ENTERTAINING POLITICS: EXPLORING HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION OF PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND CONSUMPTION OF POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN KOREA

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ABSTRACT

Observing the paucity of research on political entertainment in Korea, this study has explored the historical transformation in Korean political entertainment through the lens of changing social and economic conditions, as well as shifts in power relations, over the past several decades. The study has taken two broad and interrelated research questions as its starting points: “How are political, economic, and social forms of power associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment?” and “How has the production and dissemination of such programs changed over the past half-century and in what specific contexts?” This approach has allowed particular attention to the role of political institutions in regulating media industries; the origin of Korean political entertainment and its distinctive features; the factors and conditions influencing the transformation in formats and genres of political entertainment; and the effects of technological shifts on political entertainment.

To answer these questions, this study began by examining the politics of Mandam, as its origin of a hybrid form of political information and entertainment during the period of the 1930s. In particular, I argue that the initial rise of political entertainment in the early stages of modern Korea was led by the business sectors for commercial purposes, i.e., Mandam was situated at the nexus of the record industry, the theater business, the newspaper business, and the radio broadcasting industry. Though Mandam played a crucial role in the shaping of political opinion by conveying political information in a satirical way, it lost cultural influence with technological breakthroughs such as developments in radio broadcasting and the introduction of television. Accordingly, political entertainment did not flourish due to stringent political censorship until 1987, and the breakdown in the business relationships between newspaper companies and radio stations, which I called the dark period of political entertainment in Korea. During the period of
military regimes which implemented a dual media policy epitomized as regulation and promotion directly influenced a transformation in the formats and genres of comedy on television. During the period, a handful of allegorical comedies as well as satiric call-in-shows continued to broadcast, stand-up comedy programs could not be dominate the airwaves.

Political entertainment faced another dramatic change concurrent with changing political circumstances in 1987. The ’87 democratization movement proved a turning point for the boost in producing allegorical political satiric comedies and mock news shows. However, the IMF crisis and the rise of hallyu phenomenon contributed to the commercialization and globalization of Korean media industry, which resulted in a decrease of production and distribution of political entertainment program. Along with the rapid commercialization and globalization of Korean media industry after the IMF crisis, political entertainment programs were integrated into a unique form of Korean infotainment called the real variety show. Though the real variety show drew some attention, it focused more on civic education than political criticism, thereby causing the level of satiric criticism in infotainment to significantly decrease.

Recently, politics-oriented blended programs reappear along with the introduction of a comprehensive programming system on cable networks (CP-CATV) cross-owned by major newspaper companies. These cable networks actively produced programs that blended news and entertainment for commercial purposes such as live news shows with political pundits and celebrities, mock news shows, and televisual satires. Though such hybrid programs contributed to the commercial success of CP-CATVs by reducing production costs, These programs provide on cable TV raised serious concerns about journalistic principles such as objectivity and impartiality in reporting, although these programs provides helped increase interest in political affairs. In the meantime, political entertainment within new media has shed light on the
possibility of producing a counter-political discourse that would provide an alternative to the conservative bent mainstream news media, as exemplified by NaNeunGgomSuda (NGS).

Over the past decade, political entertainment has faced dramatic change concurrent with technological breakthroughs and with dramatic changing political-economic circumstances such as a dual media policy epitomized as regulation and promotion led by two military regimes, the ’87 democratization movement, the IMF economic crisis in 1997 and the rise of the hallyu phenomenon, which have directly influenced a transformation in the formats and genres of political entertainment programming. Political entertainment has undergone various transformations in response to a variety of external and internal challenges it has faced. Recently, a number of new hybrid formats that more strikingly problematize traditional distinctions between news and entertainment, and even fact and fiction, have developed. Political entertainment can be characterized as border genres that populate the space between the still-potent public perceptions of news/entertainment and fact/fiction. The results of the historical analysis of the transformation of political entertainment within Korean context can provide insight into how political entertainment has been generated and its history and functioning in specific contexts, given the current rise in the number of political entertainment programs. The implications of the study and recommendations for further research directions are also discussed.
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Dedicated to my family, lovers, and myself
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT ON THE RISE

Political entertainment has become popular over the past two decades. The present increase in political entertainment’s popularity is particularly caused by television network programs such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. For this reason, the political entertainment program is considered a hybrid genre that is visually optimized on TV. It is true that television has stimulated the production of such blended programs; yet political entertainment exists in a variety of forms in the given social conditions. Before the introduction of television media, audio and print media had been engaged as entertainment-blended information providers that promoted various forms of political satire. This requires attention to how political entertainment gained popularity under specific conditions. Furthermore, as Jones (2010) rightly points out, entertainment politics indicates a double meaning. Political entertainment takes the serious information jokingly; simultaneously, such programming contributes to politicizing entertainment by giving audiences an alternative way of recognizing the political truth. That is to say, the blended programs of political entertainment are situated somewhere in between information providers and entertainers, and news outlets and entertainment businesses. Though the rise of political entertainment is often considered exaggerated, this approach indicates a lack of critical understanding of the production and circulation of political entertainment, which is a result of the marketization and commercialization of information and communication technologies.

Therefore, beginning with a cursory look at the growing popularity of political entertainment in contemporary media outlets, this dissertation discusses the political and cultural implications of political entertainment’s growing popularity within wider social and historical
contexts. Furthermore, I explain why this study pays attention to the South Korean case, responding to the question of why there has been little research on political entertainment programming in South Korea (henceforth referred to as Korea), despite the great success of the Korean media content and culture named *hallyu*. As for a research method, I show how political economy analysis combines with a critical cultural industries approach (e.g., Hesmondhalgh, 2007) to form the best methodology for investigating the influence of political and social power on the transformation of the media industry and governmental policy in political entertainment. To illuminate the historical transformation of Korean political entertainment within Korea’s specific political, economic, and cultural contexts, in this chapter, I first introduce a research topic, theoretical and philosophical foundations, and a methodological framework.

**Political Entertainment on the Rise**

Over the past decade, blended programming in the form of political entertainment (news satire) TV shows has risen in popularity, becoming an influential way of disseminating political social information in a variety of settings. This has been particularly led by the US media. The exploitation of news in popular entertainment shows has become a widely accepted format on television and via other media platforms. It is currently debated whether the rise of political entertainment signals a threat to professional journalism or offers an opportunity for an alternative form of news for democratic deliberation. Moreover, the significant increase in the number of political entertainment programs on TV raises questions about how news currently is defined and how it should be defined.

Although the boost of blended programming is led by US television networks in the post-network era, the rise of such hybrid programs is not only seen in the US, but also internationally.
Baym and Jones (2010, p. 2) has pointed out (1) that news satire has become a universal phenomenon inasmuch as no matter what the context, the media play a critical role in distributing “authoritative information about the real,” and (2) that news satire has become a kind of global trend in terms of its format and the diverse ways in which it adapts to differing political economic contexts, though the format of news satire is more prominent in the United States than in other countries. Indeed, a variety of political entertainment formats and genres appear unrelated to U.S. news satire, and have sprung up everywhere by taking the politically significant role of enabling the powerless to respond to injustice. Not surprisingly, there have been a variety of studies on political entertainment programs in specific socio-political contexts. For example, Bardan (2012) has studied the weekly satire Cronica Cărăcotaşilor [The Tattlers’ Tattle] in the post-socialist context of the Romanian media landscape, and Imre (2012) has explored the satirical Hungarian talk show Heti Hetes in the ideological contexts of Western and post-socialist European modes of humor. Further, Sienkiewicz (2012) has analyzed the Palestinian sketch comedy show Watan Ala Watar’s [Country on a String] production of a discourse of liberal expression in the context of Palestine’s political struggle between authoritarian government censorship and audience resistance. In addition, Harrington (2012) has investigated the Australian fake news shows The Norman Gunston Show and Newstopia in the Australian national context, and Kleinen-von Königslöw and Keel (2012) have investigated how the heute show, which adopted a format imported from The Daily Show (TDS), was successfully adapted to German’s political and cultural contexts. These scholarly observations indicate that political entertainment is not the purview of a specific region, but in fact a worldwide phenomenon.

The growing tendency to combine the dissemination of information with entertainment has stimulated communication scholars to consider the implications of blended programming,
especially in regard to television shows, over the past decade. Political entertainment gained new importance when Jon Stewart took over as host of TDS in 1999; this show resulted in the creation of The Colbert Report (TCR) in 2005. It was on the basis of these shows that communication scholars began to pay attention to the hybridization of news and entertainment, which emerged as a common and distinctive part of the contemporary media landscape (e.g., Baym, 2005; 2007; 2010; Fox, Koloen, & Sahin, 2007; Harrington, 2012). Indeed, communication scholars have made a considerable effort to investigate the effect of this kind of political entertainment on the political engagement of audiences, particularly adolescent audiences, in the political process. In brief, there has been significant academic research on the transformation of political entertainment over the past decade in different ways. Most notably, as a normative and empirical approach for political entertainment studies, Blumler (1999) has identified a dispute regarding whether infotainment is scary like “a poison pill for democracy” (McChesney, 1999, p.2) should be substantiated with scientific evidence. Accordingly, in the 1990s and beyond, communication scholars (e.g., Baek & Wojcieszak, 2009; Brewer & Cao, 2008; Baum, 2002; Baym, 2005; Compton, 2008; Davis & Owen, 1998; Fox, Koloen, & Sahin, 2007; Holbert et al., 2007; Hollander, 2005; Jones, 2009; 2010; McLeod et al., 1996; Moy et al., 2005; Mutz, 2004; Stroud & Muddiman, 2013; Young, 2004; Young & Tisinger, 2006) explored the effects of political late-night television comedy shows such as The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and The Late Show with David Letterman on audiences’ political knowledge and their opinions of political candidates, events, campaigns, and political institutions “under the rubric of new media or soft news” (Compton, 2011, p. 10). Most of these early studies are effects-based, empirical, and quantitatively-oriented, and have become seminal works in this area of research. Compton (2011) has categorized these empirical studies of political entertainment programming
into three types: (1) political learning and information processing, (2) attitudes toward and behaviors associated with conventional news and politics, and (3) political ideology and political parties.

In another vein, technological convergence has also provided opportunities for political and economic exploitation, while economic competition has resulted in new forms of programming as the television industry’s specific response to this competition (Jones, 2010). A technological shift has allowed for a number of broadcasting networks to create diverse entertainment programming that spans multiple media platforms and has stimulated the concentration of ownership for cost-effective production and distribution of media products (Baym, 2005; Gray et al., 2009). For this reason, some scholars (e.g., Hart, 1999; Postman, 2005; Putnam, 2000) have postulated that the medium, particularly television itself, is intrinsically detrimental to possibilities for democratic engagement. These criticisms have raised controversial philosophical questions. Specifically, television is often seen as a problematic medium that makes citizens’ social networks disconnected, and such disconnection hampers participation in rich, healthy public debates on socio-political affairs, which is related to the ontological criticism raised by Putnam (2000). In his book *Bowling Alone*, Putnam argued that citizens in the United States have become increasingly disconnected from their family members, friends and neighborhoods, and this disconnection has resulted in a decrease of social trust and civic participation in political issues. Putnam cites an increase in television viewing as one of the main reasons for this. After he published this book, Putnam faced a number of critiques by communication scholars who stressed the rise of participatory media, which has the potential to increase audiences’ civic engagement (e.g., Amadeo, 2007; Bimber, 2001; Kenski & Stround, 2006; Lin, 2001; Livingstone & Markham, 2008; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999; Norris,
1996; 2003; Norris & Jones, 1998; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). However, most scholars agreed that those who watch heavy entertainment programs are less likely to be politically and civically engaged than active news consumers.

Meanwhile, medium theorists have raised more epistemological issues; they have pointed out that television itself is not appropriate medium for disseminating serious, political information, arguing that television itself is optimized for entertainment purposes. For instance, Postman (2005) has suggested that the television medium has an inherent bias, meaning that television is likely to make its information more entertaining and consequently less serious, rational, and coherent. He has argued that the television medium presents its content as irrational. Thus, adopting a dystopian view, Postman has provided the Huxleyan warning that we are in danger of “amusing ourselves to death” and television should be rendered disinformation that gives audiences the illusion of knowing. He asserts, “The best-entertained America, the least well-informed people in the Western world” (pp.106-107). In his view, television is a self-referential medium, and it presents such fragmented news information that it is not appropriate to take the information seriously. Therefore, the hybridization of information and entertainment results in decreasing public discussion, and gives birth to ill-informed citizens. In his thoughts, therefore, television itself undermines and muddles important political matters, converting serious topics into fluff pieces that are less about ideas and more about entertainment.

A handful of cultural studies (e.g., Meddaugh, 2010; Meikle, 2012) have explored the construction of meaning associated with political entertainment focusing on its function of critical reflection of the real politics. For example, Achter (2008) has analyzed an early comic response to 9/11 on the online news parody website The Onion. He argued that comedic responses could spur citizen participation in creating controversial voices or at least alternative
voices to the governmental voice without violating decorum. Colletta (2009) has argued that the satirical approach of TDS and TCR play a critical role in creating an alternative way of seeing issues and challenging the way audiences view television. Furthermore, Altrui (2009) has claimed that the Da Ali G Show revisits the complexities of black–Jewish history related to Jewish immigration to the U.S., hyper-masculine and hyper-feminine voices, and the boundary between black and white. These works have clearly achieved some noteworthy results in regard to the production of nuanced interpretations of the causes, effects, and meaning of laughter in political entertainment texts. These studies are obviously remarkable enough to illuminate a reason for the cultural implications of political entertainment programs.

Though these studies have helped scholars to understand the extent to which audiences critically interpret information presented in such shows, many questions regarding power relationships and the production and distribution of political entertainment texts remain unanswered. This study supports the idea that commercialization and marketization have affected the production of political entertainment, as McChesney (1999) has rightly pointed out. In this realm, critics blame the commercialization and marketization of media for creating hybridization between politics and entertainment. Based on this commercialization thesis, critical media scholars (e.g., Brants, 1998; McChesney, 2000; McNair, 2000) have criticized such blended programs, often called “infotainment,” for being harmful influences on democratic engagement in public discussion regarding political affairs. Their criticism has emphasized that the popularity of entertainment forms in the full range of media has been triggered by commercial financing and economic motivations, due to the amplification of market demands along with the strong commercial competition among broadcasting networks in the mid-1980s in the US and Europe (Bolin, 2014; Imre, 2012).
The commercialization thesis also criticizes the interlocking of political interests and commercial media. The press and broadcasting companies had been tied to political institutions in many countries; media organizations are heavily reliant on political power and thereby strongly tied to the state, and later, this early dependence on political power or the state can turn into a reliance on the market (Ekcerantz, 2005, p.99; Gross, 2003). A dependence on political power does not always mean political power directly regulates or censors the press. Rather, political regimes may control the media by giving special economic favors such as advertising or financial support, or by establishing a new media system as a way of promotion, which designates multiple influences on the production of political entertainment. Furthermore, political entertainment has been viewed as a powerful tool with which people can understand the current events of the day and be presented with critique and alternative views of the governing leaders. Political entertainment specifically has been banned during various times in history because it challenged and pushed cultural norms and questioned political leaders (La Marre et al., 2009). Mascha (2008) has argued in a study on the rise of fascism that the higher the level of censorship in the media, the lower the level of satire and the higher the punishment of it. This illustrates the importance of the relationship between political power and engaged citizenship in political entertainment for social critique.

Particularly in Korea, political regimes have actively engaged in establishing various regulation and promotion systems. Considering this situation, therefore, this study aims to put forward a holistic picture for a richer understanding of the dynamics of power relations within the production of political entertainment, by weighing the factors influencing the transformation of the production, distribution, and consumption of the news-blended entertainment programs.
Why Korean Political Entertainment?

Underpinning the aforementioned argument of Baym and Jones (2012), this dissertation postulates that Korea’s specific political, economic, and social contexts must be considered in order to understand the role of political entertainment. Korea has received attention since it rapidly emerged as one of the most dynamic nations in the current world media market. Korea is has one of the highest rates of household broadband usage; it is also the first country to achieve 100% wireless broadband subscription. Korean entertainment media comes with digital technology reception, which has resulted in the rapid growth of digital entertainment media. The rapid rise of Korean media content and the extraordinary flow of production, distribution, and consumption has been called the Korean Wave (hallyu), which refers to the increase in popularity of Korean entertainment and culture ranging from television dramas and movies to popular music (K-pop), and its dissemination to neighboring Asian countries in the late 1990s and to the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas (e.g., Cho, 2005; Huang, 2011; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008; Ryoo, 2009). However, notwithstanding the present remarkable increase in the flow of Korean media products and the globalization of the country’s media content market, it is somewhat ironic that little political entertainment and/or news satire is available in Korean media. Consequently, there is scarcity of research on how political entertainment has flourished in specific socio-political contexts. Such a gap in research has become a very interesting point for me in that I was previously not aware of such hybrid genres as news satires (fake news), late-night political comedy shows, and political mock documentaries.

Indeed, I did not recognize the scarcity of political entertainment in Korea until 2009 when I began to study in the United States. Had I not recognized the great popularity of political entertainment, I would not have taken a serious look at programs such as TDS, TCR, or Weekend
Update in *Saturday Night Live* (SNL). However, during five years I spent studying in the US, I was struck by the considerable number of American youth who enjoyed political entertainment. Accordingly, I became interested in the extent to which political entertainment, particularly news satire, was widely accepted, and its role in influencing audiences’ political engagement by encouraging the audiences to create and intervene in political discourses. I started to think about why there is so little political entertainment programming in Korea. On this basis, I began to address questions pertaining to political entertainment in both private and public settings.

As an initial step, tracing back to the Japanese colonial era, I began to review various historical materials including old books, newspapers, and magazines. I found that Korean political entertainment has its origin in the *Mandam* of Shin Bul-chul, a founder of political comedy in the theatre of the mid-1920s to 1940s, the Japanese colonial era. Despite the popularity of *Mandam* during 1930s, it has been rarely discussed as the origin of political entertainment. Political entertainment still remained underdeveloped after nation’s independence, because Park Jung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan’s military regimes were repressive, institutionalizing a mode of censorship that succeeded in hampering political critiques, including any humorous/satiric statements about the authoritarian governments. When the national democratic movement occurred in 1987 and the non-military regime achieved a peaceful turnover of political power in 1992, political entertainment television programming such as the *Ganeun Club Toronhoi*[^1] [Thin Club Debate Forum] in the *Oot-eum Hanmadang* [Comedy Festival], the *Moewi Gookhoi* [Mock Assembly] in the *Comedy Jeonmangdae* [Comedy Observatory], and the *Tonight Show with Lee Joo-Il* began to emerge (Yoo, 1992). However, attempts to boost political entertainment programs were not successful at this time. One reason

[^1]: It parodies the original debate forum, the *Guanhoon Club Toronhoi*, which is an occasional program featuring leading politicians discussing current affairs. The *Guanhoon Club* is a fraternal association that consists of mid-career journalists.
may be that producers tended to self-regulate, not wanting to risk introducing more political comedy. Another, more important, reason may be that advertisers did not want to back the genre of political comedy, considering it unproven in the highly-commercialized broadcasting environment. Thus, political comedy was and has continued to be marginalized in the broadcasting market, partly due to a lack of support from advertisers.

It took a decade for political entertainment to re-emerge in the contemporary Korean media landscape. In April 2011, *NaneunGgomsuda* (*NGS*) (*I Am A Petty-Minded Creep*) aired for the first time—as a podcast program. This political entertainment talk show became rapidly famous for its humorous critique of the country’s president, Lee Myung-bak. It included the use of some humorous devices such as parody and irony; e.g., Lee Myung-bak is referred to as *His Highness* (*Gaka* in Korean) in order to criticize the Korean government as well as the press. In addition, in December of the same year, tvN, one of the major cable networks in Korea, began to air *Saturday Night Live Korea* (*SNLK*), and in March 2013, *Sseol-Jeon: Hardcore Breaking News* [Verbal Battle] began on JTBC, one of the four major general programming channels on cable TV. These news satire programs quickly became popular, particularly on cable TV. The increase in political entertainment programs such as these is reflective of and is driving a considerable change in the media landscape.

It is still debated whether political entertainment provides a new channel for funneling political information more effectively to audiences. There have been concerns raised about audiences experiencing entertaining politics without serious thought and discussions, and about the ideological function of affective information. Such concerns are plausible when considering that the current rise of political entertainment is led by major conservative media corporations. This suggests the necessity of understanding the changing structure of media outlets in
association with political economic changes in order to explore how the production and dissemination of political entertainment has changed over the past half-century and in what specific contexts. Here, exploring the historical transformation of the production and circulation of political entertainment implies a double meaning. That is, this study aims to comprehend the characteristics of political entertainment content with a sketch of the history of political entertainment, and at the same time, it also seeks to understand the wider structural relationships among the media, politics, and society through the specific form of political entertainment.

**Research Questions**

Beginning with the question of why there is such little research on political entertainment programming in Korea, this dissertation explores the dynamics of power relations within the production of political entertainment, as well as factors influencing the transformation of the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment within the Korean context. It also aims to contextualize the claims in order to further understand the implications of the transformation of political entertainment by situating them in a broader social and historical context. Specifically, questions such as the more general “How is the production of political entertainment associated with a political information outlet?” and the more focused “What does entertaining politics account for?” are central to the present study. I have used these questions as a basis for my analysis and for identifying themes. My central research questions are thus as follows:

RQ 1. How are political, economic, and social forms of power associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment content?
RQ 2. How has the production and dissemination of such programs changed over the past half-century and in specific contexts?

These two research questions are interrelated in a way that the preceding question provides a basis for the following question. Regarding RQ2, it is necessary to find the origin of Korean political entertainment, and to review its distinctive features. Moreover, I pay attention to the transformation of the formats and genres of political entertainment throughout its history. Thus, I raise two complementary questions:

RQ 2-1. What is the origin of Korean political entertainment and its distinctive features, and what has driven the initial emergence in political entertainment?

RQ 2-2. How have the formats and genres of political entertainment changed and under what specific conditions and what factors are associated with these changes?

To answer these questions, I identify four historical periods in Korean media history, in each of them considering the relationships among the state, market, and civil society. Moreover, I employ the cultural industries approach in political economy analysis to examine the dynamics of the production and circulation of Korean political entertainment in a broader social context. Specifically, looking back to the Japanese colonial era, I discuss how Korean political entertainment came to the stage and its role in producing political discourses. I also explore the ways in which political entertainment has been regulated and transformed by political and/or economic power after the liberation from the Japanese imperial power to the present. Furthermore, I discuss the potential and the limitations of political entertainment in praxis based on scholarly observations (e.g., Waisanen, 2009; Young, 2013) that have highlighted political entertainment as a vital source for accessing political information and making a polysemic
meaning structure in a challenging media-scape. I propose a conceptual map for this study in Figure 1.

![Conceptual map for research](image)

Figure 1. Conceptual map for research.

Finally, as the focus of my research, I review a variety of key programs, including political satire on terrestrial television, current political entertainment shows that are prominent on Korean cable television networks, and one popular podcast, *NaneunGgomsuda (NGS)* (I Am A Petty-Minded Creep). I also review second-hand discourses to identify the linkages between political entertainment and the contextual meanings of these programs.
Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of This Study

The scholarly discussion of the relationship between entertainment media and politics or the effect of the entertainment industry on audiences’ critical thinking has long historical roots in Western philosophy and social science. Critical theorists of the Frankfurt School criticized the culture industry for being a driving force in making audiences unintelligent or at least passive. Horkheimer and Adorno (2006) have regarded the audience’s pleasure as inhering in the mass deception that takes place in the context of cultural capitalism. Using a psychoanalytic metaphor, Marcuse (1974, p. 13) has explained, “The reality principle supersedes the pleasure principle.” This means that entertainment media suppresses comedic pleasure via “the additional controls arising from the specific institutions of domination” (Marcuse, 1974, p. 37). Marcuse has conceptualized it as surplus repression. Critical theorists have claimed that the memory of such pleasure has been lost, and the resistant quality of political entertainment has been lost likewise due to the commercialization of media and culture, though the original comedic pleasure still exists and audiences remain inherently capable of achieving it. Therefore, I highlight social change, social processes, and social relations, rather than particular institutions or structures, because social change accounts for a continuous process of holistic institution or system of society. In shifting from things to processes, and from linear to non-linear relationships, Mosco (2008, p. 11) has suggested three entry points: commodification, spatialization, and structuration.

Commodification indicates “the process of transforming use values into exchange values,” and “the manifold ways this process is extended into the social field of communication products, of audiences, and of labor” (pp. 139–141). There are two aspects of commodification: the exploitation of communication and technologies in order to expand the commodification of the labor process, and the double processes of commodification of labor in the process of producing
goods and services commodities. Commodification processes are at work in the society as a whole, penetrating communication processes and institutions so that improvements and contradictions in the societal commodification process influence communication as a social practice. Spatialization pays attention to time and space as flexible resources (Giddens, 1990), or time–space compression (Harvey, 1990) in accord with Marx’s statement that “capitalism annihilates space with time.” This concept is useful in considering the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry such as horizontal integration, vertical integration, and strategic alliances. The concept is also beneficial in understanding the constitutive role of the state, which might operate in the “uneasy relationship to processes of spatialization,” in regulating processes relating to commercialization, liberalization, privatization, and internationalization. Lastly, structuration refers to “the process whereby structures are mutually constituted with human agency, or structures are constituted out of agency even as they serve as the very medium for that constitution” (Mosco, 2008, p. 139). This cosmological issue is related to epistemological questions such as whether universal understanding can be achieved through theory and observation and how social entities are shaped through theory and observation in the analysis of social entities.

Next, in regard to epistemology, this study postulates there is a need for “a realist epistemology that understands reality as the mutual constitution of sensory observation and explanatory practices” (Mosco, 2008, p. 136). Most of the misunderstanding about and criticism of political economy overemphasizes economic elements such as modes of production and the

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2 Specifically, Mosco (1996, pp. 140–161) categorizes the processes of commodification according to four subcategories: (1) commodification of content, which focuses on the process of commodity production by producing messages to reflect capitalist interests (see Herman & Chomsky, 1988); (2) audience commodity, which emphasizes audience labor (or labor power) as the core product of the mass media (e.g., Smythe, 1977); (3) cybernetic commodity, which considers audience ratings to be an actual commodity (see Meehan, 1999); and (4) commodification of labor.
labor process, thereby making the mistake of soft determinism. It thereby overlooks the relative autonomy of superstructural activity, which is directly related to reductive thinking. In a famous debate between Grossberg and Garnham, Grossberg (1995, p. 76) criticized political economists for refusing in practice to think about “the contradictory nature of social practices, and [for] apparently [accepting that] capital determines in a mechanical way from start to finish.” In his view, political economists consider culture matters only as “a commodity and ideological tool of manipulation.” In response, Garnham (1995, p. 96) claimed that Grossberg had misrepresented political economists, stating that Grossberg seemed to regard “consumption as somehow less important than production—perhaps even as trival.” Furthermore, he insisted that political economists are necessarily either reductionist or functionalist in nature, and he claimed that the construction of a mode of production is historically contingent and is unstable in the sense of being subject to crisis and contradiction, even though the mode of production can be regarded as the bottom line.

In a similar vein, Mosco (2008, p. 137) has refused to use the terms “determinism” and “overdetermination,” because the terms assume that “one unchanging thing brings about change in another.” Rather, he has taken “an inclusive and non-reductionist” position by rejecting the viewpoint that “all reality is reducible to one specific causal force.” Specifically, Mosco has avoided using the term “causality,” arguing that it interferes with efforts to understand and analyze diverse social phenomena. Instead, Mosco has suggested using the term “mutual constitution,” referring to Giddens’ structuration theory, stating that the social field consists of

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3 Mosco (2008, p. 138) noted that “the term constitution foregrounds the process of becoming within all elements of the social field. Nothing is fully formed or clearly defined, but one can specify processes at work within and between them that define the nature of the constitutive process and the relationships among the elements. ‘Mutual’ is preferred to ‘over’ (or overdetermination) because it maintains the sense of manifold without the connotation of excessive which ‘over’ conveys.”
mutually constituted “processes”\textsuperscript{4} and that many political economists positively evaluate attempts to set up an alternative epistemology with a view to avoiding relativism and/or determinism.

Thirdly, regarding axiological inquiry, I assume that the potential that political entertainment programming has in various settings is in between the normative and subversive functions of entertainment. Normative theories of entertainment are marked by the safety-valve theory,\textsuperscript{5} which suggests that parody, irony, and satire act as modes for reinforcing dominant norms and maintaining the given social order. Conversely, the dissident approach argues that the media do not inherently provide a “general politics” (Dentith, 2000, p.185). Primarily illustrated here is the problem of dominance and resistance and possible ways of understanding these terms.

First of all, it is necessary to briefly distinguish between the practice of reading a text in accordance with social and cultural norms and the practice of reading a text against dominant social and cultural mores. In the former practice, social norms determine the reader’s interpretation of the text; in the latter, the reader approaches the text as if it were coded and resists producing an unproblematic and normalized reading. Furthermore, it is necessary to situate aggression in a social setting in order to understand the ways in which aggression in political entertainment operates in televised texts. More specifically, aggression in humor and satire as used in political entertainment texts is related to a context of struggle between dominance and resistance. The discussions regarding the ideological function of political entertainment show that aggression takes certain forms in regard to the object under attack.

\textsuperscript{4} Mosco also considers this epistemology to be \textit{critical}, because “knowledge is produced through a process of comparison, between alternative theoretical formulations, between subsets of a particular formulation, and between two components that mutually constitute intellectual praxis” (p. 138).

\textsuperscript{5} The theory supports the idea that satirists attack on non-normative behaviors, and lead to fortifying conservative force.
Billig (2005, p. 200) has divided approaches to entertainment texts into those of normative, disciplinary and dissident humor. In his view, critical theorists prefer dissident humor and entertainment, because rebellion is by definition a challenge to the existing social order.

Bakhtin (1984) has placed humor within the official realm of festival, in which humor takes a dissident role in challenging the given social order. In Bakhtin’s account, in the Middle Ages, pleasure was eliminated from nearly all official events and ceremonies such that it attained a role outside of the official realm. That outside was the Carnival, wherein people were afforded limited freedom from the central social order. In the temporal period of the Carnival, all relationships characterized by hierarchy, as well as all privileges, norms, and taboos, were put aside. In Bakhtin’s view, the Carnival constituted a true festival for a limited time, one that signified creation, change, and innovation. Critical theorists have also argued that humor and entertainment can render truth and encourage reflection on society. For example, Coulson (2007) has considered the films starring Charlie Chaplin to be critical in that he sought persons within the culture industry to critique. In these frameworks, humor and entertainment combine to form a familiar vehicle for expressing popular disdain and opposition to repressive regimes (Schutz 1995; Speier 1998).

Furthermore, studies on political entertainment have focused on whether the character of political entertainment is essentially interpretative or sensual. Entertainment pleasure is to facilitate sensual liberation, and to be promoted by the interpretation of multiple entertainment texts simultaneously. That is, the pleasure of political entertainment creates a conflict between

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6 But this is somewhat debatable in that the Carnival is sanctioned and thus still official.
7 Regarding two aspects of pleasure in reading texts, Barthes divides (1975; 1981) pleasure into jouissance and plaisir. In brief, plaisir refers to interpretative, critical pleasure, rather than to instinctive pleasure, because social regulation and the logic of meaning are premises for interpreting texts. Jouissance is strong enough to throw the audience into an ecstasy and to disturb the reader’s cultural and psychological bases for interpretation. Fiske (1993, p. 239) refers to jouissance, based on Barthes’s account, as “a physical pleasure like sexual orgasm in the senses of
interpretation and sensual liberation. In this process, there exists a kind of irony in that entertainment pleasure suppresses itself, which makes pleasure no longer pleasurable, as Foucault has argued. Indeed, the pleasure of political entertainment has thus far been discussed within the bounds of the interpretable. In other words, entertainment pleasure is within the bounds of the sensual, but at the same time it is continuously challenged by interpretative attempts that are similar to “the vision of madness as an experience within the domain of language” (Foucault, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, it can be said that political entertainment is situated somewhere between what is reasonable and what is unreasonable; that is, between the interpretative and the sensual.

Based on the aforementioned literature, I posit that political entertainment itself has neither positive nor negative consequences, though it has the potential to critically reflect the real. By weighing these two approaches, I presuppose that the social influence of political entertainment programming is dependent on particular moments as well as specific social contexts. To illustrate this, I introduce three key philosophical statements regarding the conditions of political entertainment: the form of liberation, the structure of protection, and contradiction. A paradigmatic pleasure of political entertainment exists in each historical age. Particularly in the modern era, the notion of political entertainment is closely associated with the dynamics of power relations inherent in the popular media. That is, although the pleasure in consuming political entertainment texts is potentially unlimited, the expression of this pleasure may be confined, currently at least, to certain accessible spheres. This means that the pleasure of political entertainment is contingent upon given conditions that are influenced by what is

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8 Foucault (2006) argues, in the History of Madness, that the moment at which oeuvre demonstrates madness as madness, madness becomes no longer madness, by describing that “Unreason becomes the reason of reason—to the exact extent that reason only recognizes it as a possession (p. 345).”
generally accepted within a particular popular medium. Therefore, I contend that the pleasure of political entertainment is mixed with sensual pleasure and interpretative pleasure, and accordingly, its discourse is arranged and deployed via the power/knowledge mechanism of the media and the entertainment industry. That is, the pleasure of political entertainment is divided in accordance with the dichotomous requirements of ideological judgment, which is so inasmuch as pleasure of political entertainment becomes interpretative in any interpretation based on the current meaning system—and particularly in regard to popular media, which may operate as the dominant power in reality (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. *Key statements regarding the arrangement and deployment of discourses of comedic pleasure.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of liberation</th>
<th>Structure of protection</th>
<th>Contradiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sensual pleasure itself without any explication</td>
<td>1. Confers on sensual pleasure the value of the sublime</td>
<td>1. Comedic pleasure can be obtained when expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpretative freedom of comedic pleasure</td>
<td>2. Refers to the division of comedic pleasure according to the dichotomous requirements of ideological judgment</td>
<td>2. Interpretation depends on the current meaning system, which in reality is operated by the dominant power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Freedom to possess oneself of comedic pleasure</td>
<td>3. Offers an accessible sphere of the expressible</td>
<td>3. Comedic pleasure becomes coded in order to be generally accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: You & Kim (2014, p. 20)

**Methodology and Analytic Rubric**

**Methodological framework.** In adopting a methodological framework for this study, I have postulated that political economy analysis using the critical cultural industries approach is
the best approach to the outlined research questions. The questions seek a holistic understanding of the socio-political relationships among media systems for the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment programming and broader social structures, “with analysis and critique of a given society across its span” (Schiller, 1996, p. vii). This is the core objective of political economy of communication research as well: indeed, the political economy of communication seeks to investigate “the social relations, particularly the power relations, which mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources (Mosco, 2008, p.24). In other words, political economy of communication research pays attention to the allocation of resources in capitalist societies and analyzes power relations, class systems, and socio-structural inequalities through researching the ownership and control of the media. In particular, political economists both perform theoretical analyses and propose strategies to resist dominant power structures.

Considering that the advent of political entertainment occurred within the changing contemporary media landscape, the present study calls for attention to the transformation of the power structure wherein media corporations, political regimes, and policymakers work together to create a media supporting system that influences the production and allocation of media resources (McChesney, 2000; Mosco, 2008). Sketching the work of Golding and Murdock (1991), Mosco further defines the political economy of communication with reference to four central characteristics. First, political economy sheds light on social changes through history, particularly in regard to the dynamic forces of capitalism, but also by identifying both short- and long-term cycles relating to fundamental changes in the (media) system. Second, the political economic tradition has deep roots in a “wider social totality” (Mosco, 2008, p. 28) that operates on the macro level. As a holistic approach, political economy offers a way to understand the
relationships among commodities, institutions, social relations, and hegemony. Thirdly, moral philosophy accounts engage with basic social values such as “justice, equity, and the public good” (Golding & Murdock, 1991, pp. 18–19). That is, the political economic approach does more than merely analyze economic systems; it also accounts for moral and normative issues embedded in that system. The last characteristic is praxis, which refers to the “free and creative human activity by which people produce and change the world and themselves” (p. 37). Thus, as Meehan, Mosco, and Wasko (1994) have noted, studies of political economy do not make a division between studies and social engagement; rather, its practitioners engage in social activism through academic research.

However, despite the aforementioned benefits of the political economy approach, this approach is often criticized for being less sensitive to historical variations in the social relations of cultural production than the cultural industries approach which is seen as being more delicate than the Schiller-McChesney tradition (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 37). Thus, in order to explore the transformation of political entertainment in the Korean social context, I integrate analytic methods into the cultural industries approach, contending, in line with Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 8), that it is useful to study patterns of change/continuity in the cultural industries in terms of the following categories: (1) the overall place of cultural production, including the long-term commodification of culture, (2) the change of ownership and structure of the cultural industries business, (3) the organization of production in terms of the autonomy of the organization and its employees from commercial and state control, (4) the textual changes and the transformation of the format and genre of media texts.

In collecting historical materials, I have drawn mainly on the two largest online archives of Korean newspaper articles (kind.or.kr and newslibrary.naver.com), both of which have
powerful and flexible search engines that allow for obtaining relevant newspaper articles that date back to the 1920s. I have also collected governmental reports and old magazines to gain insight into the social phenomena relating to the media transformation.

**Use of terminology.** Though political entertainment has achieved great popularity, it is still important to categorize its various forms as either satiric, humorous, and/or other forms of entertainment, particularly in regard to programming that is hybridized with political news. Indeed, political entertainment encompasses various genres and formats. For example, Holbert (2005) has categorized political entertainment television programs into nine types outlined according to their respective audiences and content-based queries. The categorization includes traditional satires (*TDS, TCR*), situational comedy satires (*The Simpsons, South Park*), entertainment talk shows that include interviews with politicians (*Larry King Live, Oprah, The Late Show with David Letterman*), fictional political dramas (*The West Wing*), political docudramas (*Amerika*), and even soft news and life-world content.

In considering this language, Compton (2011) has rightly stated that despite their popularity, terms such as news satire, fake news, mock news, late-night comedy, or political comedy are not clear enough to categorize the variety of blended satiric, humorous, and/or other entertainment programs that rely on political information for their content. Baumgartner and Morris (2008) have clarified the difference between late night comedy talk shows (e.g., *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Late Show with David Letterman*) and fake news shows (e.g., *TDS, TCR*, and *Saturday Night Live*). They differentiate news satires such as *TDS* and *TCR* from other late-night political comedies by suggesting that *TDS* and *TCR* use satirical humor that is complex and contributes to audiences’ critical reflection on reality, whereas many other late-
night comedies use simple humor that ultimately undermines the seriousness of the political issues under discussion (e.g., Druick, 2009; Waisenen, 2009; Young & Tisinger, 2006).

The ambiguity contained within the definitions and typologies makes it difficult to consider studies on political entertainment and the politics driving it within a larger framework. The appropriateness of the term fake news is also debatable. Fake news is frequently called *news satire*, which is defined as a type of parody, a device frequently used to mock mainstream news. Some scholars have pointed out that since the advent of journalism, satirical news and traditional news have followed similar trajectories, which implies that satirical news has always co-existed with the original news source.

In this vein, Baym and Jones (2012) have argued that *fake news* is a misnomer, instead preferring to use the term *news parody*. According to them, parody offers a way to critically reflect on “the real,” thus playing an increasingly important discursive function. Accordingly, the term *fake* is considered an inappropriate label for political satire. In general terms, then, scholars are divided regarding whether political entertainment should be considered an alternative to journalism and whether the humor used in these programs constitutes a critical reflection on political affairs. Brewer and Marquart (2007) have also pointed out that the term *fake news* does not reflect the characteristics of mock news, thereby preferring to use the term *mock news*. In line with Brewer and Marquart (2007), I suggest that even though some comedies, particularly late-night shows such as *TDS* and *TCR*, exploit satire, not all political entertainment constitutes critical reflection as generated by satire and/or dissident humor. Therefore, this study employs the broader term of political entertainment which will help to broadly describe satirical/humorous media content combined with information pertaining to political news,
recognizing that terms such as news satire, news parody, and even fake news assume that political entertainment exploits specific devices such as satire, irony, and parody.

Classification of historical periods. In exploring the historical dynamics of the production and circulation of political entertainment in Korea, it is necessary to clarify the criteria by which the historical periods have been mapped. In studying the media, this study pays particular attention to the triangular relationship that exists among the state, the economy, and civil society. After this association was examined by Habermas (1991) in *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, some media scholars (e.g., Calhoun, 1993; Galtung, 1999; Garnham, 1995; Hamelink & Nordenstreng, 2007; Keane, 1998) embraced the relations among the state, market/capital, and civil society in exploring the institutional development of the media.

In the Korean context, the state can be the seen as the most important factor in causing the division of periods. Due to exaggerated political power in Korea, the market has long been under the state’s regulation. Thus, many studies (e.g., Kim, 1994) have classified historical periods within Korean media by looking to political turnovers. Similarly, by identifying six periods—the Experimental, Anchoring, Mobilizing, Repressive, Democratic, and Competition periods—Cho and Park (2011) have analyzed the institutional development of the media in Korea. They have claimed that in its early stages, the government had infrastructural power. However, as the market system solidified, a conflict between the state and the market developed; market power came to supersede political power. Yet commercial power has been occasionally challenged by the rise of civil society after the ’87 movement for democratization. Based on this literature, I classify periods in relation to Korean media history by considering the relationships among the state, market, and civil society (Table 1.2).
Table 1.2. *Division of Historical Periods.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Division of Periods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910 – 1945</td>
<td>Japanese colonial rule</td>
<td>- Foreign-aid economy</td>
<td>- Gyeongsung Radio Station (27)</td>
<td>Beginning period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 - 1948</td>
<td>US military administration</td>
<td>- Foreign-aid economy</td>
<td>- Ordinance No. 19 (’45) &amp; No. 88 (’46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948 – 1960</td>
<td>Lee Syngman regime</td>
<td>- Seven-point press clause (’48)</td>
<td>- Decree No. 11 (’61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 – 1980</td>
<td>Park Chung-hee regime (Military regime)</td>
<td>- Export-driven economy</td>
<td>- Introduction of TV (’63) &amp; Color TV (’80)</td>
<td>Compulsory setting period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 – 1987</td>
<td>Chun Doo-hwan regime (Military regime)</td>
<td>- Export-driven economy</td>
<td>- 1st Press Restructuring (’73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 – 1992</td>
<td>Roh Tae-woo regime (Semi-military regime)</td>
<td>- Corporates(<em>Chaebol</em>)-led economy</td>
<td>- The Basic Press Law (’80)</td>
<td>Democratization &amp; Neo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 – 1997</td>
<td>Kim Young-sam government (First civilian government)</td>
<td>- Globalization</td>
<td>- IMF crisis</td>
<td>liberalization period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 – 2007</td>
<td>Roh Moo-hyun government (Liberal government)</td>
<td>- Neo-liberalism</td>
<td>- Introduction of commercial broadcasting (’91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 – present</td>
<td>Park Keun-hye government</td>
<td>- Revision of Media-related laws (’09)</td>
<td>- Integrated Broadcasting Law (’00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first period, named the “beginning period”, occurs from the time of Japanese colonial rule to the end of the Korean War (from 1927 to 1960). In this period, Korea’s economy was ruined by Japanese exploitation and devastated by the Korean War. Due to the political upheaval and the underdevelopment of economy, press organizations were held under the colonial rule, and their publications were frequently halted by political mandate.

The second period, named the “compulsory setting period,” takes place between 1961 and 1987, concurrently with the two military regimes of Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan. This period can be subdivided into the Park regime and the Chun regime periods, recognizing that the two military regimes put forward somewhat different economic policies. The Chun regime implemented a neo-liberal economic policy, while the Park regime was more protectionist.

I have combined these two regimes, however, considering that they adopted very similar repressive policies. During this time, the foreign-aid economy propelled by the United States’ military administration shifted to an export-led economy at the hands of the Park Chung-hee regime, with the intention of achieving a self-supporting economy. The Park regime pushed ahead initiatives aimed at the industrialization and reconstruction of the business sector, seeking to move into a high-tech-based industry from a light-oriented industry via a heavy-centered industry.

The military regimes enacted suppressive policies in handling the press; meanwhile, they actively promoted the introduction of new technologies under the umbrella of cultural modernization. Television and color television were introduced by the Park and Chun regimes, respectively, as part of this dual process of governmental regulation and promotion of media and
communication technologies. In this manner, electronic devices, semiconductors, and information technologies were vigorously introduced. During this time, the Korean economy was designed as an export-driven economy, a feature that has continued to the present. The Chun’s military regimes actively adopted a neo-liberal economy, and under governmental guidance, unique conglomerates called chaebols rapidly sprung up.

The next period begins in 1987 and ends in 1997 and is marked by the democratization of Korean society. After the pro-democracy movement (hereafter referred to as the ’87 democratization movement), civil society emerged and actively engaged with the Korean media reform movement in two ways: there was a civic movement for media reform, and journalists began protesting for a more democratic media. Furthermore, the strong governmental regulation of media corporations changed with the inauguration of a civilian regime in 1993. The Kim Young-sam government sought to dismantle preexisting strict policies on the basis of the segyehwa plan. The Korean economy made a significant turnover from a state-driven economy to a private sector-led economy with the advent of the 1990s.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic crisis in 1997 triggered the enforced globalization of Korea under IMF regulation. This was, of course, a dramatic change in Korea’s economic structure. Ironically, the Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun governments proposed a globalization plan for the rebuilding of the Korean economy. These two regimes were politically progressive as well. During that time, neo-liberal media policies were implemented as means of strategic globalization. In particular, the introduction of a private broadcasting system and cable television significantly influenced Korea’s media-scape during the mid-1990s.

In this vein, Korean media conglomerates employed several strategies for the concentration of their holdings, including vertical and horizontal integration, mergers and
acquisitions, strategic alliances, and joint investments. All of these contributed to the globalization of their businesses, (Bettig & Hall, 2012, p.15-17). Thus, taken together, the years between 1987 and 2007 can be considered as the period of “democratization and neo-liberalization.”

Lastly, the last period could be considered the expansive competition period. In 2007, a conservative government reappeared, ending a decade of liberal rule. The Lee Myung-bak and present Park Keun-hye regimes have rapidly put forth neo-liberal policies marked by business-friendly innovations and deregulation. A revision of a set of media laws enabled four major newspaper companies to establish comprehensive programming cable networks (CP-CATV). In this way, major conservative newspaper companies entered the television industry. Consequently, the production, distribution, and exhibition of Korea’s media and communication industries have undergone remarkable conversions and diversions. In this political-economic climate, chaebols has played a critical role in shifting the state’s economic model, and accordingly, the Korean media and communication industries have been rapidly globalized and commercialized under the neo-liberal turn in governmental policy.

**Translation and Romanization.** The English-language translations of Korean materials—including newspapers, magazines, and websites—are mine unless otherwise specified. Transliterations from English to Korean here follow the McCune-Reischauer system and have been professionally copy-edited. In cases in which someone has selected another transliteration of his or her own name, or when common usage differs, I have respected the chosen spelling. Korean names are here presented with surname first, except in cases in which an individual chooses, in the romanization of his or her own name, to adopt the Western style of name presentation.
Organization of the Dissertation

The central argument of this study is why and how the historical transformation of Korean political entertainment has occurred and in what specific political, economic, and cultural contexts. To provide answers to the research questions, each chapter comprises three sections, arranged in the following order: (1) the broader political economic conditions of each period, (2) the media environment associated with the broader social conditions, and (3) the dynamic nature of the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment in association with above two. The organization of the dissertation is as follows. In Chapter 1, “Introduction: Political Entertainment on the Rise” I introduce my main research questions and suggest an analytic rubric, sketching the current growing popularity of political entertainment in a broader social context. In particular, highlighting historical variations of political entertainment in given conditions, I illuminate why and how this study pays attention to the historical transformation of political entertainment in the specific context of Korea. This chapter also outlines the research methods employed in the analysis and describes the analytic rubric. The analytic rubric emphasizes how the cultural industry approach within the political economy analysis functions as the best methodology for addressing the given research questions.

Chapter 2, “Origin of Korean Political Entertainment: During the Period of Japanese Colonial Rule” explores the historical roots of Korean political entertainment programming and considers its development in the context of Korean history. Korean political satire has its origin in Mandam [comic talk] of the 1920s, in which two men tell a series of short comic stories. Shin Bul-chul was one of the founders of political comic talk shows in the theatre. In exploring Mandam in politics, I first seek to identify the distinctive characteristics of this old Korean
political satire in regards to form and content; I then discuss how Mandam gained popularity in a specific context. By paying attention to the collaborative relationship among record companies, newspapers, theatrical companies, and radio broadcasting in the colonial context, I show how Mandam was situated at the core of intricate relationships between media and entertainment business. One point to note here is that fewer comic talk shows were produced after the liberation from Japanese domination.

Chapter 3, “Retrogression of Korean Political Entertainment: From the Korean War to the ’87 Democratization Movement,” examines the factors that influenced the black-out period of production and consumption of political entertainment. This chapter also explores how political entertainment was affected by the introduction of television in a broader social context and how this technology transformed Korean political entertainment in association with other comedy programs. During this period, military regimes had dual media policies marked by suppression of newspapers and the promotion of the entertainment industry; accordingly, political satire was under the stringent censorship of the military regime, which hampered the growth of comic critiques of dominant political forces, exemplified by the Aengnusae affair. Considering such dual media policies, I analyze how satiric entertainment was marginalized in broadcasting programming in accordance with introduction of television.

Chapter 4, “The Vicissitudes of Political Entertainment From 1987 to 2007,” analyzes the flows of production and circulation of political entertainment by balancing two factors, business interest and political freedom. Political comedy could not sustain itself until the turnover of political power in 1992 and the democratization movement in 1987. Though the shift to a non-military regime was a peaceful one, political entertainment still failed to develop. Media outlets became commercialized and globalized through the political drive of Saegyehwa, Korea’s
movement toward globalization that was initiated by Kim Young-sam’s government. Comedies and other kinds of entertainment programs began to adopt a global format, and political issues became marginalized in entertainment programming. My approach in this chapter is to explore this phenomenon in historical and political terms.

In Chapter 5, “Contemporary Political Entertainment in the Changing Media Landscape of Korea,” I describe the contemporary rise of political entertainment and map out the diverse forms of contemporary political entertainment within the political economic context of Korea. I also discuss how the production of these programs is associated with entertaining politics in the changing business relationships among media and entertainment companies. The present popularity of Korean political entertainment is triggered by podcast *NaneunGgomSuda (NGS)*, which stemmed from the Internet news satire *Ddanzi Ilbo*, followed by three comprehensive programming cable TV networks (CP-CATV) which were cross-owned by major right-leaning newspaper corporations. It is remarkable that the reason why podcast news satire *NGS* emerged is because the belief that traditional news media were not delivering true accounts of events was widespread (*BBC World News*, 2011). Indeed, according to *The Korea Herald* (2011), the reason for the political entertainment boom may be that the status of the press was downgraded from free to “partly free” in 2011 by Freedom House, which calls for attention to the swiftly-altering structure of contemporary media outlets in association with changes in political economic conditions.

The final chapter summarizes the results and connections among the findings as well as the implications discussed in each chapter. The chapter ends with an acknowledgment of the study’s limitations and subsequent suggestions for future research on political entertainment.
Contributions and Limitations of the Dissertation

Research to date has paid little attention to the political economy of political entertainment, even though the present popularity of political entertainment is led by the commercial interests of the television industry. The imbalance in terms of empirical research and research on the production of critical cultural meaning makes it difficult to demonstrate the connections among these respective research agendas. This dissertation untangles a comprehensive landscape within which political entertainment programming has functioned in the Korean context. The results of the case study itself are not generalizable, yet the historical analysis of the transformation of political entertainment within a specific social context provides insight into how political entertainment has been generated and its history and functioning in specific contexts.

Furthermore, Korean political entertainment is an appropriate case for studying the dynamics of political discourse in the present media landscape given the current rise in the number of political entertainment programs that have become available, along with the rapid development of the news media and communication technologies. It should also be noted that the Korean case could help affect a shift in academic focus from the empirical effects of political entertainment to an interpretative and contextual understanding of the production, distribution, and consumption of political discourses in a broader social and historical context. Through a consideration of previous research on politics and entertainment and the application of scientific and instrumental knowledge, I contribute new information and perspectives to the body of knowledge pertaining to political entertainment. With these advantages, I expect this study to contribute to forging connections among seemingly disparate research agendas in demonstrating the relationship between entertainment and politics.
CHAPTER TWO  
THE ORIGINS OF KOREAN POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT  
DURING THE JAPANESE COLONIAL PERIOD  

Using a historical political economy analysis integrated into a cultural industries approach, this chapter begins to explore the rise and fall of political entertainment in the specific context of the relationship among the state, economy, and civic society associated with Korea’s media landscape. As discussed in previous studies (e.g., Day, 2011), the rise of political entertainment is presently a worldwide phenomenon. This blended form, in which a traditional news outlet style and an entertainment show format are merged, has exploded in terms of popularity. This is particularly so, on contemporary television, which incorporates the real into the mimetic and thereby blurs the boundaries between entertainment and traditional news, satire and polemic, jokes and serious political talks, and meaning and pleasure. This phenomenon gives rise to questions regarding what drives such a boost in political entertainment in specific media environments and how the format provides challenging opportunities to vitalize our democracy in terms of critical reflections of the real. Occupying a space between news and entertainment, these hybrid programs, known as infotainment or news satire, originated in the US media. The hybrid news and entertainment format now attract broad audience attention in many countries. The growing popularity of such blended program is triggered by the US media, particularly The Daily Show (TDS) and The Colbert Report (TCR) on Comedy Central. However, the political entertainment program has existed in many countries as an endemic genre, inasmuch as comedy is situated in social settings and thus generates social and political meaning. Among the subgenres of humor and comedy, satire has a politically significant role as a response by the powerless to political situations. At the same time, there are many reasons for laughter and people differ in this response depending on the time and place in which they are situated. The
diversity of humor and comedy calls for a closer look at the specific context of the political
economy associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of the political
entertainment program, as Baym and Jones (2012) have contended. Though several studies (e.g.,
Sienkiewicz, 2012) have explored the role of specific political entertainment programs in the
specific social context of individual nations, little research has been conducted on Korean
political entertainment. Hence, this chapter begins by asking why there has been little political
entertainment programming in Korea, and why more programming of this kind has been made
since 2012. I pay attention to specific moments that are closely associated with the trajectory of
political entertainment in order to tackle questions pertaining to this genre in both private and
public setting. A historical overview of Korean political entertainment traces back to the 1930s
when Mandam, a unique kind of political satiric talk became popular among ordinary Korean
people. I view Mandam as the origin of Korean political entertainment, and verbal subversion of
the repressive political power by constituting an important and prominent way to criticize
Japanese rule.

Korean Political Economy Before and After Japanese Colonial Rule and the Korean War

The origins of Korea’s political entertainment can be traced back to the 1930s, i.e., to
Korea’s early modern phase. The devastating effects of the 36-year period of Japanese colonial
rule (1910–1945) and of the Korean War (1950–1953) hampered Korea’s independent political
and economic development. Accordingly, Korea was an underdeveloped country until the 1960s.
During the period of Japanese rule, the Korean economy is best described as based on the
exploitation of raw materials and Japanese logistics base. Through a process known as land
investigation, *Toji Josa Saup*, Japan seized public lands, and the Japanese Government-General of Korea (JGGK) owned approximately 40% of the farm and forestlands in Korea. To effectively manage real estates, the JGGK established several limited companies, such as the Tongyang chuksik Ltd (東洋拓殖株式會社), Fuji heungup (不二興業), Katagura (片倉), and Higashiyama (東山). The JGGK also supported the rights of landlords who were mostly Japan-friendly, but imposed heavy taxes, particularly on tenant farmers. The result, predictably, was a profound widening of the economic inequality between the landowners and their tenants. For example, the percentage of tenant farmers stood at 52% in 1935 compared with 36% in 1915, whereas for landlords the figure was 3.6% in 1935 compared with 1.5% in 1915.

Table 2.1. *Japan’s Exploitation of Korea’s Rice Product 1910–1945.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rice product</th>
<th>Export of rice to Japan</th>
<th>Export rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>10,406</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>14,882</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>19,181</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>5,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>15,873</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>9,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>16,717</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>9,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>24,139</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>10,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>14,356</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6,984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In addition, the JGGK initiated a rice product increase plan \textit{(Sanmi Jeungsik Gyehoik)} in order to increase the export of Korea’s rice to Japan, and accordingly Japan maximized its exploitation of Korea’s food supply in this way. In 1910, only 7.4\% of 10,406 rice product was exported to Japan. However, the export rate increased to over 50\% in the period beginning with the Manchurian Incident \textit{(Manju Sabyun)} in 1931 and ending with the Japan-China War in 1937. Also, the export of rice increased steeply, fourteen times over, in 1938 compared with the amount exported in 1910—a fact that clearly illustrates the extent to which Japan exploited Korea as a source of food supply. Further, Japan planned to build up its logistics base in Korea for World War II. Specifically, Japan began to run a mining business in order to collect mineral resources such as iron, tungsten, copper, zinc to make armaments and weapons.

Such a ruined economy was yet recovered immediately. Right after Korea’s independence from Japanese colonialism, the Korean War began in 1950, and Korea’s domestic economy was totally bankrupt. Lee Syngman’s government received economic assistance from the U.S. in order to rebuild its national economy. During the 1950s, the US government provided the Korean government with grant-type aid, primarily for the purpose of growing saccharin, wheat, and cotton as a raw material, which played a critical role in reconstructing Korea’s national economy. The Lee regime initiated a commercial enterprise to make processed goods with these raw materials. Later named \textit{Sambaek} industries, this enterprise comprised three industries manufacturing white-colored raw materials such as cotton, wheat, and saccharine based on the white color of saccharin, wheat, and cotton. In monetary terms, the Lee government received $3.2 billion aid package from the United Nations and the US government in the form of emergency relief goods, raw materials, monetary investments, and loans for industrial facilities during the period from the end of the Korean War in 1953 to 1958 (Cumings, 1984). Due to the
contribution of foreign aid to the economic reconstruction, Korean economy in this period was referred to as the economy of foreign assistance.

From the late 1950s onwards, grant-type aid to Korea gradually decreased, and the US government turned to a policy on international relations corresponding to the changing environment of international politics between socialism and capitalism. The US government needed to cut down its military expenditure, and US conservatives were opposed to any increase in foreign aid. Accordingly, US president Dwight Eisenhowe sought ways to switch from military and grant-type aid to credit assistance.11 The Korean government also called for a new economic plan, in the face of nation’s system competition from North Korea.12 And, the ruling party’s defeat in the 1956 national election forced the Lee Syngman government to initiate a new plan for economic development, the keynote of which was to effect a swift change from the stability of a domestic economy to independent economic development. Consequently, Korea established an export-led economic policy with the announcement of a five-year national plan for export and trade in 1956. The purpose of the export-led economy was to achieve a self-supporting economy. To achieve this, the Korean government pushed ahead on industrialization in order to transition from a light- to a heavy-industry focus. One important way in which the government sought to effect this transition was by strategically selecting companies and providing them with extensive support in the form of generous supplies of raw materials. Due to the uneven distribution of foreign aid, particularly Sambaek (cotton, saccharine, wheat) raw materials, the Korean government set up a system to select companies to receive support,

11 In 1956, the US ambassador, Walter C. Dowling, and the director general for economic policy, William E. Warn, required the Korean government to institute economic reforms and as part of this effort to formulate a specific plan for economic growth (Cha, 2002).
12 Until 1975, North Korea’s GDP per capita ($633) exceeded that of South Korea ($617). According to Statistics Korea (2006), this suggests that North Korea was more industrialized than South Korea until the mid-1970s. However, North Korea’s economy collapsed after the break-up of the socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, East Germany, and other East European countries.
whereas companies seeking to be among those selected bribed governmental officials.

Accordingly, a system of bribery and collusion arose between government and business [Jeong Gyeong Yu Chak, 政經癒着] during this period.

As a result of this collusion, a unique conglomerate, later called Chaebol, came into being in the mid-1950s. For example, Samsung, a global company producing electronic goods, smart phones, and semi-conductors, was among the companies that stood to benefit from this policy. Lee Byung-Chul, a founder of Samsung conglomerate, established several companies including CheilJedang 13 for a sugar and flour business in 1953 and CheilMogic for a textile business in 1954, followed by Sun Kyung textile companies (SK conglomerates, presently) in 1953, Gae Myung textiles (presently Kolon Industries) in 1954, the Samyang Company in 1956, and GeumSung Sa (presently LG Electronics) in 1958, and so forth. The chaebol companies received special favors from the Korean government and began to manufacture electric devices. For example, GeumSung started to domestically manufacture newtrodyne A501 radio sets in 1959, including the first domestic production of the transistor radio set. In this way, the chaebols expanded their business interests to encompass media and technologies. The influence of the chaebols on the rise and fall of political entertainment as well as on the transformation of Korea’s political economy will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

The Media and Communication Environment During The Era of Japanese Colonial Rule.

In terms of the cultural dimension, following the nationwide independence movement 3.1 mansei woondong [3.1 national independence movement], which began on March 1, 1919, the JGGK changed its ruling method from one of repression to the ideological rule called hwangguk-

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13 Had been separated from Samsung conglomerate in 1993, CheilJadang is a mother company of CJ conglomerate running media and entertainment business.
sinminhwa [Japanese Imperialism]. Through this method of rule, the Japanese aimed to cultivate Japan-friendly Koreans and to thereby gain support. The JGGK introduced new technology as well as permitted the publication of national newspapers such as The Chosun Daily, the Donga Daily, and Daehanmaeil Shinbo. Specifically, the Japanese Government began by experimenting with a wireless broadcast in 1925 with an output of 50 watts, and through experimental broadcasting for two and half years, the Gyeongsung radio station began to broadcast on February 16, 1927. The station first went on air with a single channel offering a mix of Japanese- and Korean-language programming. This single channel broadcasting in two languages occasioned complaints from listeners, and this combined with the sluggish reception afforded by radio sets resulted in financial difficulties for the station. Accordingly, to increase radio subscribers, Chosun Broadcasting Association was established on April 7, 1932, and a second channel was launched in 1933. The second channel broadcast all its programs in Korean, whereas the first channel continued in Japanese only and was relayed to Tokyo.

The Gyeongsung station broadcast only in Seoul until 1935 because of the deficiency of the wireless infrastructure and power output. The JGGK initiated a plan for the expansion of the broadcasting infrastructure, and the Yeonhee transmitting station was created in order to increase the power available for broadcasting output. Through this initiative, the available power output increased to 10 k. Consequently, by the end of WWII, the nationwide broadcasting network grew from the first local radio station established in Busan in 1935 to cover sixteen major Korean cities. The radio programs consisted of three types: news, education, and entertainment from the beginning of the aircast in 1927, which continued until the late 1930s. A significant change

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14 The Gyeongsung radio broadcasting station relied entirely on subscription fees at this time.
15 In total, sixteen local broadcasting stations, Busan, Pyeongyang, Chungjin, Irie (now known as Iksan), Hamheung, Daegu, Gwangju, Daejeon, Wonsan, Haeju, Shinjuju, Mokpo, Masan, Choonchun, Seongjin, Gangneung, and Chungju were established in order from 1935 to 1945.
regarding radio programming broadcast took place after the 1939 Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War (1937–1942). Around this time, radio broadcasting revoked entertainment programs in order to disseminate propaganda instead. Only news programs continued during this period, until radio broadcasts stopped for a period beginning in 1942. After the national liberation, the US military administration picked up the radio stations on September 15, 1945, for its publicity activities. The Gyeongsung Broadcasting Station changed its name to the Seoul Central Broadcasting station, and a new call sign, HLKA, was allocated in September 1947 instead of the previous regional Japanese sign JODK. The Christian Broadcasting Station (CBS), the first private radio broadcasting corporation opened with 840 kHz 5kw output, in December 1954, a year after the Korean War, followed by the Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC) with 900 kHz 5kw output in 1961, the Donga Broadcasting Station (DBS) with 1,230 kHz 10kw output in 1963, and the Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC) 640 kHz 20kw output in 1964. Though radio broadcasting began in the late 1920s, popular culture was led by the gramophone and record industry. In particular, Minyo, Jaedam and Mandam were the most popular genres in those days, as discussed in detail below. The gramophone and record business were big business in the 1930s, led by six large record companies, which took the lead in commercializing the entertainment interlocked with media.

As for the periodicals, before the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, several independent newspapers such as Maeil Shinmoon, Dijyekook Shinmoon, Hwangseong Shinmoon, and Daehanmaeil Shinbo were published (Jeong, J. S., 2013). Dijyekook Shinmoon, which aimed to reach the majority of Koreans, was published in Hangeul [Korean alphabet] and continued to publish, 3,240 issues in total, until August, 1910. Hwangseong shinmoon, which aimed for

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16 For this reason, some scholars have insisted that the history of Korean broadcasting begins in 1947.
17 It was named Radio Seoul with 1,380 kHz 20kw output when established in 1964.
upper-middle class subscribers, was published in Hanja [Chinese character] mixed with Hangeul and ceased to publish on September 15, 1910, immediately after the beginning of Japanese colonial rule. *Daehanmaeil Shinbo* was founded by British journalist Ernest Thomas Bethell, a *London Daily News* correspondent. This newspaper was published in the pure Korean language, a mixed style of Korean and Chinese, and in English. Interestingly, *Daehanmaeil* was relatively free the control of the Japanese government, as the publisher was a British journalist protected by extraterritoriality. This status meant that the newspaper was able to criticize Japan’s brutality toward Korea without restriction.\(^\text{18}\) However, British newspaper owner Alfred Weekley Marnham made a secret contract with the Japanese Residency-General (JRG) after Bethell’s death. As a result of the contract, the JRG took over the ownership of *Daehanmaeil* on May 21, 1910, and the Japanese government effectively exploited the newspaper for the purpose of propaganda for the next 35 years (Jeong, J. S., 2013).

In the 1920s, as Japanese colonial rule changed to cultural rule, the JGGK allowed the Korean press to publish several newspapers. Three press companies, Chosun, Joongang, and Sisa were allowed to publish beginning in January 1920, and these became and remained the three largest private newspaper companies until 1940 when Chosun and Donga was forced to stop publishing by the JGGK. Of the three newspapers published, *Sisa*, which had undergone several name changes (*Joongoi, Chosungjoongang, and Joongang*) ceased publishing in November 1937. Although the Japanese government apparently claimed to support Korean culture and tradition, it exercised strong censorship control. For example, The *Chosun Daily* was forced to cease publishing 4 times, and on 500 occasions the JGGK seized the company’s assets. *The Donga*

\(^{18}\) The Japanese government attempted to stop *Daehanmaeil* from publishing on numerous occasions. Further, the Japanese government filed a suit against the British government in a bid to prevent the newspaper from being published. Despite several legal actions of this nature, the Japanese government failed to stop the publication of *Daehanmaeil*. 

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Daily was also suspended 4 times by the JGGK, and on 63 occasions sales of the newspaper were prohibited. Further, during the course of the newspaper’s history, the Japanese government ordered 2,400 articles to be withdrawn (Jeong, 1983).

After Korea become independent from Japan, the country’s media industry came under the control of the US Army’s regulations. The U.S. military administration enforced Ordinance 19 thus changing the license system to a registration system, which resulted in a rise in the number of newspapers being published. The periodicals were flooded with 274 press organizations, which in September 1946 included 57 daily newspapers, 49 weekly magazines, and 154 monthly or bimonthly magazines. Despite the increase in press freedom immediately after Korea’s liberation from Japan, the jumbling of the many press organizations brought with it slander and even physical violence. Further, the press organizations were split into left-leaning and right-leaning, and their major purpose was to propagandize for their respective ideologies. Thus, the US military administration revoked Ordinance 11, and applied Ordinance 88, which aimed to return the press system to a permit-basis by May 1946 (Hahn, 1978).

In regard to radio broadcasting, the JGGK also strongly censored the content of Korean broadcasting in the second channel (Korea Broadcasting Systme, 1971). Efforts to formally control the broadcasting industry began with the Thought Control Law enacted in 1933. The purpose of this Law was to strongly regulate any content presenting any views opposing Japanese policy. Specifically, this law (Clauses 10 and 11) regulated press articles and opinion. The law (Clause 16) also justified the establishment of a new censorship institute focused on the electronic content distributed by radio broadcasting, movie, and other expressive media were considered as having a significant influences on society (Donga Daily, Sept. 1933). According to this law, radio censorship began in earnest on April 1, 1934, with the establishment of a
censorship task force in the Japanese Police Administration of Korea’s (JPAK) Division of National Security (*Donga Daily*, March 1934). This task force consisted of four experts who regulated the content domestically distributed from any electronic devices and checked the infiltration and spread of electronic content from outside Korea of an anti-Japanese and anti-Communist nature. This high level of censorship continued with the US military administration, which needed to disseminate propaganda about the legitimacy of the US Army’s place in Korea after the country’s independence from Japan (Im, 2004, pp. 376–377). Thus, until the end of Korean War, radio entertainment was not well developed.

In sum, the period of Japanese cultural rule from 1920 to 1940 saw censorship of the press and a growth in entertainment. The press was allowed to exist provided it served the purpose of the Japanese ideological rule. Therefore, the general public did not receive reliable information about the Japanese government. In such a restrictive communication environment, the production of hybrid information-entertainment forms played an important role in sharing social information as well as expressing political opinions. In particular, as I will discuss in detail, *Mandam* was the distinctive form of blending political information and entertainment during the period of Japanese colonial rule. However, I also consider the media environment of the time, which enabled the production of such blended entertainment programs, assuming that the production of such content was assuredly led by a business sector. Indeed, there was an intriguing relationship among the theater business, record industry, radio broadcasting, and newspaper companies. It is notable that this relationship among the media and communication industries grew up for economic reasons, which suggests that initial hybrid entertainment programming owed its existence to a profit-driven motive. In order to consider these
relationships, it is necessary to trace the origins of Korean political entertainment back to the era of Japanese colonial rule in the 1930s.

Origins of Korea’s Political Entertainment

*Mandam* as the origin of Korean political entertainment. The historical roots of Korea’s political humor can be found in *Mandam*, a kind of musical talk in the theatre of the mid-1920s to 1940s. Let us begin with a snapshot of a gramophone store in Jongno, Seoul, in the 1930s where civilians would gather to laugh and clap their hands as the most popular *Mandam*, “Ilksalmajeun Daemeori” [The Facetious Bald-Headed Fellow], was played.\(^{19}\) Though it is known that the *Mandam* form would be played during the intermissions of musical plays in the late 1920s, whether it has origins in other forums is unclear. Ban (2000, p. 14) noted that some professional actors performed during intermissions in 1927, which suggests that *Mandam* began before this year in some way or another.

Further, the *Mandam* form was frequently combined with related forms such as *Jaedam* [sketch], farce, and *huigageuk* [comic opera] in that *Jaedam* and *huigageuk* were commonplace in clown performance in the traveling theater. However, these forms are clearly distinguished from *Mandam*. According to the Korean Standard Unabridged Dictionary,\(^ {20}\) *Jaedam* is a kind of comic talk between more than two people who question and respond to each other, which is similar to a gag in English, whereas *Mandam* refers to satire whereby a person criticizes current affairs and human behavior. Thus, *Jaedam* has a broad meaning, whereas *Mandam* challenges specific social conditions. That is, although scholars offer various definitions, *Mandam* refers to satiric storytelling that relies on lampooning given social conditions, political power, and other

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microphysical powers. Shin Bool-Chool, the most popular Mandam storyteller, offered this definition of Mandam in a monthly magazine of the day:

*Mandam* is not a lecture, nor public speech. It is different from Jaedam, and even different from a joke. Mandam is characterized as the use of humor in verbal interactions and the liberal use of irony. That is, Mandam is the art of speech…. Now that speech per se is imperfect, it is very hard to speak Mandam. In fact, there is nothing more difficult than to speak Mandam. No matter how masterful a person is at manipulating a crowd, it is a pretty Herculean task to entertain audiences for a long time with only funny words…. In my opinion, fun is a prerequisite for Mandam, we do not necessarily enumerate several wonderful euphuistic words to make a good Mandam. Rather, a sarcastic, cutting remark based on truth is necessary.

*Samcheolli Monthly Magazine* (June 1935, p. 105)

This article is the first known document in which detailed remarks on Mandam are given. In this contribution, Shin Bool-chool described Mandam as an “art of speech” wherein sarcastic remarks and devices as irony are combined with a funny story in order to produce a commentary that is entertaining and that gets at some “truth.” In fact, Shin Bool-chool’s definition is very close to the definition of satire. According to Kim (2004, p. 157), Bool-chool offers three aspects in his definition of Mandam. Firstly, Bool-chool notes that Mandam should offer satiric and educational content about a societal phenomenon. Secondly, he distinguishes Mandam from Jaedam and other kinds of comedic devices by stating that Jaedam has the sole function of evoking laughter, whereas the function of Mandam is rhetorical subversion. In fact, Shin Bool-chool performed with the famous Jaedam storyteller Park Chun-jae, who was the most popular entertainer prior to the advent of Mandam as performed by Shin Bool-chool. Although Park Chun-jae and other famous Jaedam storytellers, such as Park Chun-bok and Lee Eun-gwan, attracted large audiences using comedic devices, Jaedam was not suitable for talking in a modern comic way. Due to Jaedam’s limitation in this regard, Bool-chool based his work on the Mandam form, which enabled eloquent speakers to tell a variety of funny, satiric stories in a
flexible way. Thirdly, by distinguishing Mandam from some forms of foreign comedic talk, particularly from the Japanese comic talk called Daesibsarang, Shin Book-chool highlights Mandam as a Korean form that could contribute to Koreans’ national consciousness and thus to the nation’s liberation from Japan. Therefore, Bool-chool argues that, among various types of verbal expressions such as lectures, orations, Jaedam, yadam [unofficial historical tale], and Mandam, oratory and Mandam are the most effective methods of attracting public attention. Further, verbal expression could be perfect when the advantages of oratory and Mandam are combined (Ban, 2000, pp. 65–67).

**Business relationships among media corporations associated with Mandam.** More importantly, Mandam was at the center of intricate relationships among the music industry, the theater, and the press, i.e., between popular culture and freedom of speech. Therefore, I review the ways in which Mandam was structurally associated with these three industries. As noted, Mandam began as an interlude for musical plays at Chuiseongjwa, a traveling theater troup that existed in between 1918 and 1929, which was the epoch-making attempt for the traditional theatricals. In the late 1920s, many traditional theater companies experienced increasing financial troubles as the size of their audience diminished. Most classical theaters were finding it difficult to attract sufficient writers due to Japanese regulations governing cultural products. In addition, although theatrical performance was very important to Korean pop-culture during the era of Japanese colonial rule, the theatres were generally operated with limited finances. Hence, many theater companies reduced actors’ wages and favored performing foreign work over creating new pieces. According to Bool-chool, the result was an overly commercial business in which theaters engaged in a mad scramble to attract the most popular actors and in which the relationship between the theaters and the actors more generally became troubled (*Donga Daily,*)
It was in this context that the theater companies introduced Mandam as a strategic way of diversifying their repertoires in order to attract a larger audience. As this form succeeded in quickly attracting an audience, it ceased to function as an interlude. Instead, Mandam became an independent play separated from the original play, such that modern Korean comedic theatrical performances took on one of two forms; any given performance was either a Mandam or a traditional drama. Given that great stress was laid on the importance of verbal technique for the Mandam, whereas visual performance emphasized movement over verbal dexterity, this subdivision influenced the transformation of the comedic genre with the introduction of radio and television, as discussed in following chapters.

In another vein, modern Korean pop culture was led by traditional ballad music called Taryeong, which became popular and vitalized the record industry in 1930s. This form is particularly important in discussing the early stages of Korean political entertainment in that two different cultural industries encountered on the border. For a deeper understanding of the music industry of the early 1900s, it is necessary to begin with the introduction of the gramophone to Korea. According to Dokrib Sinnamon on April 22, 1899, the gramophone was first introduced when a governmental officers’ banquet was given to recognize this invention. However, it was not until 1907, eight years later, that the first standard playing (henceforth, referred to as SP) disk, a recording of a master singer, Han In-Ho and a gisaeng22 Choi Hong-mae, was released by

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21 Shin Bool-chool wrote three articles entitled “Talking about the Real Circumstances of Theater Companies” for the Donga Daily newspaper. In these articles, Shin Bool-chool highlighted three major issues on the system of theater management: (1) the reduced wages of actors, (2) the absence of scenario development, and (3) the excessive commercialization of theater companies. Of these factors, Bool-Chool held that the excessive commercialization of theater companies was contributing to the breakdown of the relationship between actors and business owners. He criticized business owners for their tendency to blame actors for the worsening relations He pointed out that well-written scenarios are prerequisites for a quality performance, and that well-written pieces would both deserve and command audience attention (Donga Daily, Aug. 1932). Later, Bool-chool suggested a detailed remedy for establishing a new theater system. In brief, his suggestion focused on a division of labor. He proposed creating a writers’ pool, and outsourcing scenario work by paying the writers sufficient royalties (Chosun Daily, Jan. 1933). 22 The term refers to a Korean geisha.
Columbia record company. The early stage of the record industry was dominated by two large US recording corporations, Columbia and Victor, from 1907 to 1911. However, with the beginning of Japanese colonial rule in 1910, Japanese gramophone companies began selling records in Korea and the record industry experienced dramatic growth due to the change in recording method from acoustic to electronic in 1926. Accordingly, the record industry had its heyday from the mid-1920s until the early 1940s when the Japanese government adopted an ideological ruling method in order to obliterate Korean culture (Bae, 1989, pp. 278–282).

The 1930s was a golden era for the record industry. At this time, four record companies, i.e., Polydor, Chieron, Taepyeong, and Okeh entered the market, which was dominated by two big companies, Victor and Columbia.\(^\text{23}\) The result was a marketplace characterized by intense rivalry among big six record corporations. No authoritative evidence of record sales during this period is available. However, magazine articles suggest who was popular at the time:

> It is an old story that there was competition only between Victor and Columbia in the record market. To date, approximately fifty new records are being newly released at more than three hundred gramophone stores every month, and at least one or two thousand records were sold per each. The price is varied from 1 won 50 (Victor, Columbia, Polydor) jeon to 1 won (Chieron, Taepyeong, and Okeh).
>
> (Samcheolli Monthly Magazine, December 1933)

Monthly living expenses for a family of six were 150 won, and an 8 kilogram rice pack was about 4 won (Donga Daily, 1927, as quoted in Lee 2012). It could be estimated, therefore, that in current monetary terms the value of the record market was somewhere in the range of $108 million to $405 million. Also, the six major record companies competed with each other such that the price of records fell to as low as 50 jeon.

\(^{23}\) Polydor was a joint-investment company of Germany and Japan, and Chieron was a Japanese company that produced Korean records. Taepyeong and Okeh were Korean record corporations (Samcheolli, 1933).
Gyeongsung broadcasting station (JODK), the first radio broadcasting station in Korea was established by the Japanese Government General of Korea (JGGK) with 690 KHz, 1,000 watt output in 1927. However, the initial role of radio broadcasting was limited to disseminating propaganda in support of the JGGK.\textsuperscript{24,25,26} In addition, radio sets had found their way into very few households such that the target audience was restricted to Japanese governors and their families and to Korean governmental officers to an extent. In 1927, the number of radio subscribers stood at only 1,115 (212 of these were Korean)—a number that would not reach 20,000 until 1933 (Lee, 2012, pp. 6–7). Although radio broadcasting had offered full Korean-language programming since 1933 when the Chosun Broadcasting Association (CBA) established the second radio broadcasting station, radio did not become popular until the late 1950s (Korea Broadcasting Association, 1997).\textsuperscript{27}

For these reasons, radio broadcasting did not have substantial influence on the Korean pop culture of the day. Nonetheless, the initial radio broadcasts were critical in that radio was introduced as a Western cultural product through Japan, which implied that an intricate relationship among Japan and other Western powers was reflected on radio (Lee, 2012).\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, the introduction of radio broadcasting exemplified the influx of Western culture and products in

\textsuperscript{24} At the beginning of radio broadcasting, only one channel was used to broadcast in Korean and Japanese by turns. Broadcasting in Korean was below 33% of total broadcasting. However, by 1933, broadcasting in Korean had grown by two thirds.

\textsuperscript{25} Indeed, the Japanese Government-General of Korea utilized radio broadcasting to mobilize what it called “national spiritual mobilization” to propagandize Japanese imperialism during the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War between 1937 and 1942. However, as Lee (2012) observed, it should be noted that the JODK broadcast three types of programs (\textit{bodo} [news], \textit{wijan} [entertainment], and \textit{gyoyang} [instructional]) and that there were also experimental attempts to produce other kinds of programs.

\textsuperscript{26} A principal ostensible goal of radio broadcasting was to cultivate Korean culture and promote Koreans’ welfare. However, the use of JODK directly shows that the actual aim of broadcasting was to propagandize for Japanese colonial policies, because the JODK was a call sign allocated to the Japanese region (Lee, 2011).

\textsuperscript{27} However, the Japanese Governor-General of Korea closed the channel that provided programming entirely in the Korean language in 1942, during the Second World War.

\textsuperscript{28} Korea was not slow to introduce radio broadcasting in Korea given that regular radio broadcasting (KDKA) was first established in the US in 1920, followed by England and France in 1922, and Japan in 1925.
the 1920s and the 1930s. Drinking coffee was no longer an unfamiliar sight to Korean people, and the gramophone became the most popular item in the hope chest.

Furthermore, a specific cooperative relationship developed among the press, broadcasting, and record industries. In particular, I consider the role of newspaper organizations in connecting the broadcasting and record industries to an audience. As discussed, Korea’s economy was marked by Japan’s exploitation of resources and infrastructure during the period of Japanese colonial rule. At the same time, however, as Japanese companies began to establish branch companies in Korea in order to develop a new market, capitalism was penetrating most business areas and thus leading their rapid commercialization. In the same way, the press organizations were also in the process of commercializing.

There were three main paths to commercialization: (1) advertising and sponsorship, (2) subscription fees, and (3) the sale of news content. Among these, subscription fees did not contribute very much to the revenue of newspaper corporations due to the small number of subscribers. However, advertising was a major source of revenue, accounting for about 45% of the total revenue of the *Donga Daily* in 1935.²⁹ Record companies became one of the major advertisers for newspaper companies, as the record industry expanded significantly in the 1930s. Furthermore, the newspaper corporations made a profit in an indirect way by monopolizing the distribution channels for cultural information. Specifically, the press organizations made a connection between advertising and news content. For example, they provided promotional tickets for cultural affairs such as records, theatrical performances, movies, and other cultural festivals, as well as offering commentaries, editorials, and promotional articles on these. Civilians had little access to cultural information other than from newspapers; therefore, the newspaper organizations essentially controlled information through an oligopolization of the

²⁹ The monthly newspaper subscription fee was 1 won (approximately 10 dollar in current value) in the 1930s.
distribution of cultural information. Thus, it is evident that cooperative relations among media and entertainment corporations had already begun (Lee, 2012, p. 57).

Figure 2.1. Mandam albums made by the major record companies.

As noted, subscription fees did not constitute a main source of revenue for the newspaper companies. Therefore, newspaper companies sought ways to increase their subscriber base as
another way to increase revenue. For those reasons, newspaper companies showed a strong interest in utilizing Mandam for the purpose of increasing subscriptions. Four of the newspapers with the largest circulation, the Donga Daily, Chosun, Chosun Joongang, and Maeil Shinbo, were in competition to enter into a cooperative relationship with the Mandam storyteller, Shin Bool-chool.

The news companies all pursued several marketing strategies in this effort such as providing advertisements for the theater companies and offering special discount passes to the theater to the newspaper subscribers. In particular, there was keen competition among the newspaper companies to secure a contract with Shin Bool-chool because of his popularity. Given that the Chosun Daily provided a number of promotional articles, it could be inferred that this newspaper succeeded in securing such a contract (Ban, 2000, pp. 70-79). Shin Bool-chool’s popularity as a Mandam performer was at its peak from 1934 to 1940, a period during which he gave a total of 73 performances. Overall, most of the content offered in newspapers was not satirical in nature; however, newspapers utilized Mandam as a way to increase the number of subscriptions.

It can be estimated that at least 500 and as many as 3,000 people went to every performance based on several news articles reporting that Mandam performances were doing a roaring business (Chosun Daily, 1933). According to the Donga Daily (1939), the form drew 500 people who rewarded the actors with fits of laughter. However, Chosun Joongang (1936) reported that more than 3,000 people attended every evening performance. It is remarkable that such a large number of people attended Mandam performances, given the relatively high ticket price of 50 jeon, which compares with 10 jeon for a movie ticket and 30 jeon for a baseball ticket. The estimated revenue from Bool-chool’s Mandam concerts was more than $1.5 million.
annually based on an average of twelve concerts per year with 1,500 tickets sold for each. On this basis, *Mandam* concerts were overwhelmingly popular and highly commercialized.

Furthermore, it is necessary to take a closer look at the fact that *Mandam* concerts were not held by the storytellers, but by a regional instrument store or gramophone store that monopolized sales of the SP records, or in many cases, advertisers sponsored these concerts. The *Chosun Daily* (March 1934 as quoted in Ban, 2000, p. 107) reported that a branch office of the newspaper issued complimentary tickets and a local gramophone store provided discount passes in order to promote record sales. It is noteworthy, too, that in order to promote for their own sales gramophone stores made connections with the newspapers, which is evidence that *Mandam* records were among their top sellers. Further, it is evident that the record business was deeply implicated in the commercialization of *Mandam*.

In order to consider the relationship between the newspapers and the record industry more closely, I reviewed advertisements for *Mandam* published in the 1930s. As noted, six major companies oligopolized the record industry in the 1920s and 1930s. At first, these companies dealt in several kinds of music commodities such as *Taryeong* [traditional ballad song], *pansori* [traditional dramatic song], and *Minyo* [Korean folk song], and gradually expanded their business area to *Gayo* [Korean popular song] and musical skits. The record companies began to enter into exclusive agreements with popular musical actors. Accordingly, a number of actors and actresses, including Kang Seok-yeon, Kim Yeon-sil, Lee Kyung-seol, Shin Carnaria, Seok Geum-seong, Nah Poom-sim, Yoon Baek-dan, Seong Gwang-hyun, Kim Jin-moon, Wang Pyeong, Lee Jong-chul, and Seok Wa-bool, made *Mandam* records.³⁰

³⁰ Very little is known about the handful of artists who pursued *Mandam* storytelling as a career. For example, Yoon Baek-Nam cut a record entitled “Saseol Bangsonggook” [Private Broadcasting] with Lee Aejisoo and Kang Seok-Yeon at Victor record company (Ban, 2000, pp. 267–268).
Table 2.2. *Promotional Articles on Mandam Performances in Two Major Newspapers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chosun Daily</th>
<th>Donga Daily</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Shin Bool-chool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>- Shin Bool-chool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1936 | 9(1)         | 2           | - Shin Bool-chool, Hwang Jae-kyung
- A joint-Concert entitled “Samguijae” planned by Chosun Joongang daily in January was included |
| 1937 | 19           | 6           | - Shin Bool-chool, Kim Yoon-sim |
| 1938 | 17           | 4           | - Chosun: Shin Bool-chool
- Donga: Lee So-bool |
| 1939 | 8            | 2           | - Chosun: Shin Bool-chool (traveled with provincial performances), Son Il-pyeong and Kim Won-ho
- Donga: Lee So-bool, Seo Da-chool |
| 1940 | 4            | 3           | - Chosun: Shin Bool-chool,
- Donga: Seo Da-chool |
| Total | 81         | 17         |      |

Source: Chosun Daily (1934 – 1940) and Donga Daily (1937 – 1940).

It is worth noting that these madam storytellers were traditional singers who only later became *Mandam* storytellers. Many singers and actors were invited to be guest performers at *Mandam* concerts, which were planned toward a composite art. Shin Bool-Chool traveled for *Mandam* concerts accompanied by traditional singers and actors such as Shin Il-Seon, Yoon Baek-Dan, whose songs were very popular (Ban, 2000, p. 76).[^31]

The enormous popularity of *Mandam* records was engineered by the record companies, which expected albums consisting of *Mandam*, skits, and/or other songs would bring sales. Columbia advertised a special release of a compilation record that included *Mandam*, the first of its kind, in July 1932. But, these kinds of albums did not bring big hits until the following year.

[^31]: Among these entertainers, Shin Il-Seon was the most popular actress. She made her debut at the age of 16 and recorded a dozen songs with the Okeh record company (Ban, 2000, p. 78).
when Shin Bool-chool cut the first *Mandam* record entitled “Ilksalmajeun Daemeori” [Facetious Bald-Headed Fellow]. Okeh was a mid-size record company that released Shin’s album with an advertisement in February 1933. There is no document stating when Okeh released Bool-chool’s *Ilksalmajeun Daemeori*, but it is assumed that the record was released in February 1933. The advertisement states that the album exceeded 20,000 sales during its first two weeks of sales (*Chosun Daily*, Feb, 1933). In the same period, record market was dominated by two companies, which conferred and agreed on a selling price of 2 won per record.\(^\text{32}\)

Also, as noted, these companies oligopolized the record business by signing twenty-five singers and *Mandam* storytellers to exclusive contracts. The exclusive contracts were accompanied by the increase of market competition among these companies. Among these corporations, Taepyeong and Okeh, the newer market entrants as small startups, established with Korean capital, began to try out new sales strategies. In particular, Okeh successfully applied a strategy of a low-unit margin of profit in order to increase the company’s market share.\(^\text{33}\) Shin Boo-chool’s *Mandam* album broke the record for sales during a short period and contributed greatly to Okeh’s new financial success. Accordingly, Okeh signed five of the most popular singers and storytellers to exclusive contracts (Table 2.3).

It should be noted that usually 5,000 copies (which is equivalent to approximately 100,000 copies today) of each album used to be produced, which accounts for passing the break-even point (Cho, 1933). In comparison, at least 400,000 copies of *Ilksalmajeun Daemeori* were sold in today’s terms. Uhm (2005, p. 28) estimated that this record in today’s terms could have

\(^{32}\) Records with a blue label (Columbia) and those with a red label (Victor) were priced at 2 won, whereas those with a black label commanded the bargain price of 1 won 50 jeon in the early 1930s (Cho, 1989).

\(^{33}\) The Okeh record company was established by Lee Chul who managed the Seoul office of the Japanese gramophone store with the assistance of his wife, Hyun Song-Ja, who had a social network of Japanese friends. Okeh began as a very small company, with Lee Chul pulling a handcart in order to offer his records for sale (Park, 2009). After the dramatic success of Shin Bool-Chool’s album, Lee adopted diverse strategies to make a profit, including seeking out popular singers, arranging overseas concert tours by putting together a team of people exclusively affiliated with his company (Kim, 2014).
sold as many as one million copies taking the distribution of the gramophone at the time into consideration. In addition, an advertisement for Iksalmajeun Daemeori by the Chieron record company was published in the *Donga Daily* on February 2, 1933, according to which the album exceeded sales of 30,000. From this statistic, it could be inferred that Bool-chool may not have signed an exclusive contract with Okeh and/or that Chieron may have bought the copyright from Okeh. In any case, this Iksalmajeun Daemeori became the first album to reach 30,000 in sales, which converts to $18 to $22.5 million in today.

Table 2.3. *List of Artists Signed to the Major Record Companies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record Company</th>
<th>Number of Exclusive contracts</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lee Aerisu, Kang Seok-yeon, Choi Nam-yong, Cheon Ok, Kang Hong-sik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chae Gyu-yup, Kim Sun-cho, Im Heon-ik, Kim Seon-young, Choi Myeong-ju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polydor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wang Soo-bok, Wang Pyeong, Kim Yong-hwan, Shin Il-seon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chieron</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kim Yeon-sil, Nah Seon-gyo, Kim Yong-hwan, Choi Hyang-hwa, Namgoong Seon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taepyong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lee Nan-young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okeh</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shin Bool-chool, Cheon Choon-woo, Shin Eun-bong, Seo Sang-seok, Baek Hwa-seong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Samcheolli, Monthly Magazine* (December, 1933).

As Okeh achieved great success with its price-cutting strategy, Columbia began to produce cheap SP records called Regal at 80 jeon, which triggered a price-cutting war among the record companies. Okeh lowered its price to 50 jeon. This price-cutting strategy was possible

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34 The distribution of gramophones had reached approximately 30,000 in 1935.
35 It is remarkable that an advertisement for Iksalmajeun Daemeori appeared in the *Donga Daily* and another in the *Chosun Daily* on the same day, February 2, 1933. However, the advertisements differ in regard to the figures given for the record’s sales. No study has examined which is the correct figure, although several studies have noted that the first advertisement was in the *Chosun Daily*. 

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because Okeh had already passed the break-even point and because Mandam recordings were generally no more expensive to produce than other records were. That is, Mandam was the genre that contributed the most to the record companies’ profits.

(a) Advertisement of Iksalmajeun Daemeori made in Chieron Record

(b) Advertisement of Iksalmajeun Daemeori made in Okeh Record

Figure 2.2. Advertisement for Iksalmajeun Daemeori (on left: Chosun).

In another vein, Mandam was associated with the cooperative relationship between radio broadcasting and the record industry in the 1930s, although radio broadcasting was not yet popular at this time. As noted, although radio broadcasting was established to disseminate propaganda for Korea’s Japanese government, it was also a new technological vehicle for Korean audiences to experience Western modern culture. Specifically, Korean-language broadcasts began in 1933, and radio broadcasting was gradually systematized by programing three types of content: news, education, and entertainment. Among these three kinds of programs, entertainment rapidly became popular with Korean audiences. The most popular programs were

36 Donga Daily, Feb, 2, 1933
37 Chosun Daily, Feb, 21, 1933
music and radio drama, but there were also several comedic program types on air, such as sketch, farce, (radio) nonsense, and (radio) comedy on the Gyeongsung broadcasting station’s schedule from 1933 to 1938 (Seo, 2007). Among several entertainment programs, it is noteworthy that the radio broadcasts used Mandam with stars such as Shin Bool-chool, Yoon Baek-Nam, Yoo Chu-Gang, and Shin Jeong-Uhn (Bae, 2000, pp. 129–130).

Furthermore, the Gyeongsung broadcasting station created an exclusive theater troupe named mansojwa (漫笑座) for radio programming. As the broadcasting station managed the performance teams, many comedians entered the broadcasting market and became stars. Also, radio broadcasting held a number of Mandam festivals, some of which were sponsored by newspaper companies. Accordingly, a number of Mandam concerts entitled real performance tonight with broadcasting artists began in between 1937–1942. For example, promotional articles in the Chosun Daily show that the newspaper supported Mandam concerts by offering discounted tickets and promotional articles, while radio station broadcast the performance in real time.

**Mandam as a political entertainment text.** As the Mandam form grew in popularity, the Japanese Governor-General of Korea (JGGK) began to censor the production of records in June 1933 in the name of regulating immoral behavior and maintaining public order. Eighty-nine recordings were prohibited from sale between 1933 and 1934, 44 for breach of public order and 45 for promoting immoral behavior. However, most of the records prohibited from sale focused on content that might promote resistance to Japanese colonial rule (Ban, 2000, p. 201). Indeed, Seoul Sagye [Four Seasons in Seoul] and Arirang were prohibited on the pretext of breach of

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38 *Maeil Shinbo* reported that 43 records were subject to Japanese regulations in 1934. Among them, 24 were banned because of the breach of public order and 19 were prohibited in the name of public morals. Eleven romantic songs, six new minyo, and three Mandam were included in the list (*Maeil Shinbo*, January 11, 1934).
Several Mandam records starring Shin Bool-chool were included among the prohibited albums. For example, Seoul Gugyeong [A Sightseeing Trip to Seoul], Yuhaeng Sogok Janghanga [A short piece from a popular song called “Everlasting Regret’], and Nonsense Byeokchangho [Nonsense Tight-Ass] were prohibited for sales under the guise of breach of public order.40

Given that such harsh institutional censorship was meted out for Mandam content, it could be estimated that Mandam played a critical role in forming public opinion at that time. According to Kim (2004), Mandam had two distinctive functions: the role of mass education and the role of critical reflection on daily life. Also, Ban (2000, pp. 190–191) noted that it was small wonder that Mandam records were regulated by the Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s because the various satiric allegories in Mandam were designed to express very topical political opinions. In 1940, Shin Bool-chool went on performance tours with Lee Eun-Gwan, Kim Yoon-Sim, and Park Chun-Bok. The performance comprised an opening performance called baebaengi gut, a pre-performance, and a fifty-minute main Mandam performance starring Shin Bool-chool.

There were three types of Mandam: dokMandam [Mandam monologue], Minyo-Mandam [Mandam song], and daehwa Mandam [Mandam conversation] (Jeon, 2005). Of these forms, monologue and conversation Mandam were more suited to rhetorical criticism than was Minyo Mandam, which had been developed in the 1950s as a popular form of song that eliminated verbal expressions. However, as a specific form of Mandam, manyo [comic song] reflected popular culture, modern family life, the advent of the modern boy and girl, and ordinary daily lives, even though it was a comic form produced for the purpose of entertainment.41 That is, it

39 Chosun Daily (Sept. 14, 1933).
40 Samcheolli (April 1936).
41 Manyo, regarded as a part of Mandam, was inserted in the popular Mandam records, or sometimes produced as an independent album. A number of manyo such as “Tearful Doooman River” and “Cosmorama,” sung by Kim Jeong-
could be said that every Mandam form played a critical role in the satiric reflection of the dark side of real or troubled times rather than reflecting a longing for modern Western culture or blindly following cultural modernization at that time.

More specifically, the news articles and documents show that Mandam was very satiric and played a role in influencing public opinion on political affairs, particularly led by Shin Bool-chool. In fact, even though his Mandams focused on critically reflecting what Korea was really like under Japanese colonial rule, many of the Mandams on his albums were restricted to reflecting only very limited aspects of daily life. There appears to have been an unavoidable gap between satiric and topical talk and entertainment talk seasoned with philosophy in the social conditions of the time (Lee, 2011, p. 40). However, explicit criticism was expressed in many Mandam concerts. For example,

Some time ago, he appeared on stage wearing a durumagi, the traditional Korean overcoat, and a gat, the traditional Korean hat, but wearing geda, Japanese wooden shoes. Of course, the audience jeered at him for his weird appearance, because his appearance reminded them of the horrible experience of Japanese colonial rule. However, he was not at all disturbed by that. When he started to tell a Mandam story, the theater went silent. Shin Bool-chool criticized Korea in those days for lacking independent thinking in regard to such matters as his own striking appearance. After national liberation from Japan, a number of Japanese remained, some of whom wore Japanese military uniform. The Japanese were still part of daily life, and enka, a kind of popular Japanese song, played in many places.

(Ban, 2000, pp. 204–205)

goo, “Brother is a Street Singer,” sung by Park Hyang-rim, and a “Sham Collegian” were very popular because they made fun of the upper classes. The popularity of manyo continued with the second generation of manyo singers such as Han Bok-nam, Kang Hong-sik, and Seo Yeong-choon and endured until the late 1960s. However, manyo was sometimes criticized in that it was influenced by the Japanese form of song known as enka, which was designed for passing pleasure (Park, 2009).

It is important to point out that Mandam concerts were not referred to as such. Instead, they were considered mass meetings or mass rallies, suggesting that Mandam was a hybrid form comprising oratory and comic talk, satiric criticism and entertainment.
Some Mandams, particularly Shin Bool-Chool’s Mandam was very critical and satric. According to several articles, Shin Bool-Chool’s satire began to lean to the left after Korea’s liberation from Japan. At the May Day commencement meeting in 1946, he gave a Mandam monologue entitled *Doggaebiwa doknib* [Goblin and Independence] in which he criticized the troubled situation of Korea. Also, on June 11, 1946, he gave a three-day Mandam storytelling, sponsored by the *Hyundai Daily* and the *Joongwoi Daily*, with other entertainers such as Cho Taek-Won, Lim Choon-Aeng, Kim So-Hee, and Oh Tae-Seok.

Shin Bool-Chool used a Horatian satire entitled *Keunko dachinda* [Pay Dearly] to criticize the US military administration’s take-over of political power from Japan. *Keunko dachinda* had a dual meaning; i.e., it refers to paying dearly for something, but it literally means

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44 It was documented that thereafter, Shin Bool-Chool stopped his Mandam performance (appeared in Jayoo Sinmoon, June, 9, 1946).
a big nose that has been badly hurt. Big nose is a metonymy for Westerners. For this satire, Bool-chool was arrested for violating MacArthur’s decree 2, specifically for hat was referred to as by slandering the Allied Forces (Chosun Daily, June 23, 1946). Several articles (e.g., Donga Daily, June 15, 1946; Yesoolsegye, Jan. 1996) noted that after his arrest Shin Bool-chool stopped Mandam performance.

The four trigrams of Taegeukgi [Korean national flag] represent the present national situation whereby [Korea] is under the surveillance of four major countries, which joined together at a meeting in Moscow. And, the Taeguk circle at the center comprises a red upper section and a blue lower section. When the flag gets wet by the rain storm, it is natural that the upper red goes down, and thereby the flag becomes tinged with red. Likewise, although Korea is at present divided into North and South, the Southern region will become red as time goes by. That is, it is natural for South Korea to become a Communist country, and this is our unavoidable destiny in the near future.

*Monthly Yesoolsegye, June 1996 (as quoted in Ban, 2000, p. 209)*

After his arrest, not only did Bool-chool quit as a Mandam performer, he also quit his other activities, eventually defecting to North Korea for political reasons. Whether he continued as a performer in North Korea, however, is unknown (Koh, 1996, p. 167). It is noteworthy that by the time of Bool-chool’s last Mandam performance in the South on June 11, 1946, Mandam had become bifurcated into Mandam conversation and Mandam song. Thus, the function of Mandam as a form of entertainment was strengthened, and criticism of it lessened. Although Mandam began to lose its critical function, several Mandam storytellers succeeded in the tradition of satiric comic talk that Bool-chool had initiated. Among the Mandam storytellers, Son

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45 For this reason, there are relatively few studies on Shin Bool-Chool’s Mandam. According to Kim (2004, p. 148), he continued to give Mandam concerts in North Korea until 1976 when he died from malnutrition in a political prisoner camp.
Il-pyeong and Kim Won-ho, the first comedic duo nicknamed “Fatty and Skinny,” became popular for the satiric content of their Mandam conversations. Their satiric criticism focused on Japan’s colonial rule. For this reason, several policemen would be stationed for surveillance purposes around any theater in which the duo were performing (Ban, 2000, p. 211).

A female Mandam storyteller known as a disciple of Shin Bool-chool, Kim Yoon-shim took part in many collaborative Mandam concerts with Shin Bool-chool, and she continued giving topical Mandam storytelling performances after Korea had gained independence. Several of the Mandams she performed reflect a considerable effort to protect the original function of Mandam as a reflection of society such that the form presents topical and satiric criticism, as seen in her Mandam entitled “Women, Take a look at Yourselves!” at the Sudo Theater in 1947. Also, her Mandams, such as gamtoo-Taryeong [a traditional ballad about having an important title], manhwayneong [kaleidoscope], and yeombool-Taryeong [a traditional ballad about Buddhist prayer reflected the social criticism characteristic of her Mandam performances. In fact, her songs critically reflect on life in the post–Korean War era, using a variety of techniques in regard to satiric expression, as seen at the following example:

Person one: Hey, long time no see.
Person two: Me, too. How are you doing in such hot weather, and where are you headed?
Person one: I am heading to the Han River. How about coming with me?
Person two: Why?
Person one: To swim. I’m dying of the heat.
Person two: No, thanks. But you know, the river may have dried out.
Person one: Are you crazy? How would a river dry out when it is flowing naturally?

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46 Later, after the untimely death of his partner Kim Won-Ho, Son Il-Pyeong created a new partnership with Jeon Bang-Il.
47 They were called “Fatty and “Skinny,” because they were broadly similar to Laurel and Hardy, a famous comedy double act during the early Classical Hollywood era of American cinema (Rawlings, 2010). Bool-chool defined their performance as Mandam conversation. In addition, Fatty and Skinny were succeeded by the television comic duo of Yang Hoon and Yang Seok-Chun who were referred to as the “Third Fatty and Skinny” in Korea (Ban, 2000, p. 211).
48 Taryeong has a double meaning. Its literal meaning is traditional ballad song, but it also means a hard-luck story.
49 Gamtoo refers to the skullcap formerly worn by officials.
Person two: You, fool! Don’t you think that people who come to Seoul and end up selling everything they own for a title might have drunk it all because all their efforts were all in vain.50

A section of *gamtoo-Taryeong* as quoted in Ban, Jae-Sik (2000, pp. 297–307)

The next generation of *Mandam* storytellers, which included Yoon Bak-nam, Bok Hyesook, Wang Pyeong, Na Poom-sim, Jang So-pal, Goh Chun-ja, and Kim Yeong-un paid more attention to playing with words in order to create funny stories. In this style, political criticism became marginal and the form became more dramatic in nature. These *Mandams* were predominantly featured in radio programs, as the storytellers began to migrate from the recording industry to radio broadcasting after the 1950s. Their *Mandam* performances were quite different from those of the early *Mandam* storytellers such as Shin Bool-chool and Kim Yoon-xim, who emphasized the role of *Mandam* in producing social criticism through the use of comic devices. Instead, they aspired to rhetorical play and verbal fun by quickly repeating words such that these performers’ work was similar to the US stand-up comedy of the 1950s and 1960s. Accordingly, during this period, there was little in the way of satiric criticism and the movement of *Mandam* to radio only strengthened this tendency.

**Summary of Chapter**

In this chapter, I explored the politics of in *Mandam*, traced back to the 1930s, in the context of the collaborative relationships among record companies, press organizations, theater companies, and the radio broadcasting industry. Strict censorship continued during the period of Japanese cultural rule of the 1920s through the 1940s, such that political expression was very restricted. To justify Japanese colonial rule, the Japanese Government-General of Korea (JGGK)

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50 To making a vain effort is pronounced *hut-mool-kyeo-da* in Korean, which is similar to the pronunciation of drinking water.
used dual cultural policies: (1) propagandizing the legitimacy of Japanese rule and (2) promoting entertainment facilities. Western cultural products such as the gramophone were introduced, which stimulated the growth of the record industry. Such an influx of Western cultural products promoted the rise of Korea’s popular culture to which the gramophone made a fundamental contribution. Under these communicative circumstances, Mandam as distinctive form blending political information and entertainment played a vital role in expressing individuals’ political opinions. Indeed, Mandam was a terse and sarcastic form that combined funny storytelling with the use of various humorous devices.

More importantly, however, I contended that Mandam was placed at the core of intricate relationships among the record industry, the theater business, and the press industry. It appears that the growing popularity of the hybrid content of political information and entertainment was led by the business sector. This reminds us that political entertainment was initiated for commercial purposes. This commercial relationship was initiated by the SP record industry. As noted, the six big record companies had succeeded in attracting a wide audience from the late 1920s to the early 1940s. Record companies collaborated with small theatrical companies by providing financial support to small theater companies, which, in turn, introduced Mandam performances as a strategic way of diversifying and thus attracting an audience. The theaters did this in return for the cultural and human resources, included Mandam storytellers, scripts, and technicians, provided by the record companies. Furthermore, record companies were major advertisers in newspapers, and newspapers promoted record sales. Major newspaper companies used several marketing strategies such as providing promotional articles, commentaries, and editorials for theater companies and offering special discount passes to newspaper subscribers, which also indirectly contributed to an increase newspaper subscriptions. In the same way, the
In regard to *Mandam* content, *Mandam* played a satiric role in influencing public opinion on political affairs, particularly led by the early generation of *Mandam* storytellers such as Shin Bool-chool and Kim Yoon-sim. Their criticism centered on Japanese colonial rule, even though during this period *Mandams* were limited in terms of the issues they could address. However, other *Mandam* storytellers preferred soft criticism under the stringent regulations of Japanese colonial rule. This gave rise to that many ideas of *Mandam* performance were restrained to play an absurd as appeared in *Moosikhan Buboo* [The Ignorant Couple] and *Meongteongguri Seoul*.
Googyeong [Fathead’s Sightseeing Trip to Seoul], wherein the satiric criticism was less powerful because Mandam storytellers were obliged to avoid lampooning the repressive political power harshly. Consequently, political suppression under Japanese colonial rule caused Mandams to become more focused on entertainment than on political expression and to become a form of economic interest via the relationships among companies associated with Mandam.

After the 1950s, Mandam faced the introduction of television. Though some Mandam storytellers moved to radio broadcasting by specializing in Mandam songs, the cultural technological breakthrough weakened their cultural influence on audiences and brought about the transformation of political entertainment. Regarding this, the next chapter explores how political entertainment was influenced by the introduction of television in a broader social context and how this technological shift affected Korean political entertainment in association with other comedy programs.
CHAPTER THREE
THE RETROGRESSION OF KOREAN POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT:
FROM THE KOREAN WAR TO THE ’87 DEMOCRATIZATION MOVEMENT

Arguing that the great popularity of Mandam, one of the sources of Korean political entertainment, stemmed not from political purposes but economic interests, this chapter explores how Korean political entertainment fluctuated due to changes in the Korean political economy during the sociopolitical upheavals that occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s. As discussed in detail, military regimes had taken political power by coup for three decades. The military regimes felt it was necessary to seize governmental authority, and to do this, it was necessary to boost the state’s economy by transforming the industrial sectors from being agricultural in nature to being technology-based industries via the advent of heavy industries. These strategies ultimately created a state-led economy with an export-driven policy. Furthermore, in regard to the media and communication industries, the military regimes enacted two regulatory policies—repressive restructuring and direct governmental censorship—which together limited citizens’ freedom of political expression. Meanwhile, the Park regime (1961-1979) and Chun regime (1980-1987) promoted the introduction of television in 1961 and color television in 1980, expecting that television would contribute to the civilization of the Korean culture. The media policy of the military regimes was thus marked by a dual process of suppression and promotion.

Under these political and economic circumstances, Korean political entertainment experienced intense fluctuations in terms of production and consumption until 1987 and the advent of the citizen-led democratization movement. While political satire was rigorously banned by the military regimes, a handful of attempts aimed at producing political entertainment continued. Several Mandam storytellers such as Kim Yoon-Sim were still able to perform by
moving to the medium of the radio, and political satire programs were also produced via commercial radio broadcasting sector, which was not successful in increasing popularity. Rather, the production of comedy program focused on entertaining audiences, which resulted in the depoliticization of comedy as well as the transformation of the comedy genre. I contend that politically, the reason why comedy could not flourish is primarily due to the strong governmental regulation of the media industries. I thus call this period the dark era of political entertainment. Therefore, in this chapter, I review Korea’s political and economic circumstances from the 1960s to the 1980s, and explain how the given societal conditions were associated with Korea’s media and communication industries. I discuss how political entertainment programs were at the margin of the Korean media environment.

Political-Economic Circumstances After the Korean War

Park Chung-Hee’s export-led economic development model until 1979. After attaining independence from Japan, Korea, during the 1950s, was marked by socio-political turmoil. Lee Syngman took political power when he was elected the first president in 1948, and he continued to hold power (winning four more elections) until he had to resign due to a rigged election on March 15, 1960, which triggered the movement named 4.19 hyukmyeong. After his resignation, there was a short-lived period of parliamentary rule from 1960 to 1962. After seizing governmental power by a military coup d'état in 1962, Park Chung-Hee attempted to implement a five-year economic development initiative five times from 1962 to 1979, which continued to Chun Doo-Hwan’s regime and the fifth initiative, which extended until 1986. Park Chung-Hee’s government needed to legitimize taking governmental authority by coup, and sought to transform the state’s industrial sectors from being agricultural in nature to being heavy industries though
light industries. The Park regime recognized that this would be the best way of boosting the Korean economy, because Korea had few natural resources and insufficient technologies and facilities, and accordingly, it was necessary for the Park regime to first construct a social infrastructure and enlarge its industrial facilities (Gereffi, 1990). In order to do so, Park’s government created the Foreign Capital Inducement Act (FCIA) to raise funds from foreign loans. Consequently, the attraction of foreign public funding or foreign credit financing gradually expanded. In 1970, the foreign liabilities of Korea were 2.3 billion dollars, which accounted for 22.8% of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP). The GDP increased to 20.5 billion dollars in 1979, while it was only 2.3 billion dollars in 1970.51 52

The Park regime also utilized the Vietnam War as an opportunity for shifting the nation’s industries from primary industries to manufacturing industries and heavy and chemical industries. The Park Chung-Hee’s government decided to first send the Blue Dragon and Tiger divisions, which were among the most mechanized infantry divisions in the Korean army, to assist the United States and South Vietnam in 1965, and continued to send 312,853 soldiers in total until 1973. This accounted for the second-largest commitment to the United States, and it was predicated on the idea that the dispatch of troops would contribute to an enhanced military alliance between the United States and Korea and help Korea to gain an international reputation (Han, 2006, p.258-263). Indeed, the Park regime received a number of economic rewards from the United States government. For instance, the United States federal government paid Korean soldiers’ salaries and remitted them to the Korean government, and Park’s government also

received approximately 10 billion dollars in grants, loans, and other forms of subsidies in return for Korea’s dispatch of troops (Kwark, 2009).

The Korean government propelled an export-driven policy in earnest with the funds gained in the Vietnam War. The third and fourth five-year economic development initiatives began in 1972, with the intention of upgrading industrial infrastructure by particularly focusing on the construction of heavy and chemical industrial facilities. Chung Ju-Young, a founder of Hyundai Motors, established Hyundai civil industries in 1946, anticipating the necessity of post-war reconstruction. Hyundai obtained an exclusive business license for building much of Korea’s new infrastructure, such as the Gyeongbu Highway (‘70), the Ulsan dockyard (‘70), and the nuclear power plant (‘78), as well as several United States military facilities. Furthermore, the Korean government built a set of integrated steel mills (ISM) at Pohang from 1970 to 1981, and established a state-owned enterprise, Pohang jaechul (POSCO, at present), for the purpose of promoting the steelmaking industries.53

It is still debated whether the Park government’s export-led economic policy was the best way to revitalize Korean economy. The evaluation of the Park regime has been a mixed bag, with some saying that Park contributed to national economic development in spite of his repressive political activities, while others devaluing the effect of export-driven policy during the Park regime, instead suggesting the development was overinflated when looking at actual economic indexes, and moreover, that the trade balance deficit grew.

In addition, the average increase in consumer prices was from a minimum of 18.3% in 1979 to a maximum of 25.7% in 1975. The Gini coefficient increased from 0.344 in 1965 to 0.391 in 1976 as well. Pessimists have argued that this shows the inability of Park’s policy to

53 POSCO has been frequently cited as a successful example of Park Chung-Hee’s state-led policy. POSCO was ranked the second-largest steelmaking company on Forbes Global 2000 list in 2013 (http://www.forbes.com/global2000/list/).
solve the problem of poverty, rather than suggesting that it was an indicator of other problems, including the inequitable distribution of income.

Table 3.1. *Results of five-year economic development initiative.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</strong></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross National Product (GNP) per capita</strong></td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Export</strong></td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>252.0</td>
<td>293.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trade balance</strong></td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
<td>-54.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance on current account</strong></td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increased foreign dependency (particularly on the United States) and antidemocratic measures were typical of the developmental dictatorship. Such a mixed reception to Park Chung-Hee’s government caused Korean society to split into two groups: the first was focused on democrats (including the liberal party), and the second was focused on industrialists (including the conservative party). These two groups have continuously produced a variety of discourses in the areas of politics, culture, and society.

**Change in state-led economic policy in the 1980s.** Immediately after the assassination of Park Chung-Hee on October, 26, 1979, Chun Doo-Hwan seized power by coup on December, 12, 1979. The Chun regime faced a number of problems due to the state-driven development policy; these problems included inflation, income inequality, and growing foreign debt until

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1985\textsuperscript{55}, which was partly due to the oil shocks that took place from 1978 to 1980. A steep increase in oil prices interrupted Korea’s high-speed economic growth under the state-led export policy. In addition, Chun Doo-Hwan’s government needed to achieve political legitimacy, because Chun’s military coup had resulted in thousands of victims who protested the political illegitimacy of the Chun Doo-Hwan regime in Gwangju in May 1980. Consequently, there were a number of civilian protests calling for national democratization, many of which were led by student groups.

For the above reasons, the Chun regime continued to adopt a suppressive policy, mobilizing its repressive state apparatus. For example, the Chun regime operated the Samchung re-education camp, which aimed at the social rehabilitation of smugglers, habitual criminals, gangsters, and drug addicts. Yet the real purpose of the Samchung camp was to detain and silence potential protesters (Im, 1989, p.250).\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, the Chun regime established a cultural and entertainment policy called 3S that controlled the sex, screen, and sports industries in order to marginalize people politically.

While the Chun government continued Park Chung-Hee’s repressive policy, particularly in regards to political protests and democratization forces (Choe & Kim, 2012), the Chun regime tried to distinguish its policy from that of the previous military regime by shifting its economic policy from a government-driven plan to a private sector-initiated economy. Accordingly, the Chun Doo-Hwan government established a new economic policy founded on liberalization and an open-door economy policy corresponding to that of the Reagan government. Kim Jae-Ik, who

\textsuperscript{55} Foreign debt in Korea reached $468 million, making Korea the fourth-largest among the debtor countries in the 1980s (Cline, 1983; World Bank, 2010).

\textsuperscript{56} Approximately 48, 000 citizens were enrolled at the Samchung Re-education Camp (SRC) from August 1980-January 1981. During this time, they were subjected to institutional violence such as illegal confinement, beating, and cruel treatment in the name of social rehabilitation (Bassiouni, 2010, p. 734).
had studied economics at Stanford University and had served as chief secretary of the economy at the Blue House, took the lead in developing Chun’s neoliberal economic plan by adopting measures taken by the Reagan government in order to promote a neoliberal economy.

As an initial step, Chun’s government began an import-liberalization policy, which allowed for the greater influx of items ranging from agricultural goods to consumer goods. The import-liberalization policy came to benefit big manufacturing corporations by providing them with low-priced materials. Yet the policy weakened small entrepreneurs’ market power since the small entrepreneurs could no longer keep prices competitive, particularly in the agricultural industries. During the 1990s, the largest ten conglomerates comprised 54% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Korea, a dramatic increase from their 33% in 1979. Moreover, subsidiaries among the top 30 conglomerates expanded from 126 companies in 1970 to 513 companies in 1989, which meant one conglomerate owned approximately 17 subsidiaries on average.

Along with import liberalization, Chun’s regime began to deregulate Korea’s capital market in 1984. The Korean government had banned foreign direct investment prior to the early 1980s; this was one of the most restrictive regulations among East Asian countries and was enacted due to concerns that foreign capital would overtake Korean industries. As a result of the liberalization of the capital market, foreign direct investments increased 20 times, from 0.18 billion dollars in 1986 to 3.9 billion dollars in 1998.

Furthermore, the Chun Doo-Hwan government implemented regulatory policies to control chaebols. These policies were based on deregulatory policy, including the enactment of the Fair Trade Act (FTA) in 1981, which was revised and enforced in 1987 in the following three

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57 Immediate-import liberal items rose to 7,408 of total 7,600 items, and the import-freedom ratio reached approximately 93.1% in 1987. This was a dramatic increase compared with the 74.7% import-freedom ratio of 1982 (Kyung Hyang Daily, May 1982; Maeil Daily Economy, May 1987).
ways: (1) the restriction of a mutual investment between subsidiaries of *chaebol*; (2) the introduction of the equity investment ceiling system on *chaebols*; and (3) the prohibition of establishing holding companies. The government also revised the Banking Act to restrict single ownership of commercial banks up to 8% in 1982.\(^59\) That is, the military regime adopted some market-oriented policies, the regime exerted strong political power over all subareas of the national society until early 1990s. Thus, the primary aim of deregulation and liberalization was to situate the economic sector under political influence by reducing the level of economic concentration in the private sector, rather than to promote open and fair competition in the economic system. For instance, the Chun government influenced the discharge of the Kuk-Jae conglomerate, listed among the top seven *chaebols*, because of its discord with the government.\(^60\)

The Chun regime tried to promote high technology and electronic industries as a strategic way of distinguishing the government’s economic policy from that of the Park regime. During Chun’s regime, Samsung began to run a semiconductor business, and LG, Hyundai, and Daewoo began to produce video, display, and computer equipment. As a result, the top five export items were no longer clothes, steel, and other chemical goods, as in the 1970s, but semiconductors, ships, mobile phones, computer equipment, and vehicles. Such high value-added products contributed to the export surplus, even though it was partly due to the three lows phenomenon (low oil price, low rate of currency exchange, and low interest rate) in the mid-1980s.

Moreover, the concentration of economic wealth within the largest four *chaebols* (Hyundai, Samsung, LG, and Daewoo) increased after financial liberalization. Financial deregulation eventually enabled *chaebols* to directly manage and expand their businesses without

\(^{59}\) During the 1980s, *chaebols* actively sought to obtain ownership of both banks and financial companies, seeing it as an easy way to procure money for their businesses and to circulate funds for illegal accumulation.

\(^{60}\) Yang Jeong-Mo, an owner of the KuK-Jae conglomerate, filed a petition to the court claiming the illegal intervention of government in discharging KuK-Jae, and the court decided that it was unconstitutional (Jeong, Jul, 1993).
political permission, which in turn lead *chabols* to increase their economic power within all private sectors. The Chun regime’s neoliberal economic policy brought about a significant shift in leadership in the business sector from government to *chaebol*, which meant the private sector-led economy was beginning at that time.

The dramatic economic growth during the military regimes, from Park Chung-Hee to Roh Tae-Woo, has produced conflicting evaluations of the economic outcomes that the former military regimes achieved, and still spurs debates about whether or not political dictatorship (conceptualized as “developmental dictatorship”) is required for developmental countries’ economic growth and social advancement (Lee, 2006, p.5). It is somewhat ironic that the military dictatorship achieved economic growth by adopting state-led (neoliberal) capitalism. The original concept of developmental dictatorship was formulated by Italian Marxists who were seeking a theory that would be applicable to underdeveloped countries, including many African countries (Sklar, 1983).

Likewise, the Chinese government had been subject to the external pressures of globalization. Less than two decades ago, President Jian Zemin stated that national reform and the openness of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) would be indispensable for establishing market-oriented reform, which would optimize and revitalize the Chinese economic structure.\(^6\) His statement seems ironic in given the huge discrepancy between the two freedoms in China: the political freedom of Chinese people had been restricted, yet there had been increased economic freedom in the form of private investment, the diversity of product consumption, and spatial movement for work or travel for elites (Tisdell, 2009). This reveals that economic freedom based on free market theory did not come with political democratization.

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\(^6\) Speech by Jian Zemin at a luncheon meeting by the America-China Society and five other organizations on October 30, 1997; translation available online at [http://asiasociety.org/speech-president-jiang-zemin-peoples-republic-china?page=0.0](http://asiasociety.org/speech-president-jiang-zemin-peoples-republic-china?page=0.0).
Political economy of media and communication until 1987

Korean military governments had considered the primary role of media to be to contribute to the economic and cultural modernization of Korea. The introduction of mass media was driven by the government for obvious political reasons; indeed, the media had been exploited by the government as a way to propagandize the state’s interests. This occurred until the late 1980s, when the massive democratization movement occurred. Due to the political suppression of the press, the press organizations’ endeavor to make profits was frequently ignored at the beginning. The Korean government had a distinctive approach to media and communication industries in two ways: it enacted deregulation of the entertainment media, as well as strong regulation of the press until the late 1980s.

Thus, it is necessary to examine this dual process of the government’s policy-making on newspaper and broadcasting. In addition, though media conglomerates broadened the boundaries of their businesses to include a wider range of entertainment, including film, music, games, and entertainment management, in this part, I pay close attention to the distinctive features of the Korean newspaper and broadcasting media in illustrating the Korean media industries and market structure within their historical context, because television and newspaper are particularly important media for explaining the growing popularity of political entertainment in the following chapters.

Longstanding governmental regulation. It cannot be denied that the most prominent characteristic of Korean media history is the strong governmental suppression of various media organizations. When it comes to this suppression of the press, two methods were actively implemented by the military regimes: (1) repressive restructuring, and (2) direct governmental
censorship. First, there was a significant restructuring of the media industries during the military regimes. More specifically, two press restructuring plans were implemented during each governmental regime, with the first occurring in 1973 and the second in 1980. The Park regime initiated a compulsory restructuring of the press in 1973 to 1975 under the yushin [reformation] system. This plan included: (1) the integration of local newspapers based on the principle of Ildo-Ilsa [一道一社, one press organization per province]; (2) a limitation on the number of journalists accredited by public administrations; and (3) the introduction of an identification system, the so-called ‘the press-card system,’ wherein the government issued a permission card to each journalist in order to control public opinion by limiting the number of journalists under the name of the improvement of reporting quality. In addition, though television was actively introduced by the military regimes for cultural and entertainment purposes, the military regimes regulated the programming and content on TV with pre-censorship. The Park Chung-Hee government actively imposed censorship on television reporting through the enforcement and revision of the broadcasting laws in 1972-1973. (I will revisit this issue in detail regarding television comedy programs in the next chapter.)

The Chun regime continued the Park regime’s repressive restructuring plan in relation to the media. In 1980, after the Gwangju Democratization Movement, the Chun regime enacted a new press law called the Basic Press Law. This law was responsible for the introduction of the public management system, as well as the return to a licensing system for entry to the market. Accordingly, the structure of the broadcasting industry significantly changed at this time. The first commercial television station, Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC), was integrated into Korea Broadcasting System (KBS), and then was replaced by KBS 2 TV. Other radio stations were also incorporated into KBS, except several religious broadcasting companies such as
Christian Broadcasting System (CBS), which remained independent. Moreover, the government established institutions such as Korea Broadcasting Commission (KBC), Korea Communications Standards Commission (KCSC), Korea Broadcast Advertising Corporation (KOBACO), and other public institutions from 1980-1981 in order to put the entire broadcasting system under governmental control in the name of the public management of broadcasting. By doing so, a mixed form was created in terms of the state-owned, and the government-managed, broadcasting system (Kang, 2007).

Furthermore, the cross-ownership of broadcasting and newspaper companies and the ownership of chaebols and their affiliates were strongly prohibited under the Chun government. Although the prohibition of cross-ownership was common in many countries, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States, in order to protect the diversity of opinions, the Chun regime introduced this regulation for the purpose of maximizing political power. Because of the prohibition of cross-ownership and the ban on media ownership of chaebol, all local television stations owned by big chaebols were forced to give up 51% of their shares. TBC was forcibly absorbed into KBS under this rule, because Samsung owned TBC and Joonang Daily at that time.

Along with the restructuring of the press, the military regimes engaged in political suppression under the name of the purification of the press and media. In 1961, right after the military coup, the Park Chung-Hee government shut down approximately 1,200 periodicals, and forcibly closed thirty-nine of seventy-five daily newspapers, as well as eleven news agencies of a total 375, including many oppositional newspapers such as Minjeok Daily. Furthermore, journalists were directly put under governmental censorship. In particular, a series of serious

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slips of the pen occurred during that time. Journalists and columnists such as Kim Jiha, Lim Chung-bin, Yoon Jae-sik contributed to progressive monthly magazines such as Sasanggye, Ssialui-Sori, Dari had been repeatedly arrested under the Anticommunist Law (which is presently integrated into the National Security Law).63,64,65

The Chun regime also strictly controlled the press in a similar way to the Park regime. After seizing power, Chun Doo-Hwan sought to implement several political suppression policies including the Purification of the Press, which aimed at eliminating political opponents. This resulted in a massive layoff of journalists and the cancellation of many oppositional periodicals. More specifically, 711 journalists were fired, 172 periodicals were shut down, and 44 press organizations were integrated into 14 organizations (11 newspapers, 2 broadcasting corporations, and a single news agency).66 This strong censorship continued until 1987, ultimately resulting in a total of 1,917 journalists laid off during the Chun regime, or 10% of the total number of journalists.67

The ’87 democratization movement was particularly salient among student groups. The ’87 democratization movement promoted media reform in several ways. First, along with the change in Korea’s presidential election system to a direct election system, the movement shifted press regulation from a permit system into a registration system. With this liberation of

the press, the first independent daily newspaper, *Hankyoreh*, was able to be established in 1987, aiming to serve as an alternative to the three mainstream newspapers.

**Promotion of media and communication industries.** The restrictions that had been put on the media market on the basis of Ordinance No. 88, enacted by the United States military administration, had continued during the subsequent military governments. During the military regimes from the 1960s to the late 1980s, press regulation had been enacted for the main purpose of political suppression, while media and technologies, particularly television, had been actively introduced for their assistance with cultural and industrial development. The Park Chung-Hee regime issued Decree No. 11 right after the military coup in May 1961 in order to suppress the oppositional press, which resulted in the compulsory discontinuance of 91% of periodicals.68 Due to the suppression of the press by the military government, only a small number of publications managed to survive.

Before the 1980s, the Korean media and communication industries had been not a viable presence on the market, a problem faced by many other developing countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Taiwan as well. Korea had only thirty newspapers and three public broadcasting organizations, and the number of movie screens was 447. This meant that it was a relatively underdeveloped media system when compared to other developing countries’ media markets, i.e., 220 newspapers and approximately 1,100 screens in Argentina, and 317 newspapers and about 2,800 screens in Mexico in 1980 (UNESCO, 1999, pp. 80-204). As a way of boosting the nation’s high-tech industries, the Park regime utilized the carrot-and-stick method. In 1962, the Park regime announced a new press policy that included a single-edition system, an increase in the number of pages and circulation, loans at low interest for financial stability, and public welfare assistance for journalists. This became a basic framework for the

Park regime’s press policy. Under the Park regime’s guidance, the press industry became an oligopolistic market dominated by a small number of press organizations. As discussed later, the same progress was made in the broadcasting market.

In the meantime, contrary to the suppression of newspaper organizations, the Park regime introduced television broadcasting for the primary purpose of selling second-hand black and white television sets. The RCA Distribution Corporation (KORCAD) first opened HLKZ-TV, a commercial television station with 186-192 MHz and 525 scanning lines, in 1956.\textsuperscript{69} Despite establishing a television station, however, KORCAD did not successfully operate its broadcasting, due to very limited number of TV sets (approximately three hundred sets in 1956). This meant that the advertising industry was also fairly underdeveloped. Until early 1960s, the distribution rate of television sets was quite low. The number of TV sets was only 32,402, which accounted for 0.6\% of possible households. For this reason, television sets were installed at public places such as parks (\textit{Tab-gol Park} in Seoul, for example) and transportation stations (Seoul train station, for instance), or looking through store windows.\textsuperscript{70}

The Park regime promoted the distribution of television sets by establishing the public broadcasting station HLKA-TV (presently Korea Broadcasting Station [KBS] 1TV), followed by the first commercial TV station, Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC), in 1964, and the second commercial broadcasting system, Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC), in 1969.\textsuperscript{71} The advent of such commercial/private broadcasting stations brought about a dramatic increase in the prevalence of TV sets and accordingly boosted the development of Korea’s media

\textsuperscript{69}\texttt{http://www.museum.tv/eotv/eotv.htm?entrycode=southkorea}
\textsuperscript{70} The television was first displayed at an RCA retail ship in Jonno, Seoul. The retail price in 1954 was \$1,500 for public use and \$250 for private use (\textit{Hankuk Daily}, May 1954).
\textsuperscript{71} American Forces Korea Network (AFKN) was established by the United States military administration in 1957 for limited audiences including United States’ soldiers, their families, and other military-related employees (approximately six thousand). This should be recognized as the second broadcast in Korea, though AFKN has not been considered Korean broadcasting in many historical studies (\textit{Kyung Hyang Daily}, Sep 1957).
industries. Furthermore, to promote the sales of television sets, the Park regime provided several incentives. In 1971, the government gave a discount to those who purchased televisions, which helped contribute to the doubling of the distribution of TV sets the next year. Moreover, the Park regime instituted a nation-wide promotion plan, called the *Samaeul* TV Distribution Initiative in 1974, which resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of TV sets to over 5.7 million, compared with 1.3 million in 1973, right before the plan began (see, Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2. The prevalence of television sets in Korea during the Park regime.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>The penetration of television sets</th>
<th>Note</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The number of sets (Color TV sets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The penetration rate per household (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>32,402</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>73,224</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>223,965</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>616,392</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1,282,122</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,061,072</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>3,804,535</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>5,696,256</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981&lt;sup&gt;72&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7,172,666 (1,802,260)</td>
<td>90% (25.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988&lt;sup&gt;73&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10,263,986 (8,529,372)</td>
<td>120% (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991&lt;sup&gt;74&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>14,607,540 (11,85,5000)</td>
<td>127% (97.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Culture and Public Information (1979) and News Articles<sup>39, 40, 41</sup>

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Moreover, the Park regime actively invested in building up the communication infrastructure in order to boost the television broadcasting and telecommunications industries. The purpose of the initial promotion was to build the basic infrastructure, particularly in regard to the telecommunications industry. The primary goal of the Park regime’s telecommunications policy was to switch the light industry-oriented economy to an electronic and high-tech based one. In order to do so, the Park government sought to develop a telephone switchboard in 1962; this was part of the first five-year telecommunications development initiative (TDI). Over the course of the five TDIs that took place between 1962 and 1980, the telecommunications infrastructure became well-established and the facilities were further improved. While the number of telephone subscribers was 123,154 in 1961, this doubled to 277,756 in 1966, right at the end of the first TDI. After the completion of the fifth TDI in 1981, the number of telephone subscribers went up to 3,491,270.⁷⁵

The subsequent Chun regime continued to adopt this promotion policy towards telecommunications. In 1981, Shin Byung-Hyun, the vice-prime minister of the Chun regime, announced a five-year economic and social development initiative (ESDI) that succeeded the former five-year economic development initiatives established during the Park regime. The fifth ESDI included a plan for the promotion of semiconductors, computers, and telecommunications industries as national strategic industries. In addition, the Chun government implemented the Telecommunications Basic Act and Telecommunications Business Act in 1983, both of which promoted the facilities-based telecommunications business environment with special governmental incentives.

⁷⁵ Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) (http://20c.itfind.or.kr).
Sports, and Sex) industries for alleviating challenges to the government. Regarding the boost of 3S, a set of cultural policies were implemented during the Chun regime. First, the introduction of color television and the color broadcasting system occurred in December 1980; both were considered phenomenal breakthroughs in the Korean media environment. The introduction of color television was triggered by Japan’s introduction of color broadcasting in 1971, as well as Western countries’ successful use of color television dating from the 1960s (Bittner, 1991). More directly, the United States Army in Korea had decided to use color broadcasting for AFKN in 1977.

Until then, however, the Park regime did not have a positive view of color television, believing it was not necessary when considering that the black-and-white TV set was not distributed widely among the Korean citizens.76 The positive turn was made by the Chun regime. Chun Doo-Hwan decided to install color broadcasting in order to gain political support from Korean citizens. In addition, the regime needed to find another way of revitalizing the electronic industry by introducing new electronic devices. Accordingly, the sales of electronic products rebounded: the distribution of color television sets in use went up to 6.5 million in 1989, compared to 0.14 million in 1980. Along with the increase in color TV set consumption, the number of VCRs soared to 2.1 million in 1988 from 54,000 in 1982. This helped boost other related businesses, such as videotape and microfilm productions.

More importantly, color broadcasting resulted in a change in production as well as advertising. The average number of programming hours jumped to over 88 hours per week in 1989, compared to 56 per week in 1980, and more than 60 television stations were newly set up, which marked a six-fold increase over the twelve that existed in 1979. Furthermore, the broadcasting market became more industrialized due to the introduction of color television.

Accordingly, big chaebols established advertising companies as their affiliates. Samsung established Cheil Communications in 1973; this was followed by Daehong Communications (affiliated with LOTTE) in 1982, Samhwa Gihoek (presently Hancom) owned by Hanhwa in 1983, and LGAD (affiliated with LG) in 1984, among others. Despite the strong entry barrier faced by chaebols, the chaebols continued to indirectly influence the broadcasting industry.\(^7^7\) As the advertising industry grew due to the chaebols’ active participation, broadcasting corporations KBS and MBC maximized their profits, which reached $632 million in 1989, a five-fold increase over the $128 million profit of 1980. Lastly, the introduction of color TV directly influenced other ‘3S’ industries; Korea’s professional baseball league and football league, for instance, were launched in 1982 and in 1983, respectively. Broadcasting companies supported these pro-leagues either by directly participating in them (Blue Dragons’ baseball was managed by MBC) or through live broadcasts (KBS aired football matches).

An interesting point in regard to the governmental promotion of television broadcasting is that the introduction of television by the Park regime was likely more successful in achieving cultural and economic purposes than in creating political suppression. Thus, the process of introducing TV in Korea was somewhat different from the process in other advanced countries.\(^7^8\)

For example, in the United States, what initially contributed to shaping the modern American family structure that was based on privatized consumption was not television, but the refrigerator (Hartely, 1999, p.101). In a similar vein, Chang (2012, p. 31-36) has pointed out that the washing machine contributed to more social change than other communication technologies in terms of

\(^7^7\) To date, the top ten chaebols (with the exception of Hanjin) own their own advertising subsidiaries. These chaebol-affiliated companies drew 85% of their total revenue from such affiliations in 2012 (Kyung Hyang, Nov. 2013).

\(^7^8\) Until 1967, the number of households with refrigerators was approximately 50,000, compared to 73,224 for TV sets. In addition, the number of households with washing machines was about 0.1 million, or 0.2% of all households. This is in comparison to Japan, which had 90% in household saturation for washing machines in 1975 (Maeil Daily Economy, Sep. 1976)
the modernization of the individual’s life. In Korea, meanwhile, modern electronic devices and technologies were simultaneously introduced in a relatively short period of time; this has been frequently discussed as the experience of compressed modernization (Chang, 2010). For this reason, the introduction of television can be seen not only a process of receiving advanced technology, but as a symbol of the cultural modernization that took place during the Park regime, as President Park Chung-Hee himself praised the introduction of television as a “Christmas gift” to the Korean people on behalf of the revolutionary government (Lim, 2004). This reveals that the Park regime thought of television as a tool for modernizing Korea’s culture and entertainment. That is, television was considered an entertainment technology, while newspapers and other printed periodicals had been objects primarily used for the suppression of the military regimes. Such a dual process of suppression and promotion regarding the media and communication industries was the distinctive feature of governmental policies during the military regimes.

Korean Political Entertainment From After the Korean War to 1987

From the gramophone to radio broadcasting. After Shin Bool-Chool defected to North Korea, the influence of Mandam on audiences significantly decreased. In order to regain their popularity, Mandam storytellers made several different attempts. For instance, they attempted to combine Mandam storytelling with traditional ballads, which ultimately resulted in the subdivision of Mandam into two separate genres: verbal Mandam and Minyo Mandam [Mandam folksong]. This meant that rhetorical play was diminished and verbal expression with satiric

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However, it should be noted that the adoption of new media technology is contingent upon the interaction between historical breaks and social necessities (Winston, 1988). In this vein, some scholars (e.g., Im, 2004) have pointed out that citizens also felt the necessity of introducing television with the expectation of the educational effects that TV would provide. Also, they experienced the novelty effect of putting TVs in their houses.
words was also marginalized within the media and entertainment industries. Furthermore, as they moved onto radio broadcasting, the next generation of Mandam storytellers such as Jang So-pal, Goh Chun-ja, and Shin So-geol focused more on simple gags such as gabbling and rattling words off quickly for the primary purpose of making the audiences laugh. Thus, rhetorical criticism became less apparent in their Mandams.

In particular, Jang So-pal and Goh Chun-ja took the lead in transforming the Mandam genre into a combination of traditional song and conversational comic talk. Around then, radio broadcasting scheduled Mandam to effectively distribute Minyo [traditional ballad song], and accordingly Mandam storytellers were mobilized for this cultural purpose. Among the programs, Minyo Mandam, which first aired in 1956 and starred Jang So-pal and Goh Chun-ja, was the most popular. As this program achieved the great attention, similar programs such as Minyo janchi [Minyo Party], minsokui janchi [Folklore Party], Minyo nori [Minyo Game], and minsokui hyangyeon [Folklore Feast] continued to air until the late 1960s (Ban, 2000, pp. 403-404).

As a matter of fact, Mandam continued to be threatened by the production of other forms of comedy that aimed at making audiences laugh. Dating back to the radio comedy of the 1930s during the Japanese colonial period, there had been a variety of comedy programs, including radio huigeuk [comedy], radio drama giocoso, radio farce, radio sketch, and so forth, as outlined by Seo (2007, p.184-197). This meant that the production of comedy for the purpose of entertaining people had been continuously attempted. When considering that such comedy programs belonged to the category of wian [慰安, comfort] (which is presently within the category of entertainment) during Japanese colonial rule, one recognizes that there was more to comedy than simply entertaining people for fun. That is to say, within the rapidly-changing social circumstances, comedy was the very program that was able to provide ordinary Korean
people with an outlet for alleviating their anxiety about the nation’s dim future in the postwar period. Indeed, according to a listeners’ survey (1977), radio subscribers were more eager to hear entertainment programs than they were to hear Western popular songs, educational lectures, or news.  

In the meantime, though television was first introduced in 1956, it had only a marginal effect on society compared with radio, which implies that radio was situated at the center of the Korean popular culture between 1950s and 1960s. After the Korean War, private radio stations such as CBS and Busan Munhwa Broadcasting (MBC) were established (in 1954 and 1959, respectively) (Lee & Kang, 2007). Thus, the history of radio programming to the 1950s can help to create a more nuanced understanding of the historical formation of the comedy genre. In those days, a nationwide movement called myeongranghwa woondong [The Cheer-Up Movement] was initiated by the Lee Syngman government, and this movement was unsurprisingly combined with comedy. The government anticipated that the myeongranghwa woondong could contribute to healing up psychological scars left by the war and which were still visible everywhere in Korea. However, myeongranghwa remains a controversial term: it originates from the gyeongsung myeongranghwa saup, which aimed at the national improvement of the urban sanitation and cleaning system and which was initiated by the Japanese government-general of Korea in 1937 (Cho, 2013, p.241). Since myeongranghwa now implies making something clean and closed off in the interest of advancement, while it literally accounts for creating widespread societal cheerfulness, it remains controversial when used to describe a movement intended to create a collective emotion that is not motivated by individual, but ideologically interpellated by a totalitarian cultural policy (Soh, 2011, p.40). This suggests that joyful emotions can be

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80 Around then, radio news programs were less popular than other programs, because the news programs were produced for propagandic purposes.
regarded as historical constructs in which the traces of social experiences such as colonization and imported capitalism are carved.

In this vein, it was not surprising that the government-led movement became a springboard for the development of comedy productions (Moon, 2013, pp. 267-268), in that comedy could be the very program which influenced citizens’ emotions. Furthermore, in terms of the production costs, radio comedy was the most efficient vehicle for contributing to an increase in citizens’ enjoyment, because radio comedy did not necessarily require stage setting or additional facilities; it only required two to four voice actors (Moon, 2013, pp. 271). For this reason, radio producers preferred to create various comedy shows as described above. Indeed, radio comedy satisfied both producers and listeners. For radio stations, comedy played an important role in attracting listeners’ attention, which in turn, contributed to an increase in the number of radio subscribers. On the audience side, radio comedy satisfied the desire of listeners who sought a means of relaxation in their daily lives. With this in mind, radio comedy was termed ‘radio humor’ or ‘humor in little theater,’ and it starred traditional comedians such as Kim Hee-gab, Kwak Gyu-seok, Lee Jong-chul, Goo Bong-seo, Bae Sam-ryong, and Seo Yeong-choon, among others. Those comedians became popular stars by moving from musical troupes or theatre into radio broadcasting.

In the meantime, the production of radio comedy began to diversify. This diversification of radio programming was basically influenced by the American media and took place during the 1950s, before and after the Korean War. The United States military administration utilized radio broadcasting for political purposes. In order to do so, the military administration took over the

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81 Radio broadcasting had operated on the basis of a pay radio system during Japanese colonial rule (Lee, 2011, p.30-35).
82 Of these comedy stars, Lee Jong-Chul and Seo Yeong-Choon were dancers who played the carpenter’s scene, and Bae Sam-Ryong was a member of a show business club named Show Oriental. Goo Bong-Seo was an accordionist (Jeon, 2002).
management of the KBS radio broadcasting station, which then actively introduced American radio broadcasting formats in order to make various entertainment programs in the 1950s. As a result, various crossover entertainment programs such as gajok orakhoe [The Family Entertainment Show], ooteumdongsan [Laughter Hill], and radio humor were produced around that time. At the beginning, comedy seemed not to be a specific genre when considering that the title of program was mixed with different words as mentioned above.

Thus, before the emergence of specialized comedy programs, two distinctive features were found within comedy production. First, some comedy programs were integrated into a broader format called the variety show; this format included the quiz show, Mandam, song, and comedy. Accordingly, various short situational comedies were the crucial part of the comic variety show, although it was found that the only program entitled Humor in Little Theater was designed to be a unique situational comedy program at the beginning of radio comedy production (Lee, 2007, p. 122).

Secondly, radio comedy had increased in the 1950s under the strong programming guideline of the radio stations. Programs such as That’s Show Business (’1957), I’m Distressed (’1957), Ho Ho Father (’1958), and aejeong bokgu [Recovery of Love] (’1958) are representative of this time; all were similar to early forms of Mandam. They used comic conversations between two actors and comic sound effects for the first time (Moon, 2013). Though these comedy programs were not very different from early comedy programs, the aesthetics of comedy were beginning to be actively examined. In addition, comedy drama became more specialized as comedy soap operas such as Romance Ppappa [sic] (1959)83, Bravo

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83 In particular, Romance Ppappa played a leading role in bringing about a new trend in the production of family comedies during the 1960s (Moon, 2013, p. 280).
Youth (1960), Three Jolly Brothers (1962), Blue Apartment (1962), and so forth (Lee, 2011, p. 100) began to air.

Yet these comedy programs were restricted in terms of their topics and content due to the political exploitation of radio comedy and the lack of the infrastructure for their production. The proliferation of the production of radio comedy may be explained when considering that the post-war period was marked by a stamping-out of most political ideology except for anticommunism, which brought about surplus of other cultural discourses, the so-called ‘paradox of closed open’ (Lee, 2009, pp. 51-52). In a similar vein, there were some significant messages embedded in the radio production of comedy programs; this was in spite of the deficiencies in the production infrastructure noted above.

Most of all, radio stations strove to establish the comedy production system by hiring professional comedy writers and by opening a broadcasting script posting system⁸⁴, as well as making considerable attempts to secure an outstanding workforce for comedy drama. In consequence of these policies, new competent comedy writers such as Yoo Ho, Kim Hee-chang, Lee Ik, Kim Seong-min, and others took the lead in radio comedy in the 1960s and made forays into the radio broadcasting system (Moon, 2013, p.274). Second, comedians rushed to enter the broadcasting arena. Some comedians such as Yang Hoon and Yang Seok-cheon, Kim Yoon-sim, and Jang So-pal were acting in theatrical companies as Mandam storytellers; others such as Goo Bong-seo, Kim Hee-gab, and Kwak Gyu-seok were stand-up comedians who were crossover actors moving between live theaters and motion pictures. Park (2011) has pointed out that by making live appearances on radio, screen, and theater, the comedians played a crucial role in

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⁸⁴ The first script-posting system was limited to the comedy script. It aimed at revitalizing society with entertainment programs through the appointment of new comedy writers (Korea Broadcasting System, 1987, p. 160).
mediating the boundaries of production and consumption in relation to the cultural products of comedy.

The 1960s were the heyday of radio broadcasting, due largely to the establishment of three commercial broadcasting companies, Seoul Munhwa Broadcasting (MBC), Donga Broadcasting (DBS), and Radio Seoul (RSB), in 1961. According to Kim (2003, pp. 144-145), the number of households who owned radios increased to 81.5% in 1967, compared with 51.9% in 1962; meanwhile, the distribution of television sets was just 3.9%, according to the Ministry of Culture and Public Information (1979). This implies that television had not yet gained the same popularity as radio. The promotion of entertainment-oriented programs led by commercial radio broadcasting triggered a proliferation in comedy-related programs in the 1960s. Of these programs, Huraiboy and The Show with Kim Hee-Gab aired on DBS, while Ggongsaengwonui Seoul Sanggyeonggi [Dweeb Comes Up to Seoul] aired on TBC. All of the shows became tremendously popular. At that time, several attempts to make serial dramas (similar to the American soap opera) out of radio comedies were being tried on commercial radio. This marked one of the most prominent changes in 1960s radio comedy production (Oh, 1994, p. 99).

Such attempts were led by a new generation of comedy writers including Cho Heun-pa, Kim Hee-chang, and Kim Yeong-soo (Moon, 2013, p.280-281). Kim Hee-chang was particularly interested in writing a satiric comedy dealing with various social affairs; this came to fruition in his famous comedy entitled Eoksege Unjoeun Sanai [A Guy Who Has the Devil’s Own Luck]85, from which he gained a reputation as a high-quality, intellectual comedy writer, in contrast to other comedy writers who focused more on light comedy regarding private matters like marital conflicts and family trouble rather than socio-political issues. Other prominent writers of this

85 “A Guy Who Has The Devil’s Own Luck” was a popular comic film starring Shin Yeong-Gyun and Moon Jeong-Sook in 1962. It dealt with a young man in his 20s who handled social corruption squarely and made fun of it, all the while searching for a job.
time include Cho Heun-pa, who was known for his romantic comedies, and Kim Yeon-Soo, who mainly worked on writing radio home comedies such as *yukwaehan samhyeongjae* [Joyful Three Brothers] (1962) (Moon, 2013, pp. 280-282). These comedy works ultimately influenced the rise of the series comedy, called the radio situation comedy, which became particularly popular on commercial radio. The radio situation comedy had the distinctive feature of relying heavily on character and a lack of narratives, which contributed to the rise of stand-up comedy, as discussed in detail in connection with the rise of television stand-up comedy. Thus, as the radio industry became more and more commercialized, various forms of comedy including serial comedy dramas, situational comedies, and comic talk shows started to appear. These radio comedies continuously influenced the development of television comedy in terms of production practices, as the popularity of television began to spread in earnest between the late 1960s and 1970s (Cho, 2003, p. 198).

**Introduction of television and the dark ages of political entertainment.** The introduction of television was propelled by the Park regime for the purpose of the cultural modernization. As noted, the Park regime’s media policy encompassed the dual process of the suppression of the press and the promotion of entertainment. The rapid distribution of television sets in the 1970s caused considerable change in comedy production. Until the 1970s, radio comedy was at the forefront of the comedy industries. Around then, star comedy writers such as Cho Heun-pa, Kim Yeong-soo, Kim Hee-chang, and Yoo Ho had specialized in comedy production, but they generally preferred to make lighter comedies. This inclination towards making lighter comedies brought about a distinctive trait in regard to the production of broadcast comedy. That is, radio comedy relied heavily on comic characters such as the cantankerous old man rather than on sophisticated storytelling. Of the professional comedy writers, Cho Heun-pa
took the lead in making character-oriented comedy dramas such as *Waryong Seonsaeng Sanggyeonggi* [Mr. Waryong Comes Up To Seoul] and *Bravo Youth*.

This change in comedy production towards a heavy reliance on comic characters also occurred in the production of television comedy. It can be said that television comedy is comprised of performances and given settings on the basis of Chatman (1980)’s two categories: events (actions and occurrences) and existences (characters and setting). The Korean television comedies thus began to rely on specific, often-unintelligent characters with offbeat traits rather than on well-organized narratives. This meant that television comedies had “narratives of post-narratives” (You, 2011, p. 15). The popularity of character-oriented radio comedy contributed to the rise of stand-up comedy. The first full comedy program *Useumyeon Boggiwayo* [A Blessing Comes Your Way If You Laugh], produced by Kim Kyeong-tae and Yoo Soo-yeol, aired on MBC in August 1969. This program was considered the starting point for the development of Korean stand-up comedy and triggered the production of television stand-up comedy (Jeon, 2005). *Useumyeon Boggiwayo* took the lead in 1970s television comedy by casting a number of comedy stars such as Bae Sam-ryong, Goo Bong-seo, Lee Joo-il, Seo Yeong-choon, Shin So-geol, Yang Hoon, and Yang Seok-cheon, among others.

In the meantime, besides stand-up comedy, there were some attempts to produce various forms of television comedy. Those were eventually dropped due to harsh criticism that pointed out the vulgarness of televised humor, as exemplified by comedy programs such as *Salsari Samhyeongjae* [Three Brothers] and *Useumyeon Cheonkuk* [You’re In Paradise If You Laugh] (Song, 2011, p. 214). The following article shows the extent to which the then-television producers took the given production system of television comedy seriously.
Comedy is one of the most popular television programs which overwhelmingly occupied the large portion of television production. Nonetheless, the reason why comedy was less popular than Western countries is because there is deficiency of production capacity that takes the lead of making audiences who often regard comedy as vulgar content to laugh at continuously without repulsion…… Kim Gyeong Tae, a producer at MBC argues that when considered that the US comedy and Japanese comedy have tried to match up to audiences’ expectations of making them laugh lightly, it calls for developing daily life-based situation comedy as a way of improvement of production infrastructure that includes excavating new comic idea and securing comedians as well as writers.


As seen above, comedy was one of the most attractive forms of entertainment to many television producer. However, television comedy faced the challenge of building a stable production system that did not rely heavily on only a few comedy stars’ performances. That is, since comedy required unceasing flux and change in terms of its topics and performances, it was necessary to develop creative comedic materials as well as to secure high-quality producers, comedians, and writers.

The establishment of stable system for the production of television comedy was made more difficult due to governmental regulations. Under the military regimes, the economy was subordinated to politics, and the production of most television programs was circumscribed by governmental policies. The Park regime particularly regulated the production of television comedy via two methods. First, the military regime interfered with the programming of broadcasting stations by drawing up guidelines for programming; this was the most effective regulatory policy of the Park regime until 1979. The regulation of television comedy began with a statement by the minister of culture and public relations on June 16, 1971, wherein he asked for self-restraint and self-reflection regarding the production and consumption of vulgar entertainment on television. As a follow-up, the Park regime announced an anti-decadence drive
called “the national security-centered entertainment policy,” which resulted in new line-ups that focused on censoring many comedy and entertainment programs due to concerns that those programs promoted conspicuous consumption and obscene content (Donga Daily, Dec. 1971).

Table 3.3. Governmental regulation of television comedy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Governmental (de-)regulation</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Statement of a minister of Culture and Public Relations</td>
<td>Guideline for self-restraint and self-reflection regarding the production and consumption of vulgar entertainment on television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>National security-centered entertainment policy</td>
<td>Change of the broadcasting stations’ new line-ups that focused on avoiding many comedy and entertainment programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Revision of broadcasting law</td>
<td>Increase of educational program up to 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Regulation of broadcasting hours</td>
<td>Reduction of entertainment program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>TV programming guideline</td>
<td>Broadcasting entertainment program only after 9:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Overall abolition of television comedy</td>
<td>Abolition of weekend comedy and reduction of weekday comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Introduction of color broadcasting, Establishment of educational broadcasting station (presently EBS)</td>
<td>Reintroduction of morning broadcasting (ceased in 1973 due to the increase of oil prices)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governmental regulation of broadcasting hours continued until 1973 when the Park regime reduced broadcasting hours to 18 hours per week as a part of national energy-saving policies required by an increase in oil prices. The regime succeeded in reducing broadcasting

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88 Maeil Daily Economy, Dec, 30, 1977, A4
hours by criticizing the broadcasts for their tasteless content and forced laughter (*Donga Daily*, Nov. 1973). Moreover, governmental regulation of broadcasting hours forced working groups at each broadcasting station to participate in reorganizing entertainment programs by eliminating comedy and soap operas, such as *Saemaeul Undong* [The New Village Movement], which were seen as instigating a social malaise such as excessive consumption and decadence, both of which were against governmental drives (*Kyunghyang Daily*, Nov. 1975).

Second, the military regimes attempted to directly abolish television comedy and banned some actors’ appearances on television (*Donga Daily*, Oct, 1988). The abolition of television comedy was triggered by a statement of authority from the Ministry of Culture and Public Relations (MCPR) that included the overall abolition of television comedy and the regulation of comedians’ appearances on television (*Maeil Daily Economy*, Dec. 1977). The official statement caused many arguments for and against the abolition of television comedy (see e.g., the interpellation of Kim Yoon-Deok, a congressman of the oppositional party, *Donga Daily*, Oct. 1977). After the huge debate, Kim Seong-Jin, a minister for the Ministry of Culture and Public Relations (MCPR), announced that it bid with broadcasting stations to either accept or reject the abolition of television comedy. As a result, weekend comedies on TBC and MBC were abolished, while weekday comedies on each station were reduced to one per week (*Donga Daily*, Oct. 1977).

Meanwhile, despite the strong regulation of television comedy and entertainment by the military regimes, the introduction of television contributed to further changes in the mode of comedy production. Regarding this, three noteworthy features can be identified in regard to the systematization of comedy production on TV. First of all, the three terrestrial television networks, Korea Broadcasting System (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC), and Seoul
Broadcasting System (SBS), controlled the production and distribution of comedy programs, and consequently held sway over the way that audiences consumed comedy programs.

The second feature, which relates to the first, is that the three major broadcasting corporations adopted an open-recruiting system for selecting comedians. The open-recruiting system was firstly introduced by the Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC), which selected eight comedians, including Um Yong-soo and Kim Hyung-gon, who were among the first generation of Korean satirists. The broadcasting stations felt it was necessary to secure a large number of talented young comedians in order to establish a stable production system of television comedy. Around then, there was intense competition for picking up popular comedians such as Bae Sam-ryong, because the production of television comedy relied heavily on the comedians’ individual abilities (Jeon, 2002). Though there were some significant attempts to produce alternative comedies starring unsung comedians—take, for example, Saljagi Usseoyae [Have a Little Laugh!], which aired on TBC and created another star comedian Lee Joo-il—it was difficult to make a successful comedy program without star comedians. For this reason, the open-recruiting system was introduced to overcome the networks’ high dependency on several superstars in producing television comedy on consistent bases.

After the first open recruitment of TBC, Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC) followed the model of TBC and established its own open-recruiting system in 1981; Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) did the same in 1982. The open-recruiting system became a well-established gateway for young would-be comedians to make their forays into the television industry. The total number of comedians who have entered the broadcasting market from 1981 to present is 543. KBS has the well-established open-recruiting system, from which 285 comedians (52.5%) have made their debuts. While the open-recruiting system has contributed to the stable
production of television comedy by making exclusive contracts with young comedians, it has also accelerated the oligopolistic market structure created by having three terrestrial broadcasting corporations in regard to comedy industry.

Table 3.4. *Open-recruiting system used by major television networks in Korea.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KBS</th>
<th>MBC</th>
<th>SBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting year</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Comedians</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Open-recruit</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative Comedian</td>
<td>Shim, Hyung-Rae ('82) Yoo, Jae-Suk ('91) Kim, Yong-Man ('91) Nam, Hee-Suk ('91) Chung, Hyung-Don ('02) Kim, Byung-Man ('02)</td>
<td>Lee, Kyung-Kyu('81) Lee, Kyung-Sil('87) Park, Myung-Soo('93) Kang, Ho-Dong('93)</td>
<td>Shin, Dong-Yup ('92) Kim, Gura ('93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>543</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decrease in political entertainment during the military regimes.** As discussed in the previous chapter, *Mandam* became highly popular as a specific form of political entertainment. It created collaborative business relationships among record industries, newspaper corporations, and radio broadcasting during the Japanese colonial period. However, the popularity of *Mandam* dropped dramatically with the social turmoil that arose after the Korean War; it also dropped as radio became more and more socially influential. Accordingly, *Mandam* dwindled in status among the comedy industries, losing its distinctive features of expressing and sharing political opinions using satiric humor devices, particularly after Shin Bool-chool’s defection to North Korea.
Though a handful of Mandam storytellers such as Kim Yoon-sim continued to participate in the creation of political satire, and though some radio comedy dramas tried to convey social criticism through the utilization of such satiric humor devices, these comedy programs were somewhat different from original political satire as exemplified by Shin Bool-chool’s Mandam, because their social criticism was very restricted to everyday topics, including love matters and family troubles. Comedy soap operas in the 1950s and situational comedies in the 1960s actively drew upon these topics, aiming at producing lighter comedy; this ultimately resulted in the transformation of comedy into a new trend called home comedy. This was combined with active governmental intervention represented by myeongranghwa undong.

The advent of commercial broadcasting triggered the reappearance of political entertainment in a niche market. A representative political entertainment program was the five-minute commentary program entitled Aengmusae [Parrot], which aired on Donga Broadcasting Station (DBS) at 9:45 PM from 1963 to 1964 and which is now considered the first satiric radio commentary program to address various topical issues using satiric commentaries; as such, though it attracted great public attention, the program was controversial from its first broadcast in 1963, due to the intensity of its expression (Choi & Kang, 2001). It is particularly interesting to note that unlike other private commercial radio stations, DBS had news-oriented programs. The news-centered programming may be because DBS was affiliated with Donga, one of the major newspaper corporations; this implies that cooperative business relationships between radio and newspaper still existed around that time. The hybrid characteristics of Aengmusae—bridging the gap between news and entertainment—show similarities to present political entertainment; for example, broadcasting companies then and now utilize news information within

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89 DBS was not separate from the newspaper organization, but belonged to the editorial department of Donga News Corporation, which enabled it to make a number of news-related programs (Han, 2013).
entertainment programs to attract audiences’ attention. Though the program became popular owing to its satiric and witty commentaries that stabbed home, it ultimately went off air for political reasons enacted by the Park regime in 1964, when a huge protest against the nominalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan occurred. Around then, the Park Chung-Hee regime needed foreign investment to develop the nation’s state-led economy, and the recovery of diplomatic relations with Japan was the most realistic option for raising those funds. The Park regime’s attempt to raise funds, however, was heavily criticized as a humiliating deal in return for money. For this reason, the Park regime suppressed press organizations that were against the ruling party, mobilizing the repressive state apparatus (RSA) to prevent the instigation of public protests via the broadcasting of antigovernmental criticism (Leitch, 2001). As a result, six program-related persons, including journalists and producers, i.e., Choi Chang-bong, Cho Dong-hwa, Lee Yoon-ha, Goh Jae-eon, Lee Jong-goo, and Kim Yeong-hyo, were all arrested and imprisoned (Donga Daily, Jul. 1964). In relation to the content of *Aengmusae*, it is difficult to evaluate the extent of the program’s intensity of expression and satiric depth, because no original manuscripts of *Aengmusae* remain. Instead, it can be indirectly estimated based on examples given in several news articles.

- *How much the present government is as reckless and tainted as the government placates a high-spirited youth using such a grotesque method at the place where the whole country is staring in broad daylight……*
  

- *Certainly, there exist some influential executives of political party or dignitaries implicated in scandals……*
  
- *The person in charge of nation is taking time off to relax, but……*


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90 Interestingly, five years later, all six arrested persons were released when the prosecutor gave up his appeal to a higher court on July, 6, 1969. This surrender indicated that the suppression of *Aengmusae* was premeditated and based on political reasons, as a way of regulating press freedom (*Kyunghyang Daily*, Jul. 1969).
In accordance with the program’s goal of telling juicy stories while taking deliberate jabs, these examples show the freedom of verbal expression that the program had in satirically addressing various political affairs. This freedom of expression was referred to as manpyeong [漫評, a form of criticism that is spontaneous] (Donga Daily, Jun. 1963). When considering the satiric commentaries used in the program Aengmusae, it can be said that the program showed the possibility of a production that blended political satire, drawing on both news and entertainment in accordance with media market interests. The aengmusae affair was frequently regarded as representative of the conflict between politics and journalism (Han, 2013). However, the abolition of Aengmusae is also considered to have brought about a far more important change in the production of political entertainment in that it caused a disjunction between the printed news and the broadcasting stations’ focus on entertainment, which resulted in hindering the development of blended political entertainment programs for broadcast television.

After the aengmusae affair, radio satire was further marginalized, barely keeping itself in existence. Yet there were two shifts that helped radio satire to survive. First, political expression became more allegorical, with expressions of discontent implicitly expressed in the form of traditional fairy tales. For instance, Iksaldo Joeulsigo [Hurrah! I Like Humor, Too] aired on MBC Radio and critically dealt with topical affairs such as a real estate scandal and banks riddled with corruption via a virtual character named Kim Seon-dal, who had first appeared in a traditional fairy tale (Kyunghyang Daily, Aug. 1974). Secondly, and more importantly, new forms of short satiric commentary programs began to be broadcasted for five to ten minutes everyday. This allowed radio satire programs to regain some of their popularity for a short while in the late 1970s (Kyunghyang Daily, Dec. 1974). It is remarkable that satiric commentaries such
as Sinmungo on MBC, Yireokung-jeoreokung [Meddle One Way or the Other] on DBS, Janggunmeonggun [A Check in Turn] on CBS, and Sinminui sori [Citizen’s Voice] relied mostly on audience participation in order to create their satiric stories—the programs operated similarly to television call-in-shows, which enabled them to avoid any governmental censorship. Radio satires reliant on citizen / audience participation can thus be considered the earliest form of user-generated political entertainment in Korea. This form of audience participation in satire subsequently developed into online satiric user-generated content (UGC), a transformation I explore in detail in the next chapter.

In the meantime, political satire on TV was not particularly noteworthy until 1987. Though a few comedies such as Gojeon humor geukjang [Classic Humor Theater] on TBC sometimes featured stories punishing corrupt officials in an allegorical way, no political entertainment appeared on television until 1987 (Jeon, 2002). Rather, after the success of Useumyeon Boggiwayo, the 1970s came to be marked by television stand-up comedy. This stand-up comedy was led by Bae Sam-ryong, a comedian famous for the unintelligent character called bisiri [Doddering]. Lee Joo-il and Shim Hyeong-rae also came to achieve great popularity acting the fool. Such television comedy ultimately contributed to audience members’ conformity, given that television comedy is generally seen as a cultural product that reflects the spirit of the age. Through a functionalist lens, then, Korean television comedy served as a safety valve for maintaining and supporting the given social order (Apte, 1985; Powell, 1988; Billig, 2005). Put differently, it had a cohesive function: it worked towards hierarchy-building and hierarchy-maintaining in the society (Koller, 1988).

When considering the implications of these television comedy acts marked by unintelligent characters, conflicting views have been suggested in order to explain their

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91 Sinmungo is a traditional drum that was first used in 1401 for the purpose of remedying a grievance of the people.
popularity. According to the conflict theory lens, 1970s comedy should be considered a cultural construct that had a communicative function: through laughter, suppressed subjects were encouraged to reflect on repressive social conditions. According to this approach, unintelligent characters can be regarded as self-reflective characters who desperately seek paths of resistance in their repressive societies. This viewpoint is consistent with that of laughter theorists, who have paid attention to the culturally-mediating function of comedy, such as its engagement in a subversive discourse through its challenging of the given social order (Keough, 1990, p. 171).

In the similar vein, Choi (1978) has pointed out that unintelligent characters such as bisiri of Bae Sam-ryong serve as a portrait of the contemporaneous generation experiencing maladjustment in a rapidly-modernizing society. This is consistent with the theme of Charles Chaplin’s Modern Times. However, there is no denying that television comedy was severely suppressed from the state, no matter how it chose to reflect the modern subject. That being said, although television audiences could find some dissident messages within television comedy, it is difficult to suggest that television comedy was self-consciously aware of presenting political criticism (Song, 2011, pp. 215-216).

The production of stand-up comedy on TV became increasingly popular with the introduction of color television in 1981. As noted, along with the introduction of color broadcasting, major chaebols entered the broadcasting and advertising markets. Accordingly, the introduction of color television caused a change in the production system of television comedy in accordance with the commercialization of the broadcasting industry. In particular, the introduction of color broadcasting resulted in the enforced visualization of television comedy performances with colorful stage settings and high-tech equipment, which eventually impeded
the rise of satire-based narrative comedy. This trend continued until the late 1980s, when a turnover in political power occurred in line with increased calls for democratization.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter has explored the factors that influenced the black-out period of political entertainment from the 1960s to the late 1980s. Before the wide distribution of radio sets, gramophone-based comic performances were at the forefront of the entertainment industry. Comedy was still flourishing despite the devastation of the entertainment business during colonial rule and the Korean War periods; moreover, comedy had further developed and diversified in terms of both format and content, combining with show business, after the end of the Korean War. That is to say, comedy was actually at the center of the production and consumption of popular entertainment. However, a drop in the SP record business brought about a dramatic decrease in satiric comedies, and the cooperative business relationships between newspaper organizations and entertainment companies became separated due to tumultuous socio-political conditions.

As radios became increasingly widely distributed and a number of commercial radio stations were established, *Mandam* storytellers moved to such radio stations. These *Mandam* storytellers were asked to develop a form and content of *Mandam* suitable for radio broadcasting, and thus *Mandam* storytelling was combined with comic songs, which resulted in the abandonment of satire. The development of a production system by commercial radio stations led to the rise of lighter comedy dramas and situational comedies that dealt mainly with everyday affairs, and this trend in radio comedy production continued within television comedy production
as well until the late 1980s. Nevertheless, there were several attempts to make political entertainment programs for commercial radio broadcasting stations.

Specifically, Aengmusae on DBS showed the possibility of blended political entertainment: that is, the blending of news information and entertainment. However, the show failed due to strong political regulation and censorship. The Aengmusae affair had important implications for the rise and fall of the Korean political entertainment, because it suggested that business relationships between news organizations and entertainment organizations were faltering due to political suppression. The disjunction of these business relationships were not rectified until 2010, owing to repressive restructuring and governmental censorship by the military regimes.

Contrary to their strong suppression of newspaper organizations, the military regimes promoted the entertainment industry by introducing new media technology for the purpose of alleviating politically-motivated complaints of citizens. The dual process of media and communication policy influenced the transformation of the comedy genre, in association with the introduction of radio and (color) television in a broader political-economic context. This analysis shows that satiric criticism in radio comedy was marginalized at the boundary of production between news and entertainment owing to repressive political regulation. Though there were some significant attempts to bring satiric criticism to the radio as a means of political expression, these attempts were immediately attacked by the Park’s regime. That is, the repressive political regime played a significant role in impeding the revitalization of satiric criticism on the radio and television through stringent censorship that thwarted the freedom of political expression. Simultaneously and more importantly, the military regimes helped limit the marketization of political entertainment, as suggested by the Aengmusae affair.
After the Aengmusae affair, radio satire barely kept itself in existence via two shifts: the development of allegorical satires in the form of traditional fairy tales, and the advent of programs driven by audience participation. These programs had something in common in that they utilized allegories and audience participation in order to avoid governmental regulation. On the other hand, political satire on TV was not particularly popular until 1987, although a few television comedies showed somewhat satiric stories in allegorical ways. Rather, most television comedies were stand-up comedies based on unintelligent characters. The popularity of stand-up comedy continued to the late 1980s, and the introduction of color broadcasting contributed to the enforced visualization of television comedy performances in accordance with the
industrialization of the television market, which impeded the popularity of satire-based narrative comedy until 1987.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE VICISSITUDES OF POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT FROM 1987 TO 2007

“There can be no such thing as a sanctuary in an artful criticism. Everyone may as well utilize him as material for making fun”
- President Roh Tae-Woo

In examining the influence of Mandam on the initial stages of political entertainment in Chapter 3, I have sought to demonstrate that Korean political entertainment arose in order to generate profit, and moreover, that it relied on symbiotic relationships between the information industry (newspaper companies and radio stations) and the entertainment industry (theatrical organizations and record companies based on gramophone). Despite this initial boom in political entertainment, however, political entertainment faltered during the two military regimes. Questioning this decline, I suggested that the fall of Korean political entertainment was associated with generic transformations within Korean political entertainment that came about due to the comedy production system and the specific political-economic context.

Specifically, I examined how the change in the market and the introduction of new media technology had a direct effect on the decline of political entertainment. As discussed, political entertainment faltered right after the decline of the SP album business and the rise of radio broadcasting, which resulted in Mandam storytellers moving to radio and film, as well as the further development of entertainment-oriented form and content—content that deviated from that which was satire-based. Furthermore, governmental policy was marked by a dual process of suppression of the press and promotion of entertainment, and this caused the cooperative business relationships between the information industry and the entertainment industry in the

92 “Everyone may as well utilize him as material for making fun” (Dec, 30, 1987). Donga Daily, A3
changing political economy environment to fail. Two exemplary cases, the introduction of (color) television and the Aengmusae affair, indicate the effects of such a dual process on the vicissitudes of political entertainment during the military regimes.

Meanwhile, the introduction of television influenced the generic transformation of television comedy into stand-up comedy on the basis of unintelligent characters, and the 1970s and 1980s were thus marked by the popularity of stand-up television comedy. In those days, there were some attempts to produce a televised political satire that used allegory in much the same way as radio did, but those attempts did not contribute to revitalizing political entertainment on TV. Rather, the tendency toward producing television stand-up comedy had been reinforced according to the introduction of color television until 1987.

With this continued drop in the production of televised political entertainment as the context, production only reached a turning point in 1987, when of the movement for the democratization of Korean society took hold. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore the factors that influenced such a democratic change and how these factors were associated with the vicissitude of political entertainment that became popular after the ’87 democratization movement.

The Dynamic Change in Political Economy From 1987 to 2007

Political democratization in 1987 and the change in politics. The ’87 movement for political democratization, known as the June Democracy Movement due to its start date of June 10, 1987, brought about a substantial change in Korean society. For nineteen days, nation-wide protests were held, often led by student movement groups. These protests were triggered when student Lee Han-Yeol was struck by the splinter of a tear-gas grenade and went into a coma.

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93 Student movement groups led various street demonstrations. 930,644 students participated in 1987 (Chung, 1997, p. 90).
during a student rally agitating for a constitutional revision that would allow for a direct presidential election system (Katsiaficas, 2012, pp. 277-278). After Lee’s injury, major rallies became widespread, with rally locations including Seoul, Busan, Gwangju, Daegu, Inchon, and 22 additional large cities in Korea. An estimated 250,000 people participated in protesting the government’s suppression of citizens’ political freedom and calling for the reversal of Chun Doo-Hwan’s choice of Roh Tae-Woo for the next president. The mass protests reached their peak on June 18, when 1.5 million people rushed into the streets to attend the National Rally for the Banishment of Tear Gas Bomb. This rally generated support from white collar laborers, who came to participate in mass rallies in 34 cities in Korea. Such rallies continued until the Great National Peaceful March on June 26. Eventually, on June 29, Roh Tae-Woo, the controversial candidate for the presidency among ruling party members, announced the June 29 Declaration. This declaration included an amendment to the constitution stipulating the direct election of president. It was documented that a total of 3,362 demonstrations occurred during the June Democracy Movement, followed by 3,037 demonstrations during the Great Labor Action from July to September (Chung, 2002, p. 248).

The ’87 democratization movement changed the Korean political landscape in many ways. First, the movement contributed to civic participation in all areas of Korean society by triggering the active engagement of middling grassroots (MG)\(^{94}\) (Han, 2001). Moreover, with the amendment to the constitution brought about by the June 29 Declaration, civil rights became clearly indicated and legally reinforced. More particularly, the direct election of the president became mandated by law, and the separation of power among different governmental divisions was re-balanced through a reduction of presidential power. Citizens’ support for the

\(^{94}\) The term middling grassroots (MG) has been suggested by Han Sang-Jin to refer to those social groups that are positioned in the middle of the social structure yet identify themselves as grassroots groups--neither part of the establishment nor part of the underclass (Han, 2001, p. 113).
movement caused the government to enter into discussions about nation-wide democratic reforms, and these discussions sparked the creation of several different social movements (Strnad, 2011; Kim, S., 2000, p. 106).

Furthermore, the ’87 democratization movement provided the energy to make an alternative democratic social order. These efforts were led by large-scale labor movements named *Nodongja Daetujaeng* [The Great Labor Actions] (Koo, 2001). Subsequently, a number of regional confederations of trade unions and congresses of trade unions, organized by industry, such as the National Council of Korean Teachers (later called the Korean Teachers and Educational Workers’ Union) and Confederation of Financial Industry Labor Union, were established beginning in September 1987. These groups eventually resulted in the establishment of a national umbrella organization called *Jeonguk minju nodongjohap chongyeonmaeng* [The National Confederation of Trade Union (NCTU)] via the National Congress of Trade Union. The labor movement originally sought to establish a representative organization to protect laborers’ right, but the movements turned out to be engaged in changing broader societal structures. Likewise, student movement groups split into different groups with various ideological orientations, ranging from radical Marxism to modified capitalism. Thus, the ’87 democratization movement proved an important moment for bifurcating the pro-democratization group and the supporters of industrialization in Korean society. This bifurcation continues as a cultural and discursive form in present-day Korean society.

Furthermore, the democratization movement directly influenced the media and communication industries. Governmental suppression of the newspaper companies was less viable, because the ’87 democratization movement called for freedom of the press in accordance with increasing citizens’ power. In this political mood, Roh’s regime was forced to adopt a press-
liberalization policy. Accordingly, the number of the newspaper companies increased considerably from 1987 onwards; this was after the abolition of the Basic Press Law that had been enacted by the Chun Doo-Hwan government for the purpose of regulating press organizations.

More importantly, in regard to the economic sector, the deregulation of economy policy that had begun during the Chun regime was accelerated by the Roh regime after the ’87 democratization movement. The Roh regime rushed to open up the market in which direct foreign investments had been tightly regulated by the early 1980s. Moreover, import-liberalization and deregulation of ownership policies were implemented. As a result of such economic liberalization, chaebols expanded their economic powers to all business sectors, even though some governmental regulations still existed to control chaebols. Accordingly, economic deregulation brought about the rapid accumulation of economic wealth for top-ranked chaebols, and eventually contributed to the increase in chaebols’ domination over the Korean economy, which became a critical moment in shifting from a state-led economy to a private sector-led economy.

At the same time, the longstanding collusive relationship between government and business became increasingly conflictual. A set of chaebols established an association called the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) in 1989 for the purpose of increasing the chaebols’ political powers and rejecting coercive donations of political funds to the ruling party as well as Roh’s regime. FKI actively intervened in the policy-making process in order to accomplish the objectives that would best suit its business purposes. The inconsistency of the state’s policy-making had been seen frequently in the Roh Tae-Woo government of the late 1980s. Against

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95 It was a longstanding political custom that the military governments would provide favors to limited chaebol corporations, and in return, the chaebols would provide illegal kickbacks to the ruling party (Song, 1997).
expectations, however, the liberalization and privatization policies that the Roh government promoted for the purpose of undermining chaebols’ economic powers resulted in enervating the government’s influence over the business sector. The military governments’ liberalization and deregulation policies were unsuccessful because of the conflictual relationship between dictatorial politics and increasingly liberal business. The Roh regime had less political power than the Park regime, and thus the dominant-subordinate relationship between government and business became more mutual. Afterward, economic deregulation brought about another dramatic change in combination with the rise of neo-liberal capitalism, which led to the establishment of a new governmental policy termed segyehwa and that was propelled by the Kim Yong-Sam government beginning in 1993.

Globalization and global economic crisis. It was while attending the APEC summit in Sydney, Australia, on November 17, 1994, that former president Kim Young-sam first outlined his project segyehwa (globalization). The speech during which he outlined it was called the Sydney Declaration. Afterwards Kim gave shape to segyehwa plan, emphasizing that “globalization is the shortcut that will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st century. This is why I have revealed my plan for globalization and the government has concentrated all of its energy in forging ahead with it,” on January 6, 1995 (Kim, S. S., 2000, p. 1) This announcement was particularly important because it showed that the Kim regime recognized globalization as the necessary means through which Korea could further develop.

A vast body of literature has examined the exceptional case of Korean globalization in the post-Cold War world, paying particular attention to how Korea’s globalization was publicly initiated by the government as a state-enhancing, top-down strategic plan. Globalization of Korea contrasts with the trajectory of Western globalization, which is led by “hyperglobalization and
globaloney school.” Consequently, the effects of this alternative method remain complex and paradoxical (Kim, S. S., 2000, p.17). This means that despite that the dramatic increase in international trade and financial flow, both of which indicate a high level of global economic interdependence, globalization is not its own initiator. Rather, globalization encompasses “a set of processes of stretching and intensifying worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of human relations and transactions” (Kim, S. S., 2000, p.18). Thus, Kim’s segyehwa was not limited to economic liberalization, but was a more comprehensive renovation plan that embraced political, cultural, and societal changes. Furthermore, from a political lens, the Kim regime necessarily drove segyehwa for the purpose of setting an agenda that would be different from those of prior military governments; the Kim regime also wanted to distinguish itself from North Korea’s independent policy based on juche-sasang (the ideology of self-reliance). Accordingly, the Kim government initiated nation-wide reforms under the name of segyehwa and that transcended all aspects of society including politics, economy, culture, technologies, diplomacy, and even military/security (see Table 4.1). The Kim regime was seeking entry into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in March 1995 and joined the OECD as its 29th member in December 1996. In addition, the Kim regime asked Korean citizens to have global minds, to diversify their lifestyles, and to satisfy the global standards for active participation in global affairs.

Despite Korea’s continued stable economic growth in both its private consumption and gross domestic product (GDP) during the first half of 1990s, economic indexes triggered alarm

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96 For instance, Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows and outflows (OFDI) totaled $400 billion and $424 billion, respectively, in 1997; these numbers are approximately double those of 1990, according to a report by UNCTAD (1998).

97 Korea’s entry to OECD was politically controversial. Advocates suggested that OECD membership would identify Korea as among the advanced countries, while opponents whether OECD membership would require Korea to open its financial market to meet the WTO’s standards, thus exposing the nation to abundant competition with the world’s major economic powers (Oh, 1999).
about a potential crisis in state’s economy. Korea’s exports gradually declined until 1997, and price competitiveness of Korea’s export items also fell due to an increase in domestic wages. According to Harvey (2005), the Korean economy succumbed to a high level of competition and experienced a downfall in profitability due to a loss of export markets. Consequently, chaebols were exposed to high debt-to-equity ratios that came about by taking out foreign loans, which influenced their vulnerability to any increases in interest rates (Harvey, 2005, p. 110).

Table 4.1. *Four dimensions of Korea’s globalization.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic globalization</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Financial reform</th>
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<td>Capital</td>
<td>Corporate reform</td>
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<td>Investment</td>
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<td>MNCs</td>
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<td>Shift from loans to FDI</td>
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<td>Social and cultural globalization</td>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>Education reform</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pop Culture</td>
<td>Mass media reform</td>
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<td>Tourists</td>
<td>Knowledge-intensive industrial policy</td>
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<td>Education (Student)</td>
<td>Universal globalism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>Social concentration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Welfare state and social safety nets</td>
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<td>Social Practices and Institutions</td>
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<td>Diplomatic globalization</td>
<td>Democratization</td>
<td>Status drive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diplomatic exchange</td>
<td>Economic diplomacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ICO connection</td>
<td>“Independent collective security”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NGO connection</td>
<td>ODA</td>
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<td>Global conferences</td>
<td>Financial contribution</td>
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<td>Security globalization</td>
<td>Proliferation of WMDs</td>
<td>Interdependent collective security</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arms trade</td>
<td>Bilateralism v. multilateralism</td>
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<td>Defense production</td>
<td>UNPKO participation</td>
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<td>UNPKO</td>
<td>US-KOR alliance</td>
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<td>“Sunshine policy” to N. Korea</td>
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(Kim, S. S., 2000, p.22-23)
The financial market also turned out to be detrimental due to the hasty adoption of neoliberal globalization policies and an increase in short-term debt. These became the very factors that brought about the unprecedented change in the Korean economy as well as the vulnerability of Korea’s economy to international speculators, who destroyed the South Asian financial markets (particularly Thailand and Indonesia) beginning in July 1997.

As a harbinger of the Korean economic crisis, Hanbo Steel, the 14th of the chaebol groups, went bankrupt due to insolvent loans and corruption in which both governmental officials and merchant bankers were implicated. This collapse was followed by those of the Kia Motors group, SsangYong, Jinro, Newcore, and other eight mid-size chaebol organizations that had previously ranked among the top thirty chaebol corporations (Harvey, 2005, pp. 110-111). Due to the problem of non-performing loans in dozens of merchant banks, the Korean economy spiraled out of governmental control. Eventually, the Kim government asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to provide the nation with an emergency relief fund in November 1997. The IMF decided to offer $21 billion for an emergency loan, and the World Bank approved $10 billion for financial assistance.

Moreover, the United States, Japan, and other European countries put together a $58.4 billion bailout plan, which was the largest bailout plan ever since Mexico’s 1994 economic crisis. For all of the above reasons, the globalization policies driven by the Kim Young-sam government have been criticized by a number of studies. For instance, Gills and Gills (2000) and Kim (2000) have criticized Kim’s segyehwa policy as not only misconceived, but also responsible for the deterioration of the Korean economy in the long run in three specific areas: deconcentration, liberalization, and democratization. They have charged that Kim’s segyehwa eventually forced Korea to meet global standards including the liberalization of the financial
market required by neoliberal global organizations such as the OECD and WTO, not recognizing that Korea’s economy continued to grow until mid-1997 without this adoption of neoliberal global policies. Particularly, they have contended that Kim’s labor policy increased the vulnerability of the Korean economy, and that the neoliberal labor policy resulted in the failure of Kim’s globalization.

**Economic recovery and afterwards.** Due to the Asian financial crisis, Korea’s gross domestic product (GDP) plunged by 8.1% in July 1998. The unemployment rate skyrocketed 8.7%, with the number of unemployed people rising to 1.78 million by February 1999 (Lee, 2004, p. 48). Moreover, some indexes showed a dramatic downturn in the Korean economy: for example, the rate of private consumption growth and the export growth rate fell to -12.5% and -10.8%, respectively, in mid-1998, while dozens of merchant banks went bankrupt due to financial liquidity problems (Koo & Kiser, 2001). Korea’s globalization and neo-liberalization was led by global economic crisis in 1997. It triggered a nation-wide transformation in all industries and public organizations in Korea. Working under the regulations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the following president Kim Dae-Jung instigated substantial national reforms designed to restore the financial market; these reforms helped to ensure the quick recovery of the GDP, which grew by 10% in 1999 and 9% in 2000. The Kim Dae-Jung government also promoted the use of credit cards in order to revitalize the domestic economy. Such encouragement of consumption contributed to the recovery of the economy, with up to 4% annual growth between 2003 and 2007.\(^98\) Furthermore, Kim’s promotion of consumption served as a sign of a transition in the Korean economy from an export-driven economy to a consumer-driven economy in the post-IMF era.

\(^98\) In promoting credit card usage, the Kim Dae-Jung government intended to boost domestic demand and enhance financial transparency. Yet this increase in credit card usage ultimately translated into an increase in household debt and a rise in the number of delinquent borrowers by 3.7 million (Kim, 2005).
It is somewhat ironic, however, that although the progressive party took charge beginning in 1997, these regimes, the Kim Dae-Jung regime and the subsequent Roh Moo-Hyun government, actively promoted a neoliberal economic plan that included a free-trade agreement (FTA) and went against their political ideologies. For example, Roh’s government participated in the overseas dispatch of armed forces to Iraq and actively initiated FTAs with the United States, the European Union, and other countries. Roh’s government made its first FTA with Chile in 2004; this was followed by its FTA with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Lichtenstein, in 2006; Singapore and ten ASEAN countries in 2007; and an initial agreement with the United States in April 2007.99

The next conservative regime, the Lee Myung-Bak regime, succeeded in expanding the FTA plan to include many other countries, such as India in July 2009; Peru in August 2010; Columbia in June 2012; Turkey in December 2012; and the most controversial contract with the United States on March 15, 2012. The present Park Keun-Hye regime has completed FTAs with Australia in December 2013 and Canada in March 2014. The Korean government has made FTAs with 49 countries in total, and FTAs with 35 additional countries are either in progress or under investigation.100 The expansion of the FTA plan for a decade means that the Korean economy has made further gains towards becoming an export-driven economy. Along with this increase in exports, consumption spending has also increased. Consumption spending was $80 billion in 1998 and rose to $120 billion in 2012.101 Neoliberalists who support the trickle-down effect based on FTAs and the liberalization of the economy often refer to these positive economic indexes, while opponents suggest that having a sizable economy does not necessarily

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99 Korea’s FTA with the U.S. provoked controversy regarding the unsafety of American meat imports due to mad cow disease. Accordingly, millions of protesters held candlelight rallies for two months in order to express their discontent. Nevertheless, the FTA took effect on March 15, 2012.
100 http://www.FTA.go.kr/
101 http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-korea/consumer-spending
guarantee the equal distribution of economic wealth—rather, it may very well aggravate extant economic inequalities.

Interestingly enough, although the progressive party has been in office for a decade, the neoliberal economic policy had not been altered. Although the Roh government ordered the continuous restructuring of chaebol-centered Korean economy, the government mainly propelled a market-oriented policy, preventing governmental intervention in the market by adopting an expansionary policy. The following government, the Lee government, returned to push ahead chaebol-friendly economic policies that included corporate tax reductions, the privatization of public enterprises, equity investment limits on large conglomerates, and the easement of the separation of financial and industrial capital. However, the Lee regime also actively utilized state-led economic policies such as the artificial expansionary policy, termed Sadaegangsaup [Four-River Refurbishment Project]. This reveals the complex nature of the Korean economy (Kim, 2011).

The compounded economic policy adopted by each government helps to account for the distinctive features of the Korean economy. First, the Korean government shifted its state-led development model toward a private-sector-driven and more market-based economy, recognizing that a state-led economy was no longer appropriate for continued development due to its many intrinsic problems. At the same time, after experiencing the Asian economic crisis from 1997-1999, the Korean government had no choice but to adopt neoliberal economic plans such as further opening its market to foreign investment and imports, because the openness of

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103 There was another global financial and economic crisis in 2008 caused by the subprime mortgage crisis in the U.S. During that time, Korea’s annual GDP growth was sluggish at 2.3% in 2008 and approximately 0% in 2009, but it was not worse than the world’s average GDP growth, which dropped to -0.7% in 2009 (statistics are available online at http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm).

104 The problems were among ‘highly centralized and personalized dirigisme’ and ‘personalized dirigisme’ (Park, 2003, p. 192); and ‘politization and de-politicization of bureaucracies’ and ‘collusion among state power holders, bureaucrats’ (Park 2003, pp.166, 192, as quoted in Nam, 2008, pp. 641-642)
financial market was one of the major requirements set by the IMF and the World Bank. These requirements were reflected in the state’s sovereignty rating by three major international credit bureaus (CBs): Moody’s, Fitch’s, and Standard & Poor’s.

Second, the private-sector-driven economy was led by chaebols. Since the Chun regime had adopted a deregulatory economic policy, the chaebol companies had dramatically accumulated economic wealth through foreign direct investment, including short-term foreign loans; they had also accumulated wealth by virtue of special favors from the Korean government.\textsuperscript{105} As noted, chaebols have taken a major role in the Korean economy. In the 1980s, the top three chaebols controlled 62\% of the total manufacturing sector in Korea, and the top 10 chaebols accounted for 75\% of total sales in the 2000s. Also, the number of affiliated companies held by the top twenty chaebols totaled 381 in 1987, only to reach 589 in 1999, right after the economic crisis, and 802, more than twice its original number, in 2010. These numbers help explain the increase of the chaebols’ dominance within all areas of the Korean economy (see Table 4.2.).

Moreover, the expansion of the chaebols’ dominance demonstrates the move toward a high-tech industrialized economy. Since the early 1980s when the Chun government initiated the development of information and electronic technology, top-ranked chaebols actively participated in enlarging their businesses by integrating their hardware with software industries such as manufacturing, semi-conductors, mobile phones, televisions, video equipment, and computers. For example, Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and Daewoo ran the high-tech business, including the

\textsuperscript{105} However, the private sector-driven model was dependent upon a high level of foreign loans, which resulted in an increase in vulnerability. For example, the Daewoo conglomerate, one of the top three chaebols, had been a global business since 1993, but Daewoo could not afford to repay its loans due to the IMF financial crisis. Eventually, Daewoo went bankrupt and was dismantled by the Kim Dae-Jung government in 1999. Among the subsidies, Daewoo Motors was picked and shared by General Motors and an Indian automobile company, the Tata Group (The Economist, Aug. 19, 1999).
manufacturing of computers, semi-conductors, and white appliances in the 1980s. Some other chaebols such as SK and Hansol began the telecommunications business in the 1990s. In this way, the largest chaebols were given opportunities to enter the media and communication industry.

Table 4.2. List of top twenty chaebols between 1987 and 2010.\textsuperscript{106}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1987</th>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Number of affiliations</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Number of affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hyundai group</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Samsung group\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Daewoo group</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Hyundai Motors\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Samsung group</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>SK group</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lucky-Geumsung (LG)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>LG group\textsuperscript{c}</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SsangYong</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>LOTTE group</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hanjin</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>POSCO</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SunKyung (SK)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>GS\textsuperscript{c}</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hanhwa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Hyundai heavy industry group\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Daelim</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kumho-Asiana group</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>LOTTE</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Hanjin group</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Donga construction</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>KT</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hanil Hapsum</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Doosan group</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kia Motors</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hanhwa group</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Doosan</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>STX</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Beomyang sanssun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LS\textsuperscript{c}</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hyosung</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Daewoo shipping</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dongkuk steel corp.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hynix\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sam-mi steel corp.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CJ\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hanyang construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daelim construction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kuk-dong construction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dongbu construction</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of affiliates</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>Total number of affiliates</td>
<td>802</td>
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\textsuperscript{106} Korean Fair Trade Commission: \url{www.ftc.go.kr}
Political Economy of Korean Media and Communication Industry From 1987 to 2007

As the previous section has suggested, Korea’s political economy has been rapidly transforming into a market-oriented economy from a foreign-assisted economy via a highly government-driven economy. Over the course of this transformation, the balance of power between politics and business has also changed. In general, politics and business had been collusive, but sometimes there was conflictory. The change in the balance of power appeared most clearly in the media and communication industries and was at least partially brought about by citizens’ actions in the late 1980s. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how the change in Korea’s political economy was associated with the chaebols’ entry into the information and media industry, and how the change has influenced Korea’s media and communication environment.

In the meantime, although the dual process of suppression and promotion of the media and communication industries had been the distinctive feature of governmental policies during the military regimes, the direct suppression of press organizations was no longer applicable in Korean society due to the growth of democratic power after the ’87 democratization movement. The Roh Tae-Woo regime was forced to change the repressive policies that former military regimes initiated. Accordingly, the liberalization of the press became accelerated. The initial change was the abolition of the Press Basic Law enacted in 1980 and the shift of press regulation back to the registration system of 1987-88 and away from the permit system that had enabled the military regime to directly control the press organizations. The number of press organizations had grown dramatically since 1987. There were only 30 daily newspapers at the end of 1987, but there were 148 by 2005. Likewise, general periodicals quadrupled in numbers:
there were 9,720 periodicals in total in 2005, compared to 2,412 in 1987. The *chaebols’* full-scale entry into the press industry was another noticeable feature during that time.

Furthermore, as the restriction on the number of pages allowed in a daily newspaper was eliminated, daily newspapers began to grow, with some having up to forty pages per issue in 1995. As for the broadcasting industry, the private broadcasting system was reintroduced in 1991. Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) began to broadcast on December 9, 1991. Along with the establishment of SBS, eleven private terrestrial broadcasting corporations were set up according to the rule of one broadcasting corporation per province. Four private broadcasting corporations were established in the four major cities of Busan, Daegu, Daejeon, and Gwangju in 1995; this was followed by Inchon, Ulsan, Jeonju, and Chungju in 1997; Gwangwon in 2001; and Jaeju in 2002 (Jeong, Y. S., 2013). The introduction of the private broadcasting system denoted a shift in the Korean broadcasting system from its state-led status to a hybrid system of public and private broadcasting.

The liberalization of the media and communication industries became full-fledged under the umbrella of the Kim Young-sam government. As the earlier section noted, Kim’s government had driven state reform under the name of *segyehwa*, which aimed at building a new economy on the basis of information technology (IT). As a means of embracing information and communication technologies, the Kim regime introduced the cable television broadcasting system by enacting the Horizontal Publication (Cable TV) Act in 1993 and subsequently

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107 It is generally agreed that there was an important shift in the Korean media industries from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s (Shim, 2006), though scholars continue to debate when neoliberal economic policies and globalization were initially introduced in Korea. For example, Jin (2007) has argued that the liberalization and globalization of the Korean culture industries was planned in the early 1980s, while scholars such as Shim (2006) have suggested that neoliberalism and globalization came with democratization of the state and a global change in politics.
selecting twenty cable television program providers (PP) to launch cable broadcasting in 1995. In this context, the Kim regime deregulated the cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcasting organizations and gave breaks to several chaebols. Consequently, the four largest chaebols of the 1980s entered the cable television industry by operating entertainment program channels.

Additionally, the Kim government revised the initial policy that had restricted providers from broadcasting foreign content no more than 30% of the total cable time per channel; this policy had been put in place with the understanding that cable broadcasting corporations were not ready to produce their own programs. With the relaxation of this policy, then, cable television was flooded with a number of foreign entertainment program (Nam, 2008). The IMF economic crisis accelerated the governmental deregulation of the media industry for chaebols and foreign investors. The Kim Dae-Jung government enforced the Integrated Broadcasting Law in 2000, in which chaebols could share 33% of the stock in cable system operators (SO) as well as satellite TV. This led chaebols to have multiple system operators (MSO). In addition, the Integrated Broadcasting Law did not care who registered as the program provider (PP) managing a cable channel; this meant that chaebols could make sets of multiple program providers (PPs) for their affiliates.

Due to such chaebol-friendly lawmaking, the market dominance by chaebols increased in the 2000s. The introduction of cable television in Korea thus illustrates the state-market alliance “embedded in the compressed economic development model” (Nam, 2008, p.650). Although

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108 The cable television business is comprised of three elements: (1) the Program Provider (PP); (2) the System Operator (SO); and (3) the Network Operator (NO). The PP produces the television programs, and programs and manages the cable channel(s), similar to a cable network in the U.S., while the SO functions as the local station that transmits the program from the PP to the end user. The NO installs network equipment and manages the whole cable network infrastructure. The government sets up the three elements to protect the public system as well as to promote the private broadcasting system. Cable television in Korea officially launched with 21 PPs, 87 SOs, and 2 NOs on March 1, 1995. Among these three elements, two entrepreneurs (KT and Powerom) were the exclusive NOs; presently, however, an LG affiliate has taken over as sole NO (Lee, 1994, pp. 44-47).
civic participation rose in the late 1980s, a civic watchdog over the media did not develop until the 1990s. This meant that the collusive relationship between government and industry (chaebol) persisted in the selection process of cable television operators\textsuperscript{109}, which was surprising given the newspaper headlines championing the “Visual Revolution” and the “Channel of Dreams.”\textsuperscript{110,111,112}

After the IMF economic crisis in 1997, the Korean media industry became globalized; this was in keeping with the nation-wide globalization project led by government. It is ironic, though, that two progressive regimes, the governments of Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun, adopted cultural expansionist policies based on an open-door approach to media and culture.\textsuperscript{113} While the television and broadcasting industries became dominated by chaebols, other cultural and entertainment industries began to be propelled by the progressive regimes. In line with the governmental promotion of the media and entertainment industry, the broadcasting corporations began to actively sell their content to neighboring countries, which were called hallyu. This is discussed in detail later.

**The increase in the chaebols’ domination over the media and communication industries.** The ’87 democratization movement resulted in media reforms along with reformations in other public sectors. Ironically, however, societal democratization seemed to go hand-in-hand with the commercialization of media organizations. Big chaebols such as Samsung, Hyundai, LOTTE, and Hanwha, as well as huge religious associations (Tongil Church and Soonbokeum Church) moved into the press business at this time. Specifically, Samsung

\textsuperscript{109} For example, Kim Hyun-Chul, a son of President Kim Young-sam, took bribes from Daeho, a small construction company, in return for entry into the cable television industry (*Maeil Daily Economy*, Sep. 1997).
\textsuperscript{113} It was partly because Korea’s media industry was forced to open up in the same way that all other market sectors had been forced to under IMF regulations. However, it has been generally agreed that the basic promotion of the Korean cultural industries was planned by the government (Cho, 2005).
continued to manage *JoongAng Daily* newspaper, sharing 68.8% of its stock, while Hyundai established *Munhwa Daily*. Hanhwa also entered the press industry through the acquisition of 99.8% of the shares of *Kyunghyang Daily*. LOTTE owned 96% of the shares of *Kookjae Daily*, a newspaper company based in Busan. Other medium-sized chaebols such as Daenong and Gapeul owned more than half each of *Naewoi Daily Economy* (combined with *Korea Herald*, an English-language newspaper) and *Youngnam Daily*, a local Busan newspaper.\(^\text{114}\)

This concentration of the chaebols’ media corporation ownership grew rapidly because of the introduction of cable television. GS (separate from LG), Hyundai, and LOTTE all began home shopping businesses, managing GS Home Shopping (LG Home-shopping), Hyundai Home Shopping, and LOTTE Home Shopping, respectively. In addition, medium-sized chaebols such as CJ and Orion actively invested in the media and communication industries. Orion owned On-Media, a multiple-system program operator (MSP) that managed eleven channels on CATV, and CJ E&M also owned thirteen cable TV channels, including a home-shopping channel, CJ O-Shopping.\(^\text{115}\)

Along with the chaebols’ entry into the cable television industry, a number of media corporations rushed to establish affiliates for their cable television businesses. Newspaper corporations entered the cable broadcasting market by running entertainment channels (JoongAng Daily) or news-related information channels (Chosun Daily, Hankook Daily, Kookmin Daily, Maeil Daily Economy among others).\(^\text{116}\) Furthermore, terrestrial broadcasting companies enlarged their market shares by operating affiliates of cable program providers. In

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2005, KBS owned three cable channels (KBS Sky Drama, KBS Sky Sports, and KBS Korea), and MBC had four channels (Drama Net, MBC-ESPN, MBC Game, and Movie Channel). SBS, a private terrestrial broadcasting corporation, also ran three channels (SBS Golf, SBS Sport, and Drama Plus) until 2005. The main purpose of these companies’ entry into the cable television industry was to maximize their profits by recycling their existing content. Thus, the terrestrial broadcasting companies took an interest in circulating entertainment content such as drama, sports, and movies, while newspaper corporations focused on utilizing their information-based content. However, a common interest among all media corporations was that they considered cable television a new venue for recycling their material in order to increase their profits.

The commercialization and globalization of media and communication technology had accelerated since the IMF economic crisis in 1997. The IMF crisis forced structural changes in the media and communication industry. First, four largest chaebols that had actively expanded their businesses to the media and cultural industries partially withdrew their businesses for the purpose of lessening management risks. Samsung announced its film business association would pull out because of massive restructuring in 1997. The film affiliates of Daewoo also pulled out due to the bankruptcy of their mother company in 1999. LG and Hyundai decided to focus their businesses on their specialties: electronics and semi-conductor. Taken in sum, these moves suggest that contrary expectations, big chaebols did not succeed in creating synergistic business alliances between the hardware and software realms through entering the media and communication industries.

The 2000s were marked by the entry of medium-sized chaebols such as CJ, LOTTE, and Orion into the media and communication industries. What differentiates these three medium-sized chaebols’ entry into the media market from the entry of the big chaebols was that the main
goal of the medium-sized chaebols was the restructuring of corporations to be more technology-based businesses. Indeed, CJ and Orion intended to shift the businesses’ focus from food to information technology (IT), while LOTTE sought to make synergic effects on its original business (department store and retail distribution). More specifically, CJ Entertainment (presently CJ E&M) expanded its business from simply film and cable broadcasting to also include the Internet, music, games and star management. LOTTE expanded to film and the home-shopping cable business, while Orion entered the media market through the acquisition of a cable movie channel (DCN) from Daewoo Cinema Network in May 1999 and established a multiplex theater network in the same year. Orion concentrated its business resources on the cable and film industry. In this way, three medium-sized chaebols easily took over the market from the big four chaebols around the time of the IMF economic crisis by controlling every stage of production and distribution through vertical integration.

Chaebols instantly invested in the almost every arena of the media and information industries, embracing computer software, the Internet, music, cable distribution and programming, and film investment and distribution, among others. In a typical example, CJ rushed to create a huge alliance among all types of media and entertainment businesses: cable broadcasting, the Internet, games, music, and the performing arts. Meanwhile, Orion decided to sell its affiliates On-Media and Megabox in order to focus more on content-rich business and foreign investment, including film, music, and animation. On-Media and Megabox were subsequently acquired by the Macquarie Fund in 2007 and CJ E&M in 2010 respectively.

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Connecting globally but concentrating locally. Another distinctive feature of the Korean media and communication industries is their consistent participation in globalization since 1997. Since the IMF economic crisis, Korea has rapidly emerged as one of the most dynamic nations in the current world media market. Since 2000, Korea had been recorded as one of the countries with the highest widespread broadband usage among households and the first country to achieve 100% penetration for wireless broadband subscription within a relatively short period (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2012). Korean entertainment media comes with digital technology reception, which has resulted in the rapid growth of digital entertainment media.

Along with governmental efforts towards the globalization of the media industry, the Korean cultural products have gained great attentions in the Asian neighboring countries in the late 1990s. The extraordinary production, distribution, and consumption of Korean entertainment content has been called the Korean Wave or hallyu (in Korean), which refers to the increase in popularity of South Korean entertainment and culture. Korean entertainment spread to neighboring Asian countries in the late 1990s, and more recently it has been diffused all the way to the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas (e.g., Cho, 2005; Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008a; Ryoo, 2009; Huang, 2011). This content ranges from television dramas and movies to popular music (K-pop). Currently, hallyu is expanding to other cultural goods, including online games, food, tourism, fashion, and cosmetics, and even the Korean language (Hangul). Since the Chinese newspaper Beijing Youth Daily first used the term hallyu in 1999 to illustrate the zeal of Chinese audiences for Korean TV dramas and pop songs, as well as the overall rise of

\[120\] It is not clear exactly when the term hallyu became popular among neighboring Asian countries, but the origin of the term hallyu came from a homonym in Korean (hallyu: 韓流), Japanese (Kanryu), and Chinese (hanliu: 寒流). The term does not refer only to the Korean wave, but implies a strong influence like a Siberian cold wind of different cultures in China (Sung, 2010). Its meaning was shifted to “Korean wind” as Korean media content has maintained its influence on mainland China.
Korean pop culture in mainland China, millions of Asians have become enthusiastic devotees of Korean pop culture as imported to the Asian region.

After the remarkable success of the Korean television drama *What Is Love All About (Sa rang yi Mwo gil rae)*,\(^{121}\) which aired on China Central Television (CCTV); *Star Is in My Heart (Byeol-eun Nae-ga-seum-e)*; *Men of the Bath House (Mog-yok-tang Jib Nam-ja-deul)*; *Miss Mermaid (Ineo Agassi)*; and *Jewel in Palace (Dae Jang Geum)*, *hallyu* spread to the adjacent geolinguistic cities and countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. In Taiwan, one of top countries that have imported Korean dramas and pop music, the cable station GTV began to specialize in Korean programming beginning in 2000; this was followed by FTV, CTV, and Power TV (Kim, 2005). *Sparks (Bul-kkot)* first aired on GTV, and *An Autumn’s Tale (Ga-eul dong-hwa)* indicated the continuous popularization of *hallyu* in Taiwan.

In Japan, the Korean drama *Winter Sonata (Gyeo-ul Yeon-ga)* was responsible for *hallyu* becoming a prominent social phenomenon. The drama had an excellent viewership, particularly among middle-aged Japanese females from 2003 to 2004,\(^{122}\) and the success of *Winter Sonata* led to *Yonsama* syndrome (the popularity of Bae Yong-joon among fans) as a subsequent social phenomenon in Japan.\(^{123}\) The success of the Korean Wave in Japan is particularly important for signaling how Korea captured the cultural power that Japanese media had held over the Asia-Pacific region since the early 1990s.

Moreover, *hallyu* is continuing to influence emerging media outlets in the South Asian region. A Google trend analysis from 2004 to present shows that *hallyu* is widespread in nations

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121 *What Is Love All About* aired on Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in Korea from November 1991 to May 1992 and recorded the second-highest audience rating (64.9%) ever in Korea. In mainland China, the program had a 4.2% viewership rating on average, which was the second-highest rating among foreign programs in China (Geon & Yoon, 2005)
122 *Winter Sonata* first aired on Japanese satellite TV, NHK BS2, in 2003. It achieved successful audience ratings and subsequently aired four more times from 2003 to 2004. It also created the *Yonsama* syndrome in Japan.
123 *Yonsama* syndrome refers to the great popularity of Korean actor Bae Yong-joon, who starred in *Winter Sonata.*
as diverse as Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia (see Figure 1).\(^{124}\) Private TV stations in Indonesia, for instance, have broadcast Korean dramas since 2000. *Endless Love* (known as *An Autumn’s Tale*) aired on RCTI; *Glass Slippers* (*Yuri Ku-du*) and *Lover* (*Yeon-in*) appeared on Trans TV; and *What Happened in Bali* (*Bali-e-seo Saeng-kin-il*), *Winter Sonata* (*Gyeo-ul Yeon-ga*), and *Jewel in Palace* (*Dae Jang Geum*) achieved successful viewships on SCTV and Indosiar (*Syamsuddin, 2012*).\(^{125}\) Interestingly, Peru became a country in which young K-pop stars such as Super Junior, JYJ, and Kim Hyun-joong could successfully hold mega-concerts, and this has contributed to the popularity of *hallyu* in Latin America.

Figure 4.1. *Google trend analysis of regional interest in hallyu from 2004 to 2012.*\(^{126}\)

\(^{124}\) Mainland China was not included, even though mainland China is the origin of the term *hallyu*. Unfortunately, however, Google trend analysis does not reach to China.

\(^{125}\) Trans TV also shows many Korean movies regularly. For example, *My Sassy Girl*, *Libera Me*, *Joint Security Area*, and *The Dragon War* have all been shown since 2005 (*Syamsuddin, 2012*).

The current widespread success of Korean entertainment such as “gangnam style”-dancing in the United States illuminates Korea’s emergence as a powerhouse in producing transnational culture, particularly within the Asian region. Indeed, the rise of Korean film, television, and music in many Asian markets, has produced interesting discussions among Asian area studies scholars when considering the transnational production, circulation, and consumption of cultural products (Ryoo, 2009).

In the realm of political economy, hallyu is frequently compared with other extraordinary flows of media content such as Telenovela, Bollywood, and Japanimation. Telenovela and Bollywood, in particular, have been central to debates on the success of non-Western media in a transnational context since the 1980s. However, these cases do not demonstrate a move against media imperialism in the same way that hallyu does. Cultural pluralists have highlighted how hallyu may serve as a compelling case of a new kind of transnational media flow that elides Western cultural domination. From this angle, both neoliberals and Marxists see Korean media content as moving against the American-dominated, unilateral media flow. On the other hand, media imperialism theorists have used a political economy lens to explain how hallyu is a means of achieving economic efficiency and profitability via international circulation. Marttelart and Marttelart (1990, p. 2), for example, have observed that the import cost of non-US material was reduced by one half to one-eighth, when compared to American content.

The hallyu phenomenon has been incorporated into seminal discussions of international media flow, with scholars paying particular attention to how it relates to two key areas: cultural imperialism and cultural hybridization. In regards to cultural imperialism, Schiller (1969) has
argued that the United States has dominated the international television flow and that the American television industry has consistently (re)produced American-dominated culture. Yet this argument has been criticized in for painting an overly-simplistic portrait of American domination and eliding the rise of regional flows of non-Western media products. As Sinclair (1996, p. 11; 1997; 2004) and Straubharr (1991) have aptly pointed out, scholars must move beyond such a concentric perspective in order to gain a plausible understanding of non-American media flows such as intra-regional media flows called “geolinguistic turns,” or cultural proximity. Paying attention to specific cases such as Mexico and Brazil in Latin America, and Hong Kong, Taiwan, and India in the Asian region, many critical media theorists (e.g., Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Shim, 2008; Sung, 2009) have observed the unequal distribution of media products within the specific geocultural conditions, including those conditions based on region, language, and nation.

Table 4.3. Exports and imports of Korean broadcasting programs since 1997.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial TV</td>
<td>6,967</td>
<td>11,664</td>
<td>36,889</td>
<td>113,736</td>
<td>147,002</td>
<td>162,565</td>
<td>165,703</td>
<td>192,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable/Studio</td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td>1,447</td>
<td>5,246</td>
<td>9,757</td>
<td>15,582</td>
<td>17,603</td>
<td>18,997</td>
<td>29,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>8,318</td>
<td>13,111</td>
<td>42,135</td>
<td>123,493</td>
<td>162,584</td>
<td>180,168</td>
<td>184,700</td>
<td>222,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial TV</td>
<td>38,893</td>
<td>26,743</td>
<td>18,344</td>
<td>12,657</td>
<td>6,199</td>
<td>4,810</td>
<td>4,625</td>
<td>4,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable/Studio</td>
<td>18,385</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>9,718</td>
<td>24,318</td>
<td>26,070</td>
<td>17,037</td>
<td>105,870</td>
<td>229,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>57,278</td>
<td>29,093</td>
<td>28,062</td>
<td>36,975</td>
<td>32,269</td>
<td>21,847</td>
<td>110,495</td>
<td>233,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable/Studio</td>
<td>-17,034</td>
<td>-903</td>
<td>-4,472</td>
<td>-14,561</td>
<td>-10,488</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>-86,873</td>
<td>-199,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>-48,960</td>
<td>-15,982</td>
<td>14,073</td>
<td>86,518</td>
<td>130,315</td>
<td>158,321</td>
<td>74,205</td>
<td>-11,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This approach has been particularly apt in addressing hallyu vis-à-vis the unequal film and television programing flows in the Korean media industry. As shown in Table 4.3, imports of foreign television programs exceeded exports of Korean programs until 2001, but exports began to surpass imports foreign programs beginning in 2002. Moreover, the balance of export and import of TV programs was increased by $158 million in 2008, although the balance returned to negative in 2011. An initial rapid increase in the number of foreign programs imported was led by the terrestrial broadcasting corporations, and the number of programs imports has increased since 2010, which was due to television channel expansion by the introduction of general programming channels on CATV. In particular, Korea imported $106 million and $230 million worth of television programs in 2010 and 2011, respectively, which marked a sharp increase from of the importation of $22 million’ worth in 2008.

One reason for the difference between hallyu and other regional flows is hallyu’s strong support from the Korean government. While Telenovela and Bollywood were developed by their nations’ respective business sectors, hallyu was thoroughly designed and driven by the Korean government. As several Asian area-studies media scholars have pointed out (e.g., Ryoo, 2008; Huang, 2011), under IMF regulations, the Korean government felt the necessity of recovering the nation’s branding through symbolic capital. Media content was an excellent choice for rebuilding of the nation’s brand. Hence, hallyu became a political tool for cultural diplomacy (Jang & Paik, 2012). This so-called “nation-branding” was thus incorporated into Korea’s nation-rebuilding and globalizing plan so that the Korean Wave was facilitated by Korean government as a strategy to boost the nation’s cultural industries (Huang, 2011). Furthermore, the popularity of hallyu, which was achieved through its sustained protection from any media imperial invasion on the powerful basis of domestic media consumption, contributed to making the entertainment
market enlarged for a decade (Chua, 2004). The stability of domestic media production helped cause a significant shift in production, from the initial state-driven hallyu to the private sector-led hallyu. Korean media conglomerates rushed to run transnational businesses to seek new markets for sales of their media products under the strong assistance of the Korean government.

Though its media flow moved against media imperialism, hallyu caused the global expansion of media conglomerates, which ultimately adopted similar strategies that big media conglomerates used in order to bring their media products to the global market. The global strategy of Korean media conglomerates helped propel the diversification of the businesses and the overproduction of entertainment-centered content, which consequently affected the production system of television entertainment, and in turn influenced the rise and fall of political entertainment.

Democratization and a change of media organization’s structure. As the previous section has indicated, the ’87 democratization movement brought about a momentous change in Korean society at large, with political resistance becoming central to citizens’ lives. The broadcasting companies also experienced the weight of this change (Shim, 2006). While the Korean economy transformed into a market-oriented economy, the broadcasting stations faced a changing production system in accordance with commercialization of the broadcasting industry. This change was led by big chaebols such as Samsung, Hyundai, LOTTE, and Hanhwa, and among others. Furthermore, the ’87 democratization movement triggered media reforms in the

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128 The Korean film market has drawn attention as one of the few cases in which Hollywood exerts less influence. The market share for Korean films is at over 50%, and it has not fallen under 40% since 2000. In the music industry, K-pop has consistently accounted for more than 70% percent of the domestic music market on average, and has grown to 89% as of 2010. Since 1999 when the term hallyu began to be used, the music market size has grown dramatically, to almost seven times its original size: from $0.4 billion in 2000 to $2.96 billion in 2010. The film market has grown approximately four times in size (data retrieved from the Korea Film Council, http://www.kofic.or.kr/; white paper of the cultural industry, 2006-2009; white paper of the content industry 2011, 2012).
realm of broader societal democratization; this was a significant difference between the late 1980s and the early 1990s and one that resulted in the full-scale democratization of broadcasting organizations.

In those days, media reform movements operated in two ways: (1) via the citizen-driven media reform movement; and (2) via the strike of media employees. Of these two ways, the latter—the strike of media employees—initiated democratic media reform in Korea. This is because the citizen-driven media reform movement did not become common until the 1990s. After the '87 democratization movement, serial strikes were often led by broadcasting employees; these strikes occurred especially from 1988 to 1992, during the Roh Tae-Woo regime. These strikes aimed to achieve the fair and unbiased reportage, as well as independence from political authority over human resources at broadcasting organizations. The MBC employees initiated the first strike on August 26, 1988. This was followed by a refusal of production for 36 days at KBS in 1990, and by a 50-day strike at MBC in 1992.

Though these strikes mainly aimed at achieving freedom of the press, somewhat ironically, they simultaneously sought the liberalization of the media organizations. Such an ironic situation reveals the paradoxical structure of the Korean broadcasting industry in that broadcasting employees called for the normalization of the broadcasting market that had been distorted by political power as a way of democratizing broadcasting organizations. In particular,

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129 As for civic media reform movements, they began with complaints against biased news reporting regarding the general election campaign in 1984. During the Chun regime, the main broadcasting news on KBS and MBC began with reports on Chun Doo-Hwan’s daily schedule, as stipulated by the government. This, of course, was not consistent with the process of selecting news based on its value. For this reason, at that time, the news was cynically called Ddang-Chun News (which refers to news that starts with reports on President Chun). The ad-hoc civic alliance of the Catholic Association and the Protestant Church Association was established in November 1985 in order to arrange an anti-subscription fee protest (Choi & Kang, 2001). The anti-subscription fee movement expanded to become a nation-wide audience movement in 1986. This movement was the first audience movement that triggered sequential media reform movements of civil society in line with the increasing calls for political democratization.

130 KBS producers boycotted the program’s production for 32 days in order to claim that the resignation of their CED, Seo Ki-Won, was politically-motivated. 117 members of the KBS labor union were arrested (Saellung Forum (Ed.), 2008).
the 1980s was marked by a dramatic increase in the demand for broadcasting manpower which was triggered by the introduction of color television and two big sporting events: the 1986 Asian games and the 1988 Olympics (see Table 4.4) (Han, 1993). The number of major broadcasting employees increased to 11,402 in 1993, almost double compared to the 6,977 in 1978. This number increased steadily: an average of 231 employees were added per year, and an average of 100 core professionals such as producers, news reporters, announcers, and camera operators were hired every year starting in 1978.

Table 4.4. *Manpower of terrestrial broadcasting organizations from 1978 to 2007.*

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total MP</td>
<td>6,977</td>
<td>11,402</td>
<td>11,674</td>
<td>14,029</td>
<td>14,024</td>
<td>13,897</td>
<td>230.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core MP</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>6,571</td>
<td>7,109</td>
<td>7,394</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data has been reorganized from different sources: (1) Han (1993); (2) Korea Broadcasting Commission; (2002-2010); (3) Korea Press Foundation (1998); and (4) Kwon et al. (2011, pp. 55-56).
The Vicissitudes of The Political Entertainment From 1987 To 2007

Democratization and the production of political entertainment. The democratization of the broadcasting industry led to the expansion of the organizational structures at each broadcasting station, and in turn caused a change in the television production system along with the democratization of politics and the liberalization of the economy. In addition, a large number of young-generation producers called 386\textsuperscript{132} entered the broadcasting field. Consequently, human resources departments in major broadcasting organizations made considerable attempts to create entertainment programs that included political criticism. It was in this context that the change in the production of television comedy promoted the rise of the satiric television comedy. Along with the presidential inauguration of Roh Tae-Woo, major terrestrial broadcasting stations began in earnest to produce televised political comedies that were banned by previous political regimes; this move was partly triggered by Roh Tae-Woo’s announcement that everyone might as well utilize him as material for making fun. Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) expanded production of its scheduled comedy programs, while Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC) lengthened its entertainment program \textit{Sunday, Sunday Night} in November 1988.\textsuperscript{133}

Televised political entertainment thus flourished from 1988 to 1992 in three ways. Most importantly, political comedy dramatically increased from 1988 onwards in terms of both quantity and broadcasting hours. Two types of political comedy rose to particular prominence during this period. Several stand-up comedy programs began in earnest to employ allegorical

\textsuperscript{132} The 386 Generation was the first generation born in the 1960s and that was university-educated (in the 1980s). The members of this generation are regarded as the first to grow up in the affluent society that came about after the devastating effects of the Korean War and to actively participate in politics throughout the 1980s.

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Sunday, Sunday Night} was an extension of \textit{Sunday Night} that aired in 1981. It was the longest-running Korean television entertainment show. The name was changed in 1988 from \textit{Big March of Sunday Night} (its name when it debuted in November 1981).
methods to handle political affairs. A report of the Korea Broadcasting Standard Commission (KBSC, 1988) indicated that from February to April 1988, of a total broadcasting hour, 380 minutes, political satire accounted for 31% (118 minutes) of the time. Two programs were the key examples: First Street on Humor broadcasted 69 minutes in 7 cases, while News Parade on Sunday aired 32 minutes in 11 cases. Of these political entertainment programs, News Parade on Sunday was remarkable in that the program adopted a mock news format in order to convey its satiric message; this made it the first mock news program in Korea.

In addition, major television companies made considerable attempts to produce a political soap opera during this period. The rise of the political soap opera was initially encouraged by the popularity of First Public, which aired from April 1981 to February 1982 and which led to the production of serial dramas such as Second Public (July 1989 - April 1990); Third Public (February 1993 - August 1993); Fourth Public (October 1995 - January 1996); and Fifth Public (April 2005 - September 2005). Political drama had continuously aired on TV, with some political dramas gaining great followings: e.g., Korea Gate (October 1995 - December 1995); Three Kims Period (February 1998-May 1998); and Trio (November 2002 - January 2003). The tendency towards making political drama has endured to present days. Among the current political dramas, City Hall in 2009, Daemul [Whopper] in 2010, President from 2010 to 2011, and Chaser in 2012 have achieved especially high viewer ratings by dealing with the dark side of politicians and/or political organizations.

It was a significant change to see power-holders including high-ranking governmental officials, politicians, and chaebol owners frequently appear on satiric television comedies. Various televised satires had been produced as vehicles of political criticism, yet forms of political entertainment continued to diversify in accordance with the change in the production
system. As such, televised political satire thus began to fall into two main categories: (1) allegorical satire and (2) mock news (or news satire). Allegorical satire tended to be produced similarly to stand-up comedy, as discussed in the previous chapter, while mock news programs had never been seen before in Korean television entertainment in terms of their format.

Table 4.5. Political satire programs from 1987 to 1992.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satiric programs</th>
<th>Korea Broadcasting System (KBS)</th>
<th>Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>Allegorical stand-up comedy</td>
<td>Mock news (News Satire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity</strong></td>
<td>7 (69 minutes)</td>
<td>11 (32 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broadcasting Hour</strong></td>
<td>Satire: 21 (Political Issue: 14)</td>
<td>Satire: 13 (Political Issue: 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative Satirists</strong></td>
<td>Choi Yang-rak Kim Hyung-gon Uhm Yong-soo</td>
<td>Kim Byung-jo Choi Byung-seo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, *Chairman, Our Chairman*, starring first-generation satirists Kim Hyun-gon, Uhm Yong-soo, and Kim Hak-rae, was designed as an allegorical stand-up comedy program that treated funny happenings on the board of executives of the fake *chaebol*, The *Biryong* Group. The program presented political criticism satirically, dealing with topical issues such as the charges of fraud against Jeon Kyung-hwan, a brother of the former president; the excessive spectator mobilization during the ’87 presidential election; and a strange case of mortgage fraud

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134 Those were limited from Feb to April in 1998 according to Korea Broadcasting Standard Commission (1988).  
135 “TV Comedy Is” (1988)
called the Jeong In-sook Affair. Another popular show, *Taengja Says*, starred famous comedians such as Kim Hyung-gon, Lee Sung-mee, and Oh Jae-mee. It used allegories about Confucius during China's Warring States Period in order to level satiric criticism of current affairs. The show became especially famous for dealing with unfunny moments in modern Korean history such as a congressional hearing on the Chun military dictatorship. Furthermore, a similar program using allegorical satire named *Nero's 25 Hours* during *Show Video Jockey* aired on KBS2. This program was set in the Senate during the old Roman Period. Nero’s wife, Nalaria, appeared as woman obsessed by pseudo-religion, which was meant to be a satiric reminder of the false, time-limited eschatological syndrome caused by the Dami Missionary Society in 1992. The program was a large-scale satiric comedy program, starring twenty comedians at a time, and was the top-ranked entertainment program among similar comedies using allegorical satire to express political criticism in terms of its audience rating.137

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136 The name *Nalaria* denotes “a punk”
137 It recorded its highest rating, 42.2%, in April 1988. This should be compared with other competing programs, which had ratings between 24% and 26% (“*Show Video Jockey, Top Ranked,*” 1988).
While stand-up comedies used allegory for satiric purposes strategically, another program, *News Parade on Sunday* during *Sunday, Sunday Night* was also considered a notable news satire. Young satirist Kim Byung-jo parodied real news anchors’ apparently careful representations and examinations of their scripts, and by doing so, he satirized the falsity of the Roh regime’s slogan ‘The Era of Common Man,’ parodying the slogan as Era of Common Anchorman. Similarly, Choi Byung-seo impersonated a fake politician who had a funny conversation with a real politician on the famous program *Weekly Column on Sunday* in 1988 and *Daehwa [Conversation]* in 1993 (Gong, 1993). Another attempt using the setting of a mock assembly entitled *Comedy Mock Assembly* and starring Choi Yang-rak and Lee Bong-won was produced by Seoul Broadcasting System, a commercial broadcasting company newly-established in 1991. These programs employed the format of mock satire, and dramatically attracted audiences’ attention. They thus took the lead in the production of political entertainment.

Additionally, it is remarkable that these two different formats had developed on both broadcasting stations, and these formats influenced the subsequent development of the entertainment show. More specifically, stand-up comedy became a predecessor to the comic variety show, examples of which would later include *Gag Concert* and *Wooseumeul Channeun Saramdeul [People Seeking Laughter]*, while mock news programs *Big Parade on Sunday* became predecessors to a new form of the Korean-styled entertainment talk show, later named the real variety show and which occasionally copied the Japanese entertainment show format (Lee, 2013).

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138 *The Johnny Yune Show*, which was considered the first American-style entertainment talk show in Korea, contributed to the trend of producing American-style talk shows. Johnny Yune, a Korean-American comedian, had first appeared on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*; he had also had a special night on NBC.
In keeping up with this change in the production of television comedy, some comedians found themselves actively changing their positions as satirists with announcements that satire should be essence of television comedy (“Kim Byung-jo,” 1983). Lee Joo-il was the first to proclaim to be a satirist; he was followed by Choi Yang-rak, Choi Byung-seo, Kim Byung-jo, Kim Hyung-gon, Lee Kyung-gyu, and Lim Ha-ryong, and among others. These comedians began their careers as stand-up comedians, but expanded to the genre of satire, because they all recognized the necessity of political satire for high-quality comedy performance. For instance, the most famous comedian, Lee Joo-il proclaimed, “I don’t want to have comedy performance this way (slapstick comedy). I do want to seek the essence of comedy through political comedy” (Kim, 1988). Likewise, Kim Hyung-gon announced that he would begin in earnest to perform political comedy, stating that, “It is not a political comedy to mimic politicians, because there is no aggression toward power-holders. It should be the essence of satire” (“Kim Hyung-gon’s Announcement,” 1988).

Soon after the big comedy stars argued for the necessity of political satire, many comedians joined in the performances of political satire. Lee Kyung-gyu hosted the program Comedy From All Directions on MBC, and Lim Ha-ryong and Kim Jung-sik made satiric remarks on Everything in Comedy aired on KBS. In addition, young-generation comedians such as Kim Yong-man and Kim Guk-jin made new entries into political satiric comedy programs such as Ganeun Club Debate, which parodied the Kwanhun Club Debate and TV Pocketbook, which parodied a popular television documentary with the same title.139 Their efforts to produce a political satire continued until 1997 and the takeover of the next political regime. The production of political comedy usually cycled every five years in accordance with national

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139 The Kwanhun Club Debate was held by the most authoritative association of journalists. The title “Ganeun” had a satiric function in that it was pronounced similarly to Kwanhun, but meant “slender.”
presidential elections (Kim, 1996) or specific, momentous affairs. *Dong-gil vs. Dong-gil* during *I Love Comedy* on SBS was the first fake political comedy starring a real politician, and a similar attempt was found in *Executive Committee of a Party* during *Comedy Observatory*, produced via the same broadcasting company (Kwon, 1997).

The introduction of the commercial broadcasting company Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) in 1991 influenced the production of political comedy, which was also linked to the presidential election in 1992. Indeed, the broadcasting companies found that it was the right time to attempt to create various political entertainment programs, e.g., *Comedy Mock Assembly* and *BaewoeseoNamjuna [Learning is for Others and Not Just For Yourself]* on SBS; *SisaConte [Farcetta on Current Affairs]* during *ChunchoonHaengjingok [Youth’s March]* on MBC; *SisaToron [Debate on Topical Issues]* during *Weekend Comedy Theater* on MBC; and *Yeolpyoong 25 Si [Fever 25 Hours]* during *First Street on Humor* on KBS (Kang, 1992).

In the meantime, it was remarkable that the satirists rose to stardom by creating considerable catchphrases (Hong, 1989). For example, Kim Hyung-gon made statements such as “I hope it goes well” and “Goodness, go well!,” and another satirist Kim Byung-jo also created many buzzwords by offering many cynical remarks regarding politicians and high-ranking officials, including, “Get thee gone earth!” and “Follow in a human’s track!” Their catchphrases were regarded as alternative forms of political expression that contributed to television audiences’ political awareness and emotional engagement in political affairs (Gray et al., 2009). At the same time, however, political satire programs were restrictive in that these programs used to rely heavily on the mockery of politicians’ personal traits such as locution,

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140 Even though Kim Byung-jo rose quickly to stardom by virtue of his catchphrases, he was prohibited from entering the ruling party convention due to his inappropriate remarks. His funny conversation involved his saying that the ruling party, the Democratic Justice Party, gave “Justice,” while the Reunification Democratic Party gave a “damn” pain. This took place on July 10, 1987 (“Kim Byung-jo,” 1987).
dialect, and appearance, which had been cited by critics as a reason for the loss of satire later. The criticism of televised comedy satire was thus that it did not provide “something of a puzzle in its camouflaged criticism” (Schutz, 1977, p. 332), despite the fact that most satirists felt political satire has an insight into structural problems of society (“That We Could See,” 1988).

Table 4.6. News articles on television comedy about political satire before 2000.\textsuperscript{141}

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Comedy</td>
<td>39 (43)</td>
<td>59 (17)</td>
<td>261 (138)</td>
<td>269 (213)</td>
<td>628 (411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Satire</td>
<td>6 (5)</td>
<td>10 (3)</td>
<td>88 (55)</td>
<td>99 (77)</td>
<td>208 (140)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KINDS, a news database (www.kinds.or.kr)

As political entertainment had not engaged properly in political criticism, the production of televised political satire came under fire from critics, and particularly from journalists. Although journalists took a positive view of the rise of political satire, they were concerned

\textsuperscript{141} The parentheses indicate a negative notation regarding political comedy and satire.
about the self-regulation that hampered the lively function of televised political satire. As Table 4.6 shows, the number of news articles concerning political comedy increased to 269 in 1997, compared with 39 in the 1970s, and those with concerns about political satire also grew—to 99 in 1997.

At the same time, however, negative articles on the production of political comedy and political satire accounted for 78.8% (213) and 77.8% of selected news articles, respectively, which revealed some problems regarding the production of political entertainment. The major criticism was that political comedies were very limited: they mimicked politicians’ appearances or mocked a set of political institutions, but there was no satiric criticism of the politics themselves or the politicians’ behaviors (Kang, 1992). Meanwhile, highlighting satiric comedy as an important vehicle for creating a dissenting humor from the bitter words of second-class citizens, some self-reflective criticisms of televised political satire were suggested in news articles and academic journals (e.g., Hong, 1988; Park, 1997). In these publications, Korean satire was regarded as excessively allegorical and circumambulatory, both of which were seen as hampering the effective delivery of political criticism.

The reason why political entertainment was restrictive in terms of satiric criticism and the use of comic material was twofold: (1) indirect governmental regulation, and (2) self-regulation within broadcasting organizations. The primary reason was because the political regime still influenced the production of entertainment. Lee Sung-mee suggested that governmental regulation still mattered when she appeared on the famous satiric program Taengja Says (Sung, 2011). Other evidence of governmental regulation was provided by program producers such as Kim Woong-rae, an executive producer of many comedy programs on KBS.

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142 More specifically, Lee stated that at that time, many political comedies could not be broadcasted after they were produced, because there was an order from above that prohibited broadcasting from time to time (Sung, 2011).
who pointed out that “the decrease in the level of satiric remarks revealed the retrospection of autonomy in the society” (Oh, 1992, A27).

Secondly, but more importantly, broadcasting organizations had internalized the influence of the political regime and had begun practicing self-regulation. In regard to this, Yoo Soo-Yeol, a chief producer at KBS, properly pointed out that many producers had been conditioned to self-regulate in making political satire regarding the tenor of the political regime, and that this should be changed immediately (Hong, 1988). Even though the broadcasting organizations achieved liberalization after the ’87 democratization movement, the level of democratization did not reach a satisfactory level. For these reasons, the production of political entertainment sometimes ceased or the content of the programs had to be softened.

Comedy producers make a feeble complaint on the poor system for producing political comedy which conveys laughter and meaningful message simultaneously. However, it would not be denied that producers’ self-protectionism to avoid handling touchy political issues influences such poor system. (Kang, 1992, A16)

Political comedy had been frequently shifted to social satire in which political power had not been properly criticized, because producers had filtered the sensitive content to political power-holder(s), once power holder(s) had worried about being derisible. (Kang, 1997, A12)

Producers specialized in comedy confessed that they were not confident about making a high-quality political comedy, because they might have been self-regulated for a long time. (Kwon, 1998, A15)

The given self-protectionism of television comedy producers did not change until 1997, when the political turnover in favor of the progressive party was completed. Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) initiated a change in the mode of production in accordance with the inauguration of a new chief executive, Park Kwon-sang. Some political satire programs supporting the
government were created. For example, *Good News, Bad News* and *Again, You?* starring Kim Hyung-Gon made satiric remarks on weekly news by adopting a mock news format, while *Tracing Rumor and Truth* and *Good Question* sought to educate citizens on various topical affairs, thus suggesting that future political entertainment could have multiple purposes: political education and satiric criticism. Moreover, Lee Joo-il introduced a new satiric talk show entitled *The Comedy Show with Lee Joo-Il*, in which Lee tried to create an actual political satire. Despite some attempts to produce meaningful political entertainment, though, the production of televised political entertainment faced a new changing environment due to the IMF economic crisis in 1997.

The rise of political entertainment around every election implies that entertainment mixed with political information is more favorable for attracting audiences’ attention. That is to say, audience ratings became a more influential factor than political (indirect) suppression or the self-protectionism of broadcasting organizations in creating political entertainment. For these reasons, many televised political entertainment programs turned to using slapstick humor devices in their stand-up comedy, instead of developing devices appropriate for satiric criticism. For example, *Comedy Observatory* on SBS lost its focus on satire, instead relying heavily on slapstick comedy, while *TV Open Cabinet* on MBC ultimately failed in producing meaningful satire because of the broadcasting organization’s need to develop a new format of entertainment show in order to achieve higher audience ratings (Oh, 1994). That is, the production of political entertainment in the late 1990s had the distinctive feature of being driven by high audience ratings or, put differently, broadcasting companies’ commercial interests (Kwon, 1997). The tendency of producers to rely on audience ratings resulted in a proliferation of various forms of entertainment in the 2000s.
Globalization, commercialization, and the rise of infotainment. As suggested earlier, political entertainment was on the rise after the '87 democratization movement. The rise of political entertainment every five years continued until 1998, when the progressive party seized political power with a victory in the presidential election of 1997. The Kim Dae-Jung government strongly supported the liberal production of entertainment that makes fun of political regimes, politicians, and other power-holders. Despite this change in political mood, however, other significant changes occurring after the peaceful turnover of power in 1992 and the IMF crisis in 1997 helped to accelerate the production of political entertainment in accordance with the globalization of Korean society.

In addition, along with the globalization of the Korean media industry, four large chaebols rushed to enter the media and cultural industries for business purposes. They were followed by medium-sized chaebols such as CJ and LOTTE in the 2000s, along with the introduction of the cable television system. The business purposes that precipitated the chaebols’ entry into the media industry were varied: while largest chaebols wanted to expand their businesses to media and cultural industries, medium-sized chaebols intended to restructure themselves to be IT-based corporations. The chaebols’ entry into the media and communication industries influenced the commercialization of the broadcasting system, and in turn, contributed to the market-oriented production of entertainment that relied on audience ratings. Such tendencies were also triggered by the unexpected rise in sales of Korean entertainment products to neighboring countries.

In this atmosphere, the production of political entertainment dropped significantly, with some of the energy that had been marshaled for the production of political entertainmen being shifted to other forms of entertainment. More specifically, the Korean-styled entertainment show
was developed during this time. This came about for two reasons. First, the infotainment program took the initial lead in changing mode of production of televised entertainment program. MBC’s *Sunday, Sunday Night*, produced by Song Chang-eui and Kim Young-hee, became involved in the idea of an infotainment program. As noted, in its former version, *Big Parade on Sunday*, the show had drawn on the mock news format to lampoon political power-holders, but this format had shifted to a reality-show-based form of entertainment starring Joo Byung-jin, Lee Kyung-gyu, and Kim Yong-man, among others, by the late 1990s. An episode entitled *Here Comes Lee Kyung-gyu* that aired during this program gained particular popularity, because it combined entertainment with public interest. For example, *Yangsim Naengjanggo* [Refrigerator Gift for One’s Conscience] in 1997 was designed to secretly observe whether people heed stop signs, and to give refrigerators as gifts for those who abided by the traffic law.

In a follow-up episode entitled *Yangsimgage* [Honest Store], producers sought honest store owners who did not sell alcoholic drinks and cigarettes to minors, while in *Sinjanggaeup* [Reopening], small restaurant owners were given consulting on ways to increase their profits. Another program, *Love House*, aimed to renovate old houses in lower-income neighborhoods; this program was also very popular among audiences due to its discussion of social welfare.

Other forms of infotainment also became popular. *Gyeongjaeya Nolja* [Hangout with Economy], *Baewoebopsida* [Let’s Try to Learn], and *Gungangbogam* [Maxims on Health] were representative blended programs that had the twin purposes of social learning and entertainment. In this way, infotainment programs preferred to combine soft information with entertainment rather level sharp political criticisms through humor. Ultimately, these programs contributed to a rise of in the production of infotainment, as public information campaigns regarding many topical issues inflected their messages with entertainment.
This tendency towards producing such infotainment programs reached its peak with a program entitled *Neukkimpyo* [Exclamation Mark], which aired between November 2001 and November 2007. This program captivated audiences when it first aired, essentially functioning as a public service advertisement that encouraged people to read. The program chose a different book every week and encouraged audience members to read along, thus helping to rectify the decrease in book consumption. Another program, *Hajahaja!* [Let’s Do It!], likewise served as a public service advertisement intending to reform old habits, particularly for adolescents. Other topical public service advertisements continued to appear in segments such as *Asia Asia* and *Hyodohapsida* [Serve Your Parents With Devotion], among others. It is worth remarking that politically-sensitive information was removed from these programs; instead, the programs paid more attention to the effective knowledge transmission that would engender social learning, as well as the proper reflection of social and community values, which eventually contributed to the creation of Korean-styled infotainment.

In the interim, the production of televised infotainment was led by the three major terrestrial broadcasting companies, and the advent of commercial broadcasting SBS accelerated this broadcasting company-led entertainment. At this time, *chaebols* did not influence the broadcasting industry, though they began to increase their ownership of media corporations. In the beginning, *chaebols’* investment sin the media industry focused more on the newspaper companies than on the broadcasting media, because the Korean government still banned cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcasting companies. The full-scale entry of *chaebols* into the broadcasting industry was made along with the development of the cable television system in the mid-2000s. In particular, media conglomerates competitively engaged in producing televised entertainment—and particularly serial dramas, reality shows, and (presently) K-pop music—in
accordance with the rise of the hallyu phenomenon, which contributed to the rise of a new
entertainment format called the real variety show.

In fact, the production of the real variety show was not designed to stimulate sales of the
newly-launched Korean entertainment shows to neighboring countries, because such television
entertainment shows had difficulty attracting international audiences’ attention when compared
with television soap operas and serial dramas. Indeed, television drama accounted for 90% of
total program exports (Kim, 2012, p. 9). At present, K-pop music has garnered consumers’
attention in the Asian region. The total revenue of K-pop music exports increased ten times, by
$177 million, in 2011, compared with $17 million in 2008 (Korea Creative Content Agency,
2012). As a result, a number of Korean actors such as Ahn Jae-Wook, Rain, Lee Byung-Hun,
and Choi Ji-Woo, among others, became big stars in the Asian region, and the next hallyu stars
were typified by K-pop young group singers such as Sonyeosidae [Girls’ Generation], KARA,
Dongbangsingi [TVXQ], and Super Junior. Along with the growing popularity of hallyu, the
production of entertainment shows began to change. Specifically, entertainment talk shows such
as Happy Together and Happy Sunday on KBS; Golden Fishery on MBC; and Ballsiness, I Like
Sunday: X-Man, and Running Man on SBS rushed to contact rising hallyu stars as potential cast
members, and the stars would appear in these programs at specific moments when new dramas
would be launched or new albums were ready to be released. In this manner, the real variety
show became an effective vehicle for indirectly advertising hallyu exports by creating
cooperative business relationships among visual production and distribution companies, music
companies, and broadcasting companies.

The rise of the real variety show led to some significant changes in relation to the
comedy industry, and these changes subsequently influenced the production of political
entertainment. Perhaps most importantly, the popularity of the real variety show led comedians to rush to move from the traditional comedy show to the real variety show (Choi, 1993). For example, popular comedians such as Kang Ho-dong, Kim Yong-man, Lee Young-ja, Park Misun, Shin Dong-yup, and Yoo Jae-seok began to take roles as masters of those programs, thus separating themselves from the field of traditional comedy. This change can be traced back to specific moments, including the introduction of color television in the 1980s and the introduction of the cable television system in the 1990s.

With these developments came two different ways for comedians to enter the broadcasting arena: while first-generation comedians moved from local nightclubs, young comedians participated in the open-recruiting system used by all three major broadcasting companies since the 1980s. The young comedians entering television comedy through the open-recruiting system aspired toward verbal comedy, illustrated by paronomasia, and their comedies based on wordplay drew the attention of audiences who were tired of traditional stand-up comedy. The growing success of verbal comedies inspired the young comedians to distinguish themselves from the old stand-up comedians by creating catchphrases instead of giving non-verbal performances. They also distinguished themselves from other comedians by identifying themselves as gagmen.

As a matter of fact, the use of the term gagman became controversial in that there came to be no clear difference between a gagman and a comedian, though gagmen preferred wordplay in their comic performances (“Kim Hyung Gon’s Announcement,” 1988). Rather, young-generation comedians strategically used the term gagmen to better adapt to the change in the broadcasting environment (Jeon, 2005). Broadcasting organizations saw the young comedians as a way to change the televised comedy format to meet audience needs, while young comedians
gained opportunities to appear in various entertainment programs. That is, the interests of broadcasting organization and young comedians proved symbiotic. In this way, the term gagman came to connote the competition between old and young comedians in the neo-liberalized entertainment market. As a result, old stand-up comedians such as Koo Bong-seo, Shin So-geol, Bae Il-jib, and Song Hae lost their ground against the young gagmen: they became marginalized within the realm of television comedy (e.g., Park, 1988).

Furthermore, the intense competition among entertainment programs due to commercialization directly affected the television comedy production system. This increase in competition in the broadcasting market influenced television producers at the broadcasting organizations, who felt pressured to improve audience ratings; it also gave rise to the copying of formats among broadcasters from other popular programs (Choi et al., 1997).\(^\text{143}\) The most notable negative outcome was that the broadcasting organizations acquiesced in imitating Japanese entertainment programs, from having group masters of ceremonies as the Japanese did to copying their stage settings (Oh, 1992).

This imitation was rampant until the mid-2000s when broadcasting organizations became cognizant of the legal responsibilities they had. For instance, *Sunday, Sunday Night* on MBC, *Making a Better World With Seo Sae-Won* on SBS, and many other infotainment programs became subject to public criticism due to their partial or, at times, full-scale imitation of Japanese entertainment (Lee, 1998). In some cases, though such imitation contributed to the creation of hybrid education-entertainment segments and programs such as *Reality Comedy* during *Comedy Observatory* on SBS, the imitation most often resulted in hampering the

\(^{143}\) According to the report by congressman Chung Dong-Chae, 95% of broadcasting producers said that they felt pressure regarding audience ratings, and more than half reported that they copied foreign programs due to this pressure (Choi et al., 1997).
development of new creative comedy that combined satiric and/or meaningful information with entertainment.

**Summary of Chapter**

This chapter has examined the rise and fall in the production of televised political entertainment given the changing media environment associated with the shifts in societal power structures. By analyzing the flow of production of political entertainment programs, I have contended that the rise and fall in the production of political entertainment was influenced by business interests rather than political freedom. More specifically, though the movement for political democratization triggered the rise of political satire, this movement also and ironically contributed to the liberalization of broadcasting market. In this way, broadcasting companies’ dependence on audience ratings intensified with the production of television entertainment, which ultimately caused a genre transformation in television entertainment.

As noted, the ’87 democratization movement proved a turning point for the production of political entertainment in two ways. First, the ’87 democratization movement precipitated the expansion of broadcasting organizations. Second, it contributed to a change of the television production system. Along with the democratization of the broadcasting organizations, television political entertainment grew rapidly after the ’87 democratization movement in terms its broadcasting hours and its number of programs. Two types of political comedy were especially prominent during that time: (1) allegorical satire based on stand-up comedy, and (2) mock news. Yet the production of televised political entertainment has not thrived since the late 1990s. After the IMF economic crisis, progressive political regimes faced compulsory globalization that was led by transnational organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank, among others. Two
progressive regimes adopted cultural expansionist, neoliberal policies, which resulted in an increase in the chaebols’ domination of the media and cultural industries as well as the globalization of the Korean media and entertainment industries in accordance with the rise of the hallyu phenomenon. The neoliberal economic policy that governed the media and communication industries amplified the importance of audience ratings in the production of television entertainment.

Figure 4.2. Flow in the production of political entertainment from 1987 to 2007.

Therefore, the production of political entertainment was no longer viable. Rather, political satire shifted to fit two formats that became unique to Korean infotainment. The initial attempts to create political entertainment were when stand-up comedians used allegorical
methods for satiric purposes; the following attempts were when young comedians adopted the mock news genre and produced verbal criticism through the use of catchphrases. These different attempts promoted the production of various televised satires as a means of political criticism and eventually gave rise to the distinctive features of Korean entertainment shows (see Figure 4.2).

It was somewhat ironic, however, that the production of political entertainment decreased during the period of the progressive political regimes from 1997 to 2007. Around then, the production of political entertainment had shifted to the distinctive form of infotainment, as well as the uniquely-styled entertainment show called the real variety show. These entertainment programs indirectly advertised Korean entertainment to the nation’s neighboring Asian countries in accordance with the rise of the hallyu phenomenon. This suggests the entertainment production companies’ and broadcasting corporations’ similar interests.

It is remarkable that the rise of political entertainment came along with political democratization, but democratization was not the only factor that influenced the rise and fall in the production of political entertainment. As this chapter has discussed, democratization influenced the broadcasting organizations’ production system and played a role in altering production mechanisms in accordance with the rapid commercialization and globalization of the media and entertainment market. Therefore, the vicissitudes of political entertainment were influenced by the commercialization of media industry, which pushes against a common assumption that they were influenced by political democratization.

In conclusion, political entertainment at that time dealt partially with political affairs, but its primary focus was on entertainment. Political entertainment also paid more attention to public service advertisements, which meant that the goal of political entertainment tended toward
education rather than satiric criticism. The politics-centered entertainment show arose alongside with introduction of a comprehensive channel on cable TV, as I will discuss in the following chapter. One feature to which I pay attention regarding comprehensive programing cable TV networks (CP-CATV) is that these channel operators were newspaper companies that had only recently entered the broadcasting market in order to expand their businesses. Therefore, CP-CATVs began to actively produce various political entertainment programs ranging from political talk shows to political comedies by utilizing their information resources. This was the most effective way for CP-CATVs to maximize their profits. Meanwhile, it is also noteworthy that various political entertainment programs arose simultaneously in response to the preferential treatment that was given to conservative newspaper companies. I will explore what specific factors have brought about the return to political entertainment on cable TV and under what specific social conditions in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN THE CHANGING MEDIA LANDSCAPE OF KOREA

*News has an interest in proving that the event is newsworthy.*
*We have an interest in proving that it’s comic.*
– Scott Williams

This chapter discusses why political entertainment has become popular again and in what specific contexts. Despite the boost in liberal politics immediately after the ’87 democratization movement, the production of political entertainment at that time relied heavily on implicit expression in creating political satire, which ultimately hindered the production of politics-centered entertainment programs. The production of hybrid programs was later diversified in accordance with the commercialization and globalization of the Korean media and entertainment market, and as a result, two forms of infotainment have arisen since the 1990s. Firstly, new forms of infotainment that underscore citizens’ education via public service advertisements have become popular from the late-1990s to 2000s. Secondly, entertainment talk shows known as real variety shows have become widely adopted by major broadcasting companies as a popular format of entertainment program. In this way, broadcasting entertainment programs meet the needs of major media organizations—that is, entertainment meets the needs of an export-oriented entertainment market in the Asian region and adapts to a newly-changing media and communication market.

It is interesting that the hybrid genre that has emerged from the traditional news outlet and the entertainment show has seemed to explode in popularity, particularly on cable television, which has incorporated the real into the mimetic in order to blur the boundary between

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entertainment and traditional news, satiric jokes and serious political conversations. It is even more remarkable that the politics-centered entertainment show has managed to introduce comprehensive programming channels on cable TV. The advent of such channels calls for a closer look at the changing structure of the media market associated with recent political-economic fluctuations.

In this chapter, I particularly pay close attention to the factors influencing the revitalization of political entertainment, considering that this revitalization has been led by the comprehensive programming cable networks (CP-CATV) that were once banned by virtue of the prohibition on cross-media ownership between newspaper companies and broadcasting companies that existed until 2009 (when the Broadcasting Law and Newspaper Law were revised). The CP-CATVs that were cross-owned by major newspaper companies have since begun to actively produce a number of political entertainment shows and news satires, seeing these programs as the most effective way for those with information to maximize their profit. This shift necessitates an examination of certain factors that have enabled the revitalization of political entertainment on cable television.

In addition, while comprehensive programming cable television cable networks (CP-CATV) have taken the lead in producing political entertainment programs for mainstream media outlets, other attempts to produce political entertainment, termed new media, have also been made. New media has been cast as an alternative to the mainstream media, designed to create a counter-political discourse. More particularly, the Internet and mobile media have recently emerged as new vehicles providing various forms of infotainment such as mock news, late-night comedy talk shows, and mobile podcasts, most of which closely examine topical issues about political affairs. These attempts have been spurred in part by what has been perceived as the
unjust news reporting produced by the broadcasting corporations. The rise of new media as an alternative channel for the production of political entertainment raises questions about what has driven the revitalization of the production of political entertainment; how these programs propel meaningful changes in association with changing business relationships among media and entertainment companies; and how these programs will eventually influence Korea’s democratic system. This chapter thus seeks to provide a discussion of current political-economic conditions that have triggered this revitalization of Korean political entertainment.

The Change in Media and Communication Industries and the Rise in Civic Activism

Structural changes in the Korean media and entertainment industries. As previously discussed, the commercialization and globalization of the Korean media and communication industry was accelerated with the IMF economic crisis in 1997, the critical moment that brought about structural changes in the media and cultural industries. First, the big four chaebols that had actively expanded their businesses to the media and cultural industries partially withdrew their businesses for the purpose of lessening their risk. The film and media affiliates of Samsung, Daewoo, LG, and Hyundai pulled out of the market due to massive restructuring between 1997 and 1999. This demonstrates that contrary to expectations, big chaebols did not succeed in creating synergistic relationships between the hardware and software businesses by entering the media and communication industries. There was a distinctive flow within the media and communication industries at each stage, as shown in Table 5.1.

The IMF crisis left the big chaebols with very few options other than closing their new businesses, including business ventures in film, music, and other entertainment arenas. Among these chaebols, Samsung, Hyundai and LG eventually reentered the media and communication
industries in various ways, while Daewoo’s entertainment-related affiliates were disassembled and became affiliated with other chaebols due to Daewoo’s bankruptcy.

Table 5.1. *Structural changes in the media and communication industries.*

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<tr>
<td><strong>New entry member</strong></td>
<td>- Big four <em>chaebols</em> (Samsung, Hyundai, Daewoo, LG) - Broadcasting corporations (KBS, MBC, SBS)</td>
<td>- Middle Size <em>Chaebols</em> (CJ, LOTTE, Orion)</td>
<td>- Telecommunication Conglomerates - Big News Corporations (Chosun, Joongang, Donga, Maekyung)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Interest</strong></td>
<td>- Business promotion combined with political leadership - Sales Promotion of Electronic Devices - Enforcing the oligopoly Market-domination (KBS, MBC, SBS)</td>
<td>- Transition of core Business area (CJ, Orion) - Synergic effect on original business (LOTTE)</td>
<td>- Utilization of infrastructure (KT, SK Telecom, LG U-plus) - Establishment of multimedia conglomerates (Chosun, Joongang, Donga, Maekyung)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Activities</strong></td>
<td>- Share purchase of newspaper companies - Entry into Film &amp; Music Business</td>
<td>- Diversification of almost arena of the entertainment business (CJ, Orion, LOTTE)</td>
<td>- Integration between network management and digital content business (KT, SK, LG) - Cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcasting (Chosun, Joongang, Donga, Maekyung)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result</strong></td>
<td>- Withdrawing film and music business in 1997-1999 (Samsung, Daewoo, Hyundai, LG) - Continuing to own newspaper(s)</td>
<td>- Active M&amp;A among <em>chaebols</em> (CJ and Orion)</td>
<td>- Increase of competition among <em>chaebols</em> - Indirect domination through a joint investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governmental policy</strong></td>
<td>- Press Liberation (’88) - Introduction of private broadcasting system (’91)</td>
<td>- Introduction of Cable Television (’95) IMF economic crisis (’97) - Integrated Broadcasting Law (’00)</td>
<td>- Media-related Law (’09) - General Programming on Cable TV (’11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medium-sized *chaebols* made their debuts into the media and communication industries in the 2000s; these debuts were typified by CJ, LOTTE, and Orion, all of which had the primary goal of shifting their business foci to the information and communication technology (ICT) industries. Most of these *chaebols* aimed at restructuring their businesses in order to strengthen their competitive power on the global market via vertical and horizontal integration. For example, CJ, the top media conglomerate, with 17 cable channels in Korea, has achieved this by expanding its business to include a wide range of media and entertainment, from cable broadcasting and Internet, to music and online games. CJ has also had an oligopoly on the Korean film market alongside other two media conglomerates, LOTTE and Orion, since the 2000s.

While the medium-sized *chaebols* shifted the balance of power in the media and entertainment industries partly due to the IMF economic crisis, the third power group, comprised of newspaper companies and telecommunications conglomerates, emerged as a dark horse in the media and communication industries in the mid-2000s. Telecommunications conglomerates and major newspaper companies began to enter the broadcasting and entertainment industries concurrently with the rapid changes in technological convergence and digitization. The change in the media environment brought about the new enforcement of media laws in the 2000s, and consequently, the media and communication industries have become an arena of heated competition among the conglomerates.

The entry of telecommunications corporations into the broadcasting and entertainment market reflects the rapid development of information and communication technologies in Korea. It also raises questions regarding the production, distribution, and consumption of information; the role of blended programs; and the importance of new media. When considering that the
Internet has become an important source for the consumption of a variety of different types of information, including news (Purcell et al. 2010), the rise of participatory Web media and technologies such as online fora, online comments [daetgul]145, and social media can be seen as promoting individuals’ engagement in politics and allowing them to easily express themselves by connecting with peers who utilize new media channels as alternatives to the existing media. That is, the development of online communication technologies provides both challenges and opportunities for the ICT businesses and hence the democratization of society.

More specifically, the development of ICT has provided important opportunities for big telecommunications conglomerates. For example, Korea Telecom (presently KT), which had controlled the telecommunications network infrastructure for a long time under governmental protection, has emerged as a powerhouse in the media and communication industries. KT moved into the broadcasting industry earlier than other two chaebols by launching a digital satellite television system that had 144 channels on March 1, 2002.146 SK Telecom, one of the big three telecommunications conglomerates, has also expanded its business reach to be more IT-oriented. Likewise, LG Telecom, one of the three largest telecommunications companies in Korea, has felt the necessity of tightly interweaving their affiliates in order to create a synergistic effect.

The three telecommunications chaebols also launched IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) services in 2008. The number of IPTV subscriptions reached eight million in 2013, making IPTV one of the four major broadcasting services in Korea, next to terrestrial and cable broadcasting.147 These telecommunications conglomerates have also expanded to film (Sidus

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145 In Korea, the comments made by readers on Internet-published news articles are called “daet-gul.” The term daet-gul includes various forms of online commenting, including responses to previously-made comments, blogs, and forum postings (You et al., 2014).
Fnh, SK Telecom), digital music (Melon Music, KT Music), and Internet (SK Communications, KTH). These telecommunications conglomerates have embraced a wide range of media and entertainment business in order to maximize their profits with the use of the given infrastructure. Though the telecommunication conglomerates adopted business strategies to expand their business areas in the similar way that medium-sized chaebols did, the goals of these conglomerates were differentiated. That is, the medium-sized chaebols sought to restructure their organizations for entry into the IT world, while telecommunications conglomerates were likely to integrate subsectors of their businesses to create a packaging effect.

The entry of telecommunications conglomerates and medium-sized chaebols into the broadcasting and entertainment industries has been supported by the Korean government policies since the ’87 democratization movement. As shown in Table 5.2, chaebols began to run newspaper companies at the time of the liberalization of the press in 1988. Moreover, several governmental incentives have been put in place since the 1990s, and the revision of broadcasting laws in 2000 enabled telecommunications conglomerates to enter the broadcasting industries. More specifically, 2009 marked the full-scale entry of newspaper companies into the broadcasting market in accordance with the revision of four media-related laws. The Lee Myung-Bak government actively promoted deregulatory media policies that eventually offered breaks to major newspaper companies as well as big chaebols under the name of encouraging information and communication technologies. In doing so, the Lee regime allowed chaebols to cross-own newspaper and broadcasting companies, which resulted in removing the barrier to entry in broadcasting management for major newspaper companies.

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### Table 5.2. Flows in media policies and related civic movements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of policy</th>
<th>Before the 87 democratization</th>
<th>After the 87 democratization to Present</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Promotion</strong></td>
<td>- Ordinance No. 19 (‘45)</td>
<td>- Liberalization of the press publication and registration (‘88)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Deregulation)</td>
<td>- Five-year plan for telecommunication (‘61)</td>
<td>- New Broadcasting Act (‘90)</td>
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<td>- Introduction of TV (‘63)</td>
<td>- Horizontal Publication (‘91)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>Samaeul</em> TV Distribution Initiative (‘74)</td>
<td>- Liberalization of the press (‘93)</td>
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<td>- Introduction of Color TV (‘80)</td>
<td>- CATV Permission (‘93)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Telecommunications Basic Act &amp; Telecommunication Business Act (‘80)</td>
<td>- Integrated Broadcasting Law (‘00)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Five-year economic and social development initiative (ESDI)</td>
<td>- Revision of the Broadcasting Law (‘09)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Revision of the Press Law (‘09)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Internet Multimedia Broadcast Service Act (‘09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governmental Regulation</strong></td>
<td>- Ordinance No. 88 (‘46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(suppression)</td>
<td>- Seven-point press clause (‘48)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Decree No. 11 (‘61)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- New Press Policy (‘62)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Martial Law Decree (‘72)</td>
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<td>- 1st Press Restructuring (‘73)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Plan for the Purification of the Press (‘80)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The Basic Press Law (‘80)</td>
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<td>- Guideline for reporting (‘80)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 2nd Press Restructuring (‘80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chaebols’ participation</strong></td>
<td>- Samsung (TBC, Joongang Daily, Cheil communications)</td>
<td>- Samsung (Catch One, CATV, JTBC, Dream Box, Starmax, Nices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in media and communication</td>
<td>- LG (Busan MBC, Jinju MBC, Kookje Daily, Gyeongnam daily)</td>
<td>- Daewoo (Daewoo Cinema Networks, CATV, Woo-Il Video, Se-eum Media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industries</td>
<td>- Donga Construction (Daejeon MBC)</td>
<td>- Hyundai (HBS, CATV, Munhwa Daily, Seoul Production, Innocean Worldwide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Miwon (Jeonju MBC)</td>
<td>- LG (Korea Home-shopping, CATV, Telecom, Mediart, LG Media, HSAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Samyang shared with Gyeong-Bang Textile Co. (Dong-A Daily)</td>
<td>- KT (KTF, Sidus FnH, KT Music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- SsangYong (Tongyang News agency, Daegu MBC)</td>
<td>- Hansol (PCS provider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Doosan (Hapdong News agency, Oricomm)</td>
<td>- SK (SK Telecom, Communications, broadband, Mido film, Pan Production, Melon Music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hanhwa (Samhwa → Hancomm)</td>
<td>- CJ (Ch Q, CATV, CJ E&amp;M, CJ CGV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- LOTTE (Daehong communications)</td>
<td>- Orion (Onmedia, CATV, Showbox)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- LG (LG Ad)</td>
<td>- Taegwang (T-broad, CATV)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- LOTTE (LOTTE Home-shopping, Cinema, Entertainment)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- GS (Silver Bullet)</td>
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These press-based conglomerates included the three large newspaper corporations, Chosun, Joongang, and Donga Daily which were not bigger than other chaebols in terms of their annual turnover. These media conglomerates created strong connections between newspaper and broadcasting when they set up general cable programming channels. Although the three big media conglomerates do not yet feel the synergistic effect of cross-owning newspaper and broadcasting channels, they have embraced the entertainment business, since the main goal of their entry has been not only to maximize their profits, but to increase their sway over public opinion. In this vein, major newspaper companies have begun to establish network companies called media conglomerates in order to promote their entertainment businesses as well as to exert influence on public opinion.

At the same time, the collusion between conservative newspapers and chaebols has been fortified by mutual investments and shareholdings. For instance, Joongang Daily has established Joongang Media Network (JMN), which includes three daily newspapers, fourteen periodicals, four cable broadcasting channels, and four entertainment subsidiaries. Other chaebols that are ranked in top 20 have also made significant, though more indirect, connections to the broadcasting industries through joint investments. Hanjin and Buyoung, for example, has invested $47.5 million in TV Chosun, while Hanhwa has invested $11 million in Channel A; KT and Hyundai ($12 million) to all three channels; and Hyundai Heavy Industries and KCC ($10 million) to Channel A.

Technological growth and the rise of civic activism. Technological advances have not only brought about an increase in the chaebols’ domination over the media and entertainment

149 Joongang Media Network: http://jmedianet.com/company_06_01.jsp
industries; they have also provided potential channels for individuals to engage in online public deliberation, thus contributing to the creation of multiple alternative public spheres on the Web. Indeed, strong governmental support for information and communication technology has caused Internet use in Korea to skyrocket. Owing to its well-established technological infrastructure, Korea today has one of the highest rates of Internet usage worldwide.\textsuperscript{151} This is particularly important when discussing the production of political entertainment, because the current boom in political entertainment has been led by alternative media reform activists as a means of civic activism. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a historical overview of online civic activism within a broader social context that takes into account the state, the economy, and civil society.

As previously noted, due to overwhelming military power, there were few journalist-led protests or civic movements oriented towards media reform until the 1980s. A few journalist-led protests aimed at being free from stringent governmetal censorship.\textsuperscript{152} The first civic movement in Korea began with complaints regarding what was perceived to be biased news reporting during the general election campaign of 1984.\textsuperscript{153} In 1986, this movement expanded to be a nation-wide anti-subscription fee movement, triggering subsequent citizen-led media reform movements and an increase in calls for political democratization around 1987.

\textsuperscript{151} OECD statistics also show that South Korea was the first country to achieve 100\% high-speed wireless Internet access in relation to its population at the end of 2011\textit{(Korea Herald, 2012). In addition, South Korea had a 91\% active mobile broadband subscription rate as of 2011, the highest such subscription rate in the world (data is available at http://www.itu.int/).}

\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Donga Toowee} [journalistic protest at Dona, a daily newspaper] was the first noteworthy journalistic protest of the 1970s, occurring in October 1974. A Donga Daily journalist declared the necessity of freedom of the press (this was called the ‘Donga Toowee Accident’), protesting that chief editor Song Gun-Ho and three other executives had been taken to the police station for interrogation on account of the critical report on a Seoul National Students’ demonstration. The declaration included the refusal of external censorship; a call for a ban on surveillance by the government; and a denunciation of the unjust arrest of the journalists. This triggered other journalists’ participation in the protest. As a response, the Park regime pushed advertisers to withdraw their advertisements; this constituted the first advertisement throttlehold in Korea. Ultimately, 113 journalists and related workers were forcibly dismissed.

\textsuperscript{153} During the Chun regime, the main news segment on KBS and MBC began with a discussion of Chun Doo-Hwan’s affairs (cynically called Ttang-Chun News), which did not reflect the goal of selecting news based on its value. The ad-hoc civic alliance of the Catholic Association and the Protestant Church Association was established in November 1985 to form an anti-subscription fee protest (Choi & Kang, 2001).
The ’87 democratization movement signaled that the industrialization of Korean society under the military regimes would be challenged by the nation’s citizens (Shim, 2006). As for the citizen-led media reform movements, Christian associations took the lead in the early stages. Specifically, the YMCA helped drive citizen support with its campaign to have citizens turn off the TV every July 7 all day long; this was called the No TV Day Campaign and was started in order to protest the low quality of television programs. Yet despite the contributions of religious associations to the rise of civic participation, the associations’ activities were restricted to program monitoring. Hence, to spur citizens to engage in broader media reforms, the Association for Democratic Media (ADM) was formed in 1984.\footnote{It was restructured in 1998 as the Citizens’ Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM) (http://www.ccdm.or.kr/001_intro/intro_01.asp).}

After the first peaceful political turnover in 1997, civic participation in media reforms flourished. 48 civic society organizations (CSO) and individuals banded together under the People’s Coalition for Media Reform (PCMR), which was founded on August 27, 1998.\footnote{The goal of PCMR is to suggest alternative media policies, to participate in ensuring unbiased reportage, and to provide an alternative broadcasting station for citizen voices.} The PCMR actively engaged in media policy-making and took the lead role in a variety of citizen-led movements such as the anti-subscription movement for Cho-Joong-Dong.\footnote{Cho-Joong-Dong accounted for the three major conservative newspapers, Chosun, Joongang, and Donga Daily in Korea. This anti-subscription movement was the first nationwide protest against the rightwing, partisan newswriting of the three newspapers. Chosun, Joongang, and Donga were dominant newspaper corporations that held 75.2% of the market share in 2004, according to a survey by the Korea Press Foundation. (Media Oneul, Oct, 2006).} The movement reached its height in 2008 with the anti-US meat protest. The complaints were due to seemingly biased newswriting regarding the protest by three conservative newspapers, and in turn, the movement directly damaged the market share of the three newspapers, causing a 20% decrease in the total subscription rate.
Thirdly, the rapid growth of the Internet and new information technology helped to shape diverse forms of social movements that occurred in concert with the nation’s constitutional, political, and economic reforms. Along with an increase in calls for systematic transparency, social movements and popular protests have continued to be the most salient forms of grassroots political expression in South Korea. More particularly, the creation of user-generated content has been realized through digital publishing, Web distribution, and social networking (Rheingold, 2008), and user participation in cultural production has opened discussions about the possibility that such engagement is associated with or even leads to offline public engagement. At present, the widespread adoption of Web 2.0 technologies is coinciding with the more recent emergence of multiple public discussion platforms provided by many popular Web sites.  

Among the Internet-related political activities of the last two decades in Korea are the citizens’ gold-collecting campaign in 1997, the candlelight rally in 2002 in memory of Hyo-soon and Mi-sun, victims of a U.S. armored vehicle; the emergence of Roh-Sa-Mo, a voluntary political campaign activity in support of former president Roh Moo Hyun during the presidential election of 2002; and the candlelight protest against U.S. meat imports in 2008. These examples indicate that millions of Koreans’ participation in social and political affairs has been enabled by the rapid and widespread penetration of high-speed broadband Internet, as many scholars have observed (Kim & Lee 2006; Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009; Yoon et al. 2010).

The Internet and mobile media have become especially important vehicles for the production of alternative news programs. Several online news outlets such as Fact TV, News...
Tapa, the mobile podcast NaCcomSu, OhmyTV, Jaedaero Newsdesk (parodying Newsdesk at MBC), and Reset News (produced by the KBS union) have emerged as prominent voices challenging the conservative news media. These Internet news outlets have created in-depth news coverage with a different style from that of traditional news, and have made mocking and satirical challenges to political authority, which have consequently contributed to the rise of contemporary political entertainment.

Table 5.3. *Types of media reform movements in Korea.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main contents</th>
<th>Principal agent</th>
<th>Principal agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1987</td>
<td>Before 1987</td>
<td>Before 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Donga Tu-wee ('74)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Citizen’s Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM, '84)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Broadcasting Audience Movement ('86)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A general strike at MBC ('92)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘No TV day’ movement ('93)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People's Coalition for Media Reform (PCMR, '98)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anti-Chosun Movement ('00)</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unbiased news reportage</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Editorial freedom</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Democratization of media organization</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Civic media reform movement</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expression of viewers opinions</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Production of Alternative News Media</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anti-media conglomerates</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Online participants on the Internet, podcast, social media</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
<td>-完善新闻报道</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, the introduction of comprehensive programming cable channels and the rapid growth of information and communication technologies provide two possible ways of understanding the current production of political entertainment. In particular, the production of political entertainment is presently packaged in a variety of hybrid forms that go beyond strictly conveying hard news and information. The most prominent change can be found in the
traditional television news outlet. The major comprehensive programming cable channels (CP-CATVs) have introduced new forms of blended political talk shows, wherein politicians and professional journalists play critical roles. In addition, CP-CATVs have developed a variety of blended infotainment programs. While mainstream media has promoted the transformation of programming for profit-making purposes, alternative media has produced hybrid news satires as a way of shaping counter-hegemonic political discourses.

Therefore, in starting to classify the types of political entertainment shows, it is necessary to take a closer look at this transformed programming landscape. There have been two suggestions for how to understand these political shows. First, in terms of script format, scholars have suggested classifying the programs based on the styles and structural features of the programs, as well as the breadth of the cast utilized in the performances. Second, in terms of context, scholars have suggested categorizing political entertainment programs according to the programs’ ideological inclinations and discursive engagements in topical affairs. Using these two methods, Korean political entertainment can be classified as will be discussed henceforth.

**Entertaining Politics?: Contemporary Political Entertainment in Korea**

**Political talk shows on the rise.** A look back at the last decade in television reveals a collection of political entertainment programs that have been shown on most contemporary television channels. Political information is conveyed in a variety of formats and genres beyond news and entertainment; these formats include political talk shows, political soap operas, stand-up comedies, mock news, and even animated programs. This means that “the conventional lines that once segregated the serious from the entertaining are now eroded in contemporary television programming” (Jones, 2010, p. 6). The most eye-catching change is that newspaper-owned
comprehensive programming cable channels have provided many politicians with opportunities to work their way onto TV, landing national spots.

As is well-known, for much of television history, political talk shows had their origins in the journalistic tradition. It was in this journalistic tradition that interviews with politicians and op-ed writing became popular features of political talk shows. The journalistic history of political talk shows has its historical roots in American network television. The earliest form of American political television was pundit talk. On news shows such as Meet the Press on NBC, Face the Nation on CBS, and The News Hour with Jim Lehrer on PBS, host journalists would interview various significant persons including government officials and politicians regarding breaking events. Interviewing and op-ed writing were also developed as features of shows such as Agronsky and Company on Washington’s WTOP-TV (presently USA-TV), Crossfire on CNN, and This Week with David Brinkley on ABC. On the other hand, television has produced a number of satiric comedies. Prior to the 1980s, satiric comedies ranged from sitcoms (e.g., Family Ties) to political satire (e.g., Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In). Despite such changes in the production of political new shows, broadcasting networks did not actively seek to revitalize the production of hybrid infotainment programs, because television networks needed to maintain the division between news and entertainment. Such a division helped the networks to vindicate their efforts to serve the public interest; these efforts were based on network executives’ perceived need to employ such segregation as a means of ensuring broadcasting permission and licensure (Jones, 2010, pp. 6-7).

The production of blended programs began in earnest during the post-network period, leading to intense competition among cable networks (Gray et al., 2009). The most significant difference between before and after the network period can be found in the hybrid political
entertainment programs that have been produced by the networks since the 1990s. Since then, politicians have appeared on blended programs such as *Larry King Live* and *The Phil Donahue Show*. Also, new forms of political entertainment have been introduced on various entertainment cable channels. Comedy Central (*The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*), MTV, HBO (*Not Necessarily the News, Dennis Miller Live, and Real Time With Bill Maher*) have been the most popular channels to actively utilize entertainment forms for the creative delivery of political news. Other networks have attempted to follow suit, creating shows such as *Saturday Night Live* on NBC and *The Late Show with David Letterman* on CBS.

The previous section has suggested that the most prominent feature of current forms of political entertainment is the ability to make politics entertaining. In this regard, entertainment politics has a “double meaning” (Jones, 2010, p. 15). One side of entertaining politics is that it reflects the desires of all its participants, including the producers, audiences, and politicians; this implies that the production of political entertainment coincides with multiple stakeholders’ interests (Jones, 2010, p. 15). Producers can obtain higher audience ratings, audiences can gain both information and enjoyment, and politicians are able to brand themselves. More importantly, entertaining politics indicates that politics *per se* is as dramatized, attractive, and interesting as competitive sports or games. Due to the similarity between politics and sports, political entertainment is frequently considered a relatively comfortable way of attracting audiences’ attention.

Therefore, it is not surprising that comprehensive cable programming channels actively exploit the program formats that have been adopted by American network television. Like the American broadcasting industry, the Korean broadcasting market has become increasingly competitive in accordance with the entry of four major CP-CATV channels onto the
broadcasting market. The intensified competition among broadcasting networks has significantly contributed to the blurring of the lines between political news and entertainment programming, considering that the four CP-CATVs are well-suited for making news and information programs but are less capable than long-running terrestrial broadcasting networks in producing entertainment programs.

Table 5.4. Types of programs on the comprehensive programming cable channels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Channel A</th>
<th>JTBC</th>
<th>TV Chosun</th>
<th>MBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News/Info</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program logs of four CP-CATV networks from January, 2012 to January, 2014

Due to a series of changes in Korea’s political and economic structures, along with some significant changes in the nation’s broadcasting and technological climate, television producers have come to recognize the drawbacks in the given media system for attracting audience attraction and have begun to provide political talk programing. Table 5.4 shows the different means of production of the four CP-CATV networks from 2012 to the present. The most notable change is that CP-CATVs have sought to reinforce news production as an effective way of utilizing their given resources.

More specifically, three of the CP-CATVs, Channel A (Donga News Corporation), TV Chosun (Chosun News Corporation), and MBN (Maeil Economy News Corporation), have increased their news show programming from January 2012 to present. This indicates that most CP-CATVs are focusing more on creating news-based programs rather than on producing entertainment-oriented programs. Meanwhile, JTBC (Joongang News Corporation) has started to provide differentiated services by producing a variety of entertainment programs. The different programming strategies among the four CP-CATV networks are due to the different orientations of the networks. That is to say, since the CP-CATV networks are owned by major right-wing newspaper corporations, their primary interest is to fortify their discursive hegemony over public opinion, and in order to do so, these CP-CATV broadcasters need to increase the number of right-leaning partisan news shows that they air. Network executives expect that the production of partisan news shows will contribute to an increase in the loyalty of their right-wing audiences—a strategy that US-based Fox News has also used. Meanwhile, JTBC has looked to succeed to the history of Tongyang Broadcasting Company (TBC) which merged into Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) in 1980 during the Chun military regime.
JTBC is the only CP-CATV broadcaster that enhances its production capacity in order to compete with the three major terrestrial broadcasting networks. It is noticeable that such a difference has caused the differentiated production of political entertainment shows. Most CP-CATV networks, particularly TV Chosun and Channel A, air diverse political news shows. There have been two prominent features in the CP-CATVs’ production of political news shows.

First, CP-CATVs have promoted pundit shows as the most prominent form of the political talk show in the network television era. Yet the most substantial change in news programming is the recruitment of famed journalists and celebrities, which has led to a stunning transformation of cable news programming. For example, JTBC scouted a famous news anchor, Sohn Suk-Hee, to host the news program *JTBC News Nine*, as well as an op-ed news show, *Topical Issue Focus with Jeon Yong-Woo*. In the same vein, other right-wing CP-CATVs TV have contributed to a change in news format as well as the creation of a newly-styled political talk show. TV Chosun began production of *TV Chosun News Show PAN*, which interviews newsmakers from the prior week and introduces a panel of three or more pundits to discuss the socio-political influence of current events in a way similar to that of *Fox News Sunday*. *The Real News* on Channel A and *Sympathetic News* on MBN utilize similar formats. Also, Channel A has produced various news shows such as *Channel A’s Real News* and *News Top 10* that are similar to the shows of other CP-CATVs.

Along with the change in format of news programs, these political shows have become the dominant form of political talk shows on cable networks. In these political talk shows, popular journalists often serve as emcees, since there are several pundits. Political pundits can be classified as those who have the necessary credentials, backgrounds, or competency to deliver relevant information in proper ways.
Characteristics of political entertainment on cable networks. However, objectivity and impartiality in news reporting have been secondary concerns when considered next to the networks’ desire to garner audience attention. On the new news talk shows, journalists are not only expected to deliver objective and unbiased information, but to provide entertaining politics. There are thus two types of pundit news shows that blur the lines between news and entertainment.

First, as a strategy of program branding, journalists on CP-CATVs have been frequently asked to be entertainers who satirically emcee the programs in order to increase the programs’ ratings. Cutting the Gordian Knot with Park Jong-Jin and Wonder and Clairvoyant Weekend with Jang Won-Joon are both live talk shows that utilize this strategy. Those programs have drawn attention because their journalist-emcees behave comically while interviewing celebrities and experts. These news shows also rely heavily on politicians, celebrities, and sometimes-irreverent experts on topics in order to create entertaining, occasionally controversial spectacles. Political talk shows such as Octagon in Politics With Lee Bong-Gyu, Tank of Current Affairs with Jang Sung-Min, and Tack of Blind Spot With Sohn Byum-Soo also produce the affective stories about politicians and celebrities with interviews and celebrity panels.

Secondly, CP-CATV-led political entertainment shows have mostly right-wing partisan bents, as exemplified by Sniper Is Back on TV Chosun. Sniper Is Back began as a counter-program to NGS in October 2011, claiming that its goal was to balance the partisan information on the Internet in which left-wing voices dominated. The program is currently broadcast on major cable television and stars three highly-conservative journalists who discuss two topics every week. It is clearly a partisan talk show presenting the voice of actual conservatives based
on free market economy and neoliberalism, as the director, Sohn Hyung-gi on TV Chosun, has suggested.

Consequently, the program is not interested in giving balanced information. The news and information provided during such programs thus seems not to adhere to the strict code of journalistic ethics that stipulates fairness, balanced reporting, objectivity, and impartiality. Also, the networks do not provide or check their news sources when discussing political affairs, causing a decrease in the shows’ credibility. In addition, criticism has been expressed about the government-friendly panels that have been cast in most of the political news shows that air on the CP-CATV networks. In particular, TV Chosun and Channel A have been seen to favor right-wing panels: the number of conservative panels appearing on TV Chosun was 243 (84%) out of a possible 289 panels, while on Channel A, conservative panels accounted for 254 (69.2%) of 367 panels in 2013 (Citizens’ Coalition for Democratic Media, 2013). Therefore, although these partisan talk shows have increased in popularity and are presently expected to become a new form of hybrid program merging hard news and entertainment, they are limited by their political partisanship.

These partisan talk shows are produced not only for political purposes, but also for business purposes. The partisan talk shows aim at fortifying the influence of the conservative cable networks on political discourse as a way of providing (ex-) politicians with a new channel for shaping political affairs. Accordingly, many politicians have been willing guests on political entertainment shows “as a response to the shrinking sound bites they are allotted on the news programs” (Dahlgren, 1995, p. 56). In other words, politicians utilize these programs in order “to make news and to make waves”; “to send signals to their allies and to the opposition”; and “to evaluate their own packaging and marketing efforts” (Mundy, 1996, pp. 20-22). These programs
have also provided many ex-politicians with new opportunities to work as professional political experts. Indeed, Hwang Tae-Soon, Jang Sung-Min, Kang Yong-Suk, Lee Chul-Hee, and Min Young-sam, among others, have experience working as senior assistants, aides, and executive secretaries to politicians, positions that are considered to mediate between broadcasting and politics.

Moreover, the appearance of politicians has enabled cable network companies to reduce production costs and to provide viewers with various behind stories on political affairs, which coincides with interests of both broadcasters and politicians. It is reported that most top celebrities, political experts, and politicians are paid between $1,000 and $2,000 dollars per episode (Kang & Lee, 2014). This is highly cost-effective when compared with top entertainers’ appearance fees, which are approximately $10,000 to $15,000 dollars per episode. Owing to the low cost of producing political talk shows, the overall production cost was $49.2 billion dollars on average from December 2011 to August 2012, or a quarter of the production costs of the three major terrestrial television networks.\(^{159}\)

This is a significant difference from the networks’ original plans submitted for approval to the Korean Communication Commission (KCC) in 2010, wherein the four CP-CATV networks guaranteed balanced programming among news (23.7%), education (44.7%), and entertainment (31.5%), and an investment of $100 billion dollars per year into the production of programs as well as financial support for small production companies. However, TV Chosun, Channel A, and MBN have produced the most news and news-related talk shows (up to 82.8%), thereby suggesting that news-oriented programing will continue in the long-term (Kim, 2014).\(^{160}\)

\(^{159}\) $65.2 billion (JTBC), $48.8 billion (TV Chosun), and $34.2 billion dollar (MBN), respectively, were invested into the production of programs (press release from a congressman Yoon Kwan-Suk in Sept. 2012).

\(^{160}\) As for the CP-CATVs’ programming, TV Chosun had 82.8%, Channel A produced 74%, and MBN had 69.8%, according to the Korea Communications Commission (2013).
The reduction of program production has brought about shortage in programs, and accordingly an increase in reruns. The rate of reruns on TV Chosun is the highest among the four CP-CATV networks at 55.9%, while the average rate of reruns on the four CP-CATVs is 41%. For these reasons, harsh criticism regarding low-quality production and ideological bias, and regarding frequently-incorrect reports such as media morphosis about the 5.18 democratization has been leveled. This political partialness is contrary to the original purpose of introducing a CP-CATV system.\(^{161}\)

Thirdly, some celebrities who use humorous devices such as parody and irony in order to create entertaining politics have come to form an important part of political entertainment on the CP-CATV networks. Hybrid talk shows such as *SseolJeon [Verbal Battle]*, *Coolggadang [Cool Criticism Party]* and *Formidable Antagonists* claim to systematically analyze topical affairs, past events, and noteworthy celebrities. These programs are hosted by three to six people with diverse political backgrounds: hosts include celebrities, cultural critics, politicians, and even journalists. These blended entertainment talk shows have apparently succeeded in attracting audience attention. *Sseoljeon [Verbal Battle]* was listed among the ten most popular television programs in Korea in July 2013, while *Formidable Antagonists’* episode entitled “Human Aspects of Park Jung-Hee” had an audience rating of 3.2%, making it the top-watched program for its timeslot on March 5, 2014, on subscription cable television.\(^{162}\)

With the emergence irreverent pundits and entertainers has come an attempt to categorize these different people. Kim Gu-ra, Kang Yong-suk, and Lee Bong-gyu host several political entertainment shows, yet they are neither professional journalists nor experts. While they discuss news events and happenings, they do not deliver political information in an impartial way.

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\(^{162}\) Audience measurement aimed at Seoul and Gyonggi cable TV subscribers by Nielson Korea on March, 5.
Rather, they prefer to present biased opinions through humor and for entertainment purposes in ways similar to those of Bill O’Reilly, Bill Maher, Glen Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Sean Hannity, among other television satirists. For this reason, these entertainers are often called satirical pundits, as distinguished from the expert pundits who appear on news talk shows.

Along with the emergence of different types of pundits such as celebrity pundits and satirical pundits in political entertainment, it can be observed that the blurring of the boundary between news and entertainment has become accelerated in two ways. First, several political satire programs have emerged on cable television networks. Sseoljeon [Verbal Battle] and Saturday Night Live Korea (SNLK)\textsuperscript{163} are examples of such programs.

These programs increase citizen interest in politics, in that the program narratives provide easy and funny paths into complex political issues. The narrative arcs of these programs are very different from those of programs on terrestrial broadcasting networks. On terrestrial TV, political entertainment programs are sporadically scheduled and continue to use allegorical satire, whereas on cable networks, political entertainment programs deal frankly with sensitive political issues. This suggests that the terrestrial broadcasting networks have failed to take the lead in delivering unbiased political news, and thus alternative forms of delivery for political news are being produced in very experimental ways (Choi, 2013).

More specifically, by offering candid political criticism, political entertainment programs help individuals realize the close linkages between politics and their daily lives. For instance, Weekend Update during Saturday Night Live Korea, which stars the former newscaster Choi Il-goo, is a mock news satire that collects straightforward remarks regarding topical issues over the course of a week.

\textsuperscript{163} One of the major cable networks, tvN, bought the copyright to Saturday Night Live from NBC and began to broadcast the first season on December 3, 2011. At present, Saturday Night Live Korea is on its fifth season (the fifth season began airing on March 1, 2014).
Table 5.5. *Pundit news shows with interviews and op-eds.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Channel A</th>
<th>JTBC</th>
<th>MBN</th>
<th>TV Chosun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pundit news show</td>
<td>57.1% (4 of 7)</td>
<td>50.0% (3 of 6)</td>
<td>56.3% (9 of 16)</td>
<td>50.0% (6 of 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of programs</td>
<td>-News Top 10</td>
<td>-JTBC News 9</td>
<td>-The Public Eye</td>
<td>-Wonder and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-News Station</td>
<td>-Topical Issue Focus with Jeon Yong-Woo</td>
<td>-Sympathetic News</td>
<td>Clairvoyant with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-News Special</td>
<td>-Report: Meeting of the Political Desk at Four</td>
<td>-Current Affair</td>
<td>Kim Gwang-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Channel A’s Real News</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Microphone</td>
<td>-Desk 360°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Current Affair Specials</td>
<td>-Cutting in Two with</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One Stroke with Um Seong-Sub</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-TV Chosun News Show PAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Wonder and Clairvoyant</td>
<td>-TV Chosun Sport News PAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekend with Jang Won-Joon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infotainment</td>
<td>64.3% (9 of 14)</td>
<td>35.3% (6 of 17)</td>
<td>53.8% (7 of 13)</td>
<td>57.9% (11 of 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of programs</td>
<td>-Fact Ten</td>
<td>-Sseoljeon</td>
<td>-Touching Real Story, Life Theater</td>
<td>-Sniper is back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Political Story, Right and Wrong</td>
<td>-Documentary show</td>
<td>-Real Documentary, Soop</td>
<td>-Tank of Current Affairs with Jang Sung-Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Straight Talk with Lee Eon-Kyung</td>
<td>-Sweet information show, honey jar</td>
<td>-I am Natural</td>
<td>-Octagon in politics with Lee Bong-Gyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Cutting the Gordian knot with Park Jong-Jin</td>
<td>-Op-ed plus with Jeon Jin-Bae</td>
<td>-Consumer’s X-file with Jung Wan-Jin</td>
<td>-Discussion on Topical issue PAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Talk Behind One’s Back on Saturday</td>
<td>-JTBC Overnight debate</td>
<td>-The CEO with Jung Wan-Jin</td>
<td>-North Korea: Side Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Managing Editor’s Seeing the world</td>
<td>-Audience assembly</td>
<td>-Pang, Heated Idea Contest</td>
<td>-Formidable Antagonists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Law for you with Ryu Yeo-Hae</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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164 Drama/Soap Opera is not included in the category of entertainment, because CP-CATV networks had not actively produced drama/soap opera genre, except for JTBC. As noted, JTBC has produced 26 dramas and soap operas as a way of strategic differentiation from other CP-CATVs.
For example, Choi criticized an absurd remark regarding sex slavery made by Hashimoto, the mayor of Osaka, Japan, with the satiric comment, “Right, you are like filthy scum!” Such lampooning is also frequently found in the skit *Youido Telebubbies Return*, also part of *Saturday Night Live Korea* and which recorded the highest audience ratings for the show. By mocking the characters of *Teletubbies*, a popular British children's television series on the BBC, *Youido Telebubbies Return* parodies and satirizes presidential candidates in a figurative way as follows, thereby attracting significant attention during, for example, the 2012 presidential election.165

Moonjeni: Extend the voting hours for the class president election.
Ancheosseo: That's right. Students in class don't have the time to vote. - Episode Seven

Moonjeni: Did you see my spear? It's a spear made of pine wood and tiger's hide.
Hey, Ancheosso stole my spear!
Ancheosseo: I only caught the spear before it flew at me. - Episode Five

Voice actor: The hall monitors are supposed to investigate you because you played 'take-the-land' in class.
Emby: I don't like the teacher in charge of the hall monitors. - Episode Four

*Saturday Night Live Korea* explores topical political issues satirically, much the same way that the original *Saturday Night Live* does in America.166 *Saturday Night Live Korea* employs various humor techniques such as parody and irony for criticizing the president, which creates a clear distinction from the ways that terrestrial networks have used allegory to criticize the president’s appearance. Also, beyond providing a parody of television news, the program

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165 There are five main characters in *Youido Telebubbies Return*. Emby (Kim Won-hae) is supposed to represent President Lee Myung-bak, while Tto (Kim Seul-ki) represents Park Geun-hye, the former presidential candidate of the Saenuri Party. Moonjeni (Kim Min-gyo) is a stand-in for Moon Jae-in, the Democratic United Party candidate; Guradori (Jeong Myeong-ok) represents Lee Jung-hee of the Unified Progressive Party; and Ancheosseo (Lee Sang-hoon) represents independent candidate Ahn Chul-Soo.

166 *Saturday Night Live* has been exported to dozens of countries, including Brazil, Italy, Japan, Spain, and several East Asian countries.
offers a critical look at political affairs. More specifically, the program provides a satirical framework for considering the features that the president of Korea should possess. It has also prompted questions about the function of political satiric television. Pessimists contend that the show likely does not threaten those with actual political power, because the program is relatively inoffensive (Day, 2011). In other words, satiric TV audiences “are led to laugh but not disdain, to appreciate affectionately, but not really criticize” (Jones, 2009, pp. 43-45). On the other hand, programs such as this one are also frequently regarded as useful vehicles for learning more about contemporary politics, topical issues and their contexts, and personal information regarding political candidates during the election period (e.g., Brewer & Cao, 2006; Feldman & Young, 2008; Kim & Vishak, 2008; Xenos & Becker, 2009; Young, 2004).

_Sselowjeon [Verbal Battle]_ is a good example of political knowledge offerings. With the subtitle _Hardcore Breaking News_, the program exemplifies entertaining politics with its comical discussions of topical affairs. These discussions differ from those on satiric television, which often focus on lampooning those in power. In _Sselowjeon_, humor is generally used to help the audience understand current events easily. For this reason, anecdotal humor\(^\text{167}\) rather than sarcastic or dissident humor is mainly employed. The humor employed in this program is not satiric, but it demystifies spectacled political events.

Furthermore, by casting two performers, Lee Chul-Hee and Kang Yong-Suk, as representatives of the conservative and progressive sides, respectively, the program appears to provide balanced coverage of the issues, while simultaneously giving rise to unexpected and entertaining debates that capture the audience’s attention. Because both Lee and Kang are former

\(^{167}\) Anecdotal humor refers to personal comedic stories that may be true or partly true but are always embellished.
politicians,\textsuperscript{168} the show also helps to reveal the “real” politics that exists behind the spectacle of politics. This may be helpful to audience members who are just learning about politics, providing an easily accessible channel to the political issues. In some cases, these political entertainment programs help to shape actual political agendas. Indeed, when Jin Sun-Mi and Jeon Byung-Heon, two congressmen of the Democratic Party, appeared on \textit{Coolggadang [Cool Criticism Party]}, they presented bills regarding the improvement of firefighters’ labor conditions and the incorporation of Internet gaming into the educational curriculum, respectively.

At the same time, however, the program hampers the creation and delivery of a third party’s alternative opinion, an opinion that would diverge from the mainstream ideology that has long been closely associated with the contemporary television industry. The triangular table set in \textit{Sseoljeon [Verbal Battle]} exemplifies how these political entertainment programs have been situated in the television industry. Two panelists, Kang Yong-Suk and Lee Chul-Hee, sit side-by-side, while Kim Gu-Ra, representing the cable network, is positioned at the center. In this way, the staging represents the collusive relationship between entertainment media and politics. That is, Kim Gu-Ra seems to take a neutral position, mediating the argument between the left (Lee) and the right (Kang). In reality, the commercial broadcasting channel resists engaging in any specific political discourse, instead seeking to create an entertaining argument between the two panelists, since the primary goal of the show is to make a profit. Indeed, Kim often remarks in between arguments, “You guys have a fierce battle, while I earn money. Money talks here!” Such a comment clearly suggests why commercial cable networks have engaged in the production of political entertainment programs: the network’s commercial interests are at stake.

\textsuperscript{168} Kang Yong-suk was a former congressman of the Saenuri Party, while Lee Chul-Hee worked as an administrator in the office of the president.
Figure 5.1. *Satiric political entertainment on cable networks.*

In considering the rise of the hybrid news-entertainment format, it is necessary to pay attention to the changing face of the television industry itself. The far-reaching technological and industrial changes have brought about a new phase in television, and the ways that producers and advertisers conceptualize their target audiences have shifted, leading to the practice of narrowcasting (Day, 2011, p. 53). Fragmented audiences, a rise in non-narrative programs (as typified by reality television), an increase in the production costs associated with making narrative programs, and finally, the specialization of narrative programs are all features of the contemporary television network period (Scone, 2004). In this vein, political entertainment programs have come to target audiences who have very specific cultural tastes, and those narrowcast programs are produced using humor devices such as “irony, parody, [and] skepticism” and are sometimes based on “TV-literate critical reading protocols” (Spigel, 2004, p. 256).

Extending satire’s reach into commercial culture, television has not only established itself as an important channel for conveying dissident opinions and counter-opinions, but has also proven itself a useful vehicle for the reproduction and circulation of recognized sources. Digital servers that began to be broadly used in the broadcasting arena for the task of searching and
integrating file footage far less dauntingly now allow ubiquitous access to audiovisual materials (Caldwell, 2004, p. 49). Accordingly, television news clips, footage, and other televisual formats have been indexed and incorporated into political entertainment in accordance with the development of digital technologies. This has ultimately enabled producers to create cost-effective programs in a relatively easy way. Another related and remarkable feature of present-day political entertainment is that it utilizes visual techniques to level its satiric criticism.

The program entitled Dolbal Youngsang [Unforeseen Image], which has aired three times per week since 2003 as a two-minute segment during the news show News Parade on YTN, is considered an exemplary case of televisual satire. Dolbal Youngsang is a visual satire with a number of hidden stories that are not discussed in any news programs. It has recently expanded to other short editing programs such as Dolbal Dictionary, Dolbal Offcut, and Talk About Talk, as well as other visual satires such as MBN’s Popcorn Visuals. Owing to its satiric criticism of various political affairs, the program was awarded The Professional News Report Section in the Korean Journalism Awards. The program has attracted great attention since it first aired in 2003, but it gained the most popularity when it aired parodies of the impeachment of President Roh Moo-Hyun from the National Assembly in 2004. The program mainly shows political visuals, some of which respond to those in political power. The Lee regime has been especially sensitive to criticisms leveled by this program. As the program has come to attract an even wider audience, its use of visual satire has been held in check by the political regimes. The most prominent visual satire occurred during an episode entitled “Education on Melamine,” which aired on September 29, 2008. The episode included footage that had been shot when Lee Myung-Bak visited the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) to inspect the actual conditions of the contemporaneous melamine scandal.
(a) Education on Melamin broadcasted on September 29, 2008

(b) Bomb and Bomb on November 30, 2010

Figure 5.2. Episodes of Dolbal Yeongsang on YTN.
During this episode, Lee was humiliated when he made the ridiculous remark that there was no sign of melamine on any product—not recognizing that melamine is a harmful substance that cannot be detected in food products. The program was summarily discontinued via the disciplinary dismissal of the producers and journalists who striked between October 8, 2008 and April 20, 2009, demanding the resignation of government-friendly president Koo Bong-Hong.

Because visual satire relies on comedic pleasure, it cannot be regulated in the usual ways. Visual satire is frequently used as criticism, but it is simultaneously produced to humiliate those in political power. This is the distinctive characteristic of visual satire: it is not intended to conventionally enlighten, but instead makes satire the enlightenment itself. This makes visual satire fundamentally different from other political news shows (Lee, 2009). The rise of visual satire has raised ontological questions regarding the television medium. According to Postman, television is inherently biased, and this may lead to its rendering its content, including breaking news and political discussions, more entertaining than they otherwise would be. Entertaining politics itself might not be problematic.

However, According to Erion (2007, pp. 6-8), Neil Postman (2005) offers a Huxleyan warning that the television medium is not an appropriate vehicle for the open discussions that treat topical issues seriously, rationally, and coherently; these discussions are the prerequisite to a healthy democracy (Erion, 2007, pp. 6-8). Postman and other media theorists tend to agree that it is inevitable that serious news and public discussions become entertainment when they appear on television. *Dolbal Youngsang [Unforeseen Image]* could be regarded as such a case. At the same time, however, this televisual satire presents a potential alternative way that television can serve to contribute to serious political discourse and criticism. The program is often categorized
within the news satire genre, but it can also be seen as more than that, because humor rests on the idea that the television medium uniquely influences the news it transmits. More importantly, though, the program shows that the critical reflection of the real in televisual satire is contingent upon the structural conditions of the media industry and political dynamics within a broader social context.

**News Satire as Civic Activism Within New Media**

In order to understand the rise of mock news within new media, it is necessary to review political practices of today’s citizens. Some scholars (e.g., Axford, 2001; Dahlgren, 1999) have explained that the current political culture shows decreasing loyalty to institutional organizations such as governmental institutions, political parties, and even civic associations, while strengthening the flexible and temporary alliances that have formed around specific issues connected to individuals’ daily lives. This is frequently referred to as postmodern politics or lifestyle politics. In particular, young Koreans who were born in the late 1990s and grew up with consumer capitalism, known as Generation D or Generation M, tend to have liberal identities and be progressive on political affairs. They also tend to demonstrate a collective antipathy towards the inequalities faced by the oppressed classes, using new media and advanced communication technologies to do so.

As previously noted, in accordance with the rapid growth of new media technology, civic activism has arisen as a means for creating a transparent and healthy democratic Korean society. To date, the advanced technologies of Web 3.0 and that are merging with mobile devices coincide with multiple energetic public discussion platforms that reveal the depth of civic activism. Examples of such civic activism include the candlelight rally in memory of Hyo-soon
and Mi-sun, who were killed by an armored U.S. vehicle in 2002; the emergence of political fandom for former president Roh Moo-Hyun, called Roh-Sa-Mo, in 2002; and the candlelight protest against U.S. meat imports in 2008. These cases illustrate that the Internet and mobile media have become essential channels for conveying information that is rarely delivered by the mainstream news media. These activists have used new media to produce in-depth news, and some of them have even created mock news satires, which attract greater audience attention.

The rise of political entertainment in new media is led by *Naneun Ggonsuda (NGS) [I Am a Petty-Minded Creep]*, a satiric, podcasted news show. The podcast\(^{169}\) first aired on April 28, 2011, and ended on December 18, 2012, the presidential election date. Soon after its first episode was uploaded, it soared in popularity, with downloads numbering 11 to 20 million each week, making it the top-downloaded podcast in Apple’s iTunes’ list of world podcasts in July 2011, August 2011, and April 2012 (Cha & Jin, 2012, p.158). *NGS* was a left-wing, satiric podcast that always began with the catchphrase, “Tribute broadcasting for Gaka [His Highness].”\(^{170}\) *NGS* encouraged progressive politics, criticizing Lee Myung-bak of the conservative Grand National Party for his announcement that he had had a landslide victory in the 2007 presidential election (an election that had ended 10 years of presidential rule by the progressives). As Kim Ou-Joon, the show’s leader, described, the primary goal of *NGS* was “to entertain people by raising all kinds of allegations” against Lee and his regime (Choe, 2011). *NGS* drew significant attention because of its peculiar format and cultural influence in creating an alternative public space where citizens could actively engage in political discussions, and by extension, real political actions. By making fun of Lee’s governing style and raising concerns about him and his family, *NGS* gained a cult following among young Koreans who were frustrated with the Grand National Party (Na,

\(^{169}\) “Podcast” refers to a themed series of digital audiovisual files that is able to be downloaded via a Web site to a computer or listened to directly via a mobile device.

\(^{170}\) The slogan was later changed to “tribute broadcasting for a hidden owner of BBK”. BBK is the
NGS was honored with the Korean Democratic Journalism Award presented by the Journalists’ Union in 2011 for being a significant influence on Korean journalism (Moon, 2011).

More specifically, in terms of critical civic activism, the popularity of NGS has had substantial implications in three dimensions: its distinctive format, its framing of political discourse, and its production and distribution of alternative political information. First, the protuberant trait of NGS is that the show adapted the entertainment format by utilizing a variety of humor devices to explore political affairs, in the process combining news reports and entertainment. The entertainment format, which is often forgiven for ignoring journalistic principles and ethics, enabled show hosts to be direct and unique in their speech, unlike the hosts of serious political talk shows, who could often be very dry.

Moreover, the entertainment format enabled the hosts to thoroughly investigate the hidden dimensions of political affairs, events, and politicians, which often went underreported by the major news outlets. In this way, the show blurred the lines between fiction and non-fiction, fact and faction, and news and entertainment. The hosts of this show expressed outrage at Lee and other conservative politicians with satiric remarks, funny conversations, and even verbal abuse while addressing political issues. Finally, the show also distinguished itself from other shows—four hosts were considered the ideal combination (Kim, 2011, pp. 95-99). Kim Ou-joon was one of the foremost Korean satirists who established the online satiric newspaper Ddanzi Ilbo in 1998 as a form of confrontational media.¹⁷¹

NGS served as a follow-up to Kim’s Internet news satire, and in the show, Kim took the lead in selecting topics as well as setting the basic direction of the show. He also enlivened the

¹⁷¹ Using self-deprecating humor in its manifesto, Ddanzi Ilbo claimed that “it aims at extremely high-quality comedy, cynicism, parody, and yellow and quasi-cyber journal as much as B-movies,”; in doing so, it contributed to end of authoritarianism (Chung, 1998). Only two months after it first appeared online, Ddanzi Ilbo recorded 2 million page views, and Yahoo offered $60 million dollars for its purchase, though Kim ultimately rejected the offer (Jeong, 2009).
programs by creating a number of catchphrases. The second host, former congressman Chung Bong-joo, also aimed to create entertaining politics by providing live stories about real political situations that he had experienced, while the third host, Joo Jin-woo was a journalist who had worked at the weekly magazine SisaIn. As an investigative journalist, Woo had delved into carefully-concealed stories and events about Lee and ruling party. Finally, Kim Yong-Min, a radio producer, was in charge of editing and programming. These four hosts most frequently set their sights on Lee, a brazen move in a country with little precedent for political humor. By reconstructing known facts and materials, they raised sensational allegations against Lee Myung-Bak and his assistant, but softened the allegations through the usage of paradoxical phrases such as “It is possible to conjecture……” and “We don’t believe that His Highness would have committed such a nefarious deed” (Chae, 2011). In this way, they frequently toed the line between fact and fiction, entertainment and journalism.

Secondly, despite the sensational allegations raised by NGS, the show engaged in investigative journalism dealing with serious, often-surreptitious political issues, and in this way contributed to setting an alternative political agenda and shaping a counter-discourse. There had been many battles between the liberal and conservative presses, and these battles had stretched to other media platforms, particularly the Internet, giving rise to a new political culture. As of February 2012, the number of comments on the show’s Web site (radio.ddanzi.com) skyrocketed to 33,776, and news reports and articles in 104 newspapers and television networks reached nearly 10,000 since the first story on NGS broke in Media Today in July 2011 (Cha & Jin, 2012, p. 167). Ultimately, the progressive news media was responsible for 67.4% of the total news articles on NGS, while news reports of the conservative news media accounted for 33.6% (see Table 5.6).
Of course, these reports were rather different in nature: while the progressive news media highlighted NGS’s positive contribution to an alternative political discourse, the right-leaning news media criticized NGS for its perpetuation of quasi-journalism. These conservative news sources pointed out the partiality of NGS, as well as the lack of fact-checkers employed by the show, stressing the show’s lack of adherence to journalistic principles. Kim Ou-Joon claimed that these conservative news sources had long controlled the way in which information was distributed; meanwhile, progressive newspapers delivered information that could potentially be found in only 15% of all the political messages that the right-leaning news media disseminated (Kim, 2012, pp. 238-239). Accordingly, using the mobile interface, Kim intended to make a new infrastructure for the delivery of his alternative message.172

List of major topics raised by NGS (from April 2011 to December 2012)

- Ownership of BBK
- Chunggyae Foundation funded by Lee Myung-Bak
- Relationship between Lee and Erica Kim
- Famous pastor Cho Yong-Gi’s business and suspicions regarding his intimate affairs
- Privatization of public corporations, including Inchon Airport
- The relationship between the Jang Ja-Yeon affair and Chosun Daily
- Illusion of Resources Diplomacy
- Mayor of Seoul Oh Se-Hoon’s future plans for a presidential campaign
- The exorbitantly-priced skincare products of Na Kyung-Won, a candidate for mayor of Seoul
- A concealed story about President Lee’s visit to the United States
- Debate for mayor of Seoul by-election
- President Lee’s illegal purchase of real estate in Naegok-dong
- The conflict between prosecutors and the police regarding legal rights during an investigation
- Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack on the Web site of the Korean National Election commission (NEC)

172 Kim (2011, p. 303) stated, “Smartphones can hit the jackpot, though everyone uses his smartphone as a medium.”
• Imprisonment of Chung Bong-Joo, a co-host of NGS, for groundless allegations about the BBK affair\textsuperscript{173} (in December, 2011)
• NEC’s intervention in rigged election for mayor of Seoul
• Privatization of Korean Train Express (KTX)
• Prosecution and accusations against other hosts of NGS
• Kim Yong-Min’s campaign parliamentary election
• Complaints about the free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States
• A general strike on the Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC)
• Plots to kill oppositional leaders Moon Jae-In and Ahn Chul-Soo
• Details regarding the Korean-Japanese Military Agreement
• Corruption scandals of Chung Woo-Taek, governor of the Chung-Book province
• Investigation of the Four-River Refurbishment Project
• The manipulation of public opinion
• Hiring Daet-geul writers for propagandization
• Problems with public opinion surveys
• A ruling Saenuri party’s presidential candidate Park Keun-Hye’s incorrect perceptions regarding the modern history of Korea
• Illegal activities and manipulation scandals of the ruling Saenuri party’s mercenaries
• Agreement on single candidate between Moon and Ahn for the presidential election
• Illegal campaigning by ‘Cib-Ar’ (Crusaders Albeit)\textsuperscript{174},

The amplification of this counter-discourse resulted from NGS’s success in securing an alternative channel to push back against the ruling power. NGS developed more than a hundred different political agenda, of which 33 received significant press coverage by the mainstream news media. Those which did included suspicions regarding the exorbitantly-priced skincare products of Na Kyung-Won; President Lee’s illegal purchase of real estate in Naegok-dong; the Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack; the by-election of the Seoul mayor in 2011; and the privatization of Korean Train Express (KTX). Cha and Jin (2012, p. 175) have found that the number of NGS-related reports increased 306% during the run-up to the election of the mayor of

\textsuperscript{173} BBK is a stock price manipulation scandal in which President Lee Myung-bak was implicated. BBK is known as a combination of accomplices’ initials.
\textsuperscript{174} More specifically, ‘Cib-Ar’ refers to a group of part-time workers who were like crusaders in the presidential campaign, seeking to manipulate public opinion on the Internet.
Seoul, which suggests that the election may have been a tipping point in the attention paid to NGS.

Table 5.6. News articles about NGS.\(^{175}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News media</th>
<th>Progressive news media</th>
<th>Conservative news media</th>
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</table>
| News media | • Print: Hangyoreh, Kyunghyang, Hankook  
• Online: Media Today, OhMyNews, Presian | • Print: Chosun, Joongang, Donga  
• Online: Dailian, New Daily |
| Main topic | • Investigation on NGS fever  
• Introduction of Podcast as an alternative medium  
• NGS effect and related topics  
• Absurdity suspicion of ruling party  
• Suspicion of illegal campaigning  
• Political regulation on NGS app | • Partiality and lack of fact in NGS  
• Imprisonment of Chung Bong-Joo  
• Controversy about sexual discrimination of NGS |
| Number of articles | • 715 (67.4%) | • 346 (33.6%) |
| Number of Criticism | • 246 (34.4%) | • 255 (73.7%) |

Thirdly, NGS suggested that the current media environment was dominated by several right-leaning media corporations, which distorted political information. Thus, NGS aimed to counter the distorted information disseminated by the major conservative media. Because the program intended to promote political activism, its producers adopted different methods of production than producers of programs that aired on major commercial broadcasting networks. To manage NGS as a non-commercialized platform, NGS producers banned all advertisements except advertisements for books written by hosts and guests of the show. At the beginning, it was easy to adhere to this advertisement ban, since podcast production costs were about a twentieth of the production costs of a major radio broadcast (Table 5.7).

In the meantime, as NGS listeners gained greater access to the Internet, NGS faced financial difficulties due to the steep increase in hosting costs for its server—up to $28,000 dollars per month. This became a financial burden on the producers, when considering that 30 GB of Web traffic generally costs over $100,000 dollars in server management fees. In order to reduce costs and raise funds, NGS hosts started off-line talk concerts in which books and magazines, as well as NGS t-shirts and souvenirs, were offered for sale, with the profits slated to pay for a server-hosting service (Choi & Kim, 2011).

Table 5.7. Comparison between radio broadcasts and podcasts (NGS).^{176}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Terrestrial Radio</th>
<th>Podcast (NGS)</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production cost</td>
<td>1,400 to 1,800 USD</td>
<td>70 to 80 USD</td>
<td>Three to four casts in an hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listeners rating</td>
<td>Approximately 2%</td>
<td>7 million (downloaded)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Average news programs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>• Hourly Traditional News (5 to 30 min)</td>
<td>• Varied from 60 to 140 minutes</td>
<td>Broadcasting hour of News on radio is 230 minutes per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• News Talk Show (60-120 min)</td>
<td>• Irregularly produced and uploaded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising fee</td>
<td>• Nationwide: 15,000 USD</td>
<td>• Free to distribute extras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local: 2,100 USD</td>
<td></td>
<td>in prime-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait</td>
<td>• Technical impartiality</td>
<td>• Partisanism, but based on delivery of facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seriousness</td>
<td>• Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, Kim Ou-joon, the leading host of NGS, renovated the headquarters of Ddanzi Ilbo and opened a coffee house named Bunker One in which the show began to be produced and a variety of meetings relating to it were held. There was also a broadcast-quality open studio where the various preparations for the weekly recording sessions could be monitored by citizens, as well as a library in which a variety of educational programs on cultural politics were planned.

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^{176} Kim, Y. M. (2011, p. 187)
Kim designed the space with the idea of the Habermasian public sphere (similar to Bourgeois’ salon in medieval times) in mind, believing it was necessary for citizens to have a space in which they could discuss their ideas. Indeed, evening events ranging from political discussions to art performances to educational lectures were regularly arranged in this place, allowing participants to meet many celebrities and liberal politicians including potential presidential candidates of the oppositional party such as Chung Se-kyun, Kim Doo-kwan, Moon Jae-in, and Sohn Hak-kyu. These candidates visited Bunker One for informal meetings to discuss current affairs, thus helping to make Bunker One a basecamp for counter-cultural civic activism, as well as the stronghold for the alternative media reform movement—not dissimilar to Gramsci’s camp for the war of position. For this reason, Bunker One was often regarded as a Korean counter-version of a Starbucks mixed with Fox News (Ramstad, 2012). However, notwithstanding the many efforts to maintain its advertisement ban, NGS could not solve its financial problems. For this reason, though the hosts of the show had initially rejected commercialization, they eventually realized the necessity of developing alternative profit-making strategies that would allow them to continue to produce their form of new media (Choi, 2011).

NGS caused a very heated dispute about the role of partisan news satire, and there remains a sharp division in opinions about the role of NGS. NGS supporters contend that the show positively challenged the given media landscape and provided a new way of distributing political messages. In particular, they emphasize that NGS showed an alternative method of media reform through its introduction of a new format of mock news satire. Moreover, NGS pushed listeners to participate in politics using catchphrases such as “Let’s not be intimidated!” and “Shut up, politics!”; this resulted in dozens of thousands of citizens becoming members of online fan communities and vigorously engaging in political events. Yet the show was criticized
for disregarding the boundary between fact and fiction. Although NGS claimed that it provided an alternative voice for issues that were not likely to be reported on in the mainstream news media, some witticisms of the show were not based on proven facts (Kim, 2011). For this reason, the show was criticized for failing to monitor its use of unverified allegations and charged with mixing facts with unproven speculations. Criticism of NGS reached its peak with the controversy over the show’s “bikini protest,” staged against the imprisonment of Chun Bong-Joo, one of the show’s hosts (Park, 2012). After the protest, NGS was attacked by both supporters and dissenters due to its suggestive commentary and refusal to apologize, and the protest eventually resulted in a decrease in NGS’s popularity as well as its influence on cultural politics.

**Summary of Chapter**

By describing the recent rise in political entertainment and mapping out its diverse forms, this chapter has sought to illuminate how the production of political entertainment shows is associated with “entertaining politics” as well as the changing business relationships between media and entertainment companies. It is particularly remarkable that the politics-centered entertainment show has appeared primarily on comprehensive programming cable television networks (CP-CATVs), given that these CP-CATVs are cross-owned by major right-leaning newspaper corporations. In order to better understand this unusual development, I have explored the changing structures of contemporary media outlets in association with fluctuations in the political-economic climate. The rapid commercialization and globalization of the Korean media since the 1997 IMF crisis has coincided with such structural changes. Medium-sized chaebols

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177 This issue arose in January 2012 when a young female posted a photo of herself wearing a bikini on the NaGgomSu website. Though she intended to call for the release of Chung Bong-ju, a jailed co-host of NGS, this photo became a serious affair named bikini protest, which ignites “a stir with some comments by men on the photos revealing women’s cleavage drawing criticism.” (Kim, 2012).
and telecommunications conglomerates entered the broadcasting arena after the IMF crisis, with newspaper companies following shortly thereafter, when they were allowed to have cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcasting media. It is important to understand that CP-CATVs have vigorously engaged in the production of blended programs in order to maximize their profits in the most cost-effective way.

This strategy seems to have been successful at present. These cable networks have succeeded in reducing production costs and increasing revenue. As these cable networks continue to produce news-based entertainment, three formats have come to the forefront: live news shows with interviews and pundit op-eds, mock news shows, and televisual satires. On the one hand, these programs have helped to integrate contemporary politics into citizens’ daily lives by providing alternative channels through which to convey politically-serious information in entertaining ways, in the process increasing political interest and knowledge.

On the other hand, the growing production of news talk shows with political pundits has generated serious questions regarding journalistic principles such as objectivity and impartiality in news reporting because journalists hosting the programs have been charged with creating entertaining politics in order to brand the shows and increase audience ratings. The programs have also helped to strengthen the influence of comprehensive programming cable television networks (CP-CATV) on leading political discourses by providing conservative politicians with new outlets for influencing politics. Moreover, the programs of CP-CATVs have marginalized important opinions raised by the other minor progressive political parties and its activists, thereby revealing the strategies and limitations of commercial cable networks.

There have been other attempts to produce political entertainment within new media. The rise of political entertainment within new media is due to the recognition that the current news
outlets are dominated by right-leaning news media, leading to the creation of a biased news arena. It is still controversial to suggest that political entertainment functions as a new vehicle by which to convey political information more effectively to audiences. In particular, the rise of political entertainment has raised concerns about the entertainmentization of politics without concurrent attention to serious thought and discussions.

At the same time, the popularity of political entertainment in the contemporary media landscape frightens those in political power. The popularity of NGS has created an explosive interest in narrowcasting media, leading the Korean government to start to take it seriously. For example, the Korea Communications Standards Commission (KCSC) established a new division for consultation on social networking sites (SNS) and mobile applications in December 2011 (Han, 2011), and all the members of NGS have been sued by politicians of the ruling party. It is uncertain whether the popularity of these blended programs will eventually decrease and the shows will be replaced by others, as has been the case historically. Yet certainly if such combinations are not operative in meeting the economic and political interests of the commercial cable networks, the production of political entertainment shows will stand at the crossroads.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: ENTERTAINING POLITICS

Summary of Research

Observing the paucity of research on political entertainment in Korea, this study has explored the historical transformation in Korean political entertainment through the lens of changing social and economic conditions, as well as shifts in power relations, over the past several decades. The study has taken two broad and interrelated research questions as its starting points: (1) “How are political, economic, and social forms of power associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of political entertainment?” and (2) “How has the production and dissemination of such programs changed over the past half-century and in what specific contexts?” In order to complete this analysis, a hybrid cultural industries and political economy approach has been employed. This approach has allowed particular attention to the role of political institutions in regulating media industries; the origin of Korean political entertainment and its distinctive features; the factors and conditions influencing the transformation in formats and genres of political entertainment; and the effects of technological shifts on political entertainment.

To answer these questions, the study first investigated the period of the 1930s and the politics of Mandam. Mandam, a hybrid form of political information and entertainment, can be considered to be the origin of Korean political entertainment. In blending political information and entertainment, Mandam played a crucial role in the shaping of political opinion by conveying political information in a satirical way, although to some extent, Mandam’s influence was limited, as it issued only soft criticism on politics under the severe censorship that was
characteristic of Japanese colonial rule. Indeed, Mandam was a succinct and sarcastic form that combined storytelling with parody and irony. In addition, the Japanese Government-General of Korea (JGGK) needed a vehicle through which to produce propaganda in order to legitimate colonial ideology. Accordingly, the JGGK encouraged such entertainment as a means of persuading citizens that Japanese rule was necessary for the modernization of Korea. As a result, both stringent censorship of the press and the promotion of entertainment marked the cultural policies of the JGGK from the 1920s to the early 1940s.

Along with the promotion of entertainment led by the JGGK in the 1920s came the industrialization of entertainment. The gramophone was introduced from the West, and accordingly, the SP record business grew. Record companies cooperated with theatrical companies by financially supporting them. In this cultural climate, Mandam performances came to be seen as a strategic way that theatrical companies could earn a profit. Record companies likewise actively utilized Mandam in order to drive record sales. Shin Bool-chool’s Mandam played a particularly critical role in the popularity of this hybrid political entertainment genre. It is noteworthy that the initial rise of political entertainment in the early stages of modern Korea was led by the business sectors for commercial purposes.

Mandam was situated at the nexus of the record industry, the theater business, the newspaper business, and the radio broadcasting industry. Record companies provided theaters with financial support, and theatrical companies offered cultural and human resources in response to the financial support offered by record companies. Newspapers promoted record sales by providing subscribers with promotional articles, commentaries, and special discount passes as marketing strategies, while record companies advertised their products in newspapers. Newspapers and radio stations provided mutual sponsorships in order to increase subscriptions.
Another mutual relationship between theaters and radio stations was established by exchanging programming sources for the radio broadcasts and human resources for theaters.

However, *Mandam*, a unique form of political entertainment in Korea, lost cultural influence with technological breakthroughs such as developments in radio broadcasting and the introduction of television. Though some *Mandam* storytellers moved to radio broadcasting, they were required to fit the forms and content of *Mandam* to radio programming. Consequently, ballad songs were integrated into *Mandam*; this caused the rise of lighter comedy and the loss of satire within *Mandam*. Thus, I have concluded that the 1960s to the 1980s can be considered the dark period of political entertainment in Korea.

Although light comedy and comic song flourished on commercial radio stations, there remained some attempts to make political entertainment programming on radio stations viable. One such attempt was known as *Aengmusae*. The *Aengmusae* affair showed the possibility of producing of a new form of political entertainment on the radio, given that the radio station (DBS) that was affiliated with a newspaper company was able to successfully produce *aengmusae* as a blended program of political information and entertainment. Yet such attempts were ultimately halted due to stringent political censorship, and the breakdown in the business relationships between newspaper companies and radio stations was not repaired until the four major newspaper companies established comprehensive programming cable television networks (CP-CATV) in 2010. In the meantime, political entertainment on the radio limited itself to two suitable forms: allegorical satire and call-in shows, both of which enabled broadcasters to avoid strict political censorship.

In 1961, television was introduced as an entertainment medium by the Park military regime, demonstrating a move against the strict suppression of the press that had characterized
the previous decades. Along with the introduction of television, the Park regime actively promoted the entertainment industry in order to alleviate the political complaints of Korean civilians. Such a dual media policy epitomized as regulation and promotion directly influenced a transformation in the formats and genres of comedy on television. While a handful of allegorical comedies continued to be broadcast, stand-up comedy programs came to dominate the airwaves, making political entertainment increasingly lively.

Political entertainment faced another dramatic change concurrent with changing political circumstances in 1987. The ’87 democratization movement altered the methods of producing political entertainment in two ways. First, the democratic mood permeated the broadcasting organizations, which changed the television production system. Political entertainment programming swiftly increased in terms of both broadcasting hours and the quantity of programs immediately after the ’87 democratization movement. During this time, two forms of political entertainment became prominent: allegorical satires based on stand-up comedy, and mock news programs. Stand-up comedians engaged in allegorical satires, while young comedians participated in creating mock news programs. These different contingents shaped distinctive features of Korean political entertainment.

However, despite the active production of political entertainment in the late 1980s, the rapid commercialization and globalization of the media and entertainment industries in 1990s ensured that it did not last. More specifically, the IMF economic crisis in 1997 and the rise of the hallyu phenomenon led two progressive governments to adopt neoliberal economic policies, which resulted in an increase in chaebols’ economic influence on the media and entertainment industries, and in turn, thwarted the production of political entertainment. Ultimately, the two forms of political entertainment that had flourished in the late 1980s, allegorical satire and the
mock news program, were integrated into a unique form of infotainment, the real variety show. Though the real variety show drew some attention, it focused more on civic education than political criticism, thereby causing the level of satiric criticism in infotainment to significantly decrease.

Politics-oriented blended programs reappeared along with the introduction of a comprehensive programming system on cable television. With the revision of the media-related laws in 2009, cross-ownership of newspaper and broadcasting companies was finally allowed. Accordingly, major newspaper companies came to enter the broadcasting industry through the creation of comprehensive programming cable networks (CP-CATV). These networks actively produced programs that blended news and entertainment for commercial purposes. Among these blended programs were three types: (1) live news shows with political pundits and celebrities; (2) mock news shows; and (3) televisual satires. These programs contributed to the commercial success of CP-CATVs by reducing production costs. In addition, by conveying serious political information jokingly, these programs helped to increase interest in political affairs. These blended programs provided hidden, but valuable, stories regarding public affairs and frequently satirized political authority. At the same time, however, these programs raised serious concerns about journalistic principles such as objectivity and impartiality in reporting.

Over the past decade, political entertainment within new media has shed light on the possibility of producing a counter-political discourse that would provide an alternative to the conservative bent mainstream news media. Because of recent, rapid technological breakthroughs, narrowcasting news-based entertainment shows have come to be produced by new media channels. In particular, mobile political entertainment, as exemplified by NaNeunGgomSuda (NGS), has revealed a new direction in civic activism, as well as a new way of considering the
production and circulation of alterative political information. It is still debated whether political entertainment functions as an effective vehicle for delivering political information to audiences. To be sure, the production of political entertainment and its growing prominence in the realm of political discourse can be attributed to the prevalence of narrowcasting in the post-network period (Reilly, 2010).

Political entertainment has both opportunities and limitations. It provides important information about politics and helps audiences to become invested in topical issues in a humorous, rather than deliberative way. Since the introduction of television, media and communication scholars have debated whether television performs any socially valuable function. Television hinders people’s education, but it provides eye-candy entertainment (e.g., Postman, 2005). Yet political entertainment integrates politics into citizens’ daily lives and shows that television can play a role in helping citizens to understand political events through their participation in agenda-setting, framing, and discussing everyday issues.

Implications of Research

In exploring the transformation of the blended news-entertainment program in Korea, this study has sought to remain cognizant of the limitations of its historical approach. This study has highlighted that such a transformation was initially led by corporations for profit-making purposes. Moreover, to explore the production and circulation of political entertainment, this study has considered how the “structures and processes of production and circulation of political entertainment content are embedded in the broader structures and processes of given social conditions” (Garnham, 2000, p. 4). To begin, I suggested that Mandam was created as a unique form of entertainment by small theaters and that the popularity of Mandam was driven by SP
record companies. Accordingly, Mandam, the origin of Korean political entertainment, came to be situated at the core of the intricate relationship among media and entertainment industries, which means that political entertainment began as entertainment-based content. This coincides with the fact that the rise of political entertainment can be accredited to the advance of commercial broadcasting in the United States and Western European countries, as many studies on the political economy of communications have pointed out (e.g., Jhally, 1989; McChesney, 1999).

Korean political entertainment remains different from that of Western countries, however. In Western countries, political entertainment appears as news-based talk shows, expanding to entertainment-based political talk shows such as The Daily Show and The Colbert Report through the transformation of formats. Meanwhile, Korean political entertainment has developed from the entertainment genre, largely because the division between news and entertainment in Korea has been stricter than in Western countries, and the production and circulation of news and information was long under strict governmental censorship. Moreover, the Korean military regimes propelled the entertainment industry by introducing television and technologies for political purposes, thus suggesting that the entertainment genre was relatively free to become a channel to express and share political opinions compared with news media.

Although entertainment-oriented political satire played an important role in conveying political information and opinions during the repressive political regimes, its influence was hobbled by governmental censorship. Thus, this study has considered how political and economic power may influence the transformation of such hybrid programs. As discussed, political regimes both censored media content and promoted the commercialization and globalization of the entertainment industry. Political entertainment reveals the complicated
nature of this dual governmental policy. Though political power has long been considered more influential than economic power in terms of regulation, political regimes have also vigorously engaged in the promotion of the media and entertainment industries by introducing new media and technologies. This dual process of regulation and promotion of media and entertainment products supports the contention that ideological state apparatuses such as media and educational institutions, power elites, the national council, and other networks of dissemination, including middle-class discussion groups and corporate-financed advertising, are integrally interconnected with each other (Althusser, 2006; Dormhoff, 1999).

Finally, it is also remarkable that contemporary political entertainment reflects the compressed modernization of Korean media industry. As discussed, Korea has become one of the most capitalist societies since the 1980s, but in becoming so, Korea has followed a slightly different trajectory than its Western neighbors. Bowles and Edwards (1985) have identified three stages of American capitalism: early competitive capitalism, monopolistic competition, and global-monopolistic competition. Yet the Korean economy was forced to adopt capitalism immediately after liberation from Japanese colonial rule, and thus Korea has undergone these stages concurrently during a relatively short period, with commercialization and industrialization being propelled by the state. The Korean media industry has been rapidly changing from a state-driven to a market-led industry since the late 1980s, with particular changes occurring in both format and genre. This is known as “the cultural contemporaneity of the uncontemporary” (Jang & Kim, 2013, pp. 88-91). Indeed, political talk shows with live-interviews and op-eds featuring political pundits arose before the 1980s, though an artificial separation between news and entertainment was only eliminated with the increase of competition in the post-network era.

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178 Jang & Kim (2013, p. 89) have claimed the particular state of Korea as a semi-peripheral country (i.e., a middle point in the modern world system between the core and the periphery) simultaneously reflects the coexistence of modernity and pre-modernity.
(Jones, 2010). Similarly, blended programs have been vigorously produced, because Korean cable networks presently face intense rivalry, and concurrently, various forms of political news and talk shows are prominent on comprehensive programming cable networks (CP-CATV).

In addition, the swift globalization of Korean media organizations marked by *hallyu* echoes the idea of capitalism incorporated into culture and social life (Palan, 2000). As Herman has claimed, the market is going to grow “by reaching into new geographic territories in already occupied space by converting aspects of life that were once outside of the market into market productions (commodification)” (1995, p. 3). Indeed, the globalization of Korean media has changed the methods of production and circulation of entertainment products in order to attract more sizable audiences. In this way, political entertainment has become more marginal, which echoes critical theorists’ arguments that political culture has become merely another object lacking critical perspective and failing to provide any plausible alternatives (e.g., Galloway & Dunlop, 2007; Gibson, 2003; Golding & Murdock, 2000; Thompson, 2013). Furthermore, *chaebols’* participation in the media and entertainment industries has given rise to similar concerns about the loss of quality and democratic debate due to the monopoly of a few large media conglomerates (McChesney, 2004; Bagdikian, 1983; 2004). In particular, the fact that major conservative newspaper companies have been able to cross-own broadcasting media is especially worrisome when considering that these large media organizations strongly influence the framing of political discourses and the actual agendas that are set by emphasizing or ignoring news stories to serve their corporate interests. This raises a core concern about ownership concentration and the ideological control of the media (McChesney, 1999).

Political entertainment has undergone various transformations in response to a variety of external and internal challenges it has faced. Recently, a number of new hybrid formats that
more strikingly problematize traditional distinctions between news and entertainment, and even fact and fiction, have developed. Political entertainment can be characterized as border genres that populate the space between the still-potent public perceptions of news/entertainment and fact/fiction. Given that it works to subvert conventional discourses, political entertainment is one of the most interesting and significant formats in television and new media today.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies should include several areas of discussion associated with the changing media landscape. While this study has made a substantive contribution to scholars’ understanding of political entertainment, work still needs to be done in investigating the dynamic nature of the construction, transformation, appropriation, (dis-)articulation, and contestation of political discourses produced through a variety of forms of political entertainment. To investigate the discursive formation of political entertainment texts, it will be necessary to set forth a typology of humor. Humor is a general term that refers to all experiences of laughter: affiliative, inclusive, exclusive, self-enhancing, self-deprecating, dissident, and disciplinary humor. Concepts such as sociability, aggression, and ideology can be considered major criteria in establishing traits that various kinds of humor share.

Satire, of course, is a specific form of humor (Griffin, 1994). Satire plays a critical role in problematizing ways of seeing and challenging the viewer to think about a subject in unexpected ways (Colletta, 2009). Scholars have emphasized satire as “artful political critique” (Caufield, 2008, p. 4), or critique that expresses and provides a basis for critical reflection whereby audiences can grasp the hidden, polysemic structure of meaning in a comedic text (Gutwirth, 1993). Thus, satire should be differentiated from other forms of political humor. To
better understand the notion of satire, Test (1991) has traced familiar shared traits among satiric works, suggesting that satire has four characteristics—aggression, play, laughter, and judgment—and that taken together, these characteristics distinguish satire from other types of humor. Using Test’s work as a basis, Caufield (2008) has elaborated on these four components of satire. Agreeing with Test that aggression, judgment, and play are necessary to the creation of satire, Caufield has suggested that the existing knowledge of the audience (i.e., an informed audience) is also necessary for laughter, stating that satire depends on an audience having relevant knowledge of the subject at hand: “Good satire demands an informed audience,” such that “an ill-informed consumer of the satire is left out of the joke” (p. 9). Caufield’s emphasis on existing knowledge is important in regard to efforts to construct a certain typology of humor. In a similar vein, I have attempted to conceptualize the sociality of humor, suggesting that comedy has three core components: relationality, community, and aggression (You, 2011). My taxonomy of the sociality of humor shares the trait of aggression with both Test’s and Caufield’s notions of satire; i.e., that in accord with Freud’s (1990) argument that jokes constitute an unconscious expression of aggression, I argue that aggression is at the core of political humor. Thus, situating aggression in a social setting helps to better illuminate the dynamic means for the (de-)construction, (re-)appropriation, and (de-)articulation of political discourses.

Future research also needs to uncover intertextual relations among media that cause another paradigm of competition: what I identify as the framing battle. Political entertainment shows function to subvert the influence of the mainstream media in framing the real, setting agendas, and producing narratives for the construction of meaning. Given that political entertainment/news satire can be considered an alternative news source, its influence on agenda setting and framing “the real” should be explored. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), the
purpose of a frame is to provide a basis for “select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, oral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.” Thus, the framing battle must be one of the core issues in further research on political entertainment. Intertextual analysis will be useful for uncovering the ways in which critical meaning is constructed via political entertainment.

Further studies should also closely investigate the critical role of humor and satire in encouraging the audience’s critical reflection on meaning and discourse within broader social, political, and cultural contexts in order to identify the kind of culture that political entertainment creates and the role that humor plays in producing political and cultural discourses that promote the civic engagement of its audience. Citizens’ discursive engagement on the Internet inheres their (re-)appropriation of political discourse, but it does not always promise their critical reflection on the real. It is remarkable that several reactionary humor Web sites have grown in popularity, which leads us to rethink the role of political humor in creating meaningful political discourses. Therefore, future research needs to closely attend to the tensions between the different parties involved, the humor devices used, and the ways in which political discourses are constructed in their broader social contexts.

Finally, I propose that further studies on political entertainment discuss the influence of globally-known shows such as The Daily Show (TDS) and The Colbert Report (TCR). For instance, Kleinen-von Königslöw and Keel (2012) have investigated how heute, which adopted its format from TDS, has been successfully adapted to Germany’s political and cultural context. This suggests that political entertainment is not the purview of a specific region. Baym and Jones (2012, p. 2) have argued (1) that news satire has become a universal phenomenon inasmuch as
no matter what the context, the media plays a critical role in distributing “authoritative
information about the real,” and (2) that news satire has become a kind of global trend in terms
of its format and the diverse ways in which it adapts to differing political-economic contexts.
When considering that the sales of television programs formats have been steeply growing along
with the globalization of media industry, it is important to examine whether satiric criticism
continues to be important, and what topics are effectively discussed globally through political
entertainment.


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- Yonsei Special Award for highest honor student for university entrance exam (Department of  
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