way, he aroused public attention to the hidden fact and added weight to the voice of netizens and civic activist groups.

Moreover, the frankly articulated feelings from the standpoint of common people who have no power or authority in social terms, elicited common people's emotionality about the current issue. Emotions such as anxiety about national security, confusion about the truth of the sinking, sorrow for the seamen's deaths, and anger towards the government and military authorities, resonated among readers with 98<sup>95</sup> texted commentaries registered. Despite some antagonism, most commentaries from common people strongly supported the author's affective thinking<sup>96</sup>. Some of those responses are delineated below:

I absolutely agree with you. I was born in 1932, fought as a private in the 1950 Korean War and was discharged with a war wound in 1951, and all my three sons completed their military service. Therefore, *I am a common person just like you*. That is why I feel *a complete rapport* with every line of your story. Yes, let us *keep peace in the two Koreas*, rather than getting the Order of Military Merit by stirring up war. (*Sigolnoin* [old country man])

I am too an old man *having done my military service* at a young age. Your opinion is nearly the same as mine except one thing - from the beginning of the *Cheonan* event, I thought it was not caused by North Korea but by accident. Moreover, the JIG's announcement has too

<sup>95</sup> The reader's voluntary manuscript payment for this article recorded 215,000KRW.

<sup>96</sup> I coined affective thinking, which means that thinking and feeling cannot be separated but interlinked.

many loopholes to change my mind. I think it is not just that the government neglected the 46 dead navy men and then awarded medals to them as heroes. More disturbingly, it is too cruel that *the GNP used the event for the sake of their winning the election*. I am very much concerned that 60-and 70-year olds support the GNP according to the survey. Thus, I hope *20-and 30-year olds take an active part in ballot*. (*All the same*)

*One of the key issues in the election was the free school meal for children... How come was it shifted so instantly to the Cheonan sinking? Would it not starve poor children? Would it matter more than war (to the government)? Would the war matter more than winning the election??* (*Water ghost*)

As such, citizens' reinterpretation and re-contextualisation of the current issue reengaged readers to contemplate and discuss the public issue including election-related policies like the provision of free school meals, the Four-River Restoration Project, etc.

### **5.5.3. Tweeting and Re-tweeting: Unexpected Turn of GNP Defeat**

Surprisingly, in contrast to the prevailing anticipation, the election turned out to be disastrous for the GNP. According to public opinion surveys, it seemed that the *Cheonan* event and the government's austere measures a few days ahead of the election had made a substantial effect for the GNP to take the lead; the ruling party was anticipated to win 8 to 9 of the 16 governors' posts. However, the result was the opposite: the GNP managed to win only 6 seats and the DP won 7 seats and the Liberal Advanced Party 1 seat and the independent candidates 2 seats. The electoral turnout was 54.5 percent, the highest in 15 years, to which young people's active participation contributed. Traditionally in Korean politics, it is a norm that a high voting rate among young people leads to the victory of democratic and progressive-oriented parties. The Democrats won the majority nationwide and strikingly even in Gangwon-do province, which is closest to the borderline between the two Koreas and therefore traditionally the domain of the conservative GNP. Undoubtedly, there were some factors that possibly

aided the victory of the Democratic candidates. These included the successful solidarity and single candidacy among the opposition parties including the DP, the People's Participation Party, the Labour Party and the New Progressive Party, the celebrity Kim Je-dong's being laid-off (Nam, 2010; Yang, 2010) from an entertainment programme allegedly due to pressure from the GNP and a Buddhist monk Moon-Soo's self immolation in protest against the Four-River Restoration Project<sup>97</sup>.

In spite of the government's continuing announcements of austere, war-triggering measures and the conservative media discourse, the most striking factors, leading to the victory of the democratic coalition groups over the ruling conservatives, were the citizens' critical insight as regards the *Cheonan* sinking and the poverty of the government proclamations that followed. Particularly, using mobile micro and SNS media like twitter, blogging and citizens' actions to raise and mobilise the public attention of the election, which was largely ignored by the conservative mainstream media, contributed to the unexpected turn of the election.

## 5.6. Conclusion

As ICT became more prevalent with the mass adoption and availability of the Internet, citizens' mistrust of the conservative mainstream media and politics became interwoven with a new possibility afforded by new media and the impact of new media outlets like OMN rippled through the fabric of Korean society.

Empowering citizens by providing media platforms that reflected their everyday lives and issues of concern transformed the notions of "Who is a journalist?" and "What is news?" and questioned the theoretically supposed boundaries between the public and the private. By removing previous journalistic standards and maximising

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<sup>97</sup> For details, please see Han (2010a) Hong (2010c), and Nam (2010).

people's engagement and control of news production, in which the newsworthiness is focused on the relevance of events to people's everyday lives, OMN broke down the linear relationship between professional journalists and citizens. As such, OMN shifted the focus of news from the view of editors or power elites to the emotionality and rationality of the people.

This reshaping of the news was a dynamic shift in the journalistic paradigm and the resulting democratization of the news had real and often radical effects on the social and political landscape. Citizen journalism transformed the way people produced and consumed the news, whilst traditional mainstream news media were seen as bastions of power elitist views that people, particularly young people, found difficult to relate to.

Critics in the mainstream argue that allowing citizens' access to the exclusive arena of professional journalism has dumbed down news consumers by debasing the traditional standard of journalism. On the contrary, I hope I have shown that a more inclusive and more relevant news media, with institutionalized, citizen-led direct participation, tends to engage audiences with news that could be shared and recontextualised as the public concern and, in a number of powerful examples discussed, brought about real social change with the democratization process.

Since the emergence of other new forms of media (SNS like Twitter, etc.), OMN has lost its novelty. Therefore, readership has declined which has significantly affected their influence and revenues. However, the most important legacy of OMN's entry into the news media hinges on the redefinition of what is public versus what is private concern, which has continued to evolve with new forms of media. When a significant proportion of the news touches citizens' lived experience and is shared across the dialogical space, people begin to feel the relevance of their lives in connection with others, which is important for validating personal opinions and

emotions, and mobilizing public sentiment into action leading to grassroots social change.

## 6. Online Political Satire: Placing politics in affect and entertainment

*Talk is action, action is communicative (Holland and Quinn, 1995)*

### 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to explore democratic possibilities of online political satire, where politics is presented as a central concern in an entertainment mode. It is of importance to identify which particular mode of communication creates a discursive space in which private individuals are connected to the political (public) world, which is a fundamental role of democratic media (Dahlgren, 2009). In other words, in what context do media offer a recurring discursive space for people to engage with politics in their everyday lives?

As having potential to enable an inter-subjective communication as an indispensable component for a public sphere, the role of conversation has long been emphasised by many media and political communication scholars (Bohman, 1996; Calhoun, 1992; Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b; Dahlgren, 2006, 2009; Habermas, 1974, 1989[1962], 1996). The Enlightenment rationality has positioned news and current affairs media as the most important genre of political discourse (Schudson, 1998), discrediting other non-serious media genres. News is traditionally believed to play a crucial political role in the realization and maintenance of a healthy working democracy. In contrast, entertainment media have been denounced by political science and political communication scholars as inherently harmful to democracy by aggravating the public's political apathy and cynicism through the promotion of unhealthy media consumption and the spectacularisation or entertainmentisation of politics (Postman, 1985).

However, recent research suggests that ‘serious’ news and the official discourse of politics is largely failing to connect everyday politics to people’s lives (Baym, 2010; Buckingham, 2000; Gray, Jones and Thompson, 2009; Jones, 2010) and not delivering their historic role of producing ‘informed citizens’ (Schudson, 1998). In our everyday lives we make sense of the world or our experiences through an ‘arational’ mode as ‘a combination of using our head and heart’ (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994)(Livingstone & Lunt, 1994, p.276). Moreover, as John Street (2001) argues, ‘politics is contained and constituted within non-political’ contexts and thus can be something fun to play with. In this regard, political satire, where politics is a central concern and is represented in an entertainment mode, needs to be considered in a new light. By the same token, it is important to contextualise the democratic potential of political satire in a given society – whether or not it is offering a discursive space for people to talk about politics in their everyday lives.

Given this need, I will firstly examine the historical development of various forms of political satire in South Korea from 1961 to the early 2000s. In early 2004, when the President Impeachment bill was passed in the parliament, diverse forms of anti-Impeachment protest were conducted, and specifically online political parody played a key role in encouraging young people’s interest and engagement in the issue (Kwon, 2004; Park, 2004; Roh, 2004). No doubt as a result of the furore and protests the voting rate<sup>98</sup> grew by 2.7%, which was 59.9% of the population, and the pro-government Open Uri party won the majority with 152 seats and the Progressive Labour party formed a negotiation body in the parliament for the first time in Korean political history.

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<sup>98</sup> The voting rate was 84.6% in the 12<sup>th</sup> general election in 1985 and gradually decreased until the 16<sup>th</sup> general election in 2000 (Hwang, 2004).



Therefore, I will examine how online political satire contextualised the current political issues and engaged people with politics around the President Impeachment bill and the general election in early 2004. For this, I chose three online political parodies and DC Inside, all of which led the online political satire boom at that time. Through analysing the logic of those political satires in connecting politics to audiences, as well as the communicative actions of the DC Inside members in relation to the focal issue, I aim to locate the potential links between entertainment/affect and politics. Finally, I will examine what the emergence of amateur satirists implies in the conventionally theorised relations of expert's knowledge and lay reasoning. In so doing, I will critique the distinction between emotion and reason, news and entertainment, and professional thinking and lay knowledge in respect to politics.

## **6.2. The Development of the Korean Political Satire**

The following sections chart the history of satirical political talk in various forms, ranging from word of mouth to the Internet-based satire, in relation to the degree of censorship and freedom of speech and expression in particular political, technological circumstances under study, which influenced the style and the extent of satire. The historical circumstances comprise three phases: before the 1987 democratisation; television satire boom after the democratisation; and the ICT-based satire boom in various mixed genres in the mid-2000s. In doing so, the aim is to illustrate the ways in which varying forms of political satire in particular time and space offers citizens an alternative means of critically discursive engagement with politics as well as of entertaining themselves.

### **6.2.1. Before the 1987 democratisation**

In regard to the relationship between freedom of speech and the prosperity of satire, Matthew Hodgart (1969, p.77) argues that freedom of speech is an indispensably 'essential condition' for satire to be practised and prospered, whereas Dustin Griffin (1994, pp.138-140) claims that satire thrives in a rather repressed society where open, direct challenge to those in power and authority is not permitted. This is because Griffin sees satire as an indirect apparatus – such as irony, innuendo, allegory and fable – to attack politicians' assumed intelligence and integrity, becoming necessarily useful where public criticism of political authority in official media is prohibited or far limited. These seemingly conflicting arguments of political satire can be applied in the Korean context, but only to varying degrees in a different time. On the one hand, satire has offered alternative ways of questioning and challenging political power and authority in the face of stringent censorship or 'political reprisal' by the authoritarian government to great extent. On the other hand, however, some degree of political tolerance and speech freedom is a necessity in order for political satire to flourish and to be enjoyed as a form of institutional media, which was clearly evidenced in the case of online political parodic satire boom in the mid-2000s.

In the past three decades under the military authoritarian rule (1961-1987), as expounded in the chapter of Korean media landscape, open criticism of the ruling power and authority had been prohibited in the official media. Instead, as an indirect attack, ridiculing jokes about authoritarian presidents spread 'by word of mouth'. Through this dissemination, ordinary people formed a public sphere to criticise of the authoritarian power publicly, which allowed them to feel a sense of (temporary) liberating subversion. For instance, under the Park Jung-hee regime (1961-1979), the best known joke was a slightly sneering riddle about president Park and the first lady Yook: What do you call it

if Yook and Park have a fight in the Presidential residence Cheong Wa Dae? The answer was ‘Yook-Park Jeon’ which literally meant an extremely violent hand-to-hand fight. While it is difficult to translate humour across language and culture, this riddle diminished the President and the first lady in absolute power and authority to a barbaric, lowly and sickening position.

Under the Chun Doo-hwan authoritarian government (1979-1987), there was a ludicrous event, which reveals how tyrannised the society was: as publicly known, two entertainers, an actor named Park Yong-shik and a comedian Lee Joo-il, were banned from playing in television dramas because their close resemblance to Chun’s facial appearance and their public presentation were regarded as a sort of defamation to Chun. In this repressive circumstance, a common joke about Chun was that when asked some questions of his favourite poet Suh Jeong-joo’s pen name, a famous movie title, and the name of the sculptor who created the masterpiece *The Thinker*, Chun answered all three wrongly, which ridiculed his intelligence. For the poet, Chun answered *Midang* instead of Maldang because he didn’t know it; for the movie, he mis-named *Sa-kwan-kwah Shin-sah* (its original English title is *An Officer and A Gentleman*) as To-kwan-kwah Shin-Toh because he read the most simple Chinese characters incorrectly; and he named the famous French sculptor Auguste Rodin as Oden (which means a fish cake in Korean) because in an exam he copied his would-be successor Roh Tae-Woo’s wrong answer! (Han, 2004). This, of course, indirectly ridiculed Roh as well. In the relentlessly repressed society, those simple but witty, jokes of derision offered an opportunity for people to talk freely and even laugh at the most powerful authority. By situating all power and authority of the incumbent President in a far lower, contemptuous and disparaging discourse among ‘small groups of private individuals’, people could feel a

small sense of superiority and empowerment, though it was a momentary feeling that the institutional media could not yet provide

### **6.2.2. Television's political satire boom in the wake of the 1987 democratisation**

In the UK and the USA, it was in the late 1950s and early 1960s when political mockery became gradually acceptable on television and the view of politicians as something funny to ridicule, not just revere, slowly emerged from vigilant and self-controlled broadcasting institutions. In South Korea, institutionally mediated jokes about politics didn't emerge in television broadcasting until the late 1980s, and even then quite slowly with a level of humour that might sound unsophisticated or immature to western ears. However, whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to outline cultural context in full detail, it should be sufficient to acknowledge that differences in culture and history naturally lead to differing senses of humour.

In line with the 1987 democratisation, President Roh Tae-woo took a far softer position in controlling the media and public opinion than his predecessors. Roh allowed comedians to mimic his persona in television entertainment programmes. This opened up a way for political satire to be possible in mainstream broadcasting at the time.

The first television satire programme appeared in 1987 after the 6.29 Declaration. In the comedy programme *Humour St. #1* by KBS 2, the section '*President, Our President*' became very popular. This programme satirised the Korean Chaebol (family-owned and -run conglomerates) that were deeply corrupt but exerted power and influence in many aspects of the society through its close connections to political power. The comedian and satirist Kim Hyung-gon acted as the president of a virtual Chaebol Bi-Ryong Corporation and his oft-repeated, leading lines - "It should be successful... but it cannot be.." - became a popular phrase in various situations among audiences nationwide (Baek, 2006). And his ludicrous, quick stroking of the chin was associated

with the first lady Lee Soon-ja's pointy chin (she was symbolised as the second most powerful authority to President Chun Doo-hwan in the country at that time). Especially the scene of supporting actors' rubbing their palms in a flattering way to whatever Kim said and making their hands as a bell shape and turning them like the bells are ringing, represented the authoritarian society corrupted by flattery, iniquity and injustice in the Chun regime (Kim, 2006a). The most celebrated scene was when the brother-in-law (wife's brother) shouted in the middle of a serious board meeting, "Let's eat first! Work later!" To this absurd – given the Korean culture's work ethic - proposal, Kim replied back, "Well, well, well.. if that were not my brother-in-law, I should fire him!" This line scathingly reveals the vices and follies of how the ruling elements of society, including Chaebol, were intertwined for their own good and interest – the deep-rooted operational mechanism of the society focused on personal connections rather than individual's competence and qualifications.

In the Chun regime, the first few minutes of the 9 O'clock primetime news were always allocated to a daily report about President Chun and first lady Lee as a means of propaganda showing how great our leader supposedly was. In this repressed society, the freedom of speech was far more limited and open attacks on the government or politicians were not allowed. Ordinary people could make indirect criticism and derision of the President and the corrupt ruling class by parroting the comedian Kim's scathing lines and funny gestures in the course of everyday conversation with friends or family members. This was perhaps the only way that private individuals could share a sense of empowerment and dissidence. Interestingly, as a result of the 6.29 Declaration, the presidential election was approaching and the ruling party was highly cautious to avoid losing their votes in case of raising antagonism through censorship, and so television satire was aired in relatively freer circumstances and gained huge popularity.

Following Kim's incisive satire there were a series of similar programmes that dealt with current affairs and politics, although the degree of satire was still limited to some extent. The KBS entertainment programme, *Nero's 24 hours*, mocked the tyranny of an emperor Nero and his servants' hypocrisy, flattery and deceitful reverence to him for their own sake. In July 1988, one of the major broadcasting companies, MBC, allocated a political satire section, *Comedy Company – Choi Byung-Suh's DdaDdaBuhDda*<sup>99</sup>, in the Sunday entertainment programme *Sunday Night Parade*, which was the most popular entertainment programme at that time. The comedian Choi skilfully mimicked the voices of President Roh Tae-woo, the ex-president Chun Doo-hwan and the three leading opposition politicians – Kim Dae-jung (DJ), Kim Young-sam (YS) and Kim Jong-pil (JP). He also accurately imitated key gestures and publicly familiar, over-used phrases in their speech: DJ – with his particular Southern dialect and intonation “I think this way. I lament so deeply”, YS – also with his unique pronunciation “This time let's terminate it *certainly*”, JP – “That's difficult..” and Roh Tae-woo – “You trust this man,<sup>100</sup> please” (Choi, 1988; Kim, 1992). This programme had significance in the sense that the satirist Choi and the producer of the programme were the first to experiment with placing omnipotent politicians, including the incumbent and ex-president, as objects to be played with and ridiculed in an institutionalised media. This contributed to demystifying the most powerful authority by interweaving their silliness and irreverence into Choi's preposterously parroted dialogues and gestures.

In the Kim Young-sam government (1993-1998), the political jokes on television became more aggressive and twisted. The satirist Chang Duk-kyun, who is an author of a series of popular television political satires like KBS's *President, Our*

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<sup>99</sup> DdaDdaBuhDda [Korean] is an adverb. Its meaning is raising a question in a verbal word of a rigid style.

<sup>100</sup> The term ‘this man’ means himself, Roh Tae-woo.

*President* (1987) and *Learning is Rewarding in the End* (1996), argued that political satire became more acceptable after 1993 when he got his satirical book about President Kim published. Indeed, the political satire section *Learning is Rewarding in the End* on the SBS entertainment programme *Comedy Punch Punch* (1996) gained huge popularity. In the programme, the comedians mocked the two ex-presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, and a parliamentary man Chung Joo-young, who was a founder of Hyundai and was elected as an MP in 1992. By the time the television satire broadcast, the two ex-presidents had been sentenced to death by a parliamentary hearing in charge of the 1979 coup d'état and the 1980 Gwang-ju Massacre. In *Comedy Punch Punch*, the television actor Park Yong-shik, who had been sacked because of his similar appearance to Chun under the Chun regime, fittingly played Chun in the satire this time, and the popular comedian Choi Byung-suh parroted Jung Joo-young's persona who – whilst known as being compassionate and humane, albeit somewhat ignorant of politics – was involved in a sex scandal at that time. Similarly, there were a series of satire programmes such as SBS's *Comedy Observatory (Meeting of Observatory's Executive Committee, 1993)* and Lee Joo-il's *Tonight Show* (1996).

Yet the jokes about politicians were allowed only to the extent that the satire did not defame politicians in authority and power: the simple mimicking of an incumbent President was allowed but ridiculing or scornful mockery of the President or his family members was still prohibited. For example, in 1997, the segment *Python's Dream*, of the KBS comedy programme *Heaven of Humour*, satirized Kim Hyun-chul, the second son of the incumbent President Kim, relating to a controversial political event at that time. In January 1997, in the course of investigating the conglomerate Hanbo Corporation's bankruptcy, the prosecution disclosed that Hanbo Corp. had received an enormous amount of special loan in return for bribes. Kim Hyun-chul was

deeply involved in the incident. As a result, Kim Hyun-chul had to attend a parliamentary hearing and in May 1997 was sentenced to two years imprisonment for influence peddling, bribes and tax evasion. It was a politically shocking event in the sense that Kim Hyun-chul was a key figure of an inner consulting team for President Kim and was sentenced during Kim's presidency, which had never been imagined before. A few days before *Python's Dream* was broadcast, a daily newspaper dealt with the episode in detail. Eventually the 17-minute episode got cut down to a 2-minute show. This event constructed a regressive atmosphere of political satire in the broadcasting industry until the next government, the regime of Kim Dae-jung

### **6.2.3. Political satire boom across the media in late 1990s and early 2000s**

Kim Dae-jung, who had fought for democracy throughout his lifetime as a key political leader of the progressive, left-centre party, took office as President in 1998. It was the first time in modern Korean political history that the progressive, left-centre formed the government through a peaceful, legitimate election. Following his election, the late 1990s and early 2000s marked the second satire boom in diverse forms of media because the Kim Dae-jung government enabled freedom of speech to be extended in every aspect of society. The satirical treatment of the 'incumbent President' was permitted in television comedy programmes. In addition, the advancement and abundance of ICTs facilitated the prosperous online parody culture, which were charted in detail in Chapter Three 'Mapping Out South Korean Media Landscape'.

Accordingly, newly experimental forms of mixed genres emerged. The KBS's *Comedy File* (1999) was a mixed genre of news and entertainment. This relatively long-lived programme was aired at 8.20 to 9.20 on Tuesday evenings from December 16, 1999 to March 26, 2002. *The Comedy File* consisted of six sections, one of which, *News Punch*, dealt with news and current affairs of the week in an entertainment, parody



mode. In late 1999 a number of high-ranking civil servants' sons were disclosed to be exempt from military service in an unlawful way – bribery or forgery of medical documents – and immediately this event became a heated issue. In accordance with this event, *News Punch* mocked the corruption and hypocrisy of those politicians in power by parroting the old phrase Buh-Ja-Yu-Chin 父子有親 and playing with its homonym 富者有親. The first set of characters means that the moral sense of the relationship between father and son (父子) is to love each other (有親). However, different ideograms 富者有親 are also pronounced Buh-Ja-Yu-Chin. But here, 'Buh-Ja (富者)' means rich people. The implied meaning of this group of characters is that rich people take care of their own, including exempting loved ones from military service.

A couple of years later, MBC attempted to pursue a fully fledged political satire in a Monday entertainment programme *Tonight Good Night*, which included *Prime Minister's Diary* (2001) with more emphasis on the satiric point of current topical issues. *Prime Minister's Diary*, which employed the format of the British comedy series *Yes, Prime Minister* (1986), was shown to spur audiences' interest in politics by providing its ludicrously detailed portrayal of the incompetent, bureaucratic civil servants in the cabinet surrounding the Prime Minister<sup>101</sup> (Kang, 2001; Kim, 2001a; Kim, 2001b). Likewise MBC's *Tripartite Debate of Comedy House* (2003) parodied the television debate format of the 2002 presidential candidates, in which the comedians mimicked the former presidential candidates of the three major parties – Roh Moo-hyun (MDP), Lee Hyei-chang (GNP) and Kwon Young-gil (Democratic Labour Party (DLP)) – from a playful to scornful way by highlighting their distinctive gestures and phrases (Kim, 2003a, 2003b). Since its first airing on February 8, 2003, *Tripartite Debate* gained rapid

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<sup>101</sup> *Prime Minister's Diary* was awarded the best programme of the month in May 2001 bestowed by the Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media.

popularity across generations and thousands of audiences' feedback comments were posted weekly on the programme bulletin board. Most of those responses were that the programme was impressively entertaining and even more informative than the most popular current affairs programme *100 Minute Debate* (Song, 2003).

### **6.3. Background for the President Impeachment Bill and the 17<sup>th</sup> General Election**

#### **6.3.1. Discord between the radical reformative and the conservative**

It can be recapitulated that the impeachment motion surfaced because of the factional feud between the MDP and the OUP, and the conflict between the radical reformist and the conservative in Korean politics in a broader sense. Throughout modern Korean political history, since the Park Chung-hee government until 2002, the two leading parties, the MDP and the GNP had been firmly grounded on their regional footing with the former rooted in Cholla-do province in Southwest Korea and the latter in Kyungsang-do province in the Southeast. The two parties had long had a relationship of extreme animosity. In particular, this antagonistic regionalism began to be publicly promoted and utilised during the 1971 presidential election by the Park regime (Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000, p.115). Over the past three decades of authoritarian rule, higher positions in central and local governments and media companies had been filled by people from Kyungsang-do province, the region of the presidents' hometowns. Accordingly this long-standing regionalism has structured socio-political conflicts embedded in every aspect of society and thereby there have arisen sustained questions about regionalism.

Arriving with an image of a 'moral, clean politician' President Roh Moo-hyun was elected not by the support of his own party, the MDP, but by tremendous popular

support for socio-political reforms for genuine social integration. Right after Roh's inauguration in 2003, there began heated debates about socio-political reforms to terminate corruptive political practices and the deep-rooted regional connection within the MDP. The MDP split into two factions: more reformative and pro-Roh party members and traditional, conservative Cholla-based party members who opposed Roh. In November 2003, the former set up the Open Uri Party (OUP) comprising radical reformists of the former GNP and MDP members, and the Reformative People's Party members. As President Roh resigned his membership of the MDP and joined the OUP, the OUP became a ruling party and the MDP became an opposition party. Consequently this caused a huge criticism of Roh within the MDP.

Meanwhile, in line with the political reform, in late 2003, the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office investigated the illegal provision of funds for each political party from major companies during the 2002 presidential election. The GNP was found to have accepted tens of billions of won in bribes from businesses. At the steering committee meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2003, the GNP leader Choi Byung-ryul admitted their receipt of illegal funds by saying "I apologise that we took the illegal fund 10 billion KRW (approximately 5.5 million GBP) from SK Corporations". Shortly afterwards Choi went on a 13-day hunger strike for the introduction of an independent investigation of the alleged corruption of President Roh's close relatives. Given Choi's previous admission of illegal funds, however, his fasting generated neither public support for the cause of the hunger strike, nor much anti-Roh sentiment, only resulting in aggravating public criticism of the GNP's corruption.

At a press conference with television broadcast journalists on 24<sup>th</sup> February, Roh's remarks that "I hope that the people will give enormous support to the OUP in the general election... If my good performance as President helps the OUP to gain votes,

I would like to try all my best as long as it is lawful.” prompted a controversy of whether or not it was a violation of the president’s duty for an electoral neutrality. The National Election Commission (NEC) made an authoritative interpretation that Roh had infringed the elections law and therefore urged him to observe the president’s legal duty. In reply, Roh proclaimed that he could hardly accept the decision since it was his duty to support the OUP as a member. On 5<sup>th</sup> March, the MDP leader Cho Soon-hyung proclaimed that without Roh’s public apology for the breach of the elections law and for the alleged corruption of his relatives, as well as his promise for the prevention of the recurrence of those incidents, they would propose an impeachment motion against President Roh. However, President Roh responded that their claims were only politically motivated.

Consequently, on 9<sup>th</sup> March, the MDP initiated the impeachment motion in collusion with the majority party GNP but failed to pass the bill in the face of the OUP’s immense resistance. On 12<sup>th</sup> March, the two parties eventually passed the motion in collaboration with the Liberal Democratic Coalition (LDC) and voted 193-2 to impeach Roh. Amid the ensuing roughhouse between the OUP and the three other parties, the chairperson Park Kwan-yong ordered the OUP MPs forcibly removed from the legislature so as to allow the motion passed. The absurdly chaotic scene of the unprecedented political event was televised via the three networks KBS, MBC and SBS. The passed bill was immediately transferred to the Constitutional Court to judge its legitimacy grounded on the Constitution.

### 6.3.2. Public dissent and the victory of OUP in the general election

This event raised a nationwide public anger against the MPs that passed the impeachment motion, especially considering Roh had been elected by such grassroots popular support, and because some of those MPs were tainted by political corruption. According to public opinion polls conducted by various organisations<sup>102</sup>, including the MDP's own polls, nearly 70 percent of the nation opposed the impeachment bill (Choi, 2004b; Kim, 2004; Kwon, 2004). Correspondingly, various activities of resistance took place particularly in online spaces. Immediately the Internet search word 'impeachment' was ranked first and numerous relevant online communities were launched. For instance, at Daum, one of the largest portal websites in Korea, 453 impeachment-related online communities were newly launched as of 23<sup>rd</sup> March (Choi, 2004a), waging vibrant forms of anti-impeachment campaigns on- and offline. These included: an online petition campaign; attachment of an emblem of a black ribbon onto their messenger ID for their expression of lamenting 'the death of democracy'; and a number of impeachment-related UGCs virally spread on the Internet such as video clips, parodic satires and songs, cartoons and humorous or acidic jokes. Such online political parodic satires, which began to boom after the GNP's admission of acceptance of illegal funds in December of the previous year, rapidly expanded to ridicule the impeachment motion. In particular, the epicenter of those UGCs – by means of digital technology of composite photographs – was DC Inside in which over 3million members registered. Besides, newly emergent political satire websites such as Liveis.com and Mediamob rapidly became popular around the unprecedented political event: the number of daily visitors rose 2.5 times between early March (before the Impeachment) and late March

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<sup>102</sup> The portal websites Yahoo Korea and Naver, and the press media *Seoul Shinmun* and *Joong Ang* conducted the public opinion poll right after the political event.

(Kang, 2004a). Similarly, a series of massive nationwide protests<sup>103</sup> took place offline as increasing number of people considered the impeachment bill unnecessary and unjust. Furthermore, the anti-impeachment protests transformed into campaigns for participation in the approaching general election. Citizens' heightened political interest and engagement were shown in the fast increasing page views and postings in election-related online forums: in early April in such major portal websites as Naver, Daum and Yahoo, the number of daily postings rose to over 6,000 and the daily page views increased more than 100 percent from March (Chung, 2004).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> general election, the OUP won a majority with 152 seats. In sharp contrast, the MDP, which had led the impeachment motion, won only 9 seats and became the second minority after the newly emergent Democratic Labour Party with 10 seats. Moreover, most of the opposition politicians who had taken the lead in the impeachment – Chairperson of Parliament Park Kwan-yong, the GNP's leader Choi Byung-ryul and floor leader Hong Sa-duk, the MDP leader Cho Soon-hyung and general affairs manager Yoo Yong-tae – lost their seats and resigned from the political circle. On 14<sup>th</sup> May, the Constitutional Court overturned the impeachment motion. The Court concluded that President Roh had breached the civil servant's duty to maintain political neutrality in the election but it did not suffice as lawful reason for impeaching the incumbent President. The Court also rejected the other alleged indictments that Roh had neglected the responsibility to govern a state and to recover the nation's economic crisis, or received the illegal political fund during the 2002 presidential election campaign.

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<sup>103</sup> The Pan-national Action for the Nullity of the Impeachment Bill and the Clearance of Corruptive Politics, which launched a series of anti-impeachment vigil rallies, also set up a website (<http://www.anti312.net>). On 6<sup>th</sup> March, long before the website's launch, citizens' self-organised online community No Threat to the People (<http://cafe.daum.net/antitanhaek>) was launched and the number of its members reached over 90,000 in two weeks. This voluntary community promoted vigil rallies for anti-impeachment, organised the campaigns for voting and mobilised citizen volunteers for the aid of the rallies (Choi, 2004b).

## **6.4. Online Political Parodic Satire**

### **6.4.1. From the Playful to the Scornful Critique – entertaining, informative, subversive commentary of politics**

Like other mediums of satire, the most commonly used strategy for online political satire was parody. Parody is a vital and powerful vehicle for critiques and ‘unmasking the duplicities’ of the vices or follies of mankind (Hariman, 2008; Hutcheon, 2000, pp.32-34). Linda Hutcheon (2000, pp.xiv-32) defines parody as a form of ‘repetition with critical difference’ in ‘its ironic “trans-contextualization” and inversion’ and/or as contrast of one text to another with the intent of mocking or ridiculing it. The critical distance was implied between ‘the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work’. In Korean online political satire during the Impeachment bill, ‘the backgrounded text being parodied’ was the popular film posters and ‘the new incorporating work’ was political contexts of the Impeachment bill including related politicians and parties as examined below. In the online media environment embedded in every aspect of Korean society, visitors to websites inevitably include the ‘less politically interested’ (Baumgatner, 2007, p.333). Online political satire facilitates engaging politically apathetic audiences to the political world via a means of humour.

1. *Tanhaek - Flying Ruinous National Flag*

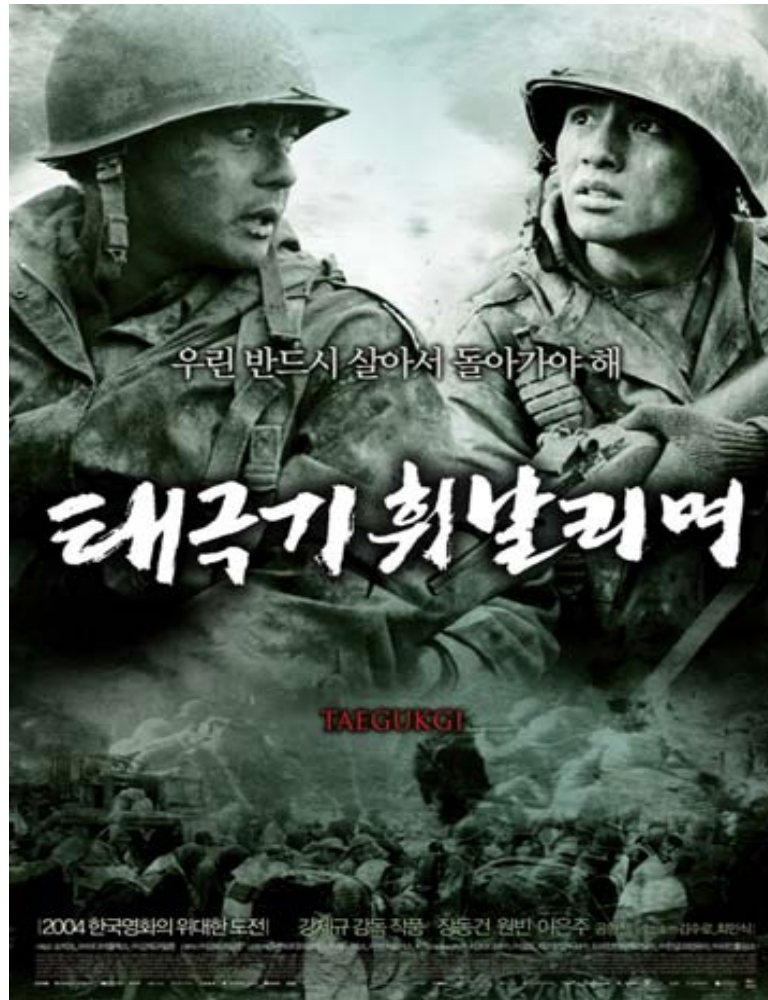


Figure 2. Tae Guk Gi – Brotherhood of the War





Figure 3. Tanhaek – Flying Ruinous National Flag  
(Source: Dokkaebi News)

To give a sense of the initial impact and to reinforce the ironic contrast in one of the most popular online satires, *Tanhaek – Flying Ruinous National Flag*, a parody of the most popular Korean movie ‘*Tae Guk Gi – Brotherhood of the War*’ (*Flying Tae Guk Gi* in Korean title) was used. In what looks like the blockbuster film poster the two heroes, originally acted by handsome lead actors Won Bin and Jang Dong-gun, are replaced with the GNP leader Choi Byung-ryul and the MDP leader Choi Soon-hyung, posing proud and trying to look tough. Throughout the entire movie, a solid brotherhood is suggested as a beautiful, great cause; actor Jang Dong-gun enters the military voluntarily in order to protect his younger brother played by Won Bin, who was forcefully drafted during the Korean War. In contrast, here in *Tanhaek*, the two

politicians' cause for likely brotherhood is ugly and disgraceful, presented through their lines in the speech balloons: (on the left) "Hyung (the ending syllable of Cho Soon-hyung's first name), we must stay alive and ruin the nation!" (on the right) "Ryul (the ending syllable of Choi Byung-ryul's first name), of course. We cannot die alone!" This implicitly suggests the coalition between the two parties to pass the impeachment bill 'for their own sake' not for the national interest, must be fulfilled by the MPs.

In addition, at the bottom of the poster parodic satire, was a photograph of some of the 47 OUP and the two other party members wrestling around the Chairperson's seat. This represents explicitly how violent and tumultuous the surroundings of the parliament were. Hence, this satire arguably provokes audiences' shared resentment towards those politicians and institutionalised politics. Moreover, at the very bottom the lines read: "2004 Korean Politicians' Ruthless Show! Co-directed by Choi Byung-ryul and Cho Soon-hyung, Distributed by the GNP and the DP, Co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Special cast – Kim Jong-pil and the Liberal Democratic Coalition" These mock credits clearly indicate the satirist's social intent to show that the three parties conspired to impeach President Roh for their own good. As such, by using parody as a main weapon to attack the corruption and hypocrisy of those MPs in conspiracy, *Tanhaek* provided not only a mockery of politicians and the business of politics in a playful and ludicrous way, but also provided information to allow the viewer to get a sense of what had happened and by whom in terms of the President's Impeachment.

## 2. *Memory of Tanhaek*



#1

Wow ~. That is the violation of the election law!  
Catch him! Freeze!~



#2

You will be dead!  
Let's impeach him~ Impeach!



#3

Yah~ Do apologise in public!  
Otherwise, we will impeach you~

과연?...

(What would happen?...)



#4

Come here~ Come~



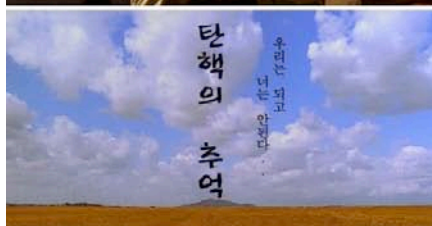
#5

Let's see! Where is an apology statement...?  
Is it here...?



#6

(Fuck you...)



#7

***Memory of Tanhaek***

We are allowed but you are not.

Figure 4. *Memory of Tanhaek* (Source: DC Inside<sup>104</sup>)

<sup>104</sup> Please see the page (<http://gall.dcinside.com/list.php?id=compositionsi&no=2062&page=368&bbs=>).

Similarly, another derisive popular joke about the event was the online political satire titled *Memory of Tanhaek*, which parodied several video clips of the movie ‘*Memory of Murder*’. This parody offered more detailed political contexts of the impeachment issue in a sequential narrative: the three MPs who played a key role in passing the bill – Choi Byung-ryul and Hong Sa-duk of the GNP and Cho Soon-hyung of the MDP – claimed President Roh had breached the election law and so Roh would have to apologise in public; otherwise they would impeach him. However, Roh refused to do so and instead gave them a rude gesture meaning ‘Fuck you’. This end scene of Roh’s farcical reaction provoked uncontrolled laughter, which no doubt resulted from the subversion of the existing power relations between Roh, in an inferior position, and the three MPs representing the 192 MPs against him; the simple, yet rude bravado of the little man standing against the odds, something many powerless people could identify with. Its final punch is contextualised in the parodied end text: “We are allowed but you are not”., The “we” signifies “the GNP and the DP” and “you” indicates “Roh” and “allowed” implies “allowed to support their own parties”. In short, the two parties’ claim is wrong and also unfairly made and the thematic social intent of the parody eventually won public sympathy and rapport.

In this way, the satire *Memory of Tanhaek* provides not only information about political contexts of the event – who, how and what – but also subversive humour that is shared among the audience and generates a common resentment and antagonism towards those key politicians who passed the bill. Through the combination of a postmodern parodied pastiche of banal contemporary aesthetic materials (altered movie flyers and familiar pictures) and social common interest (the Impeachment bill), the online satire offers an entertaining and informative commentary of politics. In such

political satire, while ‘fun’ or ‘humour’ is a crucial affective element revealing shared social feelings like joy, pleasure, aggression and resentment, another consequence is that it can inspire people to understand and engage with current political issues.

### 3. *Water is Self-served*



Figure 5. *Water is Self-served* (Source: DC Inside<sup>105</sup>)

At first sight, it is easy for most Koreans to recognise the familiar building of KBS. And the placard hung on the building catches the eye. It reads: ‘Water is self-served’. “Water is self-served” is the most commonly used term in low-priced, ordinary restaurants in Korea. The juxtaposition of the slogan with the KBS building is intended to provoke viewers’ curiosity and interest, which stimulates further reasoned activities such as searching for more detailed information on the Internet or exchanging talks among fellow netizens.

In fact, this parodic satire was a scornful joke about the DP leader Cho Soon-hyung’s visit to KBS. On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004 when the President Impeachment bill was being passed, the three networks aired the parliament live. Two days later, the MDP

<sup>105</sup> Please see the page (<http://gall.dcinside.com/list.php?id=compositionsi&no=2835>).

leader Cho Soon-hyung visited KBS and MBC to complain that their broadcast had been partial. At MBC, the chief of the Reporting department met them to have a 50-minute talk. But KBS merely sent a head of the Human Resources department to meet them. Cho immediately requested to meet the chief of the Reporting department but was refused. Later Cho complained to press journalists, “They did not even give us a glass of water, even after 12 minutes had passed.” This episode was aired by the 24 hour news channel YTN’s *Unforeseen Image*<sup>106</sup>.

With respect to the ‘Water is self-served’ parody, most of audiences’ reactions (as revealed in comments posted online at least) varied from fun and joy to resentment and aggression. Some of those affective comments are presented below:

“It’s too much.. too funny.. I might get fired.. but I will keep laughing..  
Korea is the democratic republic! More than doubly recommended!”  
(Oops)

“It’s really a high quality!” (By the way)

“Water should be self-served if water is not served within 12 minutes.”  
(Smile)

“Those are natural treasures and so do not possess them by yourself.”  
(No way)

It’s clear that online political satire produces shared laughter. Since humour is mainly a social phenomenon, it stimulates building social bonds among viewers or participants of the dialogue. Also, laughter is a critical weapon to ponder politics in an open, playful and scornful way. The pleasure that political humour provides often results from using parodic critiques to deconstruct the pretentious authority and power of politicians, who

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<sup>106</sup> YTN (Yonhap Television News) is a 24-hour news channel that is analogous to CNN or BBC World. In 2003, YTN’s *Unforeseen Image* began airing three episodes within the midday news programme *News Parade*, delivering short video clips of public figures’ trivial speeches and behind-the-scenes stories in a sarcastic way. At weekends, the selected episodes of the week *Weekly Unforeseen Image* are aired. This programme drew public attention when it broadcast the live scenes of the parliament relating to the 2004 impeachment bill and of the MDP leader Cho’s visit to KBS. This programme usually deals with the topical issues at stake, which sometimes provokes complaints or criticism from politicians.

are generally treated with reverence in the conservative media. In this light, the way in which online political satire offers pleasure to the audience is similar to what Ian Connell (1991, p.252) points out about ‘a certain pleasure’ that the tabloids provide. He delineates as follows:

...the pleasure comes from the acts of revelation as such. They engender a reaction of the sort – ‘well, you’ll never believe what I’ve just read about so-and-so’. But there was also a certain pleasure in seeing those who would set themselves above or apart from the ‘rest of us’ brought down by the revelations.

Consequently, by revelation of corruption or hypocrisy of those in power and authority such as politicians or bureaucrats, these forms of media make audiences feel empowered, and offers great pleasure.

What attracts audiences to political satire? As stated previously, some scholars argue that political satire demands comprehension and knowledge of the political context of the humour just as news audiences must understand the generic conventions of news. If this is right, then where do audiences get ‘comprehension and knowledge’ of political context from? On the one hand, audiences can get the necessary information about politics through engagement with the news and current affairs media. However, on the other hand, I believe it is not necessary to possess much depth of understanding and knowledge of politics or news to appreciate certain forms of political satire. If, as I would like to suggest, by virtue of living in the society we have only a general sense of whom or what a satirist is parroting, then the ‘ironic incongruence’ between that which is being satirized and the altered image set in the parodied text can make audiences laugh without having sophisticated background knowledge.

In other words, the intriguing element to attract audiences’ first gaze is parody of the most familiar of various media forms, as in the film posters and sequences in the Korean online political satire shown earlier. For instance, in the *Memory of Tanhaek*,



the familiarity of the parodied sequence and scenery of the movie *Memory of Murder* and the politicians' familiar, albeit juxtaposed, appearance provided sufficient background for understanding the satire. By repositioning politicians normally in power and authority into unfamiliar, ironic situations (i.e. politicians in the movies) in which they were represented as ridiculous, ruthlessly violent, vulgar and selfishly pretentious, the pretence of politicians and the business of politics became uncovered and the existing power relations got subverted. Consequently, online political satire, as a subversive positioning of the familiar in the unfamiliar, invites audiences not only to get a shared humour and joy of subversion among fellow viewers and satirists but also to feel empowered, however superficially, with a sense of community and a feeling of superiority to the ones mocked. What is most important is the feeling itself and how it can lead to further, personal curiosity about the subject being parodied.

By transposing political figures' personas into the parodied texts or genres in a 'defamiliarised' (Critchley, 2002), 'ironic context' (Hutcheon, 2000), political parodic satire offers audiences not only a playful means to make sense of the political world but also a discursive space in which they are encouraged to question politics and contemplate it in the everyday.

#### **6.4.2. From the 'messy', accidental talk to the political action**

As the general election was approaching, vibrant forms of online activities among DC Inside users took place in a series of campaigns for raising the voting rate. It is notable that ID 'DC Bingguri' created a parody titled *Voting Army* that he re-parodied as *Solo Army*, which was virally spread and became popular during the 2003 Christmas season. The original posters of Voting Army were Nazi propaganda used in World War II (Choi, 2004a; Roh, 2004).



#### 4. *Voting Army*



Figure 6. *We are Voting Army* (Source: DC Inside<sup>107</sup>)

Shown is one of the 27 cuts of *Voting Army*. The slogan that voting is the base as well as the mainstay of democracy is presented on the top, which is consistent with the original intention of the poster. On the bottom it is said that we are a strong voting army. On the red flag to the left the written text implies that we are a voting army. Overall, this parody delivers a strong message that to sustain a healthy democracy, voting is our responsibility and pride. Also the word “we” serves to distinguish us from others/them and to build the feeling of social bonds among a group of audiences or participants in a messy talk of the satire and related political events.

<sup>107</sup> Please see the page (<http://gall.dcinside.com/list.php?id=compositionsi&no=2431&page=357&bbs=>).

The entire series of *Voting Army* posters served to arouse netizens' attention and interest in the general election as can be seen from viewer comments and demonstrators that used placards showing the posters (see below). More profoundly, it served to form a discursive space for an informal, open-ended, 'messy, reflexive' talk (Bohman, 1996, p.145).

The discursive space was filled with open-ended talks ranging from the parody itself to the elections law and voting in the election, and from the emotional discharge to the reasoned action as presented below.

"Hit gall, hit gall<sup>108</sup>! *Voting Army* recommended~ ." (O~)

"Fucking breach of the elections law."<sup>109</sup> (KIN)

"I'm only 19 years old and so have no ballot.. So sad and resentful."  
(Ah Ah)

"Excellent poster.. Certainly will have to ballot and clean up those rubbishes."<sup>110</sup> (Han-min-ryun KIL)

"Superb! Absolutely will go to vote~!" (song7664)

"Enjoyed it...I will absolutely vote." (less)

As the above selection of online communications among DC Inside users suggests, the messy, open-ended conversation is a product of the emotionality – pleasure and fun, resentment, aggression, catharsis – that political parody provides or triggers. In a relatively easy, friendly and anonymous atmosphere in the Internet, the accidental,

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<sup>108</sup> 'Hit gall' is abridged from Hit gallery in which the netizen's parodied artwork is uploaded if the number of its click reaches over 10,000.

<sup>109</sup> By the 2004 President Impeachment, the NEC and the police cramped down severely on online political parody and consequently some amateur satirists especially Shin Sang-min and Kwon Se-il were accused of libel on political candidates according to the elections law.

<sup>110</sup> Here 'those rubbishes' denotes the three parties in coalition to passed the Impeachment bill as his ID suggest: Han alludes the Han Na Ra(Grand National) party, Min indicates the Min Joo (Democratic) party and Ryun implicates the Ja Min Ryun (Liberal Democratic Coalition). Thus this line suggests Jan-min-ryun's decisive will to 'vote' and to vote 'for the OUP'.

messy talk takes place ‘in practice of commentary, quotation and polemical reformulation’ (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994, p.11).

As many scholars point out, the talk, particularly the loose, open-ended talk and its potential for empathy and affective elements played a significant role in stimulating political action and sustaining a healthy democracy (Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2007b, p.170; Dahlgren, 2006, p.278). Through the loose, accidental talk, the DC Inside members mobilised themselves to take diverse political actions on various levels – launching a campaign for voting on-and-offline, discussing the Impeachment bill and the election, creating parodic satire and uploading it, participating in vigil rallies, etc. The conversations on the DC bulletin board suggest the participants’ thinking and feelings of the topical issue as below:

“I made sure that I didn’t like Roh Moo-hyun but the present political situation isn’t right.” (Super-puzzlement)

“Do you feel enraged only when you have much knowledge on a subject? We can be angry even when we don’t know it well.. I’m very indignant now.” (Well-well-well)

“The anti-Tanhaek vigil rallies wouldn’t be a protest of Roh’s fan community Rohsamo as some conservative media argues. And the key purpose for the rallies is ‘anti-Impeachment, not ‘a support for Roh Moo-hyun..” (DJ energy)

“I’m going to the rally. I’ll look for our *Doggie*<sup>111</sup> flag. It’d be me if you saw a man with a long hair up in a suit..See you then.” (Returned)

“I’m so sorry that I couldn’t bring my own parody artwork this time. But I will make sure that I’ll bring something next time when I participate in the rally.” (So)

<sup>111</sup> As a symbol of DC Inside, it was used in many ways in the 2004 Impeachment rally – on a flag of DC Inside, in various parodied pickets and online parody to promote ballot and the like.



Voting Army – Doggie is also a member of robust Voting Army.  
Let’s ballot all together.

“I can’t take part in the rally this time but will definitely go next time.”  
(Sluggard)

The pictures below demonstrate how the DC Inside members presented their emotional thinking of the current issue. They brought various forms of anti-Impeachment protest that they made themselves. Most of those pickets were what parodied currently prevailing quotations – Water is self-served, KIN<sup>112</sup>, Ddan Min Ryun or Voting Army – or popular movie posters or cute Doggie pictures that symbolise *DC Inside*.



Figure 7. *DC Inside* members after the vigil rally (19<sup>th</sup> March 2004)  
Source: DC Inside<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> ‘KIN’ is an Internet-based slang that had been used mainly among 10 to 20-year-old young people. But now it has been settled as a commonly used term among netizens. ‘KIN’ indicates a Korean word ‘즐’ which is a shortened word for ‘지랄’. Thus the ‘KIN’ is used to mean ‘fuck off’, ‘bad luck’.

<sup>113</sup> Please see the page (<http://gall.dcinside.com/list.php?id=compositionsi&no=3415&page=340&bbs=>).

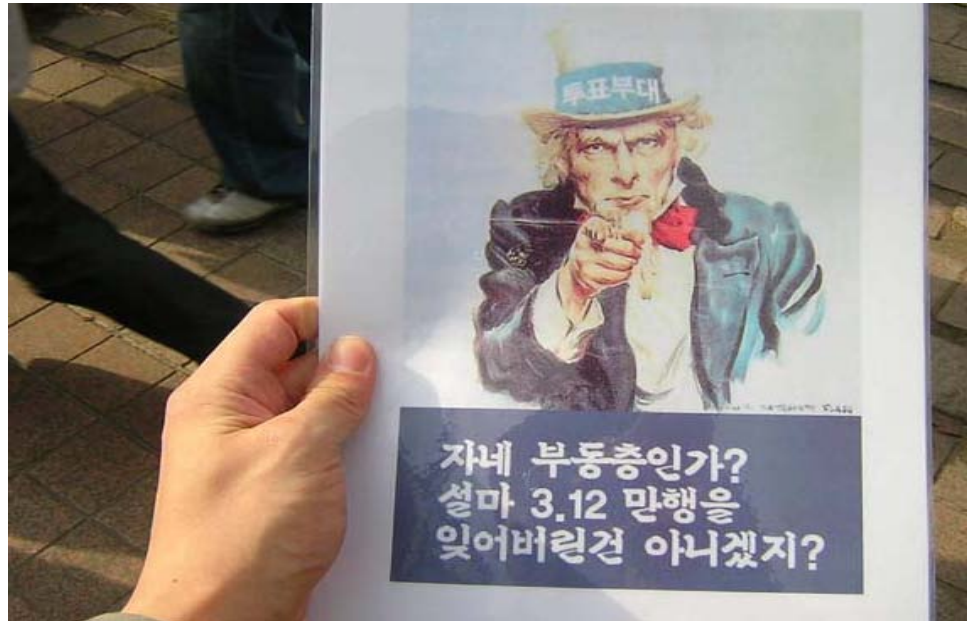


Figure 8. *DC Inside* member's parody – *Voting Army*  
Source: DC Inside<sup>114</sup>

Into those parodied texts or pictures, the participants added their own lines: “Kuk-‘hae’-eu-won<sup>115</sup> (‘Harmful’ MPs)”, “Water is self-served!”, “KIN”, “Invalid Impeachment!”, “Are you a floating voter? You’ve hardly forgotten the 3.12 Barbarian Event<sup>116</sup>, have you?”. The messy, open-ended talk about the parody with fellow netizens generated such emotions as pleasure, joy, laughter and resentment. As indicated in the conversation above, such emotions shared among participants extended into a discursive space of the issue and further actions. Moreover, through various direct actions to change the existing political situation - raising public attention by creating online political parodies, putting a sign of ballot stamp ☉ onto their online ID, organising or participating the anti-Impeachment vigil rally with their DIY parodied pickets.

<sup>114</sup> Please see the page (<http://gall.dcinside.com/list.php?id=compositionsi&no=3415&page=340&bbs=>).

<sup>115</sup> In Korean pronunciation Kuk-hoi-eu-won means MPs. The protesters altered the syllable ‘hoi’ into ‘hae’ which means ‘harmful’. In this way they twitted the 193 MPs who conspired to pass the Impeachment bill for their own interest, instead of serving for the national interest.

<sup>116</sup> This indicates the Impeachment bill which was passed on 12<sup>th</sup> March. By using the term ‘barbarian act’ instead of the Impeachment, the protester signifies it as the extremely abhorrent event.

In a nutshell, in the course of these diverse activities on-and-offline, their shared pleasure and joy increasingly augmented and facilitated the further political activities. Consequently online political satire reveals feelings that stimulate messy, open-ended, reflexive talks, and rational thinking and activities. In this sense, online political satire provides a potential linkage between emotion and reason.

### **6.5. Ordinary People's Reflexive, Affective Thinking of Politics**

So what distinguishes online political satire from political satire in institutionalised media? On the one hand, amateur online satirists emerged in the period of the Impeachment and the general election in 2004. Most satirists are not professionals, but citizens far from institutionalised, expert media. With the advancement of user-friendly communication technologies and the provision of open spaces where anybody can upload their work, netizens can become satirists to express their political intent in the parodied text. During the 2004 President Impeachment, one of the most popular online amateur satirists Shin Sang-min was an undergraduate student who had just started learning how to make a personal homepage online. With simple web-based skills and a handful of informative resources that he obtained from news and current affairs media, Shin produced 28 online political parodies of the event and uploaded them to DC Inside and other websites. Shortly afterwards he was interrogated by the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency on charges of illegal campaigning<sup>117</sup> against the GNP ahead of the general election. The agency concluded that he had committed an offence. However, this event raised a controversy in relation to the freedom of speech and expression. Many netizens focused around DC Inside launched an online cafe at Daum to protest his innocence and the number of its members reached over 1,500 within 4 days (Park and

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<sup>117</sup> According to the Elections Law, it is banned to make false accusations about politicians or to release documents that could affect poll results.

Joo, 2004). They argued that it seemed unfair that the Police Agency guaranteed professional satirists' freedom to produce satires at any level in the institutionalised elite media but cracked down on amateur satirists. This case could be seen to reflect how the Western modernist dichotomy is embedded in the Korean social system – rejecting ordinary people's thinking as ungrounded and unprofessional in comparison with professional satirists in elite institutional media as expertise, scientific and grounded as Livingstone and Lunt (1994, p.178) argued.

On the other hand, various forms of audiences' activities related to online satire also contributed to challenging the existing relations of lay reasoning and expert knowledge in a different way. The popularity of a specific political satire suggests how precisely and playfully the satire represents the public sentiment of a focal issue. Its relevance and proximity to ordinary people's thinking and feeling can be measured by the number of clicks or textual responses or the frequency of its exposure on other websites like web blogs or online forums of portal websites or online community bulletin boards. As some scholars argue that reading a 'novel' or listening to or viewing news or soap opera is a public, political activity (Habermas, 1989[1962];Lacey, 2006;McKee, 2004), audiences' responsive activities relating to online political satire – clicking, playing, copying and pasting, responding to online satire by textual communication, uploading them on varied websites – are also a form of expressing their reflexive political view and feeling, which is a critical engagement with politics.

In summary, the modern separation between expert reasoning and lay people's feeling and thinking is challenged in the constellation of online political parodic satire. Ordinary people's affective thinking, which has been devalued and unappreciated as unprofessional or useless, is being repositioned in the political world not only through ordinary netizens' placing of the reinterpreted affect and reflexive meaning of current

politics in their own political satire but also through audiences' responsive political activities online.

## **6.6. Conclusion – Reconnecting everyday politics**

There is an increased scepticism about the fulfilment of the democratic role of news and current affairs media to connect people to politics so as to create an engaged citizenry. On the contrary, entertainment can offer a more flexible way of engaging with the elements 'informing politics than the official discourse of politics' (Curran, 2011, p.67). Moreover, there is a need to identify and expand various channels and forms of democratic media to stimulate mass participation in politics. Therefore, through tracing the development of political satire in relation to the freedom of speech in the changing media environment in Korean society, and examining online political satire during the tumultuous period of the Impeachment bill, I attempted to locate the democratic potential of entertainment media, which can provide a discursive space to facilitate citizens' engagement in political talks in an entertainment mode. In the three decades before the 1987 democratisation, when freedom of speech was severely repressed, simple word-of-mouth jokes about the incumbent President provided a discursive space for ordinary people to talk about politics in a playful, ridiculing way. In the wake of the 1987 democratisation, televised political satire boomed through the late 1980s. However, its depth of dealing with politics was limited to the extent that comedians mocked fictional characters representing those in power and authority or just mimicked the President's voice or gesture in a gentle way within the boundary that censorship allowed. In the late 1990s and early 2000s when the first peaceful exchange of the government took place and the Internet media became rapidly embedded in people's everyday lives of media use, the hybrid genre of short-lived satire merged across the



media – online fake newspapers, internet broadcast satires, television animated infotainment programmes and the entry of internet fake news to current affairs television programmes. These forms of satire were produced by institutionalised elite media or professional experts.

Focused around the 2004 President Impeachment bill, online political parodic satire thrived. Unlike the previous political satire, the emergent online political parody challenged the Enlightenment dichotomy. On the one hand, amateur satirists created online parody from non-expert's knowledge, which were incorporated with their affective, reflexive meaning of the event through comprehension and reinterpretation of expert knowledge in the news media. On the other hand, ordinary netizens verified their affective feelings by means of various responsive activities online.

Then how did online political satire around the Impeachment bill provide a discursive space to connect private individuals to the focal event? The online political humour resulted from the subversive repositioning of the familiar – politicians or political situations – into unfamiliar, ironic situations in which the pretence and hypocrisy of politics was revealed and ridiculed, and hence the existing power relations were undone. In this way, online political parody invited viewers to engage with open-ended, accidental talks to let them ponder the focal issue – the Impeachment and the general election – and to stimulate political participation on a different level as was evidenced in the gatherings of online groups in offline demonstrations. Furthermore, in the course of taking direct part in the rally by expressing their affective thinking with DIY political parody, group members felt a sense of fun and empowerment.

Through its critical, reflexive laughter, political satire provided a mediating domain in which emotion, reason and politics are linked in 'arational' mode (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994, p.276). Moreover, online political parodic satire

deconstructed the modernist dichotomy between expert reasoning and lay knowledge and reconnects politics to ordinary people's everyday lived experience. As I hope I have shown, ordinary people's affective thinking, traditionally devalued as ungrounded and unprofessional, was (and continues to be) repositioned as grounded, meaningful and reasoned in politics in the course of the production and consumption of online political satire. As such, online political satire contributes to bridge between affect and entertainment, and politics by providing a discursive space of informal, open-ended, 'meandering' (Dahlgren, 2006, pp.278-279) and 'messy' (Bohman, 1996, p.145) everyday talk.

## 7. The Paradox of Fandom: The politicising of teen fans of the pop band TVXQ

*"Sovereign power resides in the people's will."  
(Article 1 of The Korea Constitution, the chant most sung in  
the anti-US beef rally)*

### 7.1. Introduction

The 2008 vigil rally began with strong opposition to the government's agreement on the reopening of US beef import despite the danger of mad cow disease<sup>118</sup>. Soon after, this rally evolved into a nationwide political protest against a wider scope of government policy. Unlike most of the past protests in South Korea, the rallies were not ideology-based for political change but were singularly policy-based, directly relating to the people's day-to-day lives. Moreover, teenaged students, especially teen girls, led those rallies to a large extent. According to the police estimation, about 60 to 70 percent of the protesters in the early stages were teenaged schoolgirls (Huh and Kim, 2008). More intriguingly, at the centre of these teen girls' activism, were various teen fan groups of K-pop stars – Super Junior, SS501, Shin Hwa and TVXQ (Moh and Yang, 2008).

While academically engaging myself with the rally as an observer, I came to wonder how those teen fans, conventionally regarded as apolitical and mindless followers of their pop idols, became politicised. What is the relationship between the teen fans and their pop idols in their everyday lives and within this activism in particular? Did the stars instigate their activism such as Lady Gaga's efficacious mobilisation of her fans for various causes like charity and LGBT awareness, whose strategy is common within Western fandom? If this is not the case, in what ways were the stars or the teen fans related to the political activism? And what is the implication of

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<sup>118</sup> Its official name is bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The more popular term 'mad cow disease' will be used throughout the chapter.

the teen fans' politicisation to the relationship between fans and publics, and popular culture and politics?

The relationship between fandom and politics, especially civic participation, has recently emerged as an important agenda in cultural studies, specifically inside the field of fan studies. Yet there are few rigorous academic discussions of the concern and, moreover, there arises an urgent need for empirical studies (Brough and Shresthova, 2012; Hinck, 2012). Among those efforts, Liesbet van Zoonen (2004, 2005) expounds their close linkage by pointing to three analogies in respect of the structural formation of their subjectivity as a result of performance and 'an intermediate process of identification' (2005, p.59) that is emotionally charged either with stars or with politicians, activities such as public discussion and deliberation, and affective investments central in both domains. In regard to the connection between popular music and politics, van Zoonen (2005, pp.37-51) suggests that the politics of popular music is often the product of 'specific articulation of lyrics, genres, artists and audience appropriations'. For instance, nonpolitical songs often gain political significance 'because of their use in a specific politicized context' and this intersection takes place often accidentally rather than systematically. In this sense, it is of importance to analyse particular contexts and ways in which cultural, affective involvement of 'particular, located audiences' in the everyday comes to matter for the public sphere (Livingstone, 2005c, p.33) and thereby translates into political action. This particular performance of the audience, specifically fans, within 'a mediating domain' (Livingstone, 2005c, p.17) constructs their subjectivity either as publics or private fans.

In this light, my aims in the chapter are to identify the contextual and processional dimensions of the fan-based politics in which teen fans' cultural and affective engagement transforms into political citizenship. Therefore, in addition to my

questions raised above, I will endeavour to investigate which emotions play what kinds of roles in the process of teen fans' politicisation. For the analysis of the teen fans' political action, I will use Gamson's (1992) collective action frame in which injustice, agency and identity play out to support political consciousness. And I will also attempt to examine if any dimensions of Dahlgren's 'civic culture' (2003, pp.153-160; 2009, pp.102-125) – knowledge, values, trust (affinity), spaces, practices (talk) and identities – are identified in the fan activism and what this means for the relation of popular culture to democratic politics. In so doing, I hope I will locate the legitimate place of entertainment, fans and emotions in democratic politics.

## **7.2. The US-Beef Import Deal and the 2008 Vigil Rally**

### **7.2.1. The US-Beef Import Agreement and the Key Issue**

On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2008, South Korea and the US settled the agreement on the full reopening of the Korean market to US beef product imports, which had remained unresolved in the Korea-US FTA trade pact<sup>119</sup>. The agreement stated that, as a first measure, from mid-May 2008 Korea would import beef with SRMs<sup>120</sup> from cattle younger than 30 months old<sup>121</sup>. As a following step, US beef aged over 30 months old was to be imported under the condition that the US would publish in the Gazette an enforcement ordinance that cattle feed containing animal parts, especially SRMs, would be prohibited (Kim, 2008a; Lee and Lee, 2008b). Eventually Korea would import almost all US beef parts. Moreover the Korean government would retain no right to take measures to stop US beef imports even if a new case of mad cow disease were to break out in the US (Oh,

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<sup>119</sup> The pact reached a conclusion in 2007 except for the US beef import deal. Korea was the third largest market for US beef prior to the import ban in December 2003 when mad cow disease broke out in the US.

<sup>120</sup> SRMs are Specified Risk Materials like brains, eyes, spinal cords, and organs, all of which are categorised as highly risky to be infected by mad cow disease. Under the agreement, most SRMs were to be imported except the tonsils and the distal ileum and a part of the small intestine.

<sup>121</sup> In the US domestic market, beef from cattle only under 30 months old is consumed and in Japan US beef aged only less than 20 months old is imported in order to prevent mad cow disease.

2008) and be required to wait until the Paris-based World Organisation for Animal Health lowered the safety rating of US cattle in order to halt imports (Kim, 2008b).

The key concern aroused by the agreement was that there was no substantial measure to secure the safety of US beef aged over 30 months and thereby protect public health from mad cow disease. Progressive parties including the Unified Democratic Party and the Democratic Labour Party and civic groups criticised the government for making the hasty agreement that they claimed would threaten not only public health and safety, but also the domestic livestock farming industry. The criticism was based on the fact that cattle feed containing animal parts is a definite cause of mad cow disease and cattle over 30 months old have a higher likelihood of being infected with mad cow disease. Under the former US beef sanitary standards agreement made in January 2003, Korea imported only boneless US beef under 30 months old and maintained the right to ban all shipments of the US beef immediately whenever a case of mad cow disease broke out in the US or when banned vertebrae was found in a shipment. In fact, there had already been two instances in which Korea had to ban or suspend US beef imports: in December 2003 when mad cow disease broke out in the US and in October 2007 since the prohibited vertebrae were found in a shipment (Joo, 2008; Moon, 2008). Besides, by the time President Lee Myung-bak had a summit talk with George W. Bush and announced the agreement, there were immense recalls of US beef exports (Lee and Lee, 2008a). These occurrences raised a grave question of the standards of the US's meat processing facilities and procedures. Consequently, the government was criticised for their haste to comply with US demands rather than to ensure public health.

In reply to the criticism, the government and the conservative party GNP proclaimed that they would take necessary steps to secure the safety of US beef by not rushing to lift a regulation on beef from cattle aged over 30 months and instead

implement the agreement gradually. In addition, they said they would take measures for protecting Korean cattle farms from bankruptcy (Yang, 2008a). However, there was no feasible action to fulfill their promises. To make matters worse, remarks from the minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Food that the beef from cattle over 30 months old would be safe if the part of SRMs were removed, provoked a public backlash.

The conventional mainstream media apparently underscored benefits of the FTA trade deal that the beef agreement would engender. In contrast, a few traditional media, like *Hankyoreh*, *Kyunghyang* and *Seoul Shinmun*, *Hankook Ilbo* and MBC *PD's Suechup (Notepad)* criticised the accord by focusing on potential risks of the agreement in the intermittent beef-related articles. In particular, it is notable how a public terrestrial broadcaster, MBC, broadcast their regular programme, *PD's Notepad*, entitled: "*Urgent news coverage! Is US beef safe from mad cow disease?*" that delivered details of the agreement. The in-depth, investigative programme, which aired on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008, drew the first massive wave of public attention to the reopening of US beef imports. The programme pointed to the problem of the quarantine inspection standards agreed with the US in comparison with the standards that China or Japan had agreed to with the US. It also stressed that Koreans are highly susceptible to mad cow disease due to genetic structure<sup>122</sup> and noted that, in particular, Korea has a food culture of eating stewed or steamed brains, skulls, and bones, which are part of SRMs. Above all, what made a huge impact on raising public concern and fear of US imported beef under the accord were shocking scenes of a downer cow, which was unable to stand – most likely

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<sup>122</sup> The programme showed the result of gene analysis that the Koreans' attack rate of mad cow disease goes up to 95% in comparison with 35% for westerners', specifically Caucasians' when eating beef infected with mad cow disease. This claim was also verified in the former government's internal report documented in September 2007, which recommended to ban the import of all the parts of SRMS (Choi, 2008).

due to mad cow disease – that was butchered, processed and sold as edible beef from a US cattle slaughterhouse and the heart breaking stories told by the parents of American mad cow disease patients. This programme provoked tremendous online communications afterwards. Netizens from various areas – lawyers, doctors, housewives, people working for NGOs and students – proffered their strong opinions, as detailed below.

### **7.2.2. Candlelit Vigil Spreads Nationwide Like Wildfire**

Prior to *PD's Notepad* broadcast on 29<sup>th</sup> April, there had already been ongoing discussions on the Internet relating to President Lee's general policies as well as US beef imports. As one of the major portal websites, Daum's online forum Agora<sup>123</sup> is a space in which netizens talk about a wide range of topics from personal, trivial events or problems to such focal issues as the US beef import deal. Two weeks before the US beef agreement, on 6<sup>th</sup> April at Agora, a high school student nicknamed Andante posed an online petition for the impeachment of President Lee, in which he criticised the government's currently proposed policy including construction of Grand canals, the implementation of English education in all subjects from primary school and the privatisation of public companies such as the National Health Service. As of 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1.3 million netizens signed the petition. This number suggests that people became outraged about the government's general policies, further inflamed by the hastily signed beef agreement.

The large scale of serial vigil rallies was organised and mobilised in online communities and forums, especially Agora, and blogs with diverse ideas of ways of

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<sup>123</sup> Throughout the 2008 vigil rally Daum came to outrun Naver, which had previously ranked as the number one portal website. Daum offered a converging public sphere for diverse online forums and communities for netizens not only to exchange information and opinions, but also to produce and distribute various user-generated content including political parody, posters warning of US mad cow disease and real-time live news of the vigil rally and of the government policy.



delivering public concerns and demands. Eventually the online communities – Michinso (mad cow) dot net ([www.michincow.net](http://www.michincow.net)), Citizens' coalition against President Lee's policy and the Centre for nationwide movement for impeachment of Lee Myung-bak – held the first vigil rally on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008, which continued until 5<sup>th</sup> July<sup>124</sup>.

By mid-May the vigil rally had expanded nationwide, with traditional media and immense online communications contributing to setting the beef issue as a mainstream agenda and orchestrating the rally. The major networks – KBS, MBC and SBS – dealt with the issue everyday despite their variation in time allocation and point of view. MBC's 9 O'clock News was, in particular, believed by many protest participants to convey their voices and the problems of the beef deal in detail from reasonably fair perspectives. Accordingly they received enormous moral support from the advocates of the rally. Eventually this turned out to be a major challenge to the government's claims of the 100% safety of the beef<sup>125</sup>.

What the mainstream media failed to deliver was complemented with real time web-cast and protesters' eyewitness accounts in the community online forums or blogs. The live webcast was produced by individual netizens armed with webcams and laptops with wireless network or online video sharing, UGC-aggregated service *Afreeca*, online news webcast *OhmyTV* and *Colour TV*, and existing newspapers *Kyunghyang*, *Hankyoreh*<sup>126</sup>. In this way, they served to renew the narrative of protests with real time video footage and to mobilise viewers to partake in protests. Prominently, *Afreeca* provided a central platform for fact-based live webcast of the vigil rally from the second day of the rally, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008, and became the most viewed live webcast during the

<sup>124</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> July the Citizens' Council against Mad Cow Disease, constituted by around 1,700 civic groups, officially terminated the intensive vigil rallies of 65 days, which had been taking place nearly every day since 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The coalition also declared the day as people's victory day.

<sup>125</sup> Correspondingly, the government exerted pressure on MBC by suing *PD's Notepad* for dissemination of "false" facts in early June, as well as by ordering MBC executive committee to dismiss the 9 O'clock News anchors in late April 2009.

<sup>126</sup> The webcast of the rally began from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008.

rally. As an exemplary incident, on the early morning of 25<sup>th</sup> May when protesters began to occupy the road for the first time in the course of serial rallies and the conflict between the police and the protesters became violent, the number of viewers of *Afreeca*'s live web-cast reached over 307,000. In particular, the live scene of a female undergraduate being brutally trampled by feet of the riot police enraged netizens and led them to join the morning protest. The following day the scene was immediately transmitted on MBC's 9 O'clock News (Yang, 2008b) and widely reported in the progressive newspapers. The number of daily hits of the rally webcast on *Afreeca* reached 1.27million and the total number of viewers was 8 million – 17 percent of the whole population – as of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (Kuh, 2008).

Despite President Lee's public apology on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, its failure to deliver pertinent measures without renegotiation thereby further fuelled the rally. Consequently a massive protest took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the 1987 democratisation, which was the largest since that historic event. On that single day, the vigil rally took place in around 120 places nationwide and in total over one million citizens took part (Chang, Lee and Oh, 2008; Shin, Chung, Sohn and Park, 2008). Over a half million citizens gathered at Seoul Plaza in central Seoul, the symbolic site of the 1987 democratisation. They shaped a long candlelit line of about 2.5km marching from Gwang Hwa Moon to Nam Dae Moon, holding up various slogans ranging from "No US beef imports" to "2MB<sup>127</sup> Out."

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<sup>127</sup> 2MB stands for the then President's name Lee Myung-Bak. Number 2 sounds like his surname Lee in Korean pronunciation. It is also used satirically in the rally slogans to mean that the president's brain capacity barely reaches 2 mega bites.



Figure 9. The Candlelit Vigil Rally on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Source: *OhmyNews* (<http://www.ohmynews.com>)

### 7.2.3. The Outcome

This monumental, nationwide protest had produced an immediate outcome: the government had an additional talk with the US trade deputies in order to seek effective and feasible measures to secure the safety of the beef, and gained a key outcome of the banning not only of beef aged over 30 months old through the QSA programme guaranteed by the US government, but of four SRM parts – brain, eyes, spinal cords and skull.

### 7.3. Revived Censorship

It is notable that the regulation of the media in Korea has been intensified since the events under review here. The Lee Myung-bak government has taken several measures to control the free flow of public opinion and the criticism of the state affairs on the

Internet during the 2008 vigil rally and afterwards. For example, the police imprisoned the CEO of *Nowcom*, which owns the Internet webcast *Afreeca*, for violation of copyright law. Some critics claimed that it was unfair to detain the CEO given judicial precedents that violators of the copyright law got sentenced to a fine with no detention. It was widely believed that this case foreshadowed the government's clampdown on the Internet so as to gag any criticism spreading through the Internet after the 2008 vigil rally.

As of 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the media regulator, the KCC, requested *Daum* to blind postings or replies critical of President Lee Myung-bak on the grounds of cyber-slander as defined by the Information and Communications Law. The regulator was widely believed to target *Daum* as it had provided the converging platform for public discussions and hot debates relating to government policy and the US beef import in particular. Furthermore, as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008, the Korea Communications Standards Commission ordered *Daum* to delete 58 of 80 postings under an accusation of promoting a boycott campaign by certain advertisers of the three newspapers *Chosun*, *Joong Ang* and *Dong-A* (Park, 2008) which had been criticised by advocates of the rally for reporting the vigil rally unfairly. In addition, in late August the police prosecuted 24 "netizens" for leading on- and off-line boycott campaigns to press major advertisers to stop providing advertisements for those newspapers. They had circulated a list of those advertisers on the Internet and encouraged netizens to make a continuous complaint call to the advertisers, which resulted in the companies' suspension of ads in the three newspapers.

Due to the government's crackdown on Internet communication, a number of online communities actively engaged in the anti-US beef protest on- and off-line changed to be strictly private to their own members. For instance, *Soul Dresser*,

composed of mainly women in their 20s with an interest in fashion, not only raised around £30,000 (60 million KRW) in order to support what they claimed were the fair press – *Kyunghyang* and *Hankyoreh* – but also publicised in those newspapers their authentic reason for the rally and the refutation of the government's claims of the 100% safety of the US beef. *Soul Dresser* also carried out a couple of flash mob performances under the title "*The Korean democracy is dead*" at the crowded shopping mall Coex in Seoul (Chung, 2008b). Since the government's repression of online discussions and the arrest of the rally participants<sup>128</sup>, however, the community *Soul Dresser* closed and no longer appeared in the result of online community search with the search phrase 'Soul Dresser' as of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

Furthermore, on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the KCC unveiled extended and fortified regulations aimed at curbing what it claimed were slanderous commentary and unsubstantiated rumours on the Internet. According to the rule, 153 websites including entertainment auction and shopping sites are now subject to follow the Internet Real-name Act that requires users to register with their real name matching their National ID number when uploading postings or responses on a bulletin board. In 2008 the number of websites subject to run the registration system was only 37 and they were limited to portal websites of over 300,000 daily users and online newspapers of at least 200,000 daily users. Under the newly introduced law, however, 116 websites with over 100,000 daily users have to run the real-name registration system.

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<sup>128</sup> According to the government's self-assessment of the performance of 2008, 1,649 rally participants got judicially punished and 1,844 civic groups involved in the protest were notified as being unlawful.

#### 7.4. TVXQ – Rising God of Cassiopeia



Figure 10. TVXQ fourth album cover  
Source: SM Entertainment (<http://www.smtown.com>)

One of the pioneering K-Pop star groups, the quintet boy band TVXQ was created in December 2003 by SM Entertainment, which established the ‘star system’ in Korea and made the first pop idol band H.O.T a huge hit from 1996 to 2001. TVXQ made Number One ranking in April 2004 in the terrestrial television station MBC’s music programme *Music Camp* that was to be an indication of their success in domestic music market. Their band name Dong Bang Shin Gi (동방신기 東方神起) means ‘Rising God in the East’. They have various names in different countries: Dong Bang Shin Gi (동방신기) in Korea and Tohoshinki in Japan. However, aiming at world music market, representatively China and Europe, TVXQ, an acronym for Tong Vfang Xien Qi (東方

神起) in Chinese pronunciation and a simpler name, started being officially used. Throughout this chapter, I will use the acronym TVXQ for 동방신기. Beginning with their Number One ranking in Channel V Thailand's Countdown International Chart for 4 consecutive weeks in 2006, they have expanded their success in Asia including Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, China and Korea, and beyond. Particularly their first 'Best Song' award in the Japan pop chart Oricon in 2008 meant that they gained a foothold in world music market, since Japan was the second biggest market in the world next to the US<sup>129</sup>. As of January 2013, TVXQ ranked first in the Oricon chart for the 12<sup>th</sup> time and recorded estimated sales of 3million copies in Japan, which outran any other overseas musicians in the country (Cho, 2013).

TVXQ has several online fan communities – Dong Ne Bang Ne, Iccadong, Yuaerubi, Cassiopeia – and the age of fan members are various from teens to those in their 30s or 40s, although most fans are female. The fans call one another Cassiopeia, or Cang or Ca-A as shorthand for Cassiopeia, which represents the TVXQ fan membership. The official membership of Cassiopeia is estimated at around 800,000 worldwide and thus TVXQ was registered as the musical group having the largest number of fans in the 2008 Guinness World Records (Yu, 2013). The TVXQ fans do various volunteering and charity activities in the name of their stars: visiting orphanages and nursing homes, donating money and hundreds of rice-sacks to celebrate band members' birthdays and promote the members' performances in television dramas, musicals and concerts. As such, beyond merely adoring and following their stars, Korean fandom actively and powerfully engages in the management and the promotion

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<sup>129</sup> It is anticipated that Japan will overtake the US to become the world's biggest music market in 2013. 'The year-end 2012 table from the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) showed that the U.S. and Japan combined accounts for more than half of the global recording industry, with the American market just 1.3% ahead'.

of the popularity of their stars, which is coined as fancom<sup>130</sup> – the norm of Korean fan culture (Chung, 2008a;Im, 2010). For example, on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009, three members of TVXQ – Hero Jae-joong, Michy Yoo-chun, Xiah Jun-su – petitioned for provisional disposition of their 13 years exclusive contract with SM Entertainment. Under the contract, if TVXQ wanted to terminate the contract before its expiry, they would have had to pay exorbitant penalty fees to SM, i.e. three times SM’s investment and twice their expected earnings (Lee, 2009). The Association of TVXQ Fans formed immediately after the petition and worked in various ways in order to publicise the unfairness of the contract between SM Entertainment and TVXQ, and to advocate the three members’ rights, including: submitting a petition accusing SM Entertainment of its unfair and inhumane contract to the National Human Rights Commission (Park, 2009); filing a petition, signed by over 0.12 million supporters on- and off-line internationally, for the correction of the unfair contract; filing a complaint for the unfair trade of the exclusive contract to the Fair Trade Commission; putting advertisements in the newspaper Hankyoreh<sup>131</sup>, in buses nationwide and underground tube stations with the voluntarily raised fund; and boycotting SM products (Kim, 2009; 2010). Although the fans’ wish for five members of TVXQ to continue to work together failed to be fulfilled, the court ordered to allow three members’ independent activities from SM Entertainment and the Fair Trade Commission directed SM Entertainment to take corrective measures about the exclusive contract period and conditions. Consequently, the liberated three members formed a new band named after the initials of their Korean names JYJ in October 2010 and two other members remained as TVXQ under the contract with SM Entertainment from January 2011 (Hong, 2010a;Kim, 2010c).

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<sup>130</sup> The shorthand for “fan company”.

<sup>131</sup> They put an advertisement saying, “*They are not monkeys. TVXQ are human beings who have personal rights and the right to make their own decisions*” in the first page of *Hankyoreh*.



### 7.5. Teen(-fan)s at the Forefront and Media Discourse

In the beginning of the 2008 anti-US beef candlelit vigil rally, the majority of participants were teenaged students, especially teen schoolgirls. And among those teen girls were the fans of pop music stars like TVXQ, Shinhwa, Super Junior, SS501 and Big Bang. The live video clip of two schoolgirls' presentation on central stage at the second day rally site was rapidly spread on the Internet. At the free speech session, they jumped up to the stage and proudly claimed in turn:

"I am a Cassiopeia. I would like to see TVXQ once more. We would like to see our beloved people much longer and we do not want them sick at all. (To their fellow teen fans) Now you are the hope for Grand Korea."<sup>132</sup>

Soon after, a round of rapturous applause from the assembly followed. It was of unequivocal surprise that the protest was led by those young schoolgirls and this fact impinged on promoting adults' attention and participation in the rally. Among adults, especially university students who had been thought of as a leading political agent in Korean history of "street democracy", the teen girls' enormous political participation evoked the feeling of reflexive responsibility that resulted in an increasing number of adult citizens joining the rally.

The unprecedented phenomenon of teen girl politics raised diverse reactions and discussions. The day after the live video clip of the two girls' speech spread virally on the Internet, the mass media immediately reported the teens' partaking in the rally. The mass media broadly reported the teenagers' political engagement rather than on the specificity of teen girls' or teen fans' politics. The textual analysis of 10 general-circulation newspapers articles revealed two central discourses of teen(-fan) protesters:

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<sup>132</sup> For the video clip, please visit the webpage (<http://blog.daum.net/spottv/3989345>).

(1) emotional crowds, and (2) rational political actors. In the following, I will endeavour to expound how this polarity of the media discourse is operative on the basis of the normative reason/emotion opposition in relation to politics, which keeps us blind to the meaningful role of emotions in participant politics.

### 7.5.1. Emotional crowds

The narrative “emotional crowds” incorporates four thematic threads - teen protesters influenced by celebrities, teen protesters swayed by Internet rumours of mad cow disease, teen protesters instigated by leftists and anti-Americans, and the need of surveillance and guidance of teen participants. In respect of teen fan participants in particular, the media predominantly focused on the negative impact of celebrities:

Popular stars are criticising the government’s US beef import agreement everyday...The stars’ remarks are often reproduced with fans’ responses in the Internet. *Unverified rumours* are being widely diffused, augmenting *anxiety* in the society. (5<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Joong Ang*, emphasis mine)

It is *undesirable* that celebrities made *emotional* remarks on the current issue. Their comments can easily provoke *impressionable teenagers*. (6<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Dong-A*, emphasis mine)

Celebrities highly influencing adolescents took a main actor’s part in *bogus disturbance*. (6<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Chosun*, emphasis mine)

There are increasing number of celebrities joining to spread the *ill-grounded mad cow disease rumours*...But their arguments should have *at least the minimum level of logic, validity and persuasiveness*...The list of celebrities advocating *violent and false* rumours is being disseminated on the Internet as the list of ‘socio-politically conscious celebrities’. It makes me rethink how powerfully celebrities affect our teenagers’ thinking. (7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Chosun*, emphasis mine)

They are likely *blind* to believe the information that was disseminated through the Internet and mobile phones, and proved to *seriously lack deliberation and judgement*. They were influenced by some entertainers’ criticism of the US beef agreement and were in a rush to prompt fellow teens. In addition, they were *so immature* that they were *too easily affected and persuaded by a trivial stimulus*. (6<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Hankook*

*Ilbo*, emphasis mine)

These accounts represent celebrities as emotional and irresponsibly influential to spread unverified, false, ill-grounded and illogical rumours and incite teenagers who were described as impressionable, immature, easily manipulated, and lacking serious deliberation and judgement. These negatively assigned qualities of teen protesters are far distanced from rational, politically significant and deliberating publics, rather in parallel to the concept of ‘crowds’ projected in early social scientific study of mass movements (Gould, 2010, p.18). The negative quality of crowds, emotionally driven, easily swayed by rumours and demagogues (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001, p.2), ‘illogical, unreasonable, reckless, and inclined toward extremism and anarchic disorder’ (Gould, 2010, p.20), was ascribed to teen protesters represented in the Korean conservative mainstream media under study. This pathological approach to reduce teen fan protesters as a crowd was lumped together with the traditionally derogatory stereotype as ‘overly emotional, irrational, imprudent audiences’ (Dayan, 2001, p.746; Livingstone, 2005d, p.17), and ‘part of an undifferentiated, easily manipulated mass’ (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p.2):

Teen protesters rarely had pertinent, correct information of the US-beef import...most of them have never studied the issue at school but came to know it through the Internet only...Socio-psychology experts analysed these teen protesters as *psychologically* parallel to so-called ‘*mindless avid fans*’ following their stars in the sense that *emotional teen participants* immersed themselves in the issue of mad cow disease. (12<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Dong-A*, emphasis mine)

Moreover, the discourse of “emotional crowds” is intensified by the theme that teens’ political activism was mistakenly instigated by strategic propaganda of left-wing, anti-American organisations:

It is a pity that teenagers, who must be full of scientific inquisitiveness,

believe *unscientific propaganda* just as told. By means of Internet, the *ill-judged* teens are likely to be *brainwashed with anti-Americanism and the fear of mad cow disease*. (5<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Dong-A, *emphasis mine*)

Underlying the conception of teen protesters as emotional, unscientific, ill-judged ‘crowds’ is a binary opposition between reason and emotion, which sees emotion as irrational and secondary to reason in the political arena. In this view, ‘*unthinking, illogical, immature* student protesters were to be watched and guided, not to leave their classrooms where they should focus on study *under the control of an authoritative institution*, and not to run out to dangerous protest sites’ (7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Dong-A, *my italics*). In fact, this discourse was observed in educational sites. By early May, as the number of the teens joining the demonstration rapidly grew, education authorities instructed middle and high schools to preclude students from participating in the protest (Chang and Yu, 2008). In addition, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education sent school inspectors including about 800 teachers to the protest site to stop students’ political participation (Kim and Oh, 2008).

### 7.5.2. Rational political actors

In sharp contrast, the themes – a rationale for and a praise of teens’ participation in the rally – were intersected into the discourse of “rational political actors”, conveyed by the progressive media *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang* in particular. The reason theme was delineated in two aspects: on the one hand the teens participated in the rally in order to secure the safety of US beef and on the other hand to resist the swiftly changing and, in some cases regressive, educational policies of the Lee government, such as implementing the entire curricula taught in English and the revisited pre-class study<sup>133</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> In 2006, under President Roh Moo-hyun’s government, the compulsory pre-and-post-class study at middle and high schools was prohibited based on the notion that this enforcing way of study incites

In addition, the media narratives constructed teen participants in the rally as an emerging political force:

...Now teenagers *set a social agenda more powerfully* than established politicians or journalists so as to make social impact... (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008, *Kyunhyang*, emphasis mine)

...Experts analyse that teenagers, educated and brought up by 386-generation parents, are *emerging as new 'political actors'* distinguishing from youth in their 20s who are rapidly becoming conservative... (7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Kyunghyang*, emphasis mine)

However, the discourse of rational political actors is still restrained within the normative rationality/emotionality dichotomy. Despite the clear departure from the derogatory image of teen protesters as “emotional crowds” and the appreciation of the teens’ political participation, the attempt to conceptualise the quality of political actors as ‘devoid of emotions’ (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001, p.5) appeared to maintain:

... Teenagers indeed directed the press... *Despite their anxious passion and immaturity, they rationally and intelligibly judged* what the abandonment of our sovereignty of inspection would result in...(11<sup>th</sup> May 2008, *Hankyoreh*, emphasis mine)

Social movements are ‘an extension of normal, everyday politics’ in which ordinary actors participated in order to press their demands when blocked from normal political channels (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001, p.5; Gould, 2010, p.22) or when institutional politics is not working properly. And emotion plays a crucial part to motivate and sustain civic engagement and participation in social movement. In this light, I will endeavour to identify the role of emotions and the possible linkage of

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overly high competition among schools, as well as students, for entering a good university and at the same time it adversely affects students’ health and study efficiency. Under the system, students have to spend around 16 hours at school from 7.30am till 10 or 11pm. In addition, most of students go to private institutes for extra study until 1 or 2am afterwards. It is extremely competitive to enter a good university and thereby the education policy regarding entering universities is a hot potato at all times in Korean society. As soon as Lee Myung-bak was inaugurated as president on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2008, he announced a series of new educational policies, including a return to some of these old study systems, which caused public criticism and deep concerns.

emotion to reason in politics through examining teen fans' politicisation.

## **7.6. Politicisation of Teen Fandom**

### **7.6.1. Altruistic Love beyond Admiration**

My analysis of Yuaerubi online communications in May 2008 shows that most communications were concerned with worries and fear of mad cow disease, specifically in respect of their pop star. The fan fiction Happy Days interestingly contextualises the US-beef issue in unique ways in which teen fans – Cassiopeia – relate to TVXQ. The story unfolds as follows:

(Monologue of TVXQ)

Now there are only a few days left before our grand comeback stage in Korea. Then all of sudden Cassiopeia told us not to come back and instead stay and keep performing under the name of TOHOSHINKI in Japan. Why is that? We do not understand at all. Even a month ago, they said they had loved and would love us as always.... Now we are hardly able to trust them as they seem to betray us... By the way, what on earth is happening in Korea? ...

(Monologue of and talks between Cassiopeia)

We are Cassiopeia. The only thing we can do is to support and protect TVXQ. Now sooner or later they will return to Korea. We have been so excited and happy with many Cassiopeias, waiting for their comeback for about two years... Then there is the news that a President elected by adults with the hope of boosting economy will import strange US beef and then every Korean might be dead. The due date for import is 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Cassiopeia A: "What should we do!!! Are we dying, too?!!!"

Cassiopeia B: "So we have to protest and if it does not work...we would have no other choice but die.... coz the mad cow disease virus is believed to be passed through not only beef but almost every sort of quotidian necessities..."

Cassiopeia A: “Then what would happen to TVXQ? They are coming back soon...”

Cassiopeia B: “They will be dead if they come...”

The protest against US beef import is still going on but it does not seem effective. The President does not listen to our demands at all... So I requested TVXQ’s best friends to persuade TVXQ to remain in Japan because we want them to live even if we die, and tell them that we no longer love them. It is so heartbreaking but we cannot let them die... On their arrival at the airport, we shouted at them to go back and lied about our love for them. In the end, they returned back to Japan and we all cried with their families... Now we are dying... TVXQ and Cassiopeia came to part for good.

This fan fiction offers an incisive picture of teen fans’ affective relationship with TVXQ and their way of understanding the current issue – the US beef import and its potential danger, and the protest. The story reveals teen fans’ affective investment in TVXQ is love that is unconditional and unselfish so that they want to protect TVXQ even if they have to sacrifice their lives. This “altruistic” love was distinctly identified in the teen fans’ articulation of what TVXQ and their music mean to them in their everyday lives:

“TVXQ guided me to find my life dream to become a musician... They are so precious that a word cannot convey what they mean to me.” (YD)

“TVXQ is my shelter in bad times. Although I cannot touch them, see or talk to them face-to-face, a piece of their picture, voice and video clips give me strength to carry on my everyday.” (HS)

“TVXQ is the centre of my world, a tonic for my life, and so precious people who have been with me through my teen age.” (KH)

“It’s been nearly 6 years since I became a TVXQ fan. They are my sanctuary in Korea where there are few places that we teenagers can release our stress.” (ISC)

“Once I wanted to kill myself because life felt too tough and devastating to go on. But I could escape from the abyss of depression and the suicidal thoughts with the imagination that I won’t be able to see TVXQ and to listen to their music for good if I die... Five members of TVXQ were just pop idols that I admired and adored... But as they have been with me for one thirds of my life so far, now they are my

good friends whom I want to be together in my whole life and protect to continue to sing.” (SC)

As such, TVXQ and their music had an inexplicable significance, substantially integrated in their everyday lives: love; an essence for life like water and oxygen; life itself; the only reason for happiness; pride; a mood manager; and a friend, lover and family that they want to protect from whatever happens. The particular circumstance of Korean teenagers makes the relationship between these teens and TVXQ stronger and more special. The reality for Korean teenagers is harsh indeed. Their daily routine seems to revolve around only one goal: to enter a good university. The weekday of high school students typically begins as they rise at 6.30am, arrive at school by 8am, finish by 4 or 5pm, and then go back home for early dinner. Then they take a shuttle bus to a private crammer or hagwon where they get extra-school lessons from 6 to 10pm and do self-study by 1 or 2am and rise at 6.30am next morning to do it all over again. Around 65% of high school students enter university but Korea has the highest suicide rate of industrialised OECD countries.

In these distressing circumstances, TVXQ is an indispensable existence that maintains the teen fans' everyday. And their affective investment in the beloved star – altruistic love – provided a common ground to take an initial attention and interest in the US beef import and the danger of mad cow disease, which were interwoven in fan-created contents dealing with the issue such as Canta's Happy Days and related posters.

#### **7.6.2. Yuaerubi built on Trust: A central communicative space for the self-mobilising teen fan politics**

The teen protesters, whom I interviewed, have been loyal fans for 4 to 6 years since TVXQ made their debut and Yuaerubi members for similar years. As the Internet is embedded in almost every aspect of Koreans' everyday life, news they get on the



Internet serves as a major source for what they learn about the society, particularly to young people including the teen fans. For making sense of the world, the teen fans also use traditional forms of television and newspaper media at times. In their everyday Internet culture, in which they spend about 1 to 3 hours per day on average, Yuaerubi was the most frequent and first-visited ‘communicative space’ (Dahlgren, 2009, pp.114-116). If they were in the third year of middle or high schools, they could manage only one day per week for a Yuaerubi visit and usually spent nearly all day long once they logged in. In Yuaerubi, they read TVXQ-related news and notifications, and fan-generated postings, watch concert video clips and respond to fellow members’ postings on ‘everyday trivia’ (Crawford, 2009, p.252) in the ‘Tearoom Coffee’ bulletin board. They sometimes circulated TVXQ-related artefacts to other online fan communities or the TVXQ Telzone bulletin board of a portal website *Daum*, and vice versa. The sharing and (re-)circulating of constantly renewable meaning of TVXQ not only intensified fan community membership but also created and revitalised ‘social ties’ (Jenkins, 2006b, p.140) between geographically isolated and fragmented individuals within Yuaerubi and beyond. The accounts of the teen fans elucidate how the fan community maintains and solidifies around affinity:

“I’m shy and don’t like to make close friends on the net in general... but, in ‘Tearoom Coffee’ of Yuaerubi, if somebody talks about her worries, we listen to her and try to give helpful advice although we don’t know each other. It’s because we are all Cassiopeia.” (LR)

“I chat to Yuaerubi members in the ‘Tearoom Coffee’ whenever I log on. They are the one that I can talk to and rely upon in bad times...and chat about any trivia, including TVXQ and my private problems in particular.” (HH)

“I appreciate Yuaerubi members because they love whom I love... and now I feel they are like my friends and family... With Yuaerubi members, I can talk about anything that might sound shameful and so that I can hardly talk to offline friends... Once we feel we become close enough, we exchange phone numbers for texting or phoning and

later do some activities together: going to TVXQ concerts and terrestrial broadcasting companies' public music broadcast in which TVXQ performs, shopping and going to McDonalds together." (IRW)

Affinity 'as a minimal sense of commonality' (Dahlgren, 2003, p.157) with Yuaerubi members played a key role in building and maintaining the relationship among fellow fans within Yuaerubi. Affinity shared among teen fans is parallel to the notion of '(thin) trust' as one of six dimensions of Dahlgren's civic culture, which is based on honest and reciprocal relationships with people whom we don't know personally but with whom we feel we can have satisfactory exchange. As indicated in the teen fan IRW's account, affinity built on 'thin trust' sometimes develops into personal friendship that demands a kind of 'thick trust' entailing 'bonding of exclusive, tight, intragroup ties'. But in a loosely networked late modern society, thin trust becomes a more relevant, predominant mode for civic engagement (Dahlgren, 2009, p.113) as the interviewed teen fans retain toward Yuaerubi members. The teen fans' narratives above also substantiate van Zoonen's (2004, 2005) argument that fan and civic participation are both maintained by affective investment. That is to say, the feeling of love for TVXQ and trust (thin or thick) among Yuaerubi members are analogous to the counterpart (citizens' admiration for politicians and trust among citizens) in political constituency. Social networks, built on trust among teen fan participants, served to mobilise themselves and friends into protest. Interestingly, in contrast to the widely held belief in academia that it is necessary for people to have intellectual understanding of society before they act to change, some teen fans acted first by their friends' encouragement without political consciousness, which is rather constructed in the process of participating, as Gamson (1992, p.6 & pp.110-111) suggested.

Yuaerubi provided the 'diffused audience' (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998) with a meeting point of multi-platforms, where they not only exchanged shared

emotions, information and developed informed opinions, but also engaged in discussions of various subjects including TVXQ.

“In the ‘Tearoom Coffee’, lots of new postings are uploaded every minute... They are about our beloved stars, and political or world issues that I didn’t know...so I get information and other people’s opinions, and discuss with fellow members about those topics... During the anti-US beef protest, we discussed passionately.” (SSE)

“As I log onto Yuaerubi almost every day, the community is the space where I can communicate with fellow fans freely and learn a lot on diverse subjects such as my beloved pop star and social, political issues sometimes. I didn’t realise the seriousness of the US beef import and mad cow disease until I encountered discussions with Yuaerubi members about the possible hazard of US beef aged over 30 months old.” (HE)

As Habermas (1989[1962], 1992) pointed out, these teen fans’ accounts epitomise how activity in the literary public sphere, engaging discussions of taste and the pleasurable enjoyment of conversation among fellow fans, spilled over into the political public sphere of the discussion of social, economic and political questions. Moreover, this online political public sphere branches out to and converges with other discursive spaces of social interaction like school and other online communities that the teen fans belong to. The account of KHR highlights this point: “The next day at school I discussed with classmates not only about what I read, viewed and heard at Yuaerubi the night before but also about the lived experience of some friends’ participation in the rally.” As such, Yuaerubi served as a central ‘communicative space’ (Dahlgren, 2009, pp.114-116) for the teen fan participants among various spaces in which relevant ‘knowledge’ (Dahlgren, 2003, pp.157-158; 2009, pp.108-110) is accessible and available and its interpreted meaning were circulated, updated and reinforced through informal, ‘meandering’ talk as a way of ‘practice’ (Dahlgren, 2009, p.117). In the following sections, I will examine the ways in which the components of ‘the collective

action frame’ – injustice, agency and identity – (Gamson, 1992), and associated emotions were deployed in the process of teen fans’ political mobilisation.

### 7.6.3. Injustice: Moral Shocks and Demonization

The information, which the teen fans acquired through fan-created fictions and posters, and discussions across various on- and off-line spaces like Yuaerubi and the school, engendered various emotions as below:

“I was so *terrified and anxious* since the first and largest market for cheapest US beef was the army and TVXQ would be enlisted for military service in near future under the conscription system.” (LR)

“I was so *angry* because *a few politicians and President made the undemocratic decision* of the US beef import that was a matter of life or death for the people. Not only me but also my family and friends, Cassiopeia and TVXQ brothers all could be killed from mad cow disease. That suddenly made me feel faint and cry... So I came out to the rally.” (TY)

“Once I came across the fan-created poster and video clip of US beef and mad cow disease in the ‘Tearoom Coffee’ of Yuaerubi where I often chat with fellow fans, I got inexplicably *enraged by the government’s careless decision* of US beef import. So I searched for more related information at other websites and recognised the seriousness of the issue... Besides, the *government’s arrest of innocent citizens* partaking in the rally made me so *angry*. Eventually I partook in the protest.” (FT)

“As a member of our country, I felt the US beef import *was not right*. So I browsed various websites for further information. With much more knowledge of the issue, I got so *indignant* that I couldn’t sit quietly without any action. So I decided to participate in the protest and went to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May protest with my friend.” (HE)

The emotions identified in the teen fans’ narratives are dreadful fear, anxiety, anger and indignation. These emotions are considered as the motivational basis in the growth and unfolding of social movements and political actions (Gamson, 1992; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001; Hoggett and Thompson, 2012; Kuklinski, 2001; Marcus and Mackuen, 2001; Thompson, 2006). As the first step toward recruitment in social

movements and political action, 'moral shocks' (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001, p.16) take place when unexpected and sudden events or a piece of information threatening the existing circumstance arouses feelings of fear and anxiety. These emotions stimulate their 'political learning' (information search and processing) and 'reflexive, informed reconsideration' (Marcus and Mackuen, 2001, p.61) of the issue, all of which are regarded as required activities of citizens. This substantiates 'affective intelligence' theory (Marcus and Mackuen, 2001, p.41) to some extent that 'emotionality sustains our capacity to use reason in precisely those circumstances when the benefits of reason are most required and most wanted'. And such feelings transformed to a sense of anger and indignation at 'injustice' as against 'democratic value' (Dahlgren, 2003, p.156; 2009, p.111) – the import of unsafe US beef jeopardising public health including family, friends and TVXQ in particular – which played as the important emotional basis for mobilisation for collective action (Gamson, 1992, p.31; Hoggett and Thompson, 2012, p.11). It necessitates the process of 'demonization' (Vanderford, 1989, p.174), that is to identify concrete and specific adversaries, who brought injustice – undeserved hardship or harm, in an entirely negative light and with regard to the broader structure in which they operate (Gamson, 1992, pp.32-33).

In the teen fans' narratives, the target of demonization is clearly defined: the government pushing forward the unsafe US beef import in contrast to the public opinion. Moreover, through the process of demonization, the teen fans' motive for the anti-US beef protest expanded into a wider scope of other government policies such as the construction of grand canals in the four main rivers, the privatisation of the public health service and the newly proposed education policy in particular, which had immediate 'proximity' (Gamson, 1992, p, 12, 36) to the teens' daily lives. As such, the teen fans' existing anger and indignation over the hardships that they experienced in the

everyday were coupled with the injustice of the US beef import. Below is the teen fans' extensive criticism of the government's policy in general:

"What the hell is the Lee government doing? All their policies are ridiculous: pre-and-post study, granting permission for parents to give small amount of money to teachers, all taught programmes in English, separation of superior and inferior class; what are the grand canals that are slower than walking for?... I couldn't understand them at all.. All made me so resentful." (SC)

"Most proposed policies of Lee government were for the rich and so evoked criticism and complaint from the public. This was more than enough to protest, let alone unsafe US beef import." (SSE)

These narratives elucidate that the rally participants comprehend the US beef import issue in a broader structure in which the government policy is operative. Through participating in the protest, their experience of widening the horizon of understanding public affairs offered 'truly integral education of the role of a citizen in democratic society' as a teen fan participant HH articulated.

#### **7.6.4. Identification of Acting Agency**

'Agency' (Gamson, 1992, p.7) is the consciousness that people see themselves as potential, social agents to improve the status quo through collective action and thereby is a key component for political mobilisation. And this notion of 'citizen-agent' is the foundation of 'civic culture' that is essential for democratic society (Dahlgren, 2003, p.153). Whether or not the teen fan protesters retained this consciousness can be examined by answering the following questions: Do the Internet rumours or anti-American groups or celebrities manipulate or affect teen fans' political activism as the conservative mainstream media argued?; Do they perceive themselves as a member of citizens to retain capacity to change the surrounding situation?

According to my study, there were only a few teens that believed and got

influenced immediately by the so-called rumours. A fifteen-year-old fan named KAH recalled, “I was only fourteen last year. I didn’t want to die of mad cow disease at a young age while using sanitary towels or cosmetics made from ingredients infected with mad cow disease. Once I heard the so-called rumour, I came to object to US beef more vehemently.” Apparently the rumour seemed to stimulate the teens’ sensibility to pay initial attention to the issue at an early stage.

However, most of the teen fans that I interviewed refuted those claims strongly. They clearly acknowledged the rumours were exaggerated to some extent. The following accounts of the fan participants pinpoint this:

“Among rumours were some overstatements but anyway it is true that over 30 months old US beef isn’t safe, isn’ it?” (MR)

“Rumour is just a rumour, and there exists some truth in it although some were overly exaggerated. Moreover, we are *not that stupid* to believe it at face value.” (KDY)

With more exact and pertinent hands-on knowledge through the gathering and checking of the facts not only from the Internet and conventional media but also from discussions across on- and off-line spaces, they came to get a clear sense of what the issue was about and sifted out the fact and truth from the rumours. As the remarks of fan protesters illustrate in the following, they negated the claims that celebrities, the Internet rumours, or any political groups (i.e. leftists) swayed them, and discerned the core of the issue:

“A so-called rumour didn’t affect me much although it drew my first attention and made me acknowledge the seriousness of the issue. As the import of unhealthy US beef was so shocking itself and was the key to the agenda, I neglected it just as a rumour.” (VMP)

“Was it that trivial to disregard it as just a groundless rumour? In fact, now that the government blamed huge public demonstrations on the so-called ill-founded rumour instead of taking necessary measures, the number of protesters and anti-Lee Myung-bak increased.” (LWNR)

Rather, the teen fan participants strongly expressed deep pride in their fan activism. In addition, they clearly recognised themselves as ‘citizen-agents’ taking responsibility to lead the nation, and thereby they took actions to achieve the safety of the imported US beef. The following statements demonstrate that they not only understood the meaning of ‘citizenship as a form of identity’ (Dahlgren, 2003, p.159) but also were practicing political ‘citizenship as their rights and obligations’ (van Zoonen, 2005, p.7) to actively engage in the state’s affairs:

“Some adults sneered at us teenagers, referring to us as mere children that knew nothing about politics, and told that we should focus on study only. And some people criticised us teen fans of degrading the sacred demonstration... But *as a Cassiopeia, it is not a shame* that we tried to secure the safety of our pop stars from mad cow disease. Because TVXQ are equivalent to my precious family and friends.” (FT)

“Even to me as a teenager, there seem so many things wrong. What on earth are adults doing, not rectifying them? For instance, most adults seemed apolitical, going for holidays on election days... They chose a wrong person as president and are now busy with criticising? I wanna tell them to take action, vote when they can instead of just sitting and complaining. In contrast to those adults, I was so *proud of our fandom of participating* actively in the rallies.” (HS)

“It is unacceptable in the country that *I would lead in the near future* that the government was engrossed in avoiding responsibility for their imprudent decision of unsafe US beef import and was making excuses. So we *took decisive actions to express our opinions*, instead of merely thinking or debating.” (ISC)

In addition, the account of ISC unveils that protest provides the people including the teen fans, ‘who have little opportunity to participate in any of the institutions that set the conditions of their daily lives’ (Gamson, 1992, p.59), with a critical means and a political public sphere to communicate their opinions and demands immediately to those in control of institutional governance.

In order to call for the government’s reconsideration of the US beef import deal and other policies under discussion, the teen fans took multiple actions. The accounts of



SJ, a third year middle school girl who actively participated throughout the rally from early May, articulates the fan activism. She partook in the protest with her 30 fellow fans in the region and school friends who also joined the rally to protect their pop idols like Super Junior and Shin Hwa. They mobilised and encouraged each other by means of mobile phone texts or postings of the time and date of rallies on online community bulletin boards, and brought in their DIY slogans such as “Against US beef,” “We’ll Guard You, TVXQ”. Moreover, they took diverse online activities, especially the teen fans that could not join the rally for their daily ‘legitimate demands’ (Gamson, 1992, p.7): mandatory night study at high school, living in a small town too far from the protest site and parents’ refusal. In this light, online protest had similar weight to offline protest as a vehicle to deliver their opposition to the unsafe US beef import. Their online actions varied: putting the sign ⊗ and the candlelight emoticon<sup>134</sup> next to their online nicknames or on personal blogs, fund-raising, signing online petitions, sending messages to join the rally to friends and frequent discussions with fellow fans and friends.

#### 7.6.5. Imagining Nationhood: Self-identification of an imagined community

As unveiled through the teen fans’ narratives, TVXQ carried a holistic signifier of “altruistic love” and “life” for the fans and a meaningful way for them to engage and feel this love in their everyday fandom. The feeling of altruistic love for TVXQ played a crucial role in extending a sense of community and imagining nationhood, beyond

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The Association of University Students’ Blogs for Venture Sealtale.com made and distributed the candlelight emoticon for those who wanted to participate in the rally but could not. Each time when an online user puts this emoticon on their blogs or by their online nicknames, the number of distribution was shown on the right hand of the emoticon.

‘mediating relations’ (Hoggett and Thompson, 2012, p.8) of the teen fans with TVXQ. In other words, the fans’ altruistic love for TVXQ extended the subject of love to their beloved people including their family and friends and themselves. This identification accompanies the process of defining “we” in opposition to “they” ‘who have different interests or values’ (Gamson, 1992, p.7, 84), which in turn entails imagination of “us” and demonization of “they”. This collective identity that enables and maintains communities and nations is built on shared feelings toward fellow insiders and perceived outsiders (Ahmed, 2004) : (thin) trust toward fellow fans and altruistic love toward TVXQ, family and friends, and anger and indignation toward the governmental authority as demonstrated in the fans’ articulation. In this way, they extended the horizon of their idea of nationhood – from the individual to the nation of Korea as an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991, p.6). The following accounts illustrate this point:

“To us, the pop star is our beloved people *just like family, or ourselves and also the member of our nation*, I am proud of our fandom indeed.”  
(FT)

“My main reason for partaking in the protest wasn’t my pop star only. But *as the people of Korea*, TVXQ would support us for participating in the rally I believed. And as a fan, I have a rapport with the fans represented in the media that joined the rally for protecting TVXQ from mad cow disease, for it’s natural that we want to secure our favourite artists’ health and safety.” (ISC)

As such, for the teen fans, to secure the safety of the US beef from mad cow disease means to guard the safety and health of TVXQ, family, friends and themselves as members of the nation, and contemplated the beef issue and general public policy as their own agenda to be unravelled. Importantly, identification of agency through collective action and nationhood as a sense of extended community intensified through social bonds to participants in the group partaking together in the rally. The teen fans

articulated their emotional experience at the rally as follows:

“It was such a great *pleasure* that I partook in the rally together with my school friends and Ca-As and I found that they had the same thought as me and I could express my opinion in public.” (TP)

“It was so amazing that so many people, including our Cassiopeas and teen students wearing school uniforms, joined the rally. To think that *we all gathered together for the nation*, I was so *proud* to be Korean... and proud of our Cassiopeas and myself in particular, who’d not been interested in politics at all before, to protest for our nation.” (HE)

“And particularly when we were *marching together* peacefully in the main road of central Seoul, holding candles and crying out for our demands, I could feel a sense of joy and pleasure *as a member of nation and TVXQ fans* that we partook together in the rally for a better society.” (IRW)

“When together with other participants singing along a tune of Article 1 of the Korean Constitution, whose lyrics elucidate that *sovereign power resides in the people*, I felt inexplicably *strong passion* like a sort of patriotism deep in my heart, *joy, pride and emotional bonds* to the group of protesters, which I had never experienced before.” (ISC)

Participating in the protest together with fellow citizens toward the shared end, the teen fans felt strong social bonds, a sense of belonging to the nation, a sense of pride in collective agency, and joy and pleasure of imagining a new and better nation. While moral outrage offered initial motivation for the teen fans to participate in the protest, these latter emotions encouraged those who were participating and motivating friends to participate.

#### **7.6.6. The Paradox of Teen Fandom**

What remains to the teen fan participants after participating in the anti-US beef protest? And what does this imply for the relationship between reason and emotion, politics and entertainment? Most teen fans that I interviewed revealed that they had been apathetic about politics until participating in the protest:

“Before this rally, I was apathetic of state or world affairs at all because I felt news was so boring. But through participating in the rally, now I try to compare the news on different channels, newspapers, and the Internet in order to get precise information and to see if the government pushes forward something strange again.” (TY)

“Before I was apolitical and didn’t read or watch news at all... but now I carefully watch banner news at the bottom of television screen and search for further information on the Internet...Because I, as a member of the nation, should pay attention to what’s going on in the society. Otherwise, our future would be at risk. Moreover, in 10 or 20 years, I will let my children hear my story of political participation, which will be great learning for them.” (PB)

“Because I didn’t like complicated situations, I used to be indifferent in state affairs. Then through this participation, I came to realise I shouldn’t be ignorant any more...I think if I take interest in public affairs, people around me will naturally get interested too...if a similar event like anti-US beef protest takes place in the future, I will probably participate not only because I want to feel that heartfelt feeling on the site but also because I should sustain my country myself.” (KH)

As the teen fans’ accounts of the lived experience suggests, it becomes clear that emotionality is linked to the rationality of politics, especially in recurring and sustaining political interest and participation. In other words, diverse forms of emotions, gained through the collective and lived political engagement for a common good – such feelings as pleasure, pride and the unity of participants in the rally as ‘collective intelligence’ (Levy, 2001) – produced or extended a wider scope of conversations with diffused yet converging fan members when things matter to their life world.

The lived experience of political participation became a collective memory that works to sustain their socio-political interest and engagement in the everyday and also becomes a heritage of ‘learning’ for future generations, as a teen fan PB articulated. And such civic cultures, as indispensable and desirable components of political citizenship, became materialised into their daily ritual of media use – reading news articles carefully and trying to get a critical view of the mediatised event by comparing diverse online news resources with the conventional media.

## 7.7. Conclusion: Fan-Citizens

As the paradoxical teen fandom demonstrates, emotion and entertainment cannot be detached from the rationality of politics, and instead are closely linked to it by stimulating and sustaining political interest and producing ‘the virtues of democratic communication’ (Dahlgren, 2003, p.157) to facilitate participatory action. The altruistic love for TVXQ provided a common ground among teen fans to take an initial interest and attention in the US beef import issue so as to contextualise as their shared concern and enabled their imagination of an extended community embracing themselves, their beloved people and the nation of Korea. Moral shocks – fear and anxiety about mad cow disease – transformed into the righteous anger and enthusiasm for justice and a better reality. In participating in the protest, moreover, the teen fans experienced such important political emotions as pride in collective agency intensified through social bonds to participants in the rally toward the shared end, and joy and pleasure of imagining a better nation.

These emotions accompanied rational actions such as information search and processing, voicing of concerns, self-mobilising with aid of efficacious and speedy mobile communication technology, and direct participation in the protest. In particular, through enlightening discussions among fellow fans and friends on- and offline, teen fans came to form informed publics, capable of sifting out what is true or not. It suggests ‘a shift from the individualized conception of the informed citizen toward the collaborative concept of a monitorial citizen’ (Jenkins, 2006a, p.208). Such activities, which can be regarded as ‘civic competences to anchor democracy in everyday actions’ (van Zoonen, 2005, p.61), were actualised in the course of the teen fan activism. In a deeply mediatised world, we all carry varying identities of fans or/and citizens, etc, whose activities often overlap and shift in different contexts, and determine whether or

not they meet the quality of a mediated public. In this light, the teen fandom served as ‘a mediating domain’ (Livingstone, 2005c) in which the performance of the teen fans constituted political subjectivity of citizens, and shaped and facilitated the political public sphere.

Thus far, the teen fan activism under study clearly shows that the supposedly fixed, hierarchical binary opposition between politics and entertainment, reason and emotion, and citizens and fans is an ideological rather than an empirical distinction and is inevitably in flux and thereby is recalibrated dependant upon particular context. Therefore, it is confirmed that the traditionally held normative dichotomy is not valid in the context of this case study under examination.

Nevertheless, Daniel Dayan (2001, p.752, 761) might argue that the vigil rally and accompanying actions were a temporary political event that produced the ‘elusive and pretended publics’ lacking a sense of seriousness and stability. In contrast, the lived experience of the political event became a collective memory for the teen fan participants who were previously apolitical yet now practicing a rite of political citizenship in their everyday media use as articulated in their accounts. They continue to inform themselves of state affairs that they discuss through diverse forms of media. Therefore, it is of importance to realise that the current entertainment culture can offer a political public sphere in which cultural, affective engagement of fans and audiences in a broader sense shifts into a public activity.

## 8. Locating the Public in the Private

The starting point to develop my thesis is a belief in the people as a bearer of potential civic agency. The people retain multiple subjectivities that are enacted by their particular activities in a different context, sometimes as a consumer, a fan or a citizen. In pursuit of enhancing general public participation in politics, it is of importance to identify and to expand various conditions and contexts under which civic agency is actualised in the people's everyday communicative practices through diverse forms of media use. *Thereby, I set the research questions as such* – in what context do hybrid media offer a discursive space to connect people's everyday lives to the public world as well as to recruit and sustain political interest? How does affect play a critical part in making sense of the public world and mobilising political participation? And, in what ways do private individuals come to shape publics?

These questions were examined in the three cases of the OMN citizen journalism, online political satire and teen fandom. Through these case studies of South Korean specificity of civic engagement in recent socio-political events by means of the ICT-based media use, the thesis aimed to identify the relation between the presumably differentiated categories – the public (reason/news/publics) and the private (emotion/entertainment/audiences) – complicated and renegotiated in everyday politics in respect of emotions, hybrid media and publics, and to locate the mediating conditions under which the private becomes recalibrated as the public.

In what follows, I will discuss the key findings of these case studies in relation to the existing literature, and expound if there are any similarities or differences between the case studies that could give more insight in the wider conditions under which entertainment or affect does or does not become relevant in a political context.

The concluding part of the chapter will discuss the contributions of the thesis to the recent debates in respect of the relations between affect, entertainment and publics in politics.

In Chapter Five, through analysing the distinctive ways in which the OMN citizen journalism contested the traditional normative values of what counts as news and who counts as journalists, I attempted to critique the supposedly hierarchical opposition between the private (the non-serious/the personal/the emotional) and the public (the serious/the political/the rational), following feminist thought. In the first place, by institutionalising citizens' participation in news production that was once regarded as the exclusive realm of the professional and allocating 70 percent of space to the news stories created by citizen journalists, OMN offered a discursive space to legitimise ordinary people's experiential knowledge as an important way of knowing and resource in the sense-making of the world and the connecting of the public world to their private lives. Legitimation of knowledge is the contested space in which experts and especially professional journalists continue to attempt to position their knowledge within the domain of scientific authority and legitimacy differentiated from common, experiential knowledge of the laity. However, the OMN citizen journalism diminished the traditionally privileged position and authority of professional journalists and thereby the supposedly hierarchical divide between journalists and audiences, and expert and common knowledge.

Distinguished from the traditional standard journalism of a detached, objective and rational mode of reporting, OMN's "citizen-centred" approach was extensively manifested in "feminised" writing style and content. On the one hand, OMN adopted a tabloid-style of news writing, which is "easy-to-consume and -produce" formats such as vivid, colloquial language and first-person interpretative storytelling of instantiate,



emotionally charged mini-episodes of ordinary people's everyday lives. Unlike the traditional standard news with its emphasis on privileged power elites and politics, by giving considerable newsworthiness on the events of high relevance or proximity to ordinary people's everyday lives, OMN revalidated the everyday and the private that had been degraded as dumbed down or mere tabloidization in the standard journalism. As examined in Kim and Joo's news stories, ordinary people's private concerns, such as women's personalised, domestic stories that were regarded as the matter of private realm, and/or social groups, such as Adjummas or deprived multicultural families often misrepresented or marginalised in the standard journalism, were redefined as important topics within the public sphere with a new light of positive image, especially in the case of Adjumma. In addition, in the case of Kim's second article about a multicultural family's predicaments, "feminised" news of personalised, affective stories stimulated audiences' emotional engagement through such emotions as compassion and sympathetic grief, and allowed them to see beyond their own immediate private interests and interpret the matter as "our" public concern, and particularly OMN's commentary space offered a discursive space in which the discussion extended into a wider scope of social, political conditions.

During the 2002 presidential election, OMN became successfully positioned as an influential news media by concentrating on the people's demands for immediate, in-depth coverage of Roh Moo-hyun who was negatively marginalised in the mainstream press as well as his own party. Moreover, OMN's 100-word readers' commentary space along with the news story offered the public sphere in which participants exchanged their viewpoints and aspirations for socio-political reforms. Thereby, the election of Roh was the victory of the truly popular vote largely inspired by citizen-centred coverage in OMN's citizen journalism.

The analysis of the *Cheonan* sinking illustrates the power of online citizen journalism to mediate private individuals to the public world. Rather than simply trusting the political discourse of the dominant media or governmental authority, netizens raised a question of the truth of the event through analytic yet sometimes emotional reinterpretation of the event from their viewpoint as shown in the citizen journalist Hong's stories. Moreover, the instantly formulating interactivity among online news readers alongside the questions not covered by the mainstream media enhanced discussions of issues and alternative information impossible to achieve via traditional conservative news outlets. The formation of this dynamic public sphere among citizens, by using online forum Agora including OMN, is the real power of citizen journalism.

In sharp contrast to the criticism of citizen journalism as 'dumbing down' the citizenry, OMN's "feminised" news, articulated through citizens' own perception and lived experience on the ground, (re-)mediated between ordinary people and the public world, and recalibrated the supposedly private, personal matter as the public concern. In this light, this case study substantiates feminist scholars' sustained efforts to contest the gendered hierarchical distinction around the terms ascribed to the quality of news (e.g. hard, objective versus soft, feminised) (Carter, Branston and Allan, 1998; Holland, 1998; Macdonald, 1998; MacLaughlin, 1998; van Zoonen, 1991, 1998). Moreover, OMN revalidated ordinary people (outside the boundary of power elites in socio-political terms) as retaining civic agency, and their knowledge as a legitimate way of knowing within the citizen journalism system. In this regard, this study supports the view of cultural studies scholars such as Livingstone and Lunt (1994), Gamson (1992) and Dahlgren (2003, 2006, 2009) in their attempts to view (ordinary) people as retaining civic agency to act as citizens to change surroundings for a better society.

Chapter Six attempted to link politics to affect and entertainment as a communicative mode to bring up an opening conversation among participants. In short, entertainment-based forms of media, which appeal to a broader range of emotions and generally have a wider public appeal, should be reconsidered as an important media genre to engage people with the public world, at least how their first contact with politics through entertaining forms like political satire can lead to greater involvement with the issues.

There are at least three aspects to the humour found in political satire. Firstly, satire of a politician or ruler, normally considered a person of power and elite status, tends to give the viewer a sense of empowerment, or/and a sense of the disempowerment of the politician. The more power the person being satirised has, the more dangerous the satire (in particular when the freedom of speech is extensively limited), and the more we tend to laugh, perhaps partly at the joke itself and partly at ourselves for daring to share it. Secondly, by placing a familiar politician or political situation or issue in an unfamiliar and often ludicrous context, our humour reflex is activated by the surprise and cleverness of the juxtaposition. Since there is a general bias of thinking that most politicians are not to be trusted, making them look foolish might also trigger a sense of justice, which provides a kind of righteous satisfaction. And thirdly, being a social experience normally, humour creates a bond with others that we find enjoyable. Sharing laughter with others creates a feeling of solidarity but at the same time can create animosity towards the one(s) who are being satirised or who are offended by the satire. To consider the satirised in a powerless light or belonging to an underclass of citizenship helps to give satire a satisfying and unifying power. The emergence of ICT culture has aided the ease at which physically distanced private

citizens or non-experts in socio-economic terms can connect and interact with fellow citizens.

In the case of parody, it seems clear that familiarity is critical to attract audiences to political satire. However, it is not necessary for the familiarity to be particularly in-depth or knowledgeable regarding a particular political issue for the initial attraction and resulting enjoyment to occur. Merely by living and working or studying in a society, most citizens can glean sufficient knowledge of cultural and political issues and personalities to enjoy seeing them lampooned. Whether it is true that a greater understanding of the political issues or personalities creates a greater appreciation of the satire is debatable and beyond the scope of this research.

The greatest power of online political satire is its potential to spread virally, giving it widespread appeal. The other distinguishing feature is the 'amateur-ness' of much of the satire, which is often created by non-professional satirists for playful and critical pleasure and appreciated as such by audiences.

In what was probably the most turbulent of political times in recent Korean history, online satire flourished around the controversy of the President Impeachment bill and general elections of 2004. With the widespread availability of high speed internet – resulting in many people gathering much of their information online – and the extended freedom of speech during that time, the period was ripe for all kinds of political commentary from wider sources than ever before, including amateur online satirists. Even those who had no previous interest in politics were now exposed to online political satire if they spent much time browsing the Internet. That exposure led to shared laughter that piqued more curiosity about the issues under parody. Therefore, political action such as street demonstrations grew to include those who had had their first taste of political involvement through online satire.

Through exploring the K-pop star TVXQ teen fandom in the 2008 anti-US beef protest, Chapter Seven aimed to identify the contextual and processional dimensions of the fan-based politics in which teen fans' cultural and affective engagement transforms into political citizenship. In addition, the study attempted to locate the role of various emotions played out in the process of teen fans' politicisation. The polarized image of the teen-fan protesters represented in the Korean media – 'emotional crowds' without reason versus 'rational political actors' devoid of emotion – reflects the dominant social discourse of the elements of affect, entertainment and fans in relation to politics. This is parallel to the Enlightenment dichotomy, which this study attempted to contest.

The teen-fans' "altruistic" love for TVXQ beyond admiration, which was being renewed around their everyday fandom, offered a common ground among teen fans to take an initial attention and interest in the US beef import issue, and to imagine an extended community embracing themselves, family and friends, and the nation. Among various on-and off-line spaces including schools, Yuaerubi offered a central communicative space in which relevant knowledge and "felt" opinions were circulated, updated and reinforced through informal talk and social ties built on trust among teen fans were developed. Through discussions with fellow fans, who shared the altruistic love for TVXQ and (thin) trust toward one another, the beef import was contextualised and constructed as the common concern to be resolved.

In addition to altruistic love, various emotions were identified as playing important political roles. First, fear and anxiety of mad cow disease stimulated political learning (relevant information search and processing) and reflexive, informed reconsideration of the issue. And these emotions transformed to righteous anger and indignation at injustice, which was identified through demonization (identity in Gamson's term) of the government who made the unsafe beef deal. The teen-fans'

existing anger that they experienced in the everyday, such as anger at educational policy, was coupled with the injustice of the unsafe beef import and extended into a wider scope of governmental policy. As such, injustice played a crucial role to mobilise teen-fans' political action. Contrary to the negative media discourse portraying teen protesters as 'emotional crowds', the teen-fans' articulations suggested their capacity to retain civic agency, which was actualised and reinforced through solidarity felt with the participants in the protest, and was associated with other feelings in participation such as pride and hope in collective agency, and joy and pleasure of imagining a better society. Collective memory constructed through the lived experience of political participation became an important resource to sustain the teen-fans' socio-political interest and engagement in their everyday media use.

As the key findings suggest, this case study supports recent discussions of media and cultural studies, and social movement theory. But I will delineate some scholars' works that were justified saliently by the study. First, it substantiated van Zoonen's argument of a close linkage between fandom and politics by showing that the teen-fans' everyday practices of their fandom was translated into the activities of citizens in a political context. Second, the study showed that Gamson's collective action components – injustice, agency and identity – are essential elements played out in the process of teen-fans' political mobilisation. Last but not least, Dahlgren's six dimensions of civic culture were identified in the study as important elements for constructing the teen-fans' political participation. As such, these works usefully informed the study but there are some missing loops that I attempted to fill in: for example, political roles of such emotions as joy, pleasure, pride, fear and anxiety, and a concrete example to show the relations to affect. In this light, this study contributes to the valuable aforementioned research in shedding light on the relations between affect,

entertainment and politics in the everyday.

The common feature identified as a crucial element in connecting private citizens to the public world and recruiting and sustaining public engagement was “emotional” relevance (proximity) to a particular issue or event. If the issue is not directly relevant to the people’s daily lives, there needs to be some emotional reaction to engage audiences with the issue so as to interpret the (private) issue as “our” concern. However, the ways in which the proximity was contextualised and the roles of emotions in a different context were varied as suggested in the discussion of the findings of the three cases above. The emotions that play a political role, e.g. mobilizing political interest and participation, are played out differently in a different political, cultural context in which people’s communicative practices are performed.

As such, these pages have shown, through providing powerful empirical cases, that the supposedly differentiated categories ascribed to the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ are renegotiated in respect of the relations between affect, hybrid media (entertainment) and politics. In doing so, the thesis has contributed to locating the democratic potential of affect and entertainment in enacting civic agency for the people (ordinary people and fans in the study) to practice political citizenship in their everyday lives so as to form publics to improve their life conditions. As a concluding remark, I would argue that the thesis contributes to enhancing participatory democracy by embracing various forms and channels of the people’s everyday communicative practices as a legitimate way of political engagement and participation.

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## **Appendix 1.**

### **Roh Tae Woo's Declaration of 29 June 1987**

1. The constitution should be expeditiously amended, through agreement between the government party and the opposition, to adopt a direct presidential system, and presidential elections should be held under a new constitution to realize a peaceful change of government in February 1988.
2. In addition to switching to a direct presidential election system through constitutional revision, I think that, to carry out elections democratically, it is necessary also to revise the Presidential Election Law so that freedom of candidacy and fair competition are guaranteed and so that the genuine verdict of the people can be given. A revised election law should ensure maximum fairness and justness in election management, from the campaigns to the casting, opening and counting of ballots.
3. Antagonisms and confrontations must be resolutely eradicated not only from our political community but also from all other sectors to achieve grand national reconciliation and unity. In this connection, I believe that Mr Kim Dae Jung (Dae-jung) should be amnestied and his civil rights restored, no matter what he has done in the past. At the same time, all those who are being detained in connection with the political situation should also be set free, except for those who have committed treason by repudiating the basic free and democratic order on which our survival and posterity hinge and a small number of people who have shaken the national foundations by committing homicide, bodily injury, arson or vandalism.
4. Human dignity must be respected even more greatly and the basic rights of citizens should be promoted and protected to the maximum. I hope that the forthcoming constitutional amendments will include all the strengthened basic rights clauses being proposed by the Democratic Justice Party, including a drastic extension of Habeas Corpus.
5. To promote the freedom of the press, the relevant systems and practices must be drastically improved. The Basic Press Law, which may have been well meant but has nonetheless been criticized by most journalists, should promptly be either extensively revised or abolished and replaced by a different law.
6. Freedom and self-regulation must be guaranteed to the maximum in all other sectors also, because private initiative is the driving force behind diverse and balanced social development, which in turn fuels national progress. In spite of the forthcoming processes of amending the constitution, local councils should be elected and organized without any hitch according to schedule... Colleges and universities – the institutions of higher learning – must be made self-governing and educational autonomy in general must be expeditiously put into practice.
7. A political climate conducive to dialogue and compromise must be created expeditiously, with healthy activities of political parties guaranteed. A political party should be a democratic organization that presents responsible demands and policies to mould and crystallize the political opinion of the people. The state should exert its utmost efforts to protect and nurture political parties, so long as they engage in sound activities and do not contravene such objectives.

8. Bold social reforms must be carried out to build a clean and honest society. In order that all citizens can lead a secure and happy life, crimes against life and property, such as hooliganism, robbery and theft, must be stamped out, and deep-seated irrationalities and improprieties that still linger in our society must be eradicated. Groundless rumours, along with regional autonomism [*sic*; parochialism] and black- and white-attitudes, should be banished forever to build a society in which mutual trust and love prevail...

## Appendix 2. Yuaerubi

동방신기 Fan Cafe • 유애루비 - Daum 카페 - Mozilla Firefox

파일(F) 편집(E) 보기(V) 이동(S) 북마크(B) 도구(T) 도움말(H)

cafe.daum.net/soul48?\_nll\_loginbox=cafe\_list&nll\_id=3

동방신기 Fan Cafe • 유애루비 - Da...

**등원 9위**  
총점 8,556점 ?

상세보기 응원하기

네이버엔딩 동방신기

**Daum 공식팬카페**  
(스도기입)

**통신 (공개)**  
카페지기 愛: 차준  
회원수 701,693  
방문수 3,421

내 정보

카페 글쓰기

**W is One (극동약가)**

[투표] BEST아이콘-5명♡  
[투표] 런던올림픽 오프닝♡

도배 : 내일은 오니까♡  
응원 : 내 가수 화이팅♡

**We are T.V.X.Q**

- 유애루비  
- 오마시스  
- 윤영일지  
- 히스토리

**No.1 Supporters**

- 뽕투대미  
- 알정체크  
- 정보나눔  
- PROUD

**: YUAERUBI**

- 등업공지  
- 등업실제

**NEVER ENDING <YUAERUBI>**

유애루비  
정준호  
1986.02.06  
184cm 66kg  
A형

영웅재중  
김재중  
1986.01.26  
180cm 63kg  
O형

시하준주  
김준주  
1986.12.15  
178cm 63kg  
B형

미역유원  
박유원  
1986.06.04  
180cm 64kg  
O형

최강동민  
심장민  
1988.02.18  
186cm 61kg  
B형