South Korean Media System:
Toward a Democratization Model*

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From a perspective of the media systems approach, we attempt to provide a media system model that accounts for the characteristics of the relationship between political and media systems in the democratization process of Korean society. Using the model, we explore the possibility by which media system has set the limit on the directions of political democratization. The notion of 'political parallelism' is employed to characterize the historical changes of the role of the news media in function of public spheres in relation to political system. The Korean way of 'political parallelism' accounts for the process by which mainstream newspapers and broadcasters have influenced political parties and civil society. The implications are discussed in terms of the role of media system in democratization.

Keywords: Media Systems Theory, Korean Democratization, Political Parallelism, Relationship between the Government and the Press

I. INTRODUCTION

During the democratic transition after the civil resistance against the authoritarian regime, how did the South Korean politics influence the media

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and how in turn the media responded to it? How have the Korean media and the politics, both in a separate and in a combined manner, contributed to democratic consolidation after the transition? What kind of public sphere have the Korean media functioned as? And what consequences will the public sphere function of the Korean media bring for the democratization? To answer these questions concerning the media-politics interaction and its effects on the processes of democratic transition and consolidation in South Korea, we employ the notions of media and political systems and examine the ways in which the two systems interact with each other in contributing to the process of democratization.

In this study, we propose a democratization model of media system on the basis of reviewing media systems dimensions Hallin and Mancini (2004) provided. Then we add a dimension of functional role of the mass media as public spheres in society. Together with the original four dimensions of media systems, this functional dimension provides a way to characterize Korean media system in terms of its distinctive roles in shaping political terrains in the process of democratization. In particular, through the prism of this model, we examine the ways in which Korean news media have strengthened their political power and played characteristic roles in affecting the democratic outlook in the course of democratization.

This study extensively makes use of the comparative media systems approach suggested by Hallin and Mancini (2004). However, our intention is not to exaggerate how Korean media system is comparable to other media models in Western countries. By proposing the Korean model of media system, we rather attempt to explore the possibility of extending the media system approach in order to account for the interactions between media and political systems in post-authoritarian democratic transitional countries. Through this, we expect to bring a case for the democratization model of media systems from the vantage point of Korean experiences of the transition from an authoritarian society to democratic consolidation.[1]

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[1] Celebrating the 50 year anniversary of Korean Society for Journalism & Communication Studies (KSJCS), there have been comprehensive evaluations and reflections on journalism and communication studies conducted to date. In the fields of political communication and journalism, review articles that overviewed past research, assessed the current outlook of journalism and communication studies, and suggested

II. THE COMPARATIVE MEDIA SYSTEMS APPROACH

In their book, *Comparing Media Systems*, Hallin and Mancini (2004) investigated the relationship between media and political systems from the perspective of comparative systems approach. They proposed three models that described the patterns of interactions between media and politics based on the observations of different types of democracies in Western societies. Hallin and Mancini suggested that their models could be applied to other countries in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America with a little modification. We find their models helpful to capture the differences and similarities of countries from many other societies as well as Western countries. We do not think, however, the models are sufficient to account for some characteristic developments observed in the countries with some significant differences in historical and cultural back-grounds from Western countries. Rather than simply borrowing their framework of modeling media systems, we analyze the preconditions under which such comparative approaches are possibly made and then figure out ways in which the comparative approach bears on examination of non-Western media systems.

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for future research were produced (Yang 2009; Im, Y. 2009; Choe 2009). In the reviews, there was a recurring common theme: Though we had been conducting studies on journalism and communications for half a century, we could not produce original theories that had contributed to building a general theory of communication based on our own experiences. This self-criticism then led to a demand for intense observations of our reality and theorization, which were to become the primary tasks for the future of journalism and communication studies. There was also a request to guard against indiscreet importation of Western theories. For example, Lee, Sang Gil (2004: 91) suggested a post-colonial defeatism working behind the acceptance that "the others (generally) create 'theories' and 'philosophies,' but we (particularly) can only create anything through 'our contexts' and 'case studies.'" He argued that in order to conduct and accumulate empirical studies, we ourselves could not avoid producing theories. Also, Cho, Hang Je (2008: 141-142) lamented the reality that "where phenomena that can be captured by Western theories are considered 'interesting' and 'meaningful', the ones that resist the application of Western theories are left unexamined." He criticized that in this way we had produced theories that were not understandable on our own. But these two critics did not discuss whether theories could be 'ours' and, if possible, how to produce theories that are 'distinctively ours.'

1. Key Dimensions of the Comparative Media Systems Approach

Hallin and Mancini proposed a series of media and politics variables to categorize different media and political systems in Western societies. As for comparative dimensions of political systems, they considered the five dimensions: (a) political history, (b) role of the state, (c) consensus v. majoritarian government, (d) individual v. organized pluralism, and (e) development of rational-legal authority. Though these system characteristics drawn from the history of Western countries, they are also highly illuminating when applied to Western societies. They provide a comparison point against which experiences and institutions of non-Western countries are posed to reveal systematic differences between Western and non-Western democratic political systems. The five dimensions do not weigh the same when applied to the countries in democratization. For example, the historical experiences of democratization, which is a part of the dimension of political history together with the level of pluralism in Hallin and Mancini's specification, stood out a critical factor that determines the relationship among other dimensions in political system. That is, depending on the natures of democratic transition and consolidation, roles of the state, level of pluralism, and rational legal authority diverge into many different kinds of inter-relations, which do not allow a generalization of Hallin and Mancini's layout.

Acknowledging the difficulty of applying Hallin and Mancini's layout to the countries in the process of democratization, we believe the experiences of Korean democratization provide a revealing perspective from which the comparative dimensions of political system are rearranged to generate a valuable point about the relationship between media system and political system. For example, unlike the most of Western countries where a minimum level of liberal politics began to be established with institutionalization of rational-legal authority,

Korean democracy in consolidation shows a stark contrast between a near completion of institutionalization of rational-legal authority in formal system and frequent negligence and violation of legal authority in practice. Part of the reason behind this contrast between formal institutions and informal practices of rational-legal authority stems from the unstable role of the state

issuing laws that not all the constituents of civil society accept as rational and legal. Consequently during the democratic transition, the government was regarded both as a controller of democratic reform and as a target of democratic reform by different parts of civil society. In this article we propose a set of political systems variables that can capture the historical experiences of Korean democratization while maintaining the system comparative approach presented by Hallin and Mancini. They are (a) government authority during democratic transition and consolidation; (b) development of political parties, and (c) role of civil society movements in democratization.

Hallin and Mancini's media dimensions are sufficiently general to be applied to media systems in developing countries: (a) development of newspaper industry, (b) political parallelism (c) journalistic professionalism and (d) role of the state in media system (i.e., strong v. weak state intervention). We think, however, that the following two points should be taken into account. First, rather than seeing these dimensions as equal and parallel with one another, one may want to consider hierarchical and causal relationships among them. For example, we find the development of newspaper industry has influenced the development of journalistic professionalism and the pattern of state intervention in Korean media system. It is also observed that specific forms of journalistic professionalism and role of the state have determined the degree of political parallelism. In our view, hypothesizing these kinds of relationships could be one way of developing Hallin and Mancini's comparative systems approach within a non-Western context like Korean media system.

Second, in order to illuminate the nature of the relationship between media and political systems variables, we find it helpful to take into additional considerations on the public sphere function of media and the democratic outlook of the society. Cho, Hang Je (2008), following the suggestion made by Ferree (Ferree, et al. 2002), attempted to categorize public spheres into (a) an elite representative public sphere, (b) a mass participatory public sphere, (c) a civic discursive public sphere, and (d) a counter public sphere. We generally accept his framework and expect that differing media systems will contribute to the operation of democracy in different ways according to the specific functions they perform in terms of management of public discourses. That is, in the societies under democratic transition like Korea, where its democratic outlook is still uncertain and contending paths to

democratization are proposed, the different paths of democratic consolidation could be foreshadowed by the kinds of functions the media system performs as a public sphere. For example, if the media function as a 'representative elite public sphere,' a watchdog and information provider, the path to democratization will heavily gear towards to a representative and market-oriented democracy. On the other hand, if the media systems function as a 'participatory public sphere,' then the path will be more likely to lead to a participatory and deliberative democracy.

2. The Systems Approach

Hallin and Mancini made it clear that the three media systems models are empirical rather than normative, which emphasizes their models are based on historical analyses of media systems established in specific social contexts.[2] Although normative values such as diversity, openness and autonomy are not explicitly praised in their description of media systems, their arguments are more than empirical in many ways. As they admitted, empirical observations and categorization can reveal the ways in which a certain condition of media systems will either lead to or limit materialization of normative values such as diversity and autonomy. For example, empirical modeling of commercialization of media industry can illuminate the way in which different levels of market development have consequences for establishment of normative values such as media autonomy and even journalistic professionalization. In principle, we are in agreement with this approach. However, we believe more attentions should be paid to the followings in order

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[2] They of course theorized on their own idealistic premises. Although they avowed to overcome the limitations of *The Four Theories of the Press* which primarily focused on 'philosophy' or 'ideology,' it is hard to deny that they completely ruled out normative values implied in their modeling. Values such as diversity and autonomy were integrated in their classifying variables and the implications attached to them were presupposed in the descriptions of the resulting models. In addition, as they admitted, particular cases drawn from different countries are never homogenous and continuously changing defying to be consistently identified as the same model. We believe that the three comparative media systems models are basically 'idealistic' in the sense that they are abstract and suggest certain evaluative implications.

for empirical and systematic modeling to be fruitful.

Hallin and Mancini's comparative media systems approach does not give as much emphasis on "the systems theoretical approach" as on "the comparative approach." As a result, they seem to skip the important question why in the first place we have to distinguish media system from other social systems and to treat it as a distinct sub-system like other *de facto* social systems such as political and economic systems. Recognition of media system as a distinctive sub-system requires specification of media system as having the same qualities that other sub-systems have as well as featuring some distinctive qualities that other sub-systems do not. But we find their modeling wanting in regard to characterizing media system in relation to other sub-systems within the total system. Since the base for justifying the autonomous status of media systems and its relations with other sub-systems is not clear, the theoretical and empirical criteria to measure the independency from other social sub-systems are not clear either. In fact, Hallin and Mancini did not present persuasive arguments for particularities of media system and for the interdependency of media systems with other sub-systems. It is our standpoint that the task of comparing the 'particularities' of individual media systems that operate within a society should be further based on systems theoretic considerations in their own rights.

We need to reconsider the analysis of the interaction between political and media systems, which is the essential part of Hallin and Mancini's comparative media systems approach. One cannot help but getting the impression that they regard media systems as depending on political systems but not the other way around. The idea that media systems mostly closely related to, sometimes as a subordinate part, political systems is generally supported by empirical evidences. However, the differentiation of media systems was never unilaterally determined by political systems. Thus, the notions such as 'mediatization of politics' (Mazzoleni and Schultz 1999), 'institutional embracement of media logics by politics' (Altheide and Snow 1979), and 'mediated politics' (Bennett and Entman 2001; Nimmo and Combs 1990) indicate that media system is not only passively determined by but also actively shape political systems. Media system, whether it is in a developed stage or not, contributes to the interactions among sub-systems including political systems.

Media systems leave an important trace in the ruptures that are often found along the evolutionary paths of social systems, the fact of which has a significant implication for the nations under a democratic transition like Korea. For example, as it will be discussed later on in this article, 'the strengthening of political power of the press' during the Roh Tae Woo administration (1988-92) and the Kim Young Sam administration (1993-97) provide good examples. During these stages, the politically oriented press took over part of the roles of political system while party politics was not being fully established even after the remains of the past authoritarian regime began to wane. Interestingly, though the same period documented a rapid expansion of media market due to the first wave of de-regulation, the interaction between the media system and the economic system was not very extensive as compared to the one between the media system and the political system. The phenomenon that the politically oriented press filled the brief vacuum of political power can be interpreted as a consequence of media system's active response to the changes at the system-level. This phenomenon characterized the nature of the relationship between the press and political parties in the transitional stage of democratization in Korea.

We believe it is important to focus on the interactions between sub-systems. To give an example, the rational-legal authority, one of the factors suggested by Hallin and Mancini that determine the nature of political system, operates in a very interesting way in Korea. Since the levels of effectiveness of the rational-legal authority among different sub-systems are quite even, one cannot help but wonder whether the rational-legal authority in Korea is not transitive across sub-systems. In the political system, it is secured at least on a surface level whereas in other sub-systems such as real estate and religion it is hard to find it working appropriately. It seems that the rational-legal authority is accepted on in some factions of society, which belies the generality of the rational-legal authority. A plausible explanation of the unevenness of the rational-legal authority would be the lack of interactions among some sub-systems.

Criticizing the static normative approach and the idealistic conceptualization of the models proposed in *The Four Theories of the Press*, Hallin and Mancini pointed out empirical modeling should not presuppose a developmental assumption. That is, any of the proposed models should not be regarded as

more developed than the others. They explicitly emphasized that none of the models were an end point in the development of media systems. However, two things are glaring in their placement of the North Atlantic liberal model within the theoretical framework. First, the liberalist values such as media autonomy and journalistic professionalism were treated as a standard against which values of other media systems are compared and evaluated. Thus one may find it hard not to think of North Atlantic liberal model of media system as having a most developed set of journalistic values and practices. Second, the global tendency of converging media systems models into the North Atlantic liberal model was considered some sort of unavoidable process. Thus for example, one may find it only natural to look at the process in which technological enhancement of the media leads to less emphasis of state regulations on media policies but more dominance of market forces in the media environment.

We find it important to have an explicit assumption about social development especially when we are to apply the media systems approach to account for the processes of democratic transition and consolidation. Although we do not think it necessary to have a linear perspective or a teleological presupposition on social development in the system theoretical approach, we believe it indispensible to have an explicit outlook on the nature of changes when we talk about changes in media systems. Thus it is always important to ask the questions as to what kinds of values and ideas are presupposed in journalistic practices, what kinds of democracy the media are predisposed to endorse, in which direction of democratization the media and political systems

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN MEDIA SYSTEMS

We first discuss the characteristics of Korean media system in terms of the media system dimensions presented by Hallin and Mancini: Development of mass media; political parallelism; media professionalization; state interventions. We then add a dimension of public sphere functions of the media system as a criterion dimension and examine how adding this functional dimension leads to a new understanding of the media system in

Table 1. The Four Models: Western and Korean Media Systems

Model	Liberal model	Democratic cor-poratist model	Polarized plural-ist model	Democratization model
Geographical Distribution	US, Canada, UK	Germany, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands,	Italy, Spain, Greece	South Korea, Post-authoritarian Countries
Media system characteristics	- Developed mass media market - Low political parallelism - High profes-sionalization - Low state in-terventions	- Developed mass media market - High political parallelism - High profes-sionalization - High state in-terventions	- Underdeveloped mass media market - High political parallelism - Low profession-alization - High state inter-ventions	- Rapidly chang-ing media mar-ket - Dynamic polit-ical parallelism - Low profes-sionalization - Various levels of state inter-ventions
Role of the media as a public sphere	Impartial and open public sphere, inter-nal pluralism, watchdog, de-politicization	Consensus-inducing plural-ism, promotion of participation	Open and muck-raking public sphere, external pluralism: advo-cacy	Advocacy, po-litical sensation-alism, conflict-reproducing ideologization
Democratic outlook as-sumed in pub-lic spheres	Pluralist elite democracy	Participatory (republican) de-mocracy	Pluralist popular democracy	Under discursive struggles

regard to the types of media systems. Table 1 summarizes the Korean model of media system in comparison to the Western media models.

1. Rapid Development of the Korean Media Market and Its Instability

Among the four dimensions that determine media systems models, the media market, that is, the 'economic foundation of media systems,' seems to work as an exogenous independent factor. Other dimensions such as professionalization, political parallelism and governmental interventions work more like interdependent variables interacting with each other.

Although Hallin and Mancini proposed the four dimensions as being on an equal level, they also seem to recognize the different degrees and levels of influences among the dimensions. It is hard not to notice that they prioritized the development of media markets over other dimensions. That is, within a system where economic foundation of the press is consolidated by the development of media markets, it is more likely the press becomes an independent system in a society, free from the supports or subsidies from other sub-systems. This kind of independence leads to professionalization of journalism since journalists in developed media markets are self-sufficient in terms of means as well as norms to support for them. Consequently, the structural separation of media market from political and social influences, by and large, tend to facilitate journalistic professionalization while reduce 'political parallelism.'

The Korean media market expanded rapidly during the process of democratization. The monopolistic media system set by the authoritarian regime broke down and was transformed into an expanding media market. Until the mid-1990s, the entire media market grew up rapidly as evidenced by the grown size of advertisement revenues. However, the government still intervened in the market as a large advertiser for newspapers as well as the competition regulator. The government sustained the monopolistic advertisement agency for broadcasters, which controlled the cash flows in the broadcasting sector.

The growth of media market is demonstrated in the total revenue of the media. For example, the total revenue of national daily newspapers rapidly increased from KW (Korean won) 137 billion in 1980 to KW 288 billion in 1985. A total of KW 1,717 billion was recorded in 1995. A comparable growth was documented in the growth of overall shares of three terrestrial broadcasting networks. Thus it was not the size of the market, but the speed that characterized the development of the Korean media system. Non-symmetrical regulation and preferential treatment of the government resulted in uneven yet fast growths in media sectors. However, the fast grown media industry in turn began to influence the government policies and initiatives.

2. Political Parallelism

'Political parallelism' is an elaboration of the concept of 'party-press parallelism' devised by Seymour-Ure in 1974 (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 27-30). Originally, party-press parallelism refers to the degree of ideological correspondence between the press and political parties. The correspondence is composed of (1) the ideology of contents, (2) connections between the press and the political parties on individual and organizational levels, (3) the overlap of the readers and political party supporters, and (4) the conformity of the journalists to the causes of the political parties they support. Following Hallin and Mancini's extension of the concept, we designate political parallelism as the extent to which the press culture is interrelated to the politics within the domains that Hallin and Mancini specified.

Considering the fact that Korean journalists often move to the politics, and that the Korean press tends to be highly politically oriented not only in editorials but also in straight news, the degree of political parallelism in Korea must be very high. Political parallelism had been especially intensified since the ideological differentiation was accelerated after the democratic transition (Nam 2006; Yoon 2001). In Korea where civil society is underdeveloped and political parties are rather inefficacious in representing voices in civil society, it is the ideologically oriented press that wields a political initiative to lead political parties or social organizations. Under the condition that conservative newspapers dominate the market and the public opinion, the initiative could be even stronger. Indeed the notion of 'political empowerment of the press' has been frequently mentioned when discussing the role or position of Korean news media (Kang, M. 2004; Pak and Chang 2000). We believe that this empowered press constitutes the particularity of the Korean model of political parallelism which will be elaborated later in this article.

3. Weak Journalistic Professionalization

The level of professionalization depends partly on the freedom of the press since it implies the independence of journalists from external authorities. But it is also true that the reinforced economic foundation of the press

resulted from the growth of media market can provide a foundation of critical professionalism that watches and criticizes other social actors and institutions. According to Hallin and Mancini, for example, in Britain, the United States and Central-Northern European countries, where the freedom of the press was firmly established during the process of industrialization and democratization, the journalistic professionalization strengthened as the media market grew.

Weak professionalization is one of the determining factors characterizing norms of Korean journalists. Since 1987 onward, the control of the news media by the transitional government had been weakened and the level of autonomy increased as the efforts for editorial independence had been paid off. While the journalists' associations and unions gained their power within a space that was opened up by democratic transition, the autonomy of the news media became firmer through the on-going conflicts and negotiations within newsrooms between senior reporters and unionist journalists. For example, the introduction of the election of editors-in-chief in some newsrooms could be an indication of growing autonomy of the press in that period. However, during the democratic consolidation period, as the media market expanded and the competitions among them got severe, the pressures from proprietors, managerial groups and advertisers increased. They were poised as a threat to the news media's internal and external autonomy since they had driven newsrooms more sensitive to intensified market competitions and advertisement revenues.

Nam (2005: 8) noted that as the democratization proceeded, "the press seems to have given in to the pressure from the business rather than to achieve internal autonomy." This is also the case from the viewpoint of professional norms and public service orientation. The recognition of journalistic norms and ethics has grown during the transitional period through the experiences of journalists' associations and press unions. As the market competitions among newspapers became so intensified in the mid-1990s to the extent that they were termed as 'the war of newspapers,' journalists were succumbed to the managerial demand and, consequently, professional values and practices became neglected.

Under the Kim Dae Jung (1999-2003) and the Roh Moo Hyun (2003-2007) administrations, conflicts between the government and the dominant

conservative newspapers intensified along with the disagreement on how to regulate and intervene in the media market. While major conservative newspapers, government, broadcasters, and progressive newspapers were in sharp conflicts against each other, the press as a whole played more of an advocate of political opinions than a provider of information. The picture was not so different for public service broadcasting when the board members of top management have been appointed by political parties.

4. Government Intervention with the Media

During the democratization, the roles of the government became unstable. In general, the state exerted significant influences on the regulation of public broadcasting and on the newspaper market, which may be a legacy from the previous authoritarian regimes. The state not merely managed and regulated the media market but also provided a significant amount of financial support in the form of public advertisement, subsidies to small newspapers and cable televisions, and monopolized the distribution of broadcasting advertisement through the Korea Broadcasting Advertising Corporation. However, as democratic authority of the transitional government did not get strengthened, the power of the state, separate from the bureaucratic authority, over the media had been actually attenuated. The media regulations and policies had to change from unilateral controls to institutional regulations (Cho 2003; Kang 2004; Park and Chang 2000).

Institutional regulations of the state, especially via a licensing system for new media businesses, however, led to severe social, political conflicts, which became more explicit under the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations. Particularly in that period, the government and the major newspapers severely clashed with each other on the issues like tax audit of the press and newsroom policies (Yang 2001). The media reform policies initiated by the reformist government were resisted by the conservative newspapers, which led to social, political conflicts that threatened the legitimacy of the reformist plans in other policy areas. In summary, the traditional role of the strong state intervention has been substantially weakened while new institutional regulatory frameworks were not consolidated. Each time the reformist policies were brought into social, political conflicts not producing

Table 2. Government and Media Policies in Democratization

Administration	Political Phase		Government	Media Policy	Major Newspapers	Media Industry	Notes
Park Jung Hee Chun Doo Hwan (~1987)	Authoritarian		Oppressive control	Authoritarian control	Subordinate lap-dog	Controlled market	- Direct state regulations - Compulsory media mergers
Roh Tae Woo (1987~92)	Democratization	Transition	Oppressive control and weak govern-mental authority	Controlled liberalization	Subordinate guard-dog	Market expansion	- Press union movements (1987) - Broadcasting Commission (1988) - *The Hankyoreh* (1988) - Increase of the pages of newspapers (1988) - SBS (1990) - Political ads allowed (1992)
Kim Young Sam (1992~97)		Consolidation	Strong authority	1st wave of de-regulation	Pro-governmental watch dog		- Market expansion - KBS1 TV commercials scrapped (1994) - Presidential TV debate (1995) - Cable TV (1995) - *The JoongAng Daily* turns into a morning paper, printing 48 pages (1995) - Homicide of *The ChosunIlbo* branch manager (1996) - Newspapers fair-trading rule scrapped (1994)
Kim Dae Jung (1997~2002)			Weak authority	Re-regulation of newspaper industry	Anti-governmental watchdog	Market competition	- Consolidated Broadcasting Act (2000) - *The Ohmynews* (2000) - Fair-trading rule on the press reintroduced (2001) - News portal sites burgeoning (2002)
Roh Moo Hyun (2002~2007)				Laissez-faire/conflictive	Attack-dog		- Market competition -Revision of electoral laws (2005) - Controversial pressroom mergers (2007)
Lee Myung Bak (2007~)				2nd wave of de-regulation	Watchdog		- Market competition - Controversial revision of Media laws (2009)

consensual agreements among the stakeholders, the democratic authority of the government got weaker. Table 2 presenting major media policies of the government, role of the major newspapers in relation to the government, and responses of markets during the process of democratization shows the relationship between the government and the major newspapers.

5. Functions of the Media as a Public Sphere

Here we introduce a media-related factor that has not been discussed in relation to the media system: the function of the press as public spheres. We believe that the ways in which the media report social facts, mediate social conflicts, and build social consensus has significant consequences for the outlook of democracy especially in the process of democratization. For example, the British and American press undertook the function of an impartial public forum by conveying the arguments and opinions of political elites, and by performing the role of a political watchdog. This kind of press presumes 'monitorial citizens' and a competitive democracy led by liberal elites. Meanwhile, the democratic corporatist model of media system projects a role of the media as a pluralistic public sphere, the primary function of which is to induce consensus and compromise across the diverse sectors of society. Within this model, the press fulfills the role of public sphere by representing the arguments and opinions from various social groups. This kind of press presumes a pluralistic participatory democracy. Lastly, in a polarized pluralist society, the media show tensions among social groups, reveal scandals and speak for polarized ideological positions. Thus in this kind of society, where the media as a whole presume external pluralism, each individual media player is highly ideological and openly advocating. These kinds of media expect 'argumentative and participatory' citizenship and presume pluralistic popular democracy as desirable.

Then what kind of role do the Korean media play, and to what kind of democracy do they expect to contribute? The Korean media designated to themselves the role of a representative voice of broader social sectors. Journalists have claimed objective reporting and independence to be cherished professional norm. However, we observe they in fact have played an advocate of political ideologies. We then wonder what kind of public

spheres they provide for public communication and what kind of democracy the kinds of public spheres presume. Before answering these questions, we have to take into account the interactions between the media system and the political system in terms of political parallelism.

IV. POLITICAL PARALLELISM IN KOREA

No same processes of democratization take place between two countries (Bunce 2000; Geddes 1999). Democratic transitions proceed in different ways within the same regions such as Eastern Europe or Latin America as well as across the different regions. Consolidation processes after the transition also differ depending on the nature of transition: resistance of authoritarian cultures, economic growth, and religious or ethnic conflicts within civil society. Korean democratic transition (Choi 1993; Im, H. 1999; Sohn 1997) and consolidation (Choi 2005; Kang 2006) in post-authoritarian were not an exception. Korean experiences of democratic transition and consolidation provide so unique a pattern of democratization as to constitute a model of democratization.

1. Characteristics of Korean Political System

Hallin and Mancini laid out three distinctive models of political systems. As shown in Table 3, North Atlantic countries like the U.S. and Britain are characterized by liberal democracy with the tradition of moderate individualist pluralism and majoritarian rules, together with well-established legal and rational authorities. Germany and North European countries constitute the democratic corporatist model based on corporatist pluralism, a welfare-oriented state and consensual democratic traditions. In contrast, Mediterranean countries like Italy and Spain can be categorized as a polarized pluralistic model characterized by the role of strong state due to the weakness of civil society, ideologically and regionally polarized pluralist culture, and the lack of procedural rationality because of strong political clientelism.

   Table 3 also presents the democratization model of political and media systems based on the observations of Korean experiences in comparison to

Table 3. Characteristics of a Democratization Model Based on Korean Experiences

Model	Liberal	Democratic Corporatist	Polarized Pluralist	Democratization
Geographical Distribution	US, Canada, Britain	Germany, Netherlands, North Europe	Italy, Spain, Greece	South Korea
Political System Characteristics	- Liberalism; weaker welfare state (US) - Individualized representation rather than organized pluralism - Predominantly majoritarian: representation of general social interests - Rational-legal authority: rational bourgeois' demand for predictable legislation and administration	- State's role to implement the consensus of social organizations - Consensual democratic tradition: centralized negotiations between social organizations, and the coexistence of practical cooperation and ideological struggles - Rational-legal authority: waning clientelism, low media instrumentalization	- Strong role of the state: absence of bourgeois civil society - Strong political clientelism, weaker development of liberal organizations and systems, intensification of clientelistic relationship between the press and politics - Weaker development of the concept of public interests - Reinforcement of private interests	- Strong role of the state after the era of anti-communism and authoritarian industrialization - From strong to weak governmental authority after democratization - Winner takes all majoritarian political culture - Weak political party system and weak civil society - Weak rational-legal authority
Media System Characteristics	- Developed mass media market - Low political parallelism - High professionalization - Low state interventions	- Developed mass media market - High political parallelism - High professionalization - High state interventions	- Underdeveloped mass media market - High political parallelism - Low professionalization - High state interventions	- Rapid developing mass media market - Enhancing political parallelism led by the press - Low professionalization - Varied state interventions

the Hallin and Mancini's three Western models. With regards to the political system dimensions, the Korean model can be characterized by (1) a strong bureaucracy reinforced by developmental strategies, (2) unstable roles of the state depending on differing levels of governmental authorities, (3) winner-takes-all majoritarian political culture, (4) a weak political party system,

and (5) weak legal and rational authorities. To an extent, the Korean model looks similar to the polarized pluralist model of Italy and Spain. But the Korean political system shows a clear difference in terms, for instance, that a winner-takes-all majoritarian political culture prevails with little institutional arrangement of pluralist representation.

The following three factors are important to characterize Korean political system within the process of democratization: the changing authority of government after the transition; the weakening of the political party system; the fractured nature of civil society. We believe these three factors determine their relationship with media systems dimensions and thus reveal one of the important features of Korean democracy, i.e., competing values of rationality and differing senses of direction in democratization.

First, by means of the mobilization of anti-communism and industrialization policies, the traditional role of the state in Korea had been very strong in dominating in every part of society including the media sector. After the transition, however, two consecutive peaceful changes of the administrations brought about a systematic change of the way in which the state mobilized the society. As the state authority gradually divided into the administrative authority and the bureaucratic authority, the power of the former authority has been oscillated depending on the level of supports from various political sectors in society. For example, the two administrations after the democratic transition, the Kim Young Sam government (1992-97) and the Kim Dae Jung government (1997-2002), showed the typical instability of state administrative authorities near the ends of their administrative terms. Even though both governments were democratic in principle, the Kim Young Sam administration inherited the political base from the previous authoritarian regimes as well as big-corporations, whereas the Kim Dae Jung administration had only received political supports from the reformative sectors. Both the Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung governments did not have the ability to generate political supports from the oppositions and to produce consensual supports from civil society. They could not secure the leadership to the extent of keeping on their political reform and policy agenda near the ends of their terms. In short, the democratic administrations in the consolidation stage could boast their political power only in the earlier period of their terms. Rapidly losing the grasp of political and policy agenda,

the democratic government effectively proved inevitability of the recurrent theme of lame-duck, which has constantly weakened government authority.

Second, Korean political parties have been very weak in channeling the political demand and motivation into the formal terrain of politics. Traditionally, major political parties have suffered from the chronic problems of regionalism, incompetent agenda-setting and poor mobilization of public forums. In addition, in every election, new political parties were established to replace the older ones just because there was the leadership change in the same ideological camps. Though they have been the primary political actors in democratic elections, political parties fail to represent people's voices and to take accountability of political activities (Choi 2005). Whether conservative or progressive, most of the institutionalized political parties have a serious problem of low representation. This becomes more serious when it comes to representing various marginalized social groups and civil society movements. Although progressive political parties was institutionalized during the consolidation stage, they had hard time to garner supports from broader sections of citizens because of their lack of effective policies in elections and low level of supports from civil society movements (Im, H. 2009).

Third, it is ironical to observe that as the democratization proceeded, the institution of civil society movements was disintegrated and the momentum of their political activities got weaker. During the democratic transition, civil society greatly expanded contributing to the democratization by such activities as monitoring political representatives, promoting civic participation, setting civil agenda, and prioritizing public interests (Im, H. 2000). For example, in the 2000 general election campaign, 'the Citizens Alliance for General Election' played an important role in the reform of the nomination processes within the major political parties and mobilized new generation of politicians. Korea Federation for Environmental Movements in tandem with other environmentalist groups also successfully drew public attention to eco-politics that had been largely neglected by the political establishment. However, as democratization proceeded, activities of civil society movements have turned into a target of political attacks, which made the civil society into an arena of social and political conflicts. Civil society movements began failing to maintain organizational coherence in producing consensual social and political agenda. State intervention through the

medium of financial subsidies has weakened the legitimacy of civil society movements. Obviously democratization does not bring about matured civil society. Civil society becomes more fractured as diverse social and political demands are organized along the lines of different sectors of civil society (Kim, H. 2000).

In summary, the post-authoritarian political system in Korea demonstrates the characteristics of unstable government authority, weakened political parties and fractured civil society. After democratic institutions were introduced and established successfully, social norms and values that previously functioned within sub-systemic relations during the authoritarian era were also effectively disintegrated. However, democratic practices of the government, political parties and civil society movements were not sufficiently executed to the extent that newly established democratic institutions have become weaker through the democratization process. In addition, a 'winner-takes-all' majoritarian culture continuously produced a tendency that rejects dialogues and negotiations among fractured political parties and civil society movements, which only contributed to maintaining of cientelism inherited from the authoritarian era.

2. Explaining Political Parallelism

We focus on political parallelism in Korea to account for the interaction between media system and political system within the context of democratization. As shown above, political parallelism has been developed in a way that determines the party-press relationship in Korea. However, it is not our intention to argue that political parallelism is the single most important factor that determines the party-press relationship. Rather, we claim in this section the ways in which political parallelism has been strengthened reveals the nature of the role of the news media during the process of democratization.

Based on the observations of Western media system, Hallin and Mancini showed that political parallelism is related with the development of media markets, journalistic professionalization and state interventions. Figure 1 presents a theoretical model explaining the inter-relationship among the key political and media dimensions within the context of
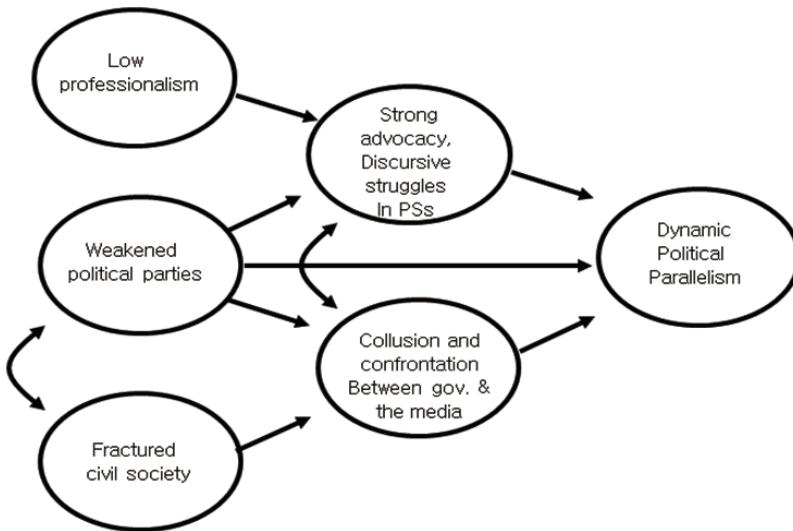
Low professionalism

Strong advocacy, Discursive struggles in PSs

Weakened political parties

Dynamic Political Parallelism

Collusion and confrontation Between gov. & the media

Fractured civil society

Figure 1. Explanatory Model of Political Parallelism in Korea.

Korean democratization. We attempt to show the explanatory factors such as journalistic professionalization, developments of political parties and fractured civil society have shaped the nature of political parallelism in Korea through the mediating factors such as strong advocacy and discursive struggles in public spheres as well as collusion and confrontations between government and the media. Though not shown in this figure, we also believe other political systems factors such as polarized pluralism and rational-legal authority also influenced political parallelism. This article limits the focus, however, on the three factors of professionalization of the press, developments of party systems and fractured civil society.

Journalistic professionalism is evaluated by variables such as political independence, establishment of distinctive professional norms, and public service orientations (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 34-6). In Korea, journalists' public service orientations were generally high due to historical legacy inherited from national independent movements. However, the autonomy of journalists from other sectors of the society and the establishment of distinctive norms were considered underdeveloped even in the process of democratic consolidation. Norms and practices regarding objectivity,

impartiality, and autonomy were not pursed in the discussion of conflicting issues and events. Thus within each of issue public spheres prepared by the news media, contending voices were amplified with few chances of moderations among the conflicting interests. Strong advocacy and discursive struggles in public spheres created the environment where political parallelism was shaped in such a way as to give the political power to the news media channeling the voices. By contrast, as weakened political parties could not represent the diverse voices in civil society, they became more dependent on the media's editorial selection of voices.

In Korea, development of political parties had a direct implication for political parallelism. Korean political parties, functioning as organizers of social interests (Schattschneider 1960), tended to instrumentalize the news media in order to exert influences on their coverage of political parties. In particular, as political parties recruited new candidates for general elections and communication directors for political campaigns from major news media, the human network between political parties and major news media including public service broadcasting got stronger. In addition, weakened political parties broadened the political space for new comers from civil society, which led to a dynamic style of political parallelism where the news media rather than political parties take initiatives in deciding whose voices should be heard in public spheres. That is, as political parties could not represent diverse voices in fractured civil society, they could not be a major news source for the news media. Various social movement groups bypassed political parties to make their voices heard in the traditional news media as well as in new media on the internet.

Then what is the characteristic of political parallelism in Korea? First, it seems that political parallelism was getting stronger as the democratization process folded out in Korea. Based on a content analysis of the news reports on South-North Korean relations in the Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung administrations, Yoon (2001: 185-91) demonstrated that ideological differentiation of news coverage between major newspapers was made clear between the two administrations. And this is the period when competitions in Korean newspaper market became more intense. That is, in Korea, as competitions in newspaper market got tougher, political parallelism became more intense, which is quite different from the British and American cases

where market competition weakened political parallelism.

As mentioned above, low professionalization of the Korean news media, weakened political parties and fractured civil society were the factors that had shaped the dynamics of political parallelism in Korea. It should be emphasized here that the pattern of political parallelism in Korea is quite different from that in the Western societies: The news media took the initiative of the relationship between the media and political parties, not the other way around. In fact, it has been pointed out several times that the Korean news media, especially the conservative major newspapers, became a dominant power agent as the society underwent democratization (Cho, H. 2003; Lee 1997; Yang 1995). There was even an argument that the press has developed into a 'state institution' to claim a part of the state role (Park and Chang 2001: 93). From a modeling perspective, we find these claims have some points, especially considering our argument that the news media have led the strengthening of political parallelism in the course of democratization. In summary, the Korean news media, frequently replacing the roles of weakened political parties in channeling various voices in civil society, acted not merely an agent but as a main player of Korean politics by instrumentalizing social conflicts. Then how did this happen? What implications do the characteristics of political parallelism have on the democratic transition of Korea?

3. Development of Political Parallelism in Korea

In order to examine our thesis of 'the domination of the news media over the political system,' we need to look into the changes of political parallelism passing through the different stages of democratic transition and consolidation. To show the changes in the pattern of political parallelism, we provide the figures illustrating political parallelism in three different stages of democratization. Figure 2 presents the pattern of political parallelism right after the democratic transition (1987-1992). It shows two horizontal lines, the one on the above for the ideological distribution of political parties and the other on the below for the ideological distribution of news media. The lines drawn on the vertical axis represent the cumulative distributions of political power as approximated by the number of voters depending on political ideologies: the dotted line for the authoritarian period and the solid line for
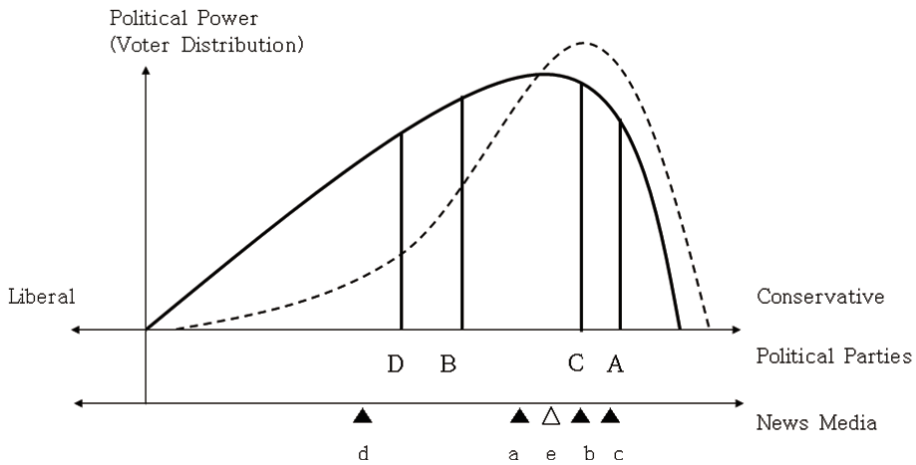
Figure 2. Political Parallelism during the Democratic Transition (1987-1992).

the democratic transitional period. The change of political power distribution basically illustrates the changes of the political power base in the democratic transition. That is, the overall distribution of voters was transformed from the skewed dotted line to the solid line. The overall power distribution moved to the left forming a 'middling voters' at the center of the line of political ideology.

The democratic transitional government, the Roh Tae Woo administration (1987-1992), initiated 'limited liberalization' in diverse social sectors including media market. As a result of 'liberalization,' a progressive daily, the *The Hankyorae*, could launch (illustrated as ▲d in Figure 2) and a commercial broadcaster *Seoul Broadcasting System* received a terrestrial broadcasting license. In this stage of democratic transition, however, the political influence of newspapers and broadcasters was not very strong although the number of news media increased and their sizes got bigger.

The news media did not contribute much to democratization. Korean democratization was a result of the combination of the movements from the below and the political pacts among the power elites (Choi 2005). Political parallelism in this period was not fully shaped yet: There was little ideological difference between the two conservative parties: the ruling Democratic Justice Party (A) and the opposing New Democratic Republican Party (C).
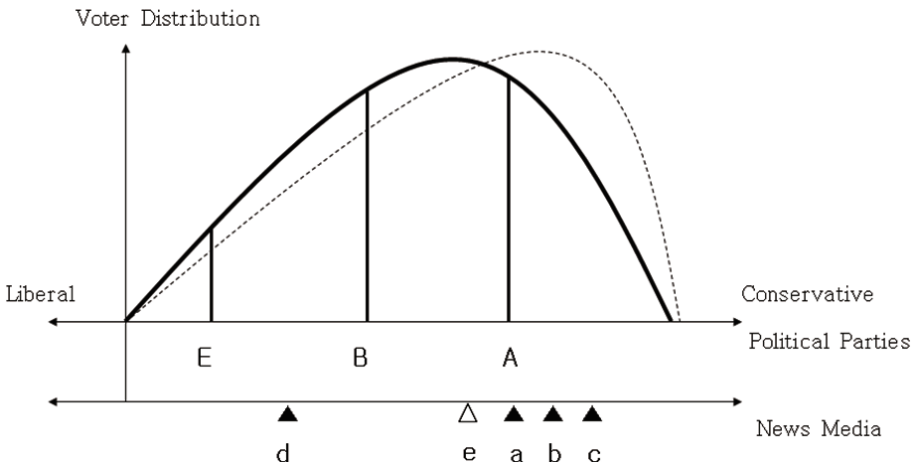
Figure 3. Political Parallelism during the Initial Stage of Democratic Consolidation (1992-1997).

The ideological difference between other two liberal parties in opposition (B, D) was not so clear, either: Reunification Democratic Party (D) and Peace Democratic Party (B). The ruling and opposition parties all took the relatively liberal stances in economic and social policies while they showed severe conflicts over the issues such as Korean re-unification and labor policies. Under these conditions, the political orientations of major newspapers (▲a, ▲b, ▲c) and the public broadcaster (△e) were targeting the largest readership and viewership, respectively.

Figure 2 shows there was no systematic matching between political parties and the media. In fact, during the democratic transitional government, the conservative press did not have the willingness and capability to take a clear ideological stance distinguished from the past stance that had been violently regulated by the authoritarian regimes oppressive state. Similarly, *the Hankyora*e (▲d), a progressive daily, sometimes revealing a tone of editorial supporting the opposition parties, did not align itself ideologically with the opposition parties.

Rather, the newspaper played a role of checking the institutionalized opposition parties' policies and ideologies from the perspective of far left political groups.

When the president Kim Young Sam (1992-97) took the office after elected as the candidate of the merged conservative parties, the democratization process became stiffen, and party-press parallelism began to get a shape. The ruling *New Korea Party* (designated as A in Figure 3) showed more liberal stances in comparison to the ex-ruling Democratic Justice Party. In relation to *the National Assembly for New Politics* (B) and other semi-institutionalized progressive political parties (E), however, the New Korea Party showed much more conservative stances especially on the issues of labor relations and South-North Korean relationships. However, the distribution of the voters in support of specific political parties moved to a more or less normal shape shown in solid line.

Mainstream conservative newspapers (▲a, ▲b, ▲c) during this period, already having secured commercial autonomy and then trying to lead the market, entered into a fierce competition among them. Based on their footing in the market, they began to exercise political influence on the political parties. *The Hankyorae* (▲d) continued to show their discursive leadership on the issues of labor, industry, and culture. Due to the ideological difference, the opposition party could not adopt what the progressive newspaper advocated on the major issues, but it could not completely ignore what the newspaper editorialized either.

During the later stage of democratic consolidation from the Kim Dae Jung to Roh Moo Hyun government, South Korean society witnessed accelerated political, social, and ideological differentiations. As shown in Figure 4, the distribution of political power in general changed from uni-polar to bi-polar, resulting no strong moderate voters in the middle of the road. Two major presidential elections ended up with a close competition between the two major parties mobilizing the ideologically differentiated voters. And the newspapers in this period exercised a serious amount of political power to the extent that Choi (2005: 229) declared that "after democratization, the press represented, consolidated, and mobilized the demands from the power elites." Not only major conservative newspapers (▲a, ▲b, ▲c) but also the progressive newspapers like *The Hankyorae* performed a very similar function of providing public spheres with strong advocacy with discursive struggles among various social and political groups. Consequently, over the past fifteen years of democratic consolidation, it was the press, regardless of political
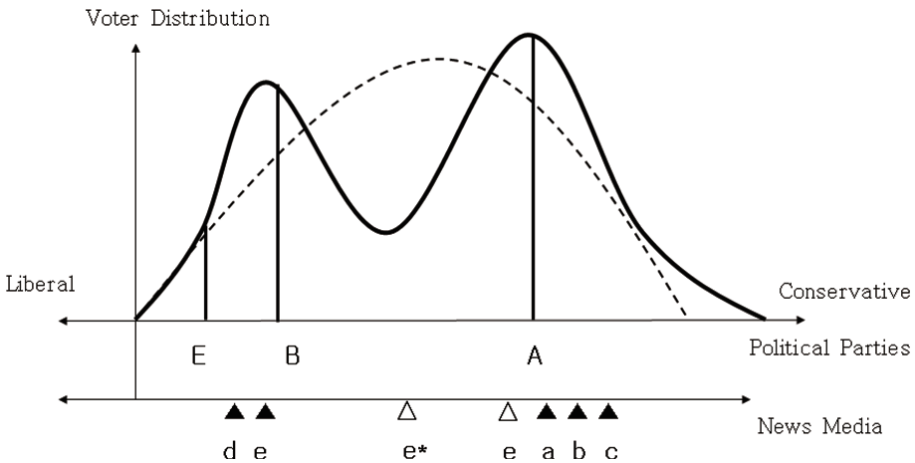
Voter Distribution

Liberal

Conservative

Political Parties

E B A

News Media

d e e* e a b c

Figure 4. Political Parallelism during the Initial Stage of Democratic Consolidation (1997-2007).

stances, that led ideological battles through the mobilization of political opinions.

Interestingly, during the latter part of the consolidation stage (1997-2007), public service broadcasters contributed to strengthening political parallelism (from e to e*) shifting its political stances in accordance with the incumbent political power. Internet newspapers, emerging from both side of the spectrum (both f and f*), rapidly expanded their influences. In other words, the news media in Korea, whether they are major newspapers, public service broadcasters and internet newspapers, represented ideological voices in society and contributed to intensifying the ideological confrontations in Korea. This resulted in increased external polarized pluralism with a limited development of internal pluralism, which shows a somewhat similar pattern of political parallelism in the media system model of Mediterranean countries on the outside. However, the kind of external polarized pluralism found in Korea is characteristically different from that of the Mediterranean model of media system in that political parallelism got strengthened during the process of democratization and was led by the news media under the conditions of low professionalism of the news media, weakened political parties, and fractured civil society.

V. CONCLUSION: POLITICAL PARALLELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC OUTLOOK

Based on the discussion about political parallelism in Korea, some of implications for the course of democratization can be drawn as follows. First, the news media, especially the major conservative newspapers, could not provide an integrated public sphere where diverse ideological groups could voice their opinions and show democratic outlooks. In the early stage of democratic consolidation, the newspapers took the role of an ideological fighter in fierce 'winner-takes-all' social and political conflicts (Kang, M. G. 2004; Rhee 2005). And this trend continues: They do not reflect social and political conflicts in society but actively carry out ideological warfare against their ideological opponents. The journalistic norms such as objectivity and diversity are frequently referred but only within the context of protecting their socio-economic status.

In fact, the major newspapers do not even fear to engage in confrontation with the government. Routinely regulated by the government and showing ideological affinity with the conservative administration, the newspapers often took side of the government of the day. But in order to protect their interests, they would resist against the government. The conflicting relationship between the mainstream newspapers and the government was reflected in the controversial tax audit on major conservative newspapers led by the Kim Young Sam administration and the political debate over imposing the fair trading rule on newspaper industry during the Kim Dae Jung administration. This became more apparent in the press reform policy of the Roh Moo Hyun administration and in the recent controversy over the revision of media law by the Lee Myoung Bak government.

By waging an ideological war against their opponents, they seriously restrict the democratic outlook. When covering the controversial issues such as reunification, foreign policy, national security, political reforms, environment, education and real estate, the news media reveal different democratic outlooks. Some are geared toward liberal democracy, others envision more or less participatory and egalitarian democracy. The problem is that there no consensual or integrated perspective emerged out of these

competing visions and outlooks of democracy. For example, while the conservative press argues for the promotion of market-oriented liberal democracy, the progressive press puts forward prospects of participatory and egalitarian democracy. Depending on the assumptions behind these competing visions and outlooks, they provide completely different visions and outlooks as to what kind of democracy South Korea is heading for.

The competing democratic outlooks revealed in the news media's coverage are presumed in the way in which the major newspapers functions as public spheres in mediating diverse controversial issues. And the problem is that even though they regard themselves as carrying out a liberalist or a participatory role of the news media within the society in the process of democratization, they in fact provide conflict-generating, advocate public spheres that have few chances of delivering social consensus among the conflicting parties. The dynamic nature of Korean political parallelism suggests the news media in Korea do not simply mediate elite opinion and convey group interests. They are the organizer of elite opinions and group interests. Considering this, it is hard to believe the claim made by conservative news media that they identify themselves as a representative liberalist institution of democracy. Certain they play more roles than this. Likewise, when the progressive media consider themselves as to play the role of civic participatory and deliberative democratic institution, they conveniently ignore the amount of conflicts amplified by their coverage of controversial issues. Thus strangely, democratic outlook of Korean society seems to resemble the kinds of democracies that Korean news media envision. It is utterly conflicting and confusing not only to participants of public spheres but also to the audience in general. However, one thing clear is that much of the course of Korean democratization depends on the ways in which the news mediate public opinions and channel social interests functioning as public spheres.

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