

The Rise of Netizen Democracy A Case Study of Netizens' Impact on Democracy in South Korea

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The history of democracy also shows that democracy is a moving target, not a static structure.

John Markoff

What does it mean to be politically engaged today? And what does it mean to be a citizen? The transformation of how we engage and act in society challenges how we perceive the concepts of civic engagement and citizenship, their content and expression. The introduction of new information technologies, most notably in the form of internet, has in turn reinvigorated these discussions.

Ylva Johansson

Someone may construe that in South Korea politics the major source of power moved from 'the muzzle of a gun (army)' to 'that of the emotion (TV)' and then to 'that of logic (Internet)' in a short time.

Yun Young-Min

Abstract

South Korean netizens are exploring the potential of the internet to make an extension of democracy a reality. The cheering during the World Cup games in Korea in June 2002 organized by the Red Devils online fan club, then the protest against the deaths of two Korean school girls caused by U.S. soldiers were the prelude to the candidacy and election of Roh Moo Hyun, the first head of state whose election can be tracked directly to the activity of the netizens. This is a case study of the South Korean netizen democracy. This case study is intended as a contribution to a needed broader project to explore the impact netizens are having on extending democratic processes today.

I – Preface

In the early 1990s, a little more than two hundred years after the French Revolution, a new form of citizenship emerged. This is a citizenship not tied to a nation state or nation, but a citizenship that embodied the ability to participate in the decisions that govern one's society. This citizenship emerged on the internet and was given the title 'netizenship.' The individuals who practice this form of citizenship refer to themselves as 'netizens.'¹

In the early 1990s, Michael Hauben, recognized the emergence and spread of this new identity. In the book *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet*, he describes

how he came to recognize that not only was there a new technical development, the internet, but also, there was a new identity being embraced by many of those online. Hauben writes:²

The story of Netizens is an important one. In conducting research five years ago (in 1992-1993-ed) online to determine people's uses of the global computer communications network, I became aware that there was a new social institution, an electronic commons developing.

It was exciting to explore this new social institution. Others online shared this excitement.... There are people online who actively contribute toward the development of the Net. These people understand the value of collective work and the communal aspects of public communications. These are the people who discuss and debate topics in a constructive manner, who e-mail answers to people and provide help to new-comers, who maintain FAQ files and other public information repositories, who maintain mailing lists, and so on. These are people who discuss the nature and role of this new communications medium. These are the people who as citizens of the Net, I realized were Netizens.... (T)hey are the people who understand it takes effort and action on each and everyone's part to make the Net a regenerative and vibrant community and resource.... The word citizen suggests a geographic or national definition of social membership. The word Netizen reflects the new non-geographically based social membership. So I contracted net.citizen to Netizen.

Just as many different meanings have developed for 'citizen,' so 'netizen' has come to have several meanings. The early concept of 'netizen' is 'one who participates in the affairs of governing and making decisions about the internet and about how the internet can impact offline society.' A further development of this concept is 'one who is empowered by the net to have an impact on politics, journalism, culture and other aspects of society.'³ This article will explore this new socio-political-cultural identity, the identity of the netizen in the context of recent developments in South Korea.

While there is a large body of literature about the internet and its impact on society, there has been considerably less attention paid to those who are empowered by the internet, to the netizens, who are able to assume a new role in society, and to embody a new identity. This article will explore how the netizens of South Korea are helping to shape the democratic practices that extend what we understand as democracy and citizenship. Their experience provides an important body of practice to consider when trying to understand what will be the future forms of political participation.

II – Introduction

In his article "Where and When was Democracy Invented?," the sociologist John Markoff raises the question of the practice of democracy and more particularly of the times and places where innovations in democracy are pioneered.⁴

Markoff writes that a dictionary in 1690 defined democracy as a "form of government in which the people have all authority." (p. 661) Not satisfied with such a general definition, Markoff wants to have a more concrete definition or conception of democracy. He wants to investigate the practices that extend democracy. He proposes looking for models or practices that will help to define democracy in the future. Such models or practices, he cautions, may be different from what we currently recognize as democratic processes. "We need to consider," he writes, "the possibility that somewhere there maybe still further innovations in what democracy is, innovations that will redefine it for the historians of the future." (p. 689)

Markoff suggests that researchers who want to understand the means of extending democracy in the future not limit themselves to the “current centers of world wealth and power.” (p. 663) Similarly, he proposes that the poorest areas of the world will not be the most fruitful for researchers looking for innovations in democracy.

Considering Markoff’s guidelines, South Korea fits very appropriately with regard to the size and environment likely to innovate democratic practices. Events in South Korea confirm that indeed there are pioneering practices that can give researchers a glimpse into how democracy can be extended in a practical fashion.

III – The South Korean Netizens Movement

Various factors have contributed to democratic developments in South Korea. For example, the activities of Korean non governmental organizations (NGOs) have played an important role. Similarly, the student movements at least since 1980 have served to maintain a set of social goals in the generations that have grown up with these experiences. Government support for the spread and use of computers and the internet by the South Korean population has also played a role.

For the purposes of this article, however, I want to focus on the practice of the Korean netizen. Along with the pioneering of computer networking in South Korea (1980s) and internet technology (1990s), there was the effort to maintain internet development for public purposes. This is different from how in the 1990s, for example, the U.S. government gave commercial and private interests free reign in their desires to direct internet development.

A – South Korean Networking as a Social Function

This case study begins in 1995.⁵

In 1995, the U.S. government privatized the U.S. portions of the internet backbone. The goal of the U.S. government was to promote private and commercial use. At the same time the concept of netizen was spreading around the U.S. and the international networking community, partially in opposition to the trend of privatization and commercialization.⁶

In South Korea, however, there was a commitment to “prevent commercial colonialization” of the South Korean internet. The effort was to promote the use of the internet for grassroots political and social purposes, as a means of democratizing Korea. In a paper presented in 1996, “The Grassroots Online Movement and Changes in Korean Civil Society,” Myung Koo Kang,⁷ documents the netizen activity in South Korea to “intervene into the telecommunication policy of the government which is pushing toward privatization, and to build an agenda for non-market use of the electronic communications technology.”

Kang describes the formation of the Solidarity of Progressive Network Group (SPNG) in 1995. He wrote, “It is now estimated that the South Korean online community is populated by as many as 1.5 million users.” (p. 117) In the early 1990s, commercial networks like Chollian, Hitel, and Nowururi were main providers of internet access in South Korea. Those interested in developing the democratic potential of the internet were active in these networks in newsgroups devoted to specific topics or on internet mailing lists. Online communities developed and the experience was one that trained a generation in participatory online activity. Describing the experience of

being online in one of these communities in the early 1990s, a netizen writing on Usenet explains:⁸ There were Hitel, Chollian, Nownuri, three major text based online services in Korea. I think they boomed in early 90's and withered drastically as the Internet explosion occurred in mid

and late 90's.

They provided the bbs, file up/download, chatting and community services.

Their community services were very strong. I also joined some such groups and learned a lot. Community members formed a kind of connection through casual meeting, online chatting, study groups and etc. The now influential Red Devils...was at first started as one of such communities. It introduced new forms of encounter among the people with the same interest.

They also had some discussion space, similar to this news group and people expressed their ideas....

B – How the Net Spread

When the Asian economic crisis hit South Korea in 1997, the Korean government met the crisis partially with a commitment to develop the infrastructure for high speed access. It gave support for the creation of businesses to provide internet access and to provide training to use computers and the internet. Describing the program of the South Korean government, Kim, Moon and Yang write:⁹ It invested more than 0.25% of the GDP to build a high-speed backbone and is also providing more than 0.2% of GDP in soft loans to operators from 1999 to 2005.

Along with the financial and business investment, the government supported training programs in internet literacy. One such program was called the “Ten Million People Internet Education” project to provide computer and internet skills to 10 million people by 2002. Unemployed South Korean housewives were particularly targeted and reports indicate that 1 million were provided with courses as part of the 4.1 million people who participated in government initiated programs. Primary and secondary schools were also provided with high speed internet access. Internet cafes with high speed access called PC-bangs spread widely, offering another form of cheap internet access.¹⁰

C – Netizen Events

Several developments in the first few years of the 21st Century demonstrate the impact the spread of the internet has had on South Korean society. A key result of widespread access to the

1) The Red Devils and World Cup Cheering

The Red Devils is a fan club for the South Korean national soccer team. It developed as an online community. The club became the main soccer cheering squad. Its original name had been “Great Hankuk Supporters Club” when it was created in 1997. It was renamed “Red Devils” after an online e-mail process “collecting public views through e-mail bulletins.”¹¹ The group utilized the internet for the 2002 World Cup cheering. Describing how the internet was utilized, Yong-Cho Ha and Sangbae Kim write:¹²

(T)he Web was a thrilling channel for many soccer fans across the country to satisfy their craving for information on the Cup. The 2002 World Cup provided Koreans with an opportunity to facilitate the dynamic exchange of information on the Web. In particular, the existence of the high-speed Internet encouraged the dynamic exchange of information about World Cup matches, players and rules. The Internet, which has become an essential part of everyday life for the majority of Koreans, helped raise public awareness about soccer and prompted millions of people to participate in outdoor cheering campaigns.

internet in South Korea has been the emergence of the netizen and of examples of netizen democracy.

Major portal sites were flooded with postings on thousands of online bulletin boards. Online users scoured the Web to absorb detailed real-time match reports, player-by-player descriptions, disputes about poor officiating and other soccer information. Instant messenger also played a role in spreading real-time news and lively stories to millions of people. Korea has more than 10 million instant messenger users and many of them exchanged views and feelings about World Cup matches through the new Internet communications tool.

During the World Cup games held in June 2002, crowds of people gathered in the streets in South Korea, not only in Seoul. The Red Devils organized cheering and celebrating by 24 million people.¹³ Sang-Jin Han describes how the Red Devils carefully planned for the massive cheering “through on-line discussions about the way of cheering, costumes, roosters’ songs and slogans, and so on.” The Red Devils function democratically and has online and off-line activities. “Anyone who loves soccer can be a member of the Red Devils,” Sang-Jin Han explains, by going to the website, logging on, and filling out their form. The website is (<http://reddevil.or.kr>) When the club started they had 200 members. During the world cup events, they had a membership of 200,000.¹⁴

The massive street celebrating during the soccer games has been compared in importance with the victory of the June 1987 defeat of the military government in South Korea.

To understand this assessment, it is helpful to look at an article written during the event by the Gwak Byueng-chan, the culture editor of *Hankyoreh*, a South Korean newspaper. I will quote at length from this article as it provides a feeling for the unexpected but significant impact that the world cup event in 2002 had on Korean society. Gwak Byueng-chan writes:¹⁵

To be honest with you, I was annoyed by the critics who compared the cheering street gatherings in front of the City Hall in June 2002 to the democratic uprising in June 1987. Much to my shame I criticized the foolish nature of sports nationalism... and even encouraged others to be wary of the sly character of commercialism... However as time passed, I began to wonder whether I wasn't being elitist and authoritarian... I was blind to a changed environment and to a changed sensibility. I assumed that people were running around because of blind nationalism and commercialism.

However, this was not a group that was mobilized by anybody nor a group that anyone could mobilize... On June 25, I wandered around Gwanghwamoon and in front of City Hall trying to get an understanding of the future leaders of this country. Otherwise, my clever brain told me, I would end up an old cynic confined to my own memories. After spending a long day wandering amongst young people, I finally understood. Although trying to understand their passion through this experience was like a Newtonian scientist trying to understand the theory of relativity, I understood. What we had experienced at that moment was the experience of becoming a ‘Great One.’ In a history with its ups and downs, we had more than our share of becoming this ‘Great One’ The 4.19 Revolution and 6.10 Struggle are two examples. So are the 4.3 Cheju Massacre and the 5.18 Democracy Movement. The gold collection drive during the IMF financial bailout was part of this effort too – trying to find a ray of hope in a cloud of despair...

The flood of supporters in June 2002, however, was no longer about finding hope. It was about young people dreaming dreams that soared higher and further than those of the past generations. Unlike the older generation, the younger generation is ready to meet the world with open hearts. They have the imagination to reinvent it and the flexibility to come together and then separate as the occasion calls for it. The whole world was rapt with attention on 'Dae-han Min-gook (Great Korea)' not just because of our soccer ability but because of this young generations' passion and creativity. Does this mean that their dreams have come true? No. Does this mean that all this was nothing more than one summer night's feast? No. These dreams will continue to flourish and the responsibility for making sure that they do belongs to the older generation, which has had the experience of becoming a Great One through such events as the 6.10 or 4.19....

Not only did the cheering crowds joyously celebrate the Korean team victories in the World Cup events, they also helped clean the streets when the event was over. Another aspect of the Red Devils achievement was to remove the stigma attached to the color red. Previously, avoiding the color red was a form of anti-communism in South Korea. The Red Devils' organization of the street cheering is a demonstration of how communication among netizens that the internet makes possible had a significant impact on the whole of South Korean society as the celebration unfolded off-line.

Recognizing the importance of analyzing this experience to the people of Korea, a symposium was held on July 3, 2002 by the Korean Association of Sociological Theory shortly after the World Cup events.¹⁶ The title of the symposium was "World Cup and New Community Culture." The theme was "Understanding and Interpreting the Dynamics of People (National People) Shown at the 2002 World Cup." Sang-jin Han described the dynamics of the culture that emerged from the World Cup events. Cho Han Hae-joang writes (p. 13):

What Han found during the collective gathering was a new community that possessed values of open-mindedness and diversity, of co-existence and respect for others.... Impressed by the cheering crowds, Han Sang-jin suggested looking for a point where the values of individualism and collectivism can synergize rather than collide. He wrote 'If there is a strong desire for individual self-expression and spontaneity blooming in the on-line space on one hand, there must be a strong sense of cohesion and desire for unity in the socio-cultural reality on the other. The new community culture will be equipped with the ability to harness these two forces into a symbiotic relationship.' In fact, at the symposium, many sociologists confessed to having been astounded at witnessing what they had considered to be impossible 'the coming together of the generations and the coexistence of the values of collectivism and individualism.' Influenced by the joy of the World Cup experience, the committee of Munhwa Yondae (the Citizens' Network for Cultural Reform) organized a campaign. They sought to reclaim the streets for public purposes, and to designate July 1 as a holiday. Also they gave support to the campaign to establish a 5-day work week and one month holidays for Koreans.¹⁷

2) Candle-light Anti U.S. Demonstrations

On June 13, 2002, while the World Cup games were being held in South Korea and Japan, two 14 year old Korean school girls were hit and killed by a U.S. armored vehicle operated by two U.S. soldiers on a training exercise. Once the games were over, many of those who had been part of the soccer celebrating took part in protests over the deaths, demanding that those responsible be punished. In November, 2002, the two soldiers were tried by a U.S. military court on charges of

negligent homicide. The verdict acquitting them was announced on November 19, 2002. Some protests followed. Then on November 27, 2002, at 6 a.m., a netizen reporter with the logon name of Ang.Ma posted a message online on the *OhmyNews* website saying he would come out with a candle to protest the acquittal of the soldiers. On Saturday, November 30, four days later, there were evening rallies in 17 cities in South Korea including thousands of people participating in a candlelight protest in Seoul. They demanded a retrial of the soldiers and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea. In subsequent weeks, candlelight demonstrations spread and grew in size. Protesters also demanded that the Status of Forces Agreement Treaty(SOFA) between the U.S. and South Korea be amended to give the Korean government more control over the activities of the U.S. troops in Korea.¹⁸

The impact of the “candlelight vigils that started from one netizen’s [online-ed] suggestion last month,” is described in a newspaper account:¹⁹

In Gwanghwamun, Seoul, the candles, lit one by one, form a sea. Tonight, on the 28th, without exception, the candles have gathered. About 1200 citizens gathered in the ‘Open Citizen’s Court’ beside the U.S. embassy in Gwanghwamun sway their bodies to the tunes of ‘Arirang’ which also played during the World Cup soccer matches last June. Middle-school student Kim Hee-yun says, ‘EverySaturday, I come here. There is something that attracts me to this place.’ Opposition to SOFA and to the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea continued to grow. The most well known outcome of this movement and the event most often cited as a result of the power of Korean netizens, is the election of Roh Moo-Hyun as President of South Korea on December 19, 2002.²⁰ The internet and netizens played a critical role in Roh’s election.

An article in a women’s newspaper on Dec 7, 2002, refers to the importance of netizens in South Korea:²¹

The netizens of the Korean Internet powerhouse are magnificent. They are reviving the youth culture of the Red Devils and the myth of the World Cup to create a social movement to revise SOFA.

3) Korean Netizens and the Election of President Roh

Of the candidates potentially running for the Presidency in South Korea in 2002, Roh Moo-Hyun had been considered the underdog and least likely to win. He had made a reputation for himself by his willingness to run for offices where he was unlikely to win, but where his candidacy might help to reduce regional antagonisms.²² Another basis for Roh’s popularity was his campaign plank advocating citizen participation in government. Roh had opened an internet site in August 1999 and his site was one of the successful candidate websites at the time. In the April 2000 election, Roh ran for a seat to represent Pusan in the National Assembly as a means of continuing his struggle against regional hostilities.

Though he lost that election, thousands of people were drawn to Roh’s website and the discussions that followed the failed election effort. Through these online discussions, the idea was raised of starting an online fan club for Roh. The Nosamo Roho fan club was started by Jeong Ki Lee (User ID: Old Fox) on April 15, 2000.²³ Nosamo also transliterated as ‘Rohsamo,’ stands for ‘those who love Roh.’

The fan club had members both internationally and locally with online and offline activities organized among the participants. When Nosamo was created, a goal of the organization was a more

participatory democracy. Sang-jin Han, reports that using the internet, the online newspaper *OhmyNews*, broadcast “live the inaugural meeting of the club held in Daejeon on June 6, 2000 through the Internet.”²⁴

In Spring 2002, the Millennium Democracy Party (MDO) held the first primary election for the selection of a presidential candidate in the history of South Korea. Nosamo waged an active primary campaign. “In cyberspace, they sent out a lot of writings in favor of Roh and Nosamo to other sites and placed favorable articles on their home pages.” (p. 9) The internet activity of the fan club made it possible for Roh to win the MDP nomination. Nevertheless, he was still considered a long shot to win the Presidency.

Early in the 2002 campaign, the conservative press attacked Roh. In response, more and more of the public turned to the internet to discuss and consider the responses to these attacks. Analyzing how these attacks were successfully countered via online discussion and debate, Yun Young-Min writes, the “political influences” in discussion boards “comes from logic, and only logic can survive cyber-debate. This is one of the substantial changes that the internet has brought about in the realm of politics in South Korea.”²⁵ Also Yun documents that as the attacks increased, so did the number of visits recorded by Roh’s websites and other websites supporting the Roh candidacy. (pp. 148-149) In a table comparing visits to websites of the two main candidates, Yun documents a significantly greater number of visits to the Roh website and Roh related websites as opposed to the websites of his opposing candidate. (p. 151)

Along with the Roh websites, the online newspaper *OhmyNews* was helpful to the Roh candidacy. *OhmyNews* developed a form of participatory citizen journalism. The online newspaper helped Roh counter the criticism of the conservative press. Roh gave his first interview to *OhmyNews* after winning the presidency.

The night before the election, a main supporter of Roh, Chung Mong-joon who had formed a coalition with Roh for the election, withdrew his support. That night, netizens posted on various websites and conducted an online campaign to discuss what had happened and what Roh’s supporters had to do to repair the damage this late defection did to the campaign. An article in the *Korea Times*²⁶ describes how the online discussion helped to save Roh’s candidacy:

The free-for-all Internet campaign also helped Roh when he lost the support of Chung Mong-joon just a day before the poll. Unlike other conventional media such as newspapers and televisions, many Internet websites gave unbiased views on the political squabble between Roh and Chung, helping voters to form their reaction....

The Internet is now the liveliest forum for political debate in Korea, the world leader in broadband Internet patronized by sophisticated Internet users....

The *Korea Times* reporter describes the activity of netizens to get out the vote on election day in support of Roh:

As of 3 p.m. on voting day, the turnout stood at 54.3 percent, compared with 62.3 percent at the same time during the presidential election in 1997. Because a low turnout was considered likely fatal for Roh – the young often skip voting – many Internet users posted online messages to Internet chatting rooms, online communities and instant messaging services imploring their colleagues to get to the voting booth. The messages spread by the tens of thousands, playing a key role in Roh’s victory.²⁷ During Roh’s election campaign, netizens turned to the internet to discuss and express their views, views which otherwise would have been buried. “The advent of the Internet can bring, by accumulating and reaching critical mass in cyberspace, a political result that anyone could hardly predict. No longer is public opinion the opinion of the press.... In fact

the press lost authority by their criticisms,” Yun concludes.²⁸

Because of the internet, Kim Yong-Ho observes, there is the “shift from party politics to citizen politics.”²⁹ The attitude of the two main candidates toward the internet proved to be a critical factor determining the outcome of the election. Roh’s main opponent approached the internet as a “new technology.” For Roh and his supporters, however, the internet became “an instrument to change the framework and practice of politics.” (p. 235) “Certainly, politics in Korea is no longer a monopoly of parties and politicians,” conclude Yong-Cho Ha and Sangbae Kim.³⁰

4) High School Students Protest Hair Length Restrictions

An example of how the younger generation in South Korea found the internet helpful was the struggle of high school students to oppose hair length restrictions set by the government and enforced by their schools. Teachers in some South Korean schools cut the hair of students who have hair longer than the school regulations permit. Such mandatory hair cutting, students explained, was not only humiliating, but also can leave them with a hair cut that is unseemly. Considering the many pressures that high school students in South Korea are under, an editorial in the *Korea Times*,³¹ explains:

Most egregious of all are their hairstyles – buzz cuts for boys and bob cuts or ponytails for girls.... At some schools, teachers still make narrow, bushy expressways on the crowns of boys’ heads with hair clippers, and lay bare girls’ ears with scissors. They say these are for the proper guidance of students by preventing them from frequenting adult-only places and focusing on only studies. But this is nothing but violence and abuse.

High school students opposed these restrictions and practices with a website to discuss the problem and how to organize their protests. Over 70,000 people signed an online petition protesting the hair length restrictions and practices. Also there were demonstrations organized online against these practices. The demonstrations were met with a significant show of force by police and from high school teachers.

5) Government Online Forums

Netizen activities in South Korea had an effect on official government structures. Government officials are under pressure to utilize the forms that are being developed online. For example, the online website for the President of Korea had a netizen section. Netizens could log on and post their problems and complaints. These could then be viewed by anyone else who logged onto the website. The open forum section of the website was left relatively free of government restrictions or interference for a while.

Uhm and Haugue³² provide a description of the participatory sections of the President’s website. They write:

Behind the outwardly chaotic Open Forum of the BBS on the Presidential Website, a team works quietly, browsing all the messages received through the BBS and other channels for user participation, and sorting them in terms of the need for specific attention and governmental follow-up. One of the main jobs the team conducts is to transfer each of the messages to the relevant section of the Presidential Office, or to the ministry in charge of the policy area concerned. The other main job is to make a daily report to the President, based on the issues not necessarily ripe for media attention but showing signs of potential that could push the government into

difficulties. These interactive channels function as a dynamic store of political issues, spanning the gamut of societal interests, ranging from key policy issues like the amendment of education acts to essentially private matters like a boundary dispute between neighbors.

Korean government ministries similarly had websites where anyone could post a message, “even anonymously, and share them with others.” (p. 28) These websites were offered as a place where “all public opinion” can be expressed. (p. 28)

Posting to an official site is not necessarily without concern about retaliation, however. Recently, a high school student reported:

We have no channel to convey our opinions to the education authorities. If we post a petition to a Web site of a provincial education office, the message is delivered to our school and teachers give us a hard time because of it.³³ There are other events which demonstrate the power of the net and the netizen in contemporary Korean politics. For example, there was the Defeat Campaign for the April 2000 election. NGO's used the internet to wage a protest against the reelection of a number of politicians they proposed were too corrupt or incompetent to continue in office. They called this a blacklist. Several of the politicians they opposed did not get reelected.

Rather than gathering further examples, however, there is the challenge to understand the nature of the practice to extend democracy that has emerged in South Korea.

D – The Netizen and Netizen Democracy in South Korea

One aspect identified as important for netizen democratic activity is that the netizen participation is directed toward the broader interests of the community. Byoungkwan Lee writes:³⁴ People who use the Internet for certain purpose are called ‘Netizens’ and they may be classified in various groups according to the purpose that they pursue on the Internet. While some people simply seek specific information they need, others build their own community and play an active part in the Internet for the interest of that community. (Michael-ed) Hauben (1997) defined the term Netizen as the people who actively contribute online towards the development of the Internet. . . . In particular, Usenet news groups or Internet bulletin boards are considered an ‘agora’ where the Netizens actively discuss and debate upon various issues. . . . In this manner, a variety of agenda are formed on the ‘agora’ and in their activity there, a Netizen can act as ‘a citizen who uses the Internet as a way of participating in political society’

Another component of democratic practice is to participate in discussion and debate. Discussing an issue with others who have a variety of views is a process that can help one to think through an issue and develop a thoughtful and common understanding of a problem. The interactive nature of the online experience allows for a give and take that helps netizens dynamically develop or change their opinions and ideas. Several Korean researchers describe the benefit of online discussion. For example, Jongwoo Han writes:³⁵

Another aspect of online is that participating in a discussion with others with a variety of viewpoints makes it possible to develop a broader and more all sided understanding of issues.

Jinbong Choi, offers a similar observation:³⁶

By showing various perspectives of an issue the public can have a chance to acquire more information and understand the issue more deeply.

Byoungkwan Lee observes how the net provides “a public space where people have the

opportunity to express their own opinions and debate on a certain issue.”³⁷ Comparing the experience online with the passive experience of the user of other media, Lee notes, “Further the role of the internet as a public space seems to be more dynamic and practical than that of traditional media such as television, newspapers, and magazines because of its own distinct characteristics, namely, interactivity.” (pp. 58-59)

An important function of the internet is to facilitate netizens’ thinking about and considering public issues and questions. Byoungkwan Lee explains some of how this occurs: Various opinions about public issues, for instance, are posted on the Internet bulletin boards or the Usenet newsgroups by Netizens, and the opinions then form an agenda in which other Netizens can perceive the salient issues. As such it is assumed that not only does the Internet function as the public space, but it can also function as a medium for forming Internet users’ opinions.³⁸ Through their discussion and participation, netizens are able to have an impact on public affairs. Hyug Baeg Im argues that the internet even makes it possible for Korean netizens to provide a check on government activity.³⁹

(The – ed) Internet can deliver more and diverse information to citizens faster in speed and cheaper in cost, disclose information about politicians in cyber space that works 24 hours, transmit quickly the demands of people to their representatives through two-way cyber communication, and enable politicians to respond to people’s demands in their policy making and legislations in a speedy manner. In addition, netizens can make use of Internet as collective action place of monitoring, pressuring and protesting that works 24 hours and can establish the system of constant political accountability.

The impact the internet is having on the younger generations of Korean society has impressed several researchers. For example, Jongwoo Han observes that younger netizens are more quickly able to participate in political affairs than was previously possible. Jongwoo Han writes:⁴⁰

Due to its effectiveness as a communications channel, the Internet shortens the time in which social issues become part of the national agenda, especially among populations previously excluded from the national discourse. The time needed for one generation to learn from the previous one is also shortened. In newly created Internet cyberspace, the young generation, which did not use to factor in major social and political discourses in Korean society, is becoming a major player. The political orientation of the offline 386 generation was smoothly handed on to the 2030 a political young generation through the 2002 World Cup and candle light anti-U.S. demonstrations.

(Note: The 386 generation refers to those who were university students in the 1980s. Also they were the first generation of Korean students who had access to computers for their personal use. The 2030 generation refers to students currently in their 20's and 30's and who have grown up with the internet.)

Jongwoo Han argues that online discussion has brought a needed development in Korean democracy. All can participate and communicate (pp. 16-17):

Due to the revolutionary development of information technology, the transition of power from one generation to the next will accelerate, thus maximizing the dynamics of changes in political systems. The duration of the overall learning and education process between generations will also be shortened. Especially, the Netizen transcends the boundaries of age, job, gender and education as long as participants

share individual inclinations on topics.

Explaining how the participatory process works, Kim, Moon, and Yang provide an example from Nosamo's experience:⁴¹

Their internal discussion making process was a microcosm of participatory democracy in practice. All members voted on a decision following open deliberations in forums for a given period of time. Opinions were offered in this process in order to effect changes to the decision on which people were to vote.

Such online discussion and decision making was demonstrated when members of Roh's fan club disagreed with his decision to send South Korean troops to Iraq in support of the U.S. invasion. Even though they were members of a fan club, they did not feel obligated to support every action of the Roh Presidency.⁴² The fan club members held an online discussion and vote on their website about the U.S. war in Iraq. They issued a public statement opposing the decision to send South Korean troops to Iraq.

Several researchers are endeavoring to investigate the netizens phenomenon and the conscious identity that is being developed. They believe that the internet is providing an important way to train future citizens. For example, Sang-jin Han writes:⁴³

I argue that a post-traditional and hence post-Confucian attitude is emerging quite visible particularly among younger generations who use the Internet, not simply as an instrument of self-interest, but as a public sphere where netizens freely meet and discuss matters critically.

In his research, Sang-Jin Han is interested in the impact the internet is having on the democratic development of South Korean society. He argues that the online experience provides an alternative experience to the authoritarian and hierarchical institutions and practices that are prevalent in society offline. The online experience in itself is a form of a laboratory for democracy. In the process of participating in the democratic processes online, a new identity is forged. One begins to experience the identity of oneself as a participant, not observer. Contributions online are appreciated or the subject of controversy. This is a different world than the one the ordinary person experiences offline and one that is a more dynamic and creative experience. Sang-Jin Han refers to research by Sunny Yoon about the impact of the internet on South Korean youth. Yoon writes:⁴⁴ In short, the Korean new generation experiences an alternative identity in cyberspace that they have never achieved in real life. The hierarchical system of ordinary social reality turns up side down as soon as Korean students enter cyberspace.

In interviews, most students claim that the Internet opened a new world and new excitement. This is not only because the Internet has exciting information, but also because it provides them with a new experience and an alternative hierarchical. It is something of an experience of deconstructing power in reality, especially in Korean society, which is strongly hierarchical and repressive for young students.

IV – Conclusion

In this case study I have explored several aspects of the online experience that generally are given little attention. South Korean netizens utilize the internet forums to let each other know of a problem or event, to discuss problems and to explore how to find solutions. This form of activity is a critical part of a democratic process. It involves the participant not in carrying out someone else's solution to a problem, but in the effort to frame the nature of the problem and to understand its essence.

The internet doesn't require that one belong to a particular institution. A netizen can express his or her opinion, gather the facts that are available, and hear and discuss the facts gathered and opinions offered by others. Not only is the internet a laboratory for democracy, but the scale of participation and contributions is unprecedented. Online discussion makes it possible for netizens to become active individual and group actors in social and public affairs. The internet makes it possible for netizens to speak out independently of institutions or officials.

The netizen is able to participate in an experience that reminds one of the role that the citizen of ancient Athens or the citizen just after the French Revolution could play in society. The experience of such participation is a training ground in which people learn the skills and challenges through the process. Considering the potential of the internet, the Swedish researcher Ylva Johansson refers to the potential of technology as contributing to political participation and the concept of citizenship on a higher societal level.⁴⁵

Describing this important benefit of being online, Hauben writes:⁴⁶ For the people of the world, the Net provides a powerful means for peaceful assembly. Peaceful assembly allows people to take control of their lives, rather than that control being in the hands of others.

This case study of Korean netizens provides a beginning investigation into the impact that widespread broadband access can bring to society.⁴⁷ The practices of South Korean netizens to extend democracy is prologue to the changes that netizenship can bring to the world, to the rise of netizen democracy as a qualitative advance over the former concept of the citizen and democracy.

Appendix A

The Early Development of Computer Networking in Korea

South Korea's first networking system was the connection of two computers on May 15, 1982, one at the Department of Computer Science, at Seoul National University and the other to a computer at the Korean Institute of Electronics Technology (KIET) in Gumi (presently ETRI) via a 1200 bps leased line. In January 1983, a computer at KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) connected to the other two computers. These three computers at different networking sites used TCP/IP to connect. This is the communication protocol which makes it possible to have an internet. This early Korean computer network was called System Development Network (SDN).^{*} In August 1983, the Korean SND was connected to the mcVax computer in the Netherlands using the Unix networking program UUCP (Unix-to-Unix Copy). And in October 1983 the Korean network was connected to a site in the U.S. (HP Labs).

A more formal connection to the U.S. government sponsored network CSNET was made in December 1984. In 1990, the Korean network joined the U.S. part of the internet.

• See "A Brief History of the Korean Internet," 4.1.05
[http://www.internethistory.or.kr/breifhistory/ebrief-history\(eng\).htm](http://www.internethistory.or.kr/breifhistory/ebrief-history(eng).htm)

Notes:

1. See for example, Michael Hauben, Preface, in Michael Hauben and Ronda Hauben, *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet*, IEEE Computer Society Press, 1997, p. ix.
2. Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 3.
3. This is a concept that Michael Hauben developed in an article "What the Net Means to Me," online at: http://www.ais.org/~hauben/Michael_Hauben/Collected_Works/Amateur_Computerist/What_the_Net_Means_to_Me.txt
4. "Where and When was Democracy Invented," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41(4), 1999, pp. 660-690. Online at: http://pics3441.upmf-grenoble.fr/articles/demo/where_and_when_was_democracy_invented.pdf

5. A significant caveat about this case study is that computer networking and the internet were developed relatively early in South Korea. (See Appendix A) The country is a showplace for the spread of broadband internet access to a large percentage of the population. A study of the spread of the internet in South Korea is a study of an advanced situation which allows one to see into the future. This study raises the question of whether knowledge of the practices of the South Korean netizen movement can help to extend democracy elsewhere around the world.
6. *Ibid.*, note 1, Chapter 12, pp. 214-221.
7. Myung Koo Kang, "The Grassroots Online Movement and Changes in Korean Civil Society," *Review of Media, Information and Society* 3, 1998, pp. 107-127.
8. Jongseon Shin, soc.culture.korea, April 10, 2005. Online at: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!original/soc.culture.korean/gbZORadACPQ/IxrUYb7FuE8J>
9. Heekyung Hellen Kim, Jae Yun Moon and Shinkyu Yang, "Broadband Penetration and Participatory Politics: South Korea Case," *Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2004, p. 4.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
11. Sang-Jin Han, "Confucian Tradition and the Young Generation in Korea: The Effect of Post-Traditional Global Testing," *International Symposium Dialogue among Youth in East Asia Project*, Yingjie Exchange Center of Peking University, delivered January 14, 2004.
12. Yong-Cho Ha and Sangbae Kim, "The Internet Revolution and Korea: Asocio-cultural interpretation," *International Conference on Re-Bootting the Miracle? Asia and the Internet Revolution in the Age of International Indeterminacy*, Seoul, South Korea, December 4, 2002. Online at: <http://www.sangkim.net/it&korea.pdf>
13. See Hyug Baeg Im, *From Democratic Consolidation and Democratic Governance: 21st Century South Korean Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, p. 28.
14. *Ibid.*, note 11, p. 10.
15. Translated and quoted in Hae-joang Cho Han, "Beyond the FIFA World Cup: An Ethnography of the 'Local' in South Korea around the 2002 World Cup," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, p. 11.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
18. See *Korea Times* articles: Na Jeong-ju, "Anti-U.S. Protests Held Nationwide Over Acquittals of GIs," *Korea Times*, November 27, 2002 and Na Jeong-ju, "Entertainers, Priests Join Anti-U.S. Protests," *Korea Times* December 3, 2002
19. *Ibid.*, note 15, p. 22.
20. Kim Hyong-eok, "The Two Koreas: A Chance to Revive," *Korea Times*, December 27, 2002. This article in the *Korea Times* attributes Roh's election to the euphoria generated by the World Cup Soccer Games, the hostility to the U.S. generated by the deaths of the two Korean school girls and the inadequacy of the U.S. response.
21. *Ibid.*, note 15, p. 14.
22. Yun Young-Min, "An Analysis of Cyber-Electioneering Focusing on the 2002 Presidential Election in Korea," *Korea Journal*, Autumn 2003, pp. 141-164.
23. Jongwoo Han. "Internet, Social Capital, and Democracy in the Information Age: Korea's Defeat Movement, the Red Devils, Candle Light Anti-U.S. Demonstration, and Presidential Election during 2000-2002," p. 15, no longer online. See also, Han Jongwoo, *Networked Information Technologies, Elections, and Politics: Korea and the United States*, Lanham, Md, Lexington Books, 2012, p. 85.
24. *Ibid.*, note 11, p. 8.
25. *Ibid.*, note 22, p. 157.
26. Kim Deok-hyun, "Roh's Online Supporters Behind Victory," *Korea Times*, December 23, 2002.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, note 22, p. 143.
29. Kim Yong-Ho, "Political Significance of the 2002 Presidential Election Outcome and Political Prospects for the Roh Administration," *Korea Journal*, Vol. 43, No.2, 2003, p. 233.
30. Yong-Chool Ha and Sangbae Kim, "The Internet Revolution and Korea: A Socio-cultural Interpretation," Paper delivered Dec 4, 2005 at the conference *Re-Bootting the Miracle? Asia and the Internet Revolution in the Age of International Indeterminacy*, Seoul, South Korea, December 4-5, 2005, p. 8.
31. "No Forced Haircut, Please," *Korea Times*, May 5, 2005.
32. Seung-Yong Uhm and Rod Hague, "Electronic Governance, Political Participation and Virtual Community: Korea and U.K. Compared in Political Context," paper presented at *European Consortium for Political Research, Joint Workshops*, Workshop on "Electronic Democracy: Mobilisation, Organisation and Participation via new ICTs," Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Grenoble, France, 6-11 April 2001, p. 24.

33. Bae Keun-min, "High School Students Stand Up for Rights," *Korea Times*, May 10, 2005.
34. Byoungkwan Lee, Karen M. Lancendorfer and Ki Jung Lee, "Agenda-Setting and the Internet: the Intermedia Influence of Internet Bulletin Boards on Newspaper Coverage of the 2000 General Election in South Korea," *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 15, No 1, 2005, p. 58.
35. Ibid., note 23, 17.
36. Jinbong Choi, "Public Journalism in Cyberspace: A Korean Case Study," *Global Media Journal*, Vol. 2, No3, 2003, p.27. Online at: <http://lass.purduecal.edu/cca/gmj/fa03/graduatefa03/gmj-fa03-choi.htm>.
37. Ibid., note 34, pp. 58-59.
38. Ibid.
39. Hyug Baeg Im, "Democratic Consolidation and Democratic Governance: 21st Century South Korean Democracy in Comparative Perspective," *Sixth Forum on Reinventing Government*, Seoul, South Korea, May 24-27, 2005.
40. Ibid., note 23, p. 4.
41. Ibid., note 9.
42. An article in the *Korea Times* on March 24, 2003, quotes a member of the fanclub: "When we say we love Roh Moohyun, we do not mean Roh is always right. We simply mean that we love his ideas for new politics and a democracy in which the people are the real owners of the country." Byun Duk-kun, "'Nosamo' Opposes Assistance to Iraq War." 43. Ibid., note 11, p. 4.
44. Sunny Yoon, "Internet Discourse and the Habitus of Korea's New Generation," *Culture, Technology, Communication*, edited by Charles Ess with Fay Sudweeks, State University of New York, 2001, p. 255.
45. Ylva Johansson, "Civic Engagement in Change – The Role of the Internet," *European Consortium for Political Research*, Edinburgh, U.K., 2003.
46. Ibid., note 1, see for example Chapter 18, "The Computer as a Democratizer," pp. 315- 320.
47. Hauben quotes Steve Welch who recognized the importance of all having access (Ibid., p. 27): "If we can get to the point where anyone who gets out of highschool has used computers to communicate on the Net or a reasonable facsimile or successor to it, then we as a society will benefit in ways not currently understandable. When access to information is as ubiquitous as access to the phone system, all Hell will break loose. Bet on it."

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The New Dynamics of Democratization in South Korea The Internet and the Emergence of the Netizen by Ronda Hauben

I - The Global Internet and the Netizen Experience in Korea

In 2002, the Sisa Journal, a Korean weekly, named Netizens as the Person of the Year.(1) This represented a rare recognition of a new and significant phenomenon that has emerged with the development and spread of the Internet.(2) The netizen has become a significant actor in the struggle for democracy. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in South Korea.

Describing the progressive impact that the Internet is having around the world, Choi Jang Jip, a professor at Korea University, writes (3):

"[A]ccompanied by the development of communication technologies, globalization creates new elements that enable people to counter undemocratic or antidemocratic elements....In the instrumental sense, globalization enables communication for democracy in cyberspace. In terms of content, a greater affinity between worldwide democratic values and norms and the unique experiences of younger Koreans in the democratization movement becomes possible."

Explaining the dissatisfaction of Koreans with the process of democratic development in South Korea, Choi recognizes that it is the Internet and the democratic processes that the Internet makes possible that provide a continuum with the democratic processes and practices that helped to win the June 1987 victory in South Korea. He writes:

"Political society is preoccupied with political parties, political elites, and mass media, which produces and transmits dominant discourse...however, cyberspace has no barriers to entry and is an absolutely free space over which no hegemonic discourse can exercise a dominant influence."(Choi 2000, p. 40)

Choi maintains that the Korean experience of democratic practice is important not only for the democratization struggle in Korea, but also as a contribution to the worldwide struggle for democracy:

"The citizen movement using Internet is just a beginning stage. It will become popular in the near future and change the quality and contents of movements because of the rapid internet diffusion and information expansion." (Choi 2000, p. 50)

There is a need to document and understand the experience of netizens in Korea not only to support the democratization struggle in Korea itself, but also toward understanding the contribution of this netizen experience to the worldwide struggle for democracy.

II - A Model for Democratization

Along with the recognition that the experience of democratic struggle provides the basis for the continuing struggle for democracy in South Korea, Choi believes that there is a need for public understanding of democracy. He writes:

"In any given nation or society, democracy develops in parallel with the level of understanding in that society. In order for democracy to take root and to develop in quality, [a] social understanding of democracy has to develop. This is why civic education for democracy is important, and it is necessary to increase public interest and participation through such education. When this happens, people's intellectual curiosity for understanding will increase, and so will their social participation. This is how democracy develops." (Choi 2005, p. 13)

To develop such an understanding, he proposes the need for critical discussion and debate about

democracy (Choi 2005, p. 13). Such a process of discussion and experimentation with democracy is currently happening on the Internet in South Korea. Yet because it is taking place at a grassroots level, online and in the Korean language, it is little understood and even more rarely considered in the world outside of the Internet. Choi himself has written a recent book, "Democracy after Democratization: the Korean Experience," documenting the history and progress of the struggle for democracy in South Korea. (4) The only mention in his book of the online developments, however, is the cover, which shows a massive demonstration in Seoul that took place in 2004 that was made possible by the online democratic developments. The online newspaper "OhmyNews" is credited for the photo. Thus the book and its cover demonstrate the confusion about the contribution to the democratic struggle in South Korea by the Internet and the netizens. This is understandable as the Internet and the netizens are relatively recent phenomena and their contribution to the struggle for democracy is still poorly understood. This paper is intended as a contribution to the discussion and debate about democracy that Choi advocates.

III - A New Model for Democracy and the Need for a Communication Infrastructure

Before discussing the Internet and the netizens and their impact on the democratization struggle in South Korea, however, I want to propose a model for democracy that I will utilize in my paper. A number of Korean scholars note that a minimalist conception of democracy is inadequate as a goal. Han Sang-Jin, a Professor at Seoul National University, disagrees with scholars who depend on institutional politics from within the political system. (5) Han writes:

"If the outside energy dries up or disappears, it seems very unlikely that any political leader or faction would pursue structural reform. by its own initiative"

As part of his support for grassroots political activity, Han proposes the need to support a culture of diversity, a culture which nourishes the quest for a conscious social identity. He writes:

"Crucial for democratic consolidation...is the capacity of civil society as the basis of democratic institutions in which cultural identities and diversities are nurtured and developed. It is probably in this sense that one may expect that new visions for civilization will also come from East Asia. It is indeed tempting to think about the possibility, and it will be as much so in the future as it is now." (Han 1995, p. 13)

Han's intuition that democratic development requires a cultural

process is similar to the model for democracy created by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the US in the early 1960s. An essay by Arnold Kaufman, a Professor at the University of Michigan, inspired the development of the SDS model of democracy which has become known as 'participatory democracy.' The essay Kaufman wrote, "Participatory Democracy and Human Initiative" helped to set the foundation for the SDS model of democracy.

Kaufman writes, "Participation means both personal initiative -that men feel obliged to resolve social problems and social opportunity -that society feels obliged to maximize the possibility for personal initiatives to find creative outlets." (6) Thus for Kaufman and then for the SDS, the concept of participatory democracy had two aspects, one a role for the person as part of a social process, and two, a role for the society to encourage the creative initiative of the person.

This is different from the minimalist conceptions of democracy and from conceptions relying on an elite to make the decisions for the population, or proposing that democracy means facilitating institutional competition among an elite. Kaufman, and subsequently SDS, proposed a model for democracy which had three elements:

1) the involvement of ordinary people actively participating to foster the changes they desire in their society.

2) some structural connection between the community of ordinary people and those in society who make the decisions.

3) a commitment by society to foster the creative development and functioning of the population

Crucial to this model is the need for a communications infrastructure to provide a public space for discussion and debate among the community of ordinary people. For such public discussion "mechanisms of voluntary association must be created through which political information can be imparted and political participation encouraged," proclaims the Port Huron Statement of SDS in the section "Towards American Democracy" (Hauben 1995, p. 7)

In a paper he wrote about the SDS vision of participatory democracy and the Internet, Michael Hauben, then a student at Columbia University, described how the creation and development of the Internet has provided the communications infrastructure identified by SDS as necessary to realize their model of participatory democracy. (Hauben 1995, p. 7)

IV - The Development of Computer Networking and Internet in South Korea

Consequently, an understanding of the history of the development of computer networking and of the Internet in South Korea and of the interconnection of the development of this infrastructure with the struggle for democracy can help to provide the needed perspective through which to view the current netizen developments.

In a paper he wrote about the history of Korean computer network, Kilnam Chon, a professor at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and other authors describe the development of computer networking in South Korea. (7) The earliest network began in 1982 with networking connections set up between a computer at the Department of Computer Science at Seoul National University (SNU), and a computer at the Korean Institute of Electronics Technology (KIET) in Gumi, using a 1200 bps leased line. In January 1983, KAIST was added. Also in 1983, there were connections from South Korea to a computer in the Netherlands (mcvax) and then to a computer in the US (hplabs). These connections made it possible for researchers and students to connect with others who were part of the developing international computer networks. Computer networking for the public in South Korea in the 1980s was via connections to commercial networking provided by the Korean Telecom. PC communications began with email (Dacom's Hangeul Mail) in 1984 which in 1986 became part of what was known as Chollian. KETEL (Korean Economic Daily Telepress) services began in 1988 and became known as HITEL. By 1995, HITEL made it possible for users to connect to the Internet. (Chon 2005, p. 2-3)

A plan to build the Korean National Information Infrastructure was created in 1983. Through the 1980s, there was continued research and development of networking. Though there were commercial networking services available to the public in the 1990s, it was not until 1994-5 that Internet connectivity began to be publicly available. This early Internet connectivity was limited to 64 Kbps with modem and dial up access until July 1998.

In July 1998, high speed Internet access began to be available to computer users either through cable tv networks provided by Thrunet or by Korean Telecom and Hanaro Telecom offering a version of DSL called ADSL. (Chon 2005, p. 4)

A combination of factors led to the fact that this access was relatively low cost and welcomed by different sectors of the Korean population. Consequently, in 2004, over 70% of the households in Korea had broadband Internet service. This included Internet access availability in 11 million homes. "The widespread availability of broadband Internet services," writes Chon, "provided the impetus for Korea to become the leading Internet stronghold nation of the world." (Chon 2005, p. 7)

One of the important contributors to the spread of Internet connectivity in Korea were Internet cafes called PC bangs. The first one opened in Sept. 15, 1995. By 1999 there were 150 such cafes. The widespread popularity of computer games in Korea along with the popularity in the 1990s of online discussion communities contributed to a strong demand for inexpensive Internet broadband service to the home.

In describing the development of computer networking in South Korea, Chon notes the importance of the netizen. Several examples have been documented of online discussion which led to offline social or political activity. These include the massive cheering at the world cup games in Korea in June 2002, and the demonstrations protesting the deaths of two school girls by a US armored truck, the acquittal of the US soldiers responsible by a US military court, and the protests against SOFA (State of Forces Agreement between the US and South Korea) in 2002 which helped to bring about the election of the Korean President Rho Moo-hyun.

In an article comparing Internet development in South Korea, Japan and Singapore, Izumi Aizu, a Japanese networking activist and researcher, notes the advanced nature of the Korean networking developments. Izumi attributes this advanced nature in large part to the desire and support by Koreans for freedom of speech. "The Korean political situation changed rapidly during the last 15 years," he writes:

"It was only 1987 when the first real free and democratic election took place for the presidency. Until the mid 80s, there was no such thing as freedom of speech or freedom of press under the military autocracy. Now with the power of computer networking Korean people become very active and aggressive in exercising their freedom online and offline, a long-awaited value indeed. Now netizen is the common word for Korean people...ordinary citizens who want to speak up and communicate." (8)

Izumi attributes the Korean regard for "freedom of speech as one of the key factors behind the expansion of broadband, too."

V - The Netizen

Agreeing that freedom of speech was a key factor promoting the development of the Internet in Korea, Chon describes the United Nation's program "Sustainable Development Network Program" (SDNP) hosted in South Korea by the YMCA as one of the places where it was possible to express diverse views. "It was in the early 1990s," he writes, "that individuals of the general public were able to express their political and social opinions through the Internet." The more recent online participation of users as netizens on the Internet is an "extension of online communities...formed through PC communications in the early 1990s." (9)

The experience of online communities and interest in what was being created online was a common experience among those who had access to computer networking in the 1990s. Describing this period, Hauben explains that it was a period when a number of people online began to find a new identity, and to develop a consciousness of themselves citizens of the new online world. In research he began in 1992 to try to understand the social impact of the growing networking developments, Hauben came to understand that the Internet and computer networks were serious subjects for study. He recognized that online users had begun to develop a consciousness of themselves as contributors to the online world, and that the impact of such participation on users was an important new phenomena to be understood.

Hauben had seen the word 'net.citizen' online referring to someone who acted as a citizen online. Thinking about the social concern and consciousness he had found among those online who were developing what was actually a new form of social identity, and about the non-geographical character of a net based form of citizenship, he contracted 'net.citizen' into the word 'netizen'. Netizen has come to describe the online social identity Hauben discovered as part of his early research on the social impact of the Internet and computer networks.

Hauben recognized that(10):

"[T]he on-line user is part of a global culture and considers him or herself to be a global citizen. This global citizen is a net citizen, or a Netizen. The world which has developed is based on communal effort to make a cooperative community."

Not all online users are considered netizens by Hauben. He reserves the term for those with a social perspective and practice. He writes(11):

"Netizens are not just anyone who comes online, and they are especially not people who come online for individual gain or profit. They are not people who come to the Net thinking it is a service. Rather they are people who understand it takes effort and action on each and everyone's part to make the Net a regenerative and vibrant community and resource. Netizens are people who decide to devote time and effort into making the Net, this new part of our world, a better place."

After his initial online research into the social impact of the Net, Hauben posted the paper he had written online. The paper was titled, "Common Sense: The Net and Netizens: The Impact the Net Has on People's Lives." (12) He posted it in several Usenet newsgroups and on a number of mailing lists on July 6, 1993. Soon afterwards, Hauben received comments from people around the world welcoming his research and the consciousness of themselves as netizens, as participants in this new form of online world.

The concept and consciousness of oneself as a netizen has since spread around the world. There are a number of examples of references to netizens in Korean networking posts in the early 1990s on Usenet. Also in 1996, a post on Usenet provides the Korean terms for several networking terms, and one of these is 'netizen'. (13) The word in the Korean alphabet has the same pronunciation as in English.

One user said that she was in high school in 1996 in Korea and was part of a set of students who were forming a computer club. She remembers that they chose to call their club the Netizens Computer Club.(14)

More recently, Heewon Kim, a graduate student at Yonsei University, who is researching the role of blogs in Korean society, discussed the difference between the use of 'netizen' to mean a casual user of the Internet and the use of the word for the online user with a social practice and consciousness. She writes (15):

"This is a sophisticated concept. If you have the consciousness of social/political participation and take action, you can be a netizen. If you just enjoy web surfing, it's very hard to say that you are a netizen although you spend great time for the internet."

While the netizen identity has been embraced around the world, South Korea is one of the countries where users often consider themselves to be 'netizens'.(16)

Part VI - Computer Networking in the 1990s in South Korea

Before gaining access to the Internet, Hauben had been a participant on a number of local bulletin board systems (bbs) in the early 1980s in the US. Chang Woo-Young, a Professor at Konkuk University describes similar bulletin board experiences in South Korea during the late 1980s. Chang writes (17):

"It was between 1988 and 1990 that the online space emerged in Korea. The bulletin board systems began to be actively used in the non-political arena after June 1987, when the authoritarian regime retreated as a result of a democratic resistance movement."

In 1991, Beareun Tongshin Moim (The Society for Fair Communication) was an early political group which opened on Hitel. It was "created by 10 high school students" according to Won Sook-Yeong. (18) In 1992, The Society for Fair Communication put online a "collection of voting results from the 1992 presidential campaign as a way to supervise the election and ensure its fairness." (Won Sook-Yeon 1998, p. 8) During the Sampung tragedy, when a major department store complex in Seoul collapsed due to shoddy construction, the Society for Fair Communication put online a "collection of carried bulletins about the tragedy. An estimated 500 people died. (Won Sook-Yeon 1998,p. 24)

'Hyundai Chollhak Donghohoi (The Modern Philosophy Club)', and 'Himangteo (Hope Spot)', are two of the most famous early groups on Chollian, and 'Jinbo Cheongnyeong Tongshin Dongwoohoi (The Radical Young Men's Club for Fair Communication)' was a famous early group on Naunuri. The Modern Philosophy Club started in September 1993. When three of its members were arrested, and charged with violations of the National Security Law based on their posts online, the group took up to defend them. The case led to a movement to defend freedom of speech online. The Radical Young Men's Club for Fair Communication became an advocate of direct democracy through computer networking. Among other online forums in the early 1990s in South Korea is the 'Hot Issue Discussion Forum' to discuss current issues. This was a forum on the Korea Telecom system known as 'KIDS (Korea Internet Data Service System)'. (19)

In September 1993, a forum 'Politics' was created for political discussion, and a forum called 'Acropolis' was created on the Seoul National University Computer Network. (Chang 2005a, p. 415) A book by Yun Yeon-min, titled "A Theory of Electronic Information Space: A Sociological Exploration of Computer Networks, (Seoul: Jeonyewon, p. 70-71) describes these early networking developments. Some of the organizations that set up web sites on Chollian in the 1990s included 'Green Scout', 'Kongseonhyup', 'Shinmunlo forum', 'Young Congress'.

On Naunuri, the list included the 21-Seki, Frontier (21 Century Frontier) and the Korean Christian Academy. Those on Hitel included Yeollin Jeong chak, Hoeuri (Open Policy Meeting). (Won Sook Young 1998, p. 8) Discussion on political issues also went on in more general forums like Keumaul on Hitel, Nado Hanmadi in Chollian and Yeoron Kwangjang in Naunuri. In addition to the vibrant online discussion in the 1990s, various online communities formed. Some led to joint activity or work offline. One of the most well known of these is the Red Devils which formed online in 1997 to support the Korean Soccer team. This online community developed into hundreds of thousands of members who then gave leadership to the cheering activities in support of the Korean Soccer team's world cup games in June 2002.

A Usenet post recalls early online communities in Korea in the 1990s (21):

"There were Hitel, Chollian, Naunuri, three major text based online services in Korea. I think they boomed in [the] early 90s and withered drastically as the Internet explosion occurred in mid and late 90s.

They provided the bbs, file up/download, chatting and community Services.

Their community services were very strong. I also joined some such groups and learned a lot. Community members formed a kind of connection through casual meeting, online chatting, study groups and etc. The now influential Red Devils... was at first started as one of such communities. It introduced new forms of encounter among the people with the same interest.

They also had some discussion space, similar to this news group and people expressed their ideas...."

Along with other online interactive forums for netizens, the Korean government set up forums for citizens. An early forum was set up by the Blue House just after Kim Young Sam was elected President in 1992 (22) The online forum was opened at the Blue House in 1993. After a few months, however, it stopped accepting posts from the public. One researcher suggests that this was because the presidential office and its BBS operator could not endure people's criticism of presidential policy. (23) After that users could only browse through the material online. They could no longer post. By 1997, there were 17 department and government offices which had forums on commercial computer networks.

Some researchers distinguish between the online forums where users could post themselves and discuss issues and those where users could only read what had been posted. The sites providing for interactivity and posts from users were substantially more popular than those which just provided information. (24)

VII - The Online Media 1999-2004

Media play a critical role in South Korean politics and the struggle for democracy. Choi refers to a similar observation made by Tocqueville in his study of democracy in America (ca. 1820-1840) "Tocqueville had observed as early as the mid-nineteenth century that the press in America was the secret of democracy in America." (25)

Han observed that the mass media in Korea joined the democratization struggle leading up to the June 1987 uprising. By the early 1990s, however, the mainstream conservative press was opposed to continuing democratization efforts. "For the populist reform to succeed," Han argues, "support from the mass media is essential." (26) Scholars interested in the struggle for democratization in South Korea explain that it was not until 1997, ten years after the June 1987 victory, that there was an actual transfer of political power to opposition parties in the Korean government. Even with this transfer, however, the power of the conservative media has been one of the obstacles to the reform of the political system. According to Chang, after the June 1987 victory, the conservative media emerged as an "independent political institution." (27)

Subsequently, the need for reform of the conservative media is cited as critical for a structural change of the conservative and repressive institutions in South Korea. "Without the reform of the media, no success of

the democratic reform is possible," writes Cho Hee-Yeon. (28) Cho Hee-Yeon, one of the founders of the civil society NGO People's Solidarity with Participatory Democracy (PSPD), is a Professor at Sungkonghoe University in Seoul.

The conservative press most often cited as the problem are "Chosun Ilbo", "Donga Ilbo", and "Joongang Ilbo". Chosun Ilbo (Daily Newspaper) was started March 5, 1920. It has a reputation as the South Korean print newspaper with the largest circulation (2,383,429 in 2004). The 2nd largest newspaper is Dong Ilbo, started in April 5, 1920. (In 2004 its circulation was given as 2,088,715) (29)

It is not surprising, therefore, that a movement would spring up to critique and oppose the domination of "Chosun Ilbo". This movement came to be known as the 'anti-chosun movement'. An article on the Korean Press Foundation (KPF) web site explains that the initial stimulus for the anti-chosun movement were articles in Chosun Ilbo and a monthly publication "Chosun Woban" labeling publications of Professor Choi Jang-jip as sympathetic to North Korea (30) The National Security Law of South Korea makes it a crime to give support or praise to North Korea. Such a violation can be prosecuted as a violation of the law. (31) Choi's attorney described how "The Monthly Chosun (Woban) article wrongly depicted Choi as saying the Korean War was one of 'national liberation', when in fact this was merely an introduction to a DPRK claim." When two Koreans criticized Chosun's distortion of Choi, they were given court fines. Supporters online organized to help them to pay the fines. Following is the description KPF provides of the incident:

"A pioneering movement to give vent to consumer grievances against the press was the 'Anti-Chosun Movement' organized by civic groups to denounce the conservative paper's cold war mentality. What prompted the movement were the Chosun Ilbo November 1998 articles taking issue with the ideological background of Prof. Choi Jang-jip of Korea University. Prof. Gang Jun-man of Chunbuk University and Jeong Ji-hwan, reporter of monthly magazine 'Mahl' were sued by a Chosun Ilbo reporter for their criticism of the controversial articles. When penalties were imposed on the two defendants, netizens launched an on-line campaign to collect money to help pay the fine, starting up the movement."

The KPF explains that not only does the anti-chosun movement critique Chosun Ilbo, but it also provides a focus to oppose the structural flaws of the country's print media. Waging an effective challenge to the power of the conservative media has long been recognized as part of the struggle against the forces of reaction in South Korea. For example, the newspaper Hankyoreh Shinmun was started in 1988, shortly after the victory of June 1987, as a means of providing a voice for the news and views of the democratic movement. With the economic collapse of 1997, however, it became ever more obvious that there was a need for more of a progressive media presence in South Korea. Along with criticism of other institutional problems within the Korean society which were blamed for the crisis, the uncritical nature of the conservative press was targeted as contributing to the economic problems. "Mainstream South Korean news outlets failed to apply a critical eye to economic reporting before the Asian slump," one reporter wrote, "a fact that many analysts say contributed to the crash." He admitted, "We were guilty of printing government statements without checking the facts." (32) Pressure from editors contributed to the reporters uncritical reporting. In response to the financial crisis, the Korean government embraced Internet and networking development as a means to provide for economic recovery. (33)

As part of a growing interest in the Internet in South Korea in the later part of the 1990s, the mainstream conservative press began to set up online editions of their newspapers. Still another development, however, was the beginning of an online news media represented by the birth of OhmyNews. Phrases that came into vogue after the economic crisis included, "We were late to industrialization but let's lead in digitalization," and "We shall lead Korea to become an information superpower." Encouraged by these developments, a journalist with the progressive monthly journal Mahl, Oh Yeon Ho, became interested in the potential of the Internet to make possible the creation of a progressive media that could challenge the power of the mainstream media. Oh had found that media like Chosun Ilbo were able to determine what would be considered as news. If a story was published in the Monthly Mahl, it would get little public attention or attention from other media. If a story was published by one of the conservative media organizations, however, it would be given attention in other media and would in that way be considered news. Oh hoped that OhmyNews would transform the South Korean media environment so that "the quality of news determined whether a story was treated with serious attention by the other media, rather than the power and prestige of the media organization that printed the article." (34)

Also Oh recognized that the Internet provided a new and interesting environment for a different form of news media, a news media that could support collaborative efforts. The Internet publications of the mainstream media were composed of articles transferred from their print publications. Instead, "OhmyNews", based itself on the interactive and plastic environment provided by the Internet. (35) A beta version of OhmyNews appeared in December 1999, but it officially began production on February 22, 2000 at 2:22 pm. Oh proclaimed his commitment to make OhmyNews a model for a more modern form of journalism, a form of journalism appropriate for the 21st Century. (36)

To achieve this goal, OhmyNews not only publishes stories by its staff, but it welcomes articles from netizens, from citizen journalists. They are paid a small fee for each article that is published, depending on where in the newspaper the story first appears. By incorporating the articles by netizen journalists into the main content of the online newspaper, OhmyNews is able to encompass a broader focus than more traditional newspapers. Netizen journalists often provide breaking news stories that the more traditional press in South Korea would have ignored or missed. OhmyNews also provides online forums so that netizens can comment on the articles published or submit articles into a special section where the staff doesn't determine the placement of the articles. In its Korean

edition, OhmyNews has been able to draw on the forms that have made online forums participatory and interactive.

Soon after OhmyNews was created, it began to transform the practices of journalism and to provide support for the civil society social movement. This movement more and more based itself on the Internet and on the potential it offered for political involvement of a broader section of the population.

37) More recently, OhmyNews has begun to look for ways to relate to the blogging community and includes a section on its web site for blogs.

The online media in South Korea includes a number of different forms which provide netizens with varied ways to participate. Portals like Daum and Naver post news items and encourage discussion among users. Commenting on the popularity of these interactive sites, which has led to less online readership for other news sites, a Korea Times reporter writes (38):

"Portals do not think that they are wholly to blame for the adverse effect. They suggest that the problems are due in part to the nature of Internet where every netizen can speak out."

Another online site, DC Inside (www.decinside.com) was begun with one purpose but soon developed differently. Originally it was an online web site to share information about digital cameras and photography. This site has become a significant part of the netizen community in Korea as it has expanded to include discussion of social and political issues. The web site adopted a policy that every post to it contain a photo. Those contributing to DC Inside "spend hours viewing digital photos that have been uploaded on a site and then post their opinions of any images that catch their fancy." (39)

Among the issues that are cited as the subject of substantive discussion on DC Inside are the Apollo Anton Ono incident where a Korean skater who came in first to the finish line at the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics was disqualified. The gold medal then went to the American skater who had come in second. There are other events like the election of Roh Moo-Hyun, the first head of state said to be elected by netizens, and the candle light demonstrations against the impeachment of Roh, which grew out of online discussions by netizens.

Other online forums which have become part of the alternative Internet media are Seoprise (www.seoprise.com) and its offshoots. Describing the achievements of online journalism in Korea, Chang points to the diversification of the participants and the varying methods of online public discussion. He writes, "This newly enabled diversification places online journalism in an antithetical position vis-a-vis traditional journalism which has tended to standardize methods of message transmission and the relationship between senders and recipients of messages." (40) The more traditional media has been criticized for their inability to foster public discussion of divergent social opinions. This is attributed to the fact that the conservative media is handicapped by their connection to commercial and political powers.

Chang believes that the online media, such as OhmyNews and other less widely known examples, have "emerged as a powerful alternative journalism by challenging the existing conservative media." (Chang 2005b, p. 925) The ability of the online media to support and encourage netizen participation is a pivotal factor. Access to these varied forms of online to interactive communication is a support for netizens to be part of the struggle for more democracy in Korea.

Chang proposes that newspapers without an off-line edition may be considered as genuine examples of online journalism. He includes newsgroups and discussion forums (sometimes called bbs's) as online journalism. "Korean citizens," Chang writes, "no longer passively accept the agenda put forward by the traditional media; they are now producers of messages. Their writings -- in bulletin boards, discussion rooms, and their own websites and blogs - have already intruded into the realm of journalism and even beyond. Messages they produce trigger online discussions and consensus-building. Such online activities may even be coalesced into collective actions that assume the characteristics of social movements." (Chang 2005b, p. 926) Other important aspects of such online

discussion include the ability to determine the salient aspects of an issue through the discussion process, and the ability to have new or unusual ideas considered seriously by others. (41) Someone reading an online debate where divergent views are presented may conclude that such divergent views merely reinforce already held opinions. Those who have been part of such online discussion, however, have noted that a broadening of the views of the participants often happens as a result of the discussion, though it may not be documented in the particular discussion itself. Chuq Von Rospach, a Usenet pioneer, has described how he would introduce a new or novel idea and there would be lots of disagreement with the idea. It would seem as if it had been useless to have introduced something new or novel into the discussion. When he returned to the discussion a week or two later, however, he would find that a number of people would be discussing his idea and considering how it was useful. I found a similar phenomenon in my experience online. (42)

Chang describes as an early phase of the anti-chosun movement, the creation of the online parody site Ddanji Ilbo (www.ddangi.com). (Chang 2005b, p. 926). "The prime target of Ddanji Ilbo was Chosun Ilbo." (Chang 2005b, p. 929). Also the web site Urimodu (www.urimodu.com) was created as an anti-chosun web site. Its objective, Chang writes, was "to organize a movement to close down Chosun Ilbo." (Chang 2005b, p. 927). A turning point in the anti-chosun movement, however, was when "netizens began to create their own online media to initiate alternative media reform." Though the parody media gave a voice to criticism of Chosun Ilbo, "They failed," Chang explains, "to emerge as alternative media. The most representative new media that have overcome the hurdles that appeared in the early stage of the anti-chosun movement are OhmyNews and websites like Seoprise.com." (Chang 2005b, p. 929)

"Capitalizing on citizen's participation and interactive communication," OhmyNews and Seoprise and its offshoots "have forcefully challenged the existing media." (Chang 2005b, p. 928) Chang cites the role they played in the campaign for the presidency of South Korea in support of Roh Moo-Myung. The Seoprise web site began October 14, 2002. It was established by Seo Yeong-seok and others who supported Roh in the 2002 election. During the 2002 Presidential campaign "up to 100,000 netizens visited Seoprise every day to participate in online debates that favored Roh whenever important campaign issues emerged." (Chang 2005b, p. 931) Arguments over the issues were promptly generated. "Seoprise functioned as an online eye of the storm for the so-called Roh Moo-Hun wind," writes Chang. (Chang 2005a, p. 404)

Articles posted on the Seoprise website are like columns supporting positions on particular politicians. The web site was structured in a way where a few participants who had achieved the status of columnists would frequently submit columns. The web site also included a place where those visiting it could post their comments on others columns, or submit their own columns. Among the heated debates on the web site were discussions on issues like the dispatch of Korean troops to Iraq. Through such debates certain issues emerged where those who found themselves disagreeing with the dominant position left the web site and created other web sites such as Politizen. Politizen is a web site created on May 21, 2003 (www.politizen.org) (43) Similarly some netizens split from Politizen on September 15, 2003 and formed Namprise (www.namprise.com). Chang proposes that such splits have a political significance.

"In the case of Seoprise," writes Chang, the policies of "President Roh Moo-Myun and the Uri Party are supported. Namprise supports President Kim Dae-Jung and the millennium Democratic Party. Politizen does not formally express support; however, it is generally critical toward President Roh and tends to support both the Millennium Democratic Party and the Democratic Labor Party." (Chang 2005a, p. 406)

Chang observes that conservative users haven't formed online sites like Seoprise and its offspring, as they "can express and exchange opinions in online discussion forums provided by the websites of the conservative media, such as chosun.com joins.com and donga.com." (Chang 2005a, p. 406.)

A characteristic of Seoprise that has developed, according to Chang, is that netizens will avoid discussing issues where they disagree with a policy of Roh. (Chang 2005a, p. 406) He offers as an example the way

issues like the construction of a nuclear dump site dispute is treated at the different online sites. (Chang 2005a, p. 407). While Seoprise avoided discussion of the issue, it was discussed seriously on Politizen and Namprise. Similarly with regard to the issue of sending Korean troops to Iraq, Politizen and Namprise discussed the issue, while discussion of the issue is avoided on Seoprise. (Chang 2005a, p. 408) Politizen was created with a commitment to represent a variety of views. A characteristic of these three web sites, however, is to encourage the expression of strong viewpoints for particular political trends. Chang proposes that this contributes to a higher level of participation than on those sites where more general discussion occurs like Updorea and Jungprise. (Chang 2005a, p. 407)

Along with the ability to develop a broad perspective provided by the Internet, there is similarly the ability to develop a particular viewpoint. Seoprise is an example where the discussion of issues contrary to the policy of Roh are limited. OhmyNews, similarly, has been criticized by some as having a tendency to limit discussion of issues which diverge from policy decisions of the Roh government.

Chang explains that online media like OhmyNews and Seoprise functioned as an "epicenter of activities that lead the movement for political reform against conservative hegemony." Netizens have created and use such online media "to produce and exchange values and arguments that challenge the existing social order." (Chang 200b, p. 933) He points out that these online forums also provided a way for netizens to participate in political processes as elections. This has succeeded in reducing the power of the conservative media, and has provided support for the increased political participation of citizens. Chang proposes that such developments accelerate the "hitherto prolonged and delayed process of democratic consolidation." (Chang 2005b, p. 933)

The online media are richly endowed with devices that facilitate citizen participation and exchange of opinions, both of which support the pursuit of political goals." And the netizen consciousness makes it possible to form the new social and cultural reality. (Chang, 2005b, p. 934) "A Korean case shows that online media are powerful tools for communicative or participatory democracy," writes Chang, "This has important ramifications, not only for the future of democracy in Korea, but also for any other countries where political potential of online exists." (Chang 2005b, p. 934)

VIII - Conclusion

In his book "Democracy After Democratization," Choi explains the significant role that the mainstream conservative media has played in Korean society since the June 1987 democratic victory. In a chapter titled "Politics Ruled by the Press," Choi describes the power of the press over political institutions of South Korea. "If anyone asks me who moves the politics in Korea," he writes, "I would say it is the press." (Choi 2005, p. 41)

According to Choi's argument, it is not government officials who determine the political issues and priorities to be considered. Instead it is the press that sets the agenda and priorities for the political officials, who "adjust their role according to what is reported that day in the press." (Choi 2005, p. 41) The conservative press wielding this power (Choi wrote his book prior to the 2002 election of Roh) was in possession of what Choi characterizes as unbridled power, unchecked by any democratic process. Choi proposes that democracy is a process by which justice emerges from the conflict between various opinions and interests. To have a democratic society, a continuous process of reform is needed, one that can continually counter the resistance of the conservative vested interests. Otherwise the society can regress and there is the danger of reactionary forces gaining dominance. To continue the advance toward a more democratic society, Choi maintains that there is a need for "efforts to continually develop institutional mechanisms to defend it, [to] foster values appropriate to it and further nurture it." (Choi 2005, p. 50)

The online media developing in South Korea is a new form of institutional mechanism. This institutional mechanism is helping to defend, foster and nurture the continuing development of democracy in Korea. Similarly, the netizens, the online citizens who participate in online forums discussing and debating the issues of

the day and the social goals needed to continue the struggle for democracy, are the heirs of the pro-democracy movement of the 1980s.

While I have presented some of the variety of online forms that netizens in Korea have developed and contribute to, there are many more that could be discussed. These include Cyworld, blogs, web sites for the discussion of music or human rights or ecology issues, just to mention a few. Also there are web sites where serious social or political questions are raised, as for example, where the authenticity of photos of human rights violations by the North Korean were challenged.

Just as the first draft of this paper was being written, three web sites for the discussion of scientific developments have gained the spotlight in newspapers and scientific journals around the world. These web sites are Scieng (Association of Korean Scientists and Engineers) (www.scieng.net), BRIC (The Biological Research Information Center) (bric.postech.ac.kr), and the Science Gallery of DCInside (www.dcinside.com). They gained prominence in a controversy that developed in South Korea over possible ethical and fraudulent breaches in stem-cell research by a prominent scientist. (44) Issues raised on these web sites led to articles in the print media in Korea and around the world and even in international scientific journals. Young scientists in Korea posting in BRIC have been proposed as the 'Netizens of the Year' for the role they played in helping to uncover fabricated data and scientific claims in well respected scientific articles by Hwang Woo-sook who had been a nationally and internationally acclaimed scientific researcher. (45)

The subject matter of these online forms, however, are not the salient aspects. Rather it is the fact that via this new form of communications media, netizens are able to speak out about their views and the problems they deem important and to hear and think about the views and concerns of other netizens. One of the early participants in the US student group SDS remembers a talk by Arnold Kaufman at the SDS conference creating the Port Huron statement on participatory democracy. She writes (46):

"At one point, he declared that our job as citizens was not to role-play the President. Our job was to put forth our own perspective. That was the real meaning of democracy -press for your own perspective as you see it, not trying to be a statesman understanding the big picture."

Such a process makes possible the active involvement of people in the discussion of issues they find of interest. As each person argues for his or her viewpoint in discussion with others with similar or different viewpoints, a vibrant debate can ensue. It is just such a process that Choi considers necessary for democracy. This is the kind of process that has been nourished by the online media in South Korea and it has in turn led to the spread and continuing development of the Internet.

The online media has had an impact on many areas of Korean society, including election campaigns. The General Election campaigns of 2000 and the Presidential Election campaign in 2002 have been especially impacted by online discussion and debate. Describing the role of the Internet in the 2000 election in an article from her thesis, Jeong Hoiok then of Ewha Woman's University, writes (47):

"The 16th general election [April 2000] was the first in Korea in which the real world and virtual world came together thanks to information technology. Indeed, even well established candidates have come to actively use the Internet as an effective campaign tool, while the homepage of the anti-incumbent Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Election was visited by more than 900,000 Internet users. Even the Central Election Management Committee made the headlines when it disclosed on the Internet the military records, personal assets, and any criminal records of registered candidates. Moreover, a number of websites are actively engaged in political activities on an ongoing basis."

In a special feature of the French newspaper, La Monde, about the 2000 Korean General Election,

published on April 25, 2000, the editors observed that "the Internet served as a catalyst for the development of a new form of democracy," during that election. The editors then predicted that, "Once today's information technology is fully applied, this will significantly contribute to furthering Korea's democratization. (Hoiok, p 5)

The varied forms of online media that have developed in the past several years in Korea are helping to nourish a new form of democracy, participatory democracy. Participatory democracy, in turn, is helping to foster the continuing development and spread of the Internet in Korea. The continuing development of the Internet and of the netizens protect and nurture new online forms that have become a new institution for the continuing struggle to maintain and extend democracy

Notes:

- 1) La Do-sam, "Understanding Korea's Internet Development and Cyber-culture", Korea Focus, Sep-Oct 2003, Vol 11, No. 5, p. 1.
- 2) Michael Hauben, "The Net and Netizens: The Impact the Net has on People's Lives, "Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet," IEEE Computer Society, 1997.
- 3) Choi Jang Jip, "Democratization, Civil Society, and the Civil Social Movement in Korea: the Significance of the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Election," Korea Journal, Autumn 2000, p. 46.
- 4) Choi Jang-Jip, "Democracy after Democratization: the Korean Experience," Humanitas, Seoul, 2005.
- 5) Han Sang-Jin, "Economic Development and Democracy" Korea Journal, Summer 1995, p. 13.
- 6) quoted in Michael Hauben, "Participatory Democracy from the 1960s and SDS Into the Future Online", 1995. <http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/CS/netdemocracy-60s.txt>
- 7) Kilnam Chon et al, A Brief History of the Internet in Korea, 2005.
- 8) Izumi Aizu, "A Comparative Study of Broadband in Asia: Deployment and Policy, 2002, p. 11-12.
- 9) Chon
- 10) Hauben, SDS, p. 8. <http://opencollector.org/history/homebrew/netdemocracy-60s.html>
- 11) Michael Hauben, "Preface" in Hauben and Hauben, "Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet," p. X.
- 12) "The Net and Netizens" is reprinted as chapter 1 in "Netizens". There is the indication that "The Net and Netizen" was available in Korea by January 1994. It was listed in The Computer Underground Digest issue of January 2, 1994, which was available via ftp from: ftp: cair.kaist.ac.kr in /doc/eff/cud COMPUTER UNDERGROUND DIGEST The Net and Netizens was in CONTENTS, #5.79 (Oct 10 1993) in File 6--The Net and Netizens.

The Computer Underground Digest is a weekly electronic journal/newsletter with subscriptions are available at no cost electronically from tk0jut2@mvs.cso.niu.edu and also at various ftp sites around the

world. Jim Thomas, Department of Sociology, NIU, DeKalb, IL was the contact person. The url is: www.skepticfiles.org/hacker/cud601.htm

13) Newsgroups: han.sci.med, han.announce From: s...@sun.hallym.ac.kr (Huh Sun) Date: 1996/03/21 Subject: Proposal of the Korean terminology for internet terms
<http://groups.google.com/group/han.announce/msg/ca5675194cadcf7e?hl=en&>

14) Interview with Aniese Park, August 1, 2005, Seoul.

15) Heewon Kim's blog <http://hypercortex.net/ver2/index.php?pl=4#t1>

16) When I was in South Korea in July 2005, a number of the people I met considered themselves netizens. One person, in response to the question of whether she was a netizen, answered, "I hope so." For other examples of netizen consciousness around the world, see "The Emergence of the Netizens: [Speech text] Ronda Hauben addresses the opening ceremony of the OhmyNews International Forum 2005"

http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=234337&rel_no=1 See also:
<http://www.ais.org/~ronda/new.papers/netizensskorea.txt> "The Rise of Netizen Democracy: A case study of the impact of Netizens on democracy in South Korea"

17) Chang Woo-Young, "The Internet, alternative public sphere and political dynamism: Korea's non-gaek* (polemist) websites", Pacific Review, Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2005, p. 398

18) Won Sook-Yeon, Yeo Eun-Ho and Lee Bun-Soo, CMPC Computer Mediated Political Communication and Its Impact on the Political Process in Korea", 1998, p.8 url:
list.msu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9812d&L=aejmc&T=0&F=&S=&P=3340

19) Chang Woo-Young, "The Internet, alternative public sphere and political dynamism: Korea's non-gaek* (polemist) websites", Pacific Review, Volume 18, Number 3 / September 2005, p. 399 (referred to in the text as Chang 2005a)

20) Yun Yeong-min (1996) A Theory of Electronic Information Space: A Sociological Exploration of the Computer Network. Seoul: Jeonyewon, p. 70-1. Yun Yeong-min wrote me, 'Your book "Netizens": that was the one I quoted in my first book. The book encouraged me to push my plan to write a book on the cyberspace.' (Email, Yun Yeong-min, July 11, 2005.)

21) Jongseon SHIN, Usenet post on April 10, 2005.

22) Sam opened bbs.

23) Kang. See also woo - p. 6-7 However, the government closed the "Free Bulletin Board" in 1994 when public complaints on government policy dramatically increased due to several grand-scale accidents in which hundreds of people died. On the other hand, in August 1994, the Agency for National Security Planning, which has been known for not permitting public access, established a bulletin board on which more than 100 letters from the public were posted within one month. "Yeolin Jeongboo (Open Government)" is run by Gongbo-Cheo (The Bureau of Public Administration) and has "Jeongchaek Toronshil (Policy Discussion Room)" which encourages

public participation in the policy making process.

24) Won

25) Choi, p. 128.

26) Sang Jin Han, Economic Development and Democracy, Korea Journal, Summer 1995, p. See also Korea Focus (item #25, p. 7)

27) Chang Woo Young,, "Online civic participation, and political empowerment: online media and public opinion formation in Korea, Media, Culture, and Society, Vol 27, No. 6, 2005, p. 928. See also Choi Jang-jip (2002) p. 17-38. (Referred to in the text as Chang 2005b) ("In particular, the conservative media - paradoxically major beneficiaries of democratization - have rapidly enhanced their autonomy and social influence, thereby emerging as an independent political institution".) (See also Park Seung-gwan and and Jang Gyeong-seob, 2001, p. 9-41)

28) Cho Hee-Yeon, "The Role of NGO's in the Democratic Transition" p. 4.

29) Gunho Lee, "Salience Transfer between Online and Offline Media in Korea: Content Analysis of Four Traditional Papers and Their Online Siblings", Paper Submitted to the 2004 Toronto Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, AEJMC, 21st Nov. 2004, <http://list.msu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0411c&L=aejmc&T=0&F=&S=&P=25084>

30) Korea Press Foundation, "General Trends in the Korean Press in 2000~2001" http://www.kpf.or.kr/eng/general/general_2001.jsp

31) See for example: [KS] introduction/Choi Jang-jip Statement. Henry H. Em em@HUMnet.UCLA.EDU Mon, 23 Nov 1998 12:28:29 +0900. http://koreaweb.ws/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreaweb.ws/1998-November/000912.html

32) Committee to Protect Journalists Country Report, December 31, 1998.

33) See for example the description in Rise of Netizen Democracy.

34) Ronda Hauben, "OhmyNews and 21st Century Journalism", OhmyNews, September 8, 2005. http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=8&no=246787&rel_no=1

35) See for example, Ronda Hauben, "Dawn of the Internet and Netizen", OhmyNews, August 15, 2005. http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=4&no=242311&rel_no=1

It is only a myth that the Internet was created as a communications media that would survive a nuclear war. Actually the Internet was created to provide an environment that is plastic, malleable, general purpose and interactive so as to foster collaboration.

36) See for example, Oh Yeon Ho, "Korean Netizens Change Journalism and Politics", OhmyNews, December 14, 2004.

http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=8&no=201423&rel_no=1

37) See Hauben, "Rise of Netizen Democracy" for a discussion of how the Internet made it possible for a more participatory form of election activity by netizens.

<http://www.ais.org/~ronda/new.papers/netizensskorean>

38) Kim Ki-tae, "Portal News Service Sweeps Online Media Scene", Korea Times, July 13, 2005.

<http://times.hankooki.com/lpage/200507/kt2005071319404410230.htm>

39) Lo Do-sam, "Understanding Korea's Internet Development and Cyber-culture", Korea Focus, September-October 2003.

40) Chang 2005b, p. 925

41) See "The Rise of Netizen Democracy"

42) It is interesting to realize that if one just studies a situation, rather than participating in it, one might not notice phenomena like this.

43) Chang 2005a

44) See "Fresh Mixup Casts Doubt on Cloning Pioneer's Research", Chosun Ilbo, South Korea, Dec 15, 2005

<http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200512/200512150008.html>

45) See Article in Korea

http://www.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?at_code=300437

This response is in English:

...(dongilone)

"I have firmly believed that truth prevails in the long run. I am choked with overflowing emotions of relief and joy, when I am aware that the future of Korean science will not be withered, with your brilliant performance, suffering frequent slanderings and other physical and mental threats to you young scientists, from blind followers of the God Lie.

Momentary bitterness of setback is to be welcomed when lasting longer sweet fruit is to be savored.

I am proud of you young scientists.

I treat you all a large barrel of Makoli."

http://www.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?at_code=299945

See also the Appendix in this paper.

46) Hauben, SDS paper.

47) Jeong Hoiok, "Information Society and Democracy in Korea," Korea

Focus, Sept-Oct 2000, Vol 8, No. 5, p. 1. See also the description of the 2002 campaign and the activities of Nosamo in Hauben, Ronda, "The Rise of Netizen Democracy."

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Won Sook-Yeon, Yeo Eun-Ho and Lee Bun-Soo, CMPC Computer Mediated Political Communication and Its Impact on the Political Process in Korea", 1998, p.8 url: list.msu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9812d&L=aejmc&T=0&F=&S=&P=3340

(Won 1998)

Appendix

Stem Cell Fraud and the Netizens A Case Study

An important struggle developed in South Korea in Fall 2005 while I was working on a paper about Korean netizens. The struggle helps to demonstrate both the role of the netizen and the role of the online media in modern Korean life and the struggle for a more democratic society.

A research laboratory at Seoul National University directed by veterinary scientist Hwang

Woo Suk published what were considered forefront research papers in the field of stem-cell research. His papers documented a technique for cloning stem cells, to produce patient specific cells to treat certain diseases, like Parkinson's disease, diabetes, and injuries like spinal column injuries.

Hwang's research was seen as promising for therapeutic treatment.

He was treated as a national hero. He received substantial government funding and acclaim from the government of Roh Moo-hyun. Private commercial entities like Posco, South Korea's largest steel corporation and Korean Airlines supported his work. (1) The stocks of the biotechnology industry were affected by the progress of Hwang's research. (2)

A well known American scientist, Gerald Schatten, a Professor at the University of Pittsburgh in the US, and a well known reproductive biologist is listed as the senior author of Hwang's May 2005 paper. The paper, published in the prestigious scientific journal "Science" documented the production of 11 strands of patient specific stem cells through cloning.

Questions about possible ethical violations in Hwang's research were raised in an article in "Nature" after reporters for Nature visited Hwang's laboratory and learned that some of the ova that were used in his research may have come from donations from women who worked as part of his research team. This is contrary to ethical guidelines which mandate that donations be voluntary. If a woman is in a subordinate position in a research project, her donation may be induced under pressure from her job.

Based on information from a former research colleague of Hwang's, a TV documentary by PD Notebook, an investigative news program of Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) was produced in the Fall of 2005. The documentary raised a number of ethical questions about the ova used in Hwang's research.

The tv program promised a follow up documentary that would raise further questions about possible fraud in the professor's research.

What followed, however, was a flurry of corporate and government support for Professor Hwang. This included mainstream media like Chosun Ilbo, government officials who formed an unofficial group called "Hwang-kum-pak-chui" ('golden bat') to support Hwang. (3) Supporters of Hwang created an online web site "We Love Hwang" to plan their defense of him.

The web site of the tv program was filled with posts challenging the the critique of Hwang's research. Claims were made that the tv interviewers threatened researchers they were interviewing. A campaign was started to induce the advertisers of PD Notebook to withdraw their support for the program. The followup program was cancelled.

Some of the online media like OhmyNews and Pressian (another online newspaper) carried stories challenging the attack on the tv program. OhmyNews, an online newspaper, printed an article that compared the attacks on PD Notebook and others who were raising questions about Hwang's work to activities that took place in Nazi Germany. A group of Civil Society groups defended the importance of investigating the ethical issues. (footnote)

At first Professor Hwang denied any ethical breaches in his research. But after the first tv program he acknowledged that ova had been donated by two of the researchers in his lab. The Helsinki Declaration is considered to set the ethical standards for scientific research. It outlines the conditions under which ova can be donated. Among the criteria are that there be informed consent by the donors. It also requires that no force be involved, and that the donation be voluntary.

While a law governing such donations only went into effect in Korea in January 2005, language in the

May 2005 paper published by 'Science' included language claiming that the Helsinki standard was adhered to.

An editorial in Chosun Ilbo attacked OhmyNews and Pressian for the questions they raised about Prof. Hwang's research, demonstrating the furor that was unleashed on anyone challenging the ethics or honesty of Hwang's research.

Similarly, the government promised to continue support for Hwang's research. Hwang's supporters claimed that the beneficial potential of his research, the promise that it could provide a cure for serious medical problems, was more important than possible ethical violations. Also the portals claimed that most of those online supported Hwang. The fact that a prestigious scientific journal like 'Science' had published Hwang's research papers presented as proof that the scientific community had verified his research.

Online, however, there was continuing discussion of the controversy over his research. The problems were discussed. Along with the online consideration of ethical problems with his research, the photos and other evidence he submitted to Science to support his May 2005 article were examined. At web sites for scientists like BRIC, scieng, and the Science Gallery of DC Inside, serious discussions went on about the articles.

At the BRIC web site, the website of the Biological Research Information Center (<http://gene.postech.or.kr/bbs/>), an anonymous post explained how the photos appeared to be fabrications. Others at the scientific web sites discussed problems they observed in the data to support the claims of the articles.

Earlier posts on web sites raised suspicions that pictures on the Science web site presenting the data evidence for the Hwang's articles did not support the claims in his article. Instead it appeared that photos 5,6 & 8 and 3,4,7,8 and 11 were from the same stem cells, not 11 different stem cells as the article claimed.

Also members of the Association of Korean Scientists and Engineers

(www.scieng.net), the Biological Research Information Center (BRIC), and the Science Gallery of DC Inside posted messages in the various web sites saying the stem cell in picture No 5 accompanying Hwang's article in Science and the picture No 1 in an article by researchers from the MizMedi Hospital, which was submitted to the US "Journal of Biology of Reproduction" were virtually the same. MitiMedi Hospital is a fertility clinic in Seoul that collaborated with Hwang on his research.

Co-authors of this article were Roh Sung-il, the hospital's head, Chun Sung-hye of Seoul National University, and Kim Sun-jong, who had worked at the hospital with Roh. Seeing the discussion about the duplication of photos in the two articles, Chun posted a message on the DC Inside and BRIC websites where he said "the mistake was due to confusion of the folders where the pictures had been saved." (4) The article was subsequently withdrawn from the journal to correct the photos.

Discussing whether Koreans should feel upset over this exposure of fraudulent activities by a top scientist, some posters argue that 'No'. They were proud that young scientists on the online scientific web sites, Korean netizens, had taken up the challenge to publicly air their suspicions about the integrity of the data in Hwang's paper. These netizens were willing to challenge the government, the press, the scientific hierarchy in Korea, and even a scientific journal with an international reputation.

The fact that the U.S. journal 'Science' could publish fraudulent articles shows the need for

serious discussion about their peer review process and the need to have a community which will raise questions when needed about the scientific papers and research they publish.

In response to the online explanation of the problems in Hwang's articles, professors at his university, Seoul National University (SNU), petitioned that there be an investigation into his research. A panel was formed. After investigating Hwang's work and examining whatever notes and records they could find, the panel declared that there was no clonings of stem cells, i.e. no patient specific stem cells had been produced by Hwan'ts laboratory.

This set of events demonstrates the power of the online media that is developing in Korea. The online sites of scientific reserachers like BRIC, scieng, and Science Gallery of DC Inside, were able to stand up against the full fury of attacks from the establishment in South Korea. They were supported by others in the online community, by those on discussion forums and blogs, and by online media like OhmyNews, and Pressian.

This is a support for democracy. One blogger wrote that the hierarchy within scientific laboratories in Korea makes it difficult for young researchers to speak up and to fight abuse. The fact that the problems could be pinpointed and then treated seriously despite the critical set of attacks on those raising these issues is a significant step for Korean democracy.

Notes

(1)Yoon Chang-hee, "Stem cell controversy being felt by sponsors", Joongang Ilbo, December 16, 2005)
<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/200512/16/200512162202553239900090509051.html> Another major supporter is the chairman of Dongwon Group (Kim Jae-chul) "Dongwon F&B Co. was one of the first companies to cancel its television commercial spot from Munhwa Broadcasting Corp.'s Newsdesk, a nightly news program that reported on doubts about Dr. Hwang's work."

- biotech companies hurt financially 2005 Top 10

News

December 29, 2005 . Hwang woo-suk

<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/200512/28/200512282211430709900090409041.html>

- from 'Hwang Woo-Suk: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia'

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Ties with Park Ki-young, Science and Techonolgy Advisor for the President, "yielded a favorable environment for Hwang in the government, as a non-official group consisting of high-ranking government officials was created to support Hwang's research that includes not only Hwang and Park, but also Kim Byung-joon, Chief National Policy Secretary, and Jin Dae-jae, Information and Communications minister. The group was dubbed as 'Hwang-kum-pak-chui,' a loose acronym made from each member's family names which means "golden bat" in Korean."

4. Fresh Mixup Casts Doubt on Cloning Pioneer.s Research Chosun Ilbo (english),
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<http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200512/200512150008.html>

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Carothers? Critique of the Transition Paradigm: Korea as a Case in Point or The Netizens vs. the Conservative Print Media

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Executive Summary of Paper

In this paper I hope to demonstrate that the critique presented by Thomas Carothers in his article "The End of the Transition Paradigm" in the Journal of Democracy (January 2002) provides a helpful perspective to use when investigating democratic processes using the Republic of Korea as a case study.

Carothers identifies a set of assumptions that he proposes are false but which are implicit to the transition paradigm. These assumptions briefly are:

- 1) That there was a predictable democratization script that could be expected to unfold.
- 2) That one could assume there would be a particular sequence of stages.
- 3) That elections would not only provide legitimacy for government officials, but also would "continuously deepen political participation and accountability."
- 4) That legacies from the autocratic period would not affect the democratization process.
- 5) That the previous power holders would not lock in the power and resources they held.

He also provides a summary of the historical framework of how the 'transition paradigm' came to be dominant in the democracy promotion community. When his critique appeared, it met with criticism from a number of scholars. Carothers appears not to have desired to engage in polemics so he agreed to qualify his critique as intended to apply particularly to the community of foreign aid practitioners and left open the issue of how or if the critique had validity when applied to others who were involved with the widespread discussion and application of the transition paradigm.

Carothers defended the critique as useful for the aid community and presents an anecdote to indicate that it was welcomed by them, as opposed to the reception it received from scholars. (See for example, "A Reply to My Critics", Journal of Democracy, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 3, 2002, p. 37. Critiques of his original article are also in this issue of the Journal of Democracy)

Despite the original reception to Carothers' article, however, it has had an impact. For example, in his recent article, "Democratization: Perspectives from Global Citizenries"(Center for the Study of Democracy, 2006), Doh C. Shin writes:

"In policy circles democracy is too often equated with the holding of free and competitive multiparty elections (Carothers 2002). The electoral conception of democracy, however, does not provide a full account of the process that transforms age-old authoritarian institutions into democratically functioning ones. This conception provides only a minimalist account because it deals merely with the process of elections and overlooks additional important institutions of democracy. It is formalistic or superficial because it fails to consider how democratically or undemocratically these institutions actually perform. It also provides a static account of institutional

democratization because it ignores interactions between various democratic institutions between each round of elections." (Shin, p. 4) Shin proposes that the task is to consider the alternative conceptions of democracy proposed by scholars to overcome the minimalist nature of electoral democracy.

I have found Carothers' critique helpful in my research investigating the processes of democratization and their relation to the history and impact of Internet development. I am particularly interested in exploring if and how the Internet can help to extend democracy. South Korea is the country with the most widespread broadband access. It presents scholars with a chance to understand the practical and potential impact that the Internet and widespread broadband access can have on democratization as it spreads to other countries and regions of the world.

In this paper, I focus on two areas that Carothers identifies as important for the study and observation of democratization. These areas are the identification of the vested interests that remain from the autocratic period and the actual experience of elections and citizen participation in politics.

One such vested interest is that represented by the conservative print media as exemplified in the mainstream press in Korea. This institution has played a particularly harmful role in politics when they are able to dominate the formation of public opinion and limit it to the projection of the narrow set of the interests they represent.

The events of the 2002 presidential election campaign provide the basis for a case study of a power struggle between the conservative print media and online discussion by netizens on the Internet. In this election campaign, criticism in the print media stirred interest in Roh Moo-hyun, whose candidacy was considered to be a long shot. Responses to the print articles were posted on the Internet. The narrow focus of the print media was countered with a broad discussion online of the issues of the election. This discussion was carried on over a variety of online forms, including discussion groups, online polemics, and an online newspaper which introduced a new form of journalism known as citizen journalism.

Also a new form of online political organization was created by netizens, a form of fan club which was named Nosamo. Nosamo (Korean for "those who love Roh Moo-hyun") was created to support the candidacy of the Roh Moo-hyun. A tenet of this organization was its commitment to participatory democracy. The online environment on the Internet made it possible for netizens to play an active role as citizens in the election, participating in the discussion and debate of the 2002 presidential campaign.

The victory of Roh in the election was also a victory for the vibrant participatory process the Internet and netizens had made possible.

I argue that a new online political culture was created in this election campaign and hence this experience serves as an important example of democratization, and of the appropriateness of Carothers' advice to raise the question, "what is happening politically?" in place of the previous question, "How is the democratic transition going?"

I - Preface

The mass demonstrations in France in 2005 in opposition to the youth employment law (CNE) and the 2005 mass demonstrations in Nepal protesting the actions of the monarchy, are a sign that there is serious dissatisfaction with the political processes in both developed countries like France and developing countries like Nepal. Such examples of mass dissatisfaction help to highlight the widespread desire for democratic political processes.

In a similar vein, a report issued recently in Great Britain titled "Power to the People: The report of Power An Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy" documents a deepening public dissatisfaction with the political processes in Great Britain and the U.S." (1)

Thus even in the countries long considered to be models of democracy, the democratic practices are the subject of serious discontent. In light of such dissatisfaction with the old models of democracy, the efforts of countries that have recently thrown out autocratic systems and are now searching for how to develop and sustain a democratizing process, become especially interesting and relevant subjects for study. Some scholars of democratization, for example, John Markoff, propose that innovations to craft new forms or processes of democratization will develop from the waves of innovation going on in these countries. (1a)

In my paper I will explore certain aspects of the current democratization process in South Korea (officially known as the Republic of Korea, but hereafter referred to most often as Korea).

II - Carothers' Critique of the Transition Paradigm

Given what is acknowledged by some to be a crisis of democracy around the world, it is not surprising that serious questions are being raised about what had been considered a model or what will be the processes by which how a newly democratizing country could be expected to develop.

One useful critique has been developed by Thomas Carothers, in his article "The End of the Transition Paradigm." Describing the origin and impetus for what he calls the 'transition paradigm', Carothers explains how in the 1980s U.S. policy makers desired a model to apply to newly democratizing countries in their official democracy promotion work. He writes:

"As early as the mid-1980s, President Ronald Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, and other high-level U.S. officials were referring regularly to "the worldwide democratic revolution." During the 1980s, an active array of governmental, quasi-governmental, and nongovernmental organizations devoted to promoting democracy abroad sprang into being. This new democracy-promotion community had a pressing need for an analytic framework to conceptualize and respond to the ongoing political events....(Carothers 2002: 6) (2)

In response, a model for the democratizing process that Carothers calls the 'transition paradigm' was advanced which has been applied by scholars. In recent years, however, Carothers argues that a number of problems have become obvious with the 'transition paradigm'. This has led him to declare, "It is time for the democracy-promotion community to discard the transition paradigm." (3) He argues that researchers interested in democratization need to shed the lens colored by these prior assumptions. When analyzing the democratization process in a country, he proposes that instead of asking, "How is its democratic transition going?", the question researchers should ask is, "What is happening politically?" (Carothers 2002: 18) South Korea provides the example of a country that has made significant progress with democratization since its June 1987 revolution. Therefore, it provides a useful case study to explore whether Carothers' critique of the transition paradigm can be helpful in analyzing democratization.

In this paper, I focus mainly on developments in Korea which took place during the 2002 presidential election campaign. This campaign resulted in the nomination and then election of Roh Moo Hyun as the 16th President of South Korea.

Roh's election, I will argue, demonstrates in a salient way, democratic processes that I believe it is critical to consider in trying to understand both the theory and practice of democratization.

These processes, I contend, are related to the ability of the people at a grassroots level, to have a means of influencing what those who are in positions of power will do. There are various means of wielding such influence. For the purposes of this paper, however, I want to focus on what for the time being I will call the "power of the press". (Eventually I hope to develop this concept further to include the ability for the press to function as a "watchdog" overseeing and affecting the actions of government, and more specifically, of government officials.) (See for example, Michael Hauben, "The Computer as Democratizer" in "Netizens: On the History and Impact of

Usenet and the Internet", 1997, p. 315-316, John H. McManus, "Market-Driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?", 1994, p. xi)

What the 2002 election in Korea demonstrated, was that if the people have a means of communicating with each other, and of discussing the activities of those who are wielding the power in their society, then there is a potential for the concept of democracy to have a practical meaning beyond the general normative ideal.

The definition of democracy that I am using for this paper is the processes by which people have a means to affect the decisions of those in power that will affect their lives.

When considering this particular process of democracy, I am taking into consideration the definition that Tilly offers (Tilly 2005):

"In the political-process definition that strikes me as most useful for explanatory purposes, democracy combines four elements: 1) relatively broad public political participation; 2) relatively equal participation; 3) binding consultation of political participants with respect to state policies, resources, and personnel; and 4) protection of political participants (especially members of minorities) from arbitrary action by state agents. Without effective citizenship, no regime provides sufficient breadth, equality,

binding consultation, or protection of participants in public politics to qualify as democratic."

In this context, however, I want to focus on the problem represented by #3 in the above definition. I want to propose that there is a problem in relationship between the state agents and the political participants which is a crucial problem to explore in considering the problems of democratization. The events of the election campaign provide useful experience to consider in trying to come to grips with the problems and achievements of democratization in Korea.

When considering Carothers' critique of the transition paradigm, one is struck by the fact that newly democratizing countries don't start out with a clean slate when they make the transition to democratization. Instead it can be expected that they will inherit at least some of the forms and power structures from their past. These countries have a handicap, the handicap of having to root out the surviving remnants of the political and economic authoritarian past. How they do this and what new forms and structures they find to replace the vestiges of the surviving autocratic system is a subject worthy of study.

III - Forms and Structures from Korea's Autocratic Past

A number of scholars of Korean democratization are concerned with these surviving remnants of the autocratic system and their continuing impact on the economy and politics of Korea. One such scholar is Choi Jang Jip, a Professor at Korea University, and the author of the book "Democracy after Democratization" (2005). Choi discusses how the holders of power from the autocratic period of Korean history, have continued to dominate Korean politics and economics after the 1987 Revolution. A major subject for his study are the structures supporting the continuing hegemony of the conservatives over Korean political and economic life. Among the strata that Choi is worried about are the chaebols, the conservative newspapers, and the conservative intellectuals. The conservative intellectuals he is referring to are those who "do not criticize the media and chaebol. Nor do they show any interest in the groups and social classes being victimized in the process of the entrenchment of the class structure." (Choi 2005: 48)

Choi argues that the forces who have continued from the authoritarian period that dominated post WWII Korea until

June 1987, are those who "resist change". He proposes that they "have become gradually more organized and stronger." (Choi 2005: 49)

In evaluating the progress made in Korean society since the June 1987 revolution, Choi argues that conditions have gotten worse for people, rather than improving. He explains that it is no longer likely that hard work and education will make it possible for most people to advance in their society. (Choi 2005: 41)

Hong Yun-Gi is another researcher interested in the nature of the power block that has emerged from the autocratic post WWII period. Hong writes:

"The ruling group of the post-war order included extreme-right [wing] anti communist politicians, conglomerate capitalist groups called chaebol, military forces of politicized generals and

officials, and the three largest newspapers, i.e. Chosun Ilbo, Joong Ang Ilbo and Dong A Ilbo. The social power of these groups survived the process of democratic consolidation which dissolved the system of formal military dictatorship in the June revolt of 1987." (Hong 2003: 8)

In his critique of this power block, Choi particularly emphasizes the role that the conservative press plays in Korean politics. Choi argues:

"The political agenda in Korea is set by the press, not initiated by the political parties. It is also the press that determines policy issues and priorities. From the President to members of the National Assembly, from cabinet ministers to political advisors, to ranking bureaucrats....the most they do in terms of making any decisions is to make decisions based on the expectation of how the press would evaluate such decisions." (Choi 2005: 41)

This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it suggests the central importance in Korean politics of the press. Choi also criticizes how the press functions with respect to private individuals, "(I)t arbitrarily intervenes and defines a person's intellectual and emotional spheres, calling a person 'ideologically suspicious' or 'leftist' as they see fit. The press freely conducts ideological inquisitions that one would credit to the Japanese colonial rulers or a totalitarian regime." (Choi 2005: 41)

The effect of the conservative domination of the print press, Choi explains, is that public opinion becomes the views expressed in a few large powerful newspapers. This narrows the range of political and ideological viewpoints that are reflected as the public opinion of Korean society. (Choi 2005: 43)

Some scholars writing about the struggle for democratization in South Korea explain that it was not until 1997, ten years after the June 1987 victory, that there was an actual transfer of political power to opposition parties. Even with this transfer, however, the conservative media is presented as one of the contenders for what form any reform of the political system will take. According to another researcher, Chang Woo Young, after the June 1987 victory, rather than the conservative media being curtailed, it emerged as an "independent political institution." (Chang 2005: 928)

Others emphasize the need to reform the conservative media. "Without the reform of the media, no success of democratic reform is possible," argues Cho Hu Yeon, one of the founders of the civil society NGO People's Solidarity with Participatory Democracy (PSPD).

The failure to put through reforms of the structure of the chaebols and of the conservative media has been seen as a factor contributing to the economic crisis of 1997.

While South Korean Presidents Kim Young Sam and then Kim Dae Jung had promised to uproot the conservative

power base, and several of the measures Sam took when he came to office, did indeed make some impact, the financial crisis of 1997 is attributed to the fact that not nearly enough progress had been made.

For example, Sunhyuk Kim writes:

"There is currently an extensive consensus in and outside of Korea that the economic crisis could have been avoided had Kim Young

Sam's chaebol reform been successfully carried out." (Kim 2000: 28) Similarly, "mainstream South Korean news outlets failed to apply a critical eye to economic reporting before the Asian slump." As one reporter explains, this lack of criticism is "a fact that many analysts say contributed to the crash." Among the mechanisms considered responsible for the crisis, he proposes is the fact that, "We were guilty of printing government statements without checking the facts." (4) Describing the press during this period, David I. Steinberg notes the widespread conformity of opinion, and the ownership and or control of major media by the powerful economic conglomerates known as chaebols. Steinberg characterizes the nature of the press by a set of statistics he offers to show the lack of independent reporting. He writes:

"some 97.8 percent of political news, 76.5 percent of social news, and 75.5 percent of economic news are said to be press releases by the government or other interested parties." (Steinberg, Paper presented June 15, 1996, "The Media: A Major Actor in Civil Society, p. 221-222) (5)

The conservative newspapers most often cited as the problem are "Chosun Ilbo", "Donga Ilbo", and "Joongang Ilbo". Chosun Ilbo (Daily Newspaper) was started March 5, 1920. It has a reputation as the South Korean print newspaper with the largest circulation (2,383,429 in 2004). The 2nd largest newspaper is Dong Ilbo, started in April 5, 1920. (In 2004 its circulation was given as 2,088,715) (Lee, Gunho 2004: 6)

These three major newspapers, have a market share of 70%, explains Lee EunJeung. (Lee, Eun-Jeung: 624) She quotes Sisa Journal, 5 January 2002 "Never had a politician won elections against the will of these newspapers." (Lee, EunJeung, 634)

In this context the success of the electoral campaign of Roh Moo-Hyun, which was bitterly opposed by the major conservative print publications takes on an added significance. What was the nature of his campaign and how did it succeed despite the opposition of the major conservative print publications?

IV - Roh Moo Hyun's Election Campaign

Roh's background was unusual for someone who would run for the office of President of South Korea. He had come from a farming family. He completed high school, but never attended college. He studied on his own to take the National Bar Exam. Passing the exam, Roh was licensed to practice law. Soon afterwards he became interested in helping students who had been prosecuted for their opposition to the autocratic government. Roh also supported labor activists. He was from Busan but had not been able to win a National Assembly seat from the area.

By the 2000 National Assembly election, Roh was able to win a seat in an area around Seoul. But he gave it up to run again for a seat in Busan in an effort to challenge the harmful impact of regional divisions in Korean political parties and politics. When Roh lost the April 2000 election, however, his efforts attracted discussion on his website among a number of people interested in election reform. Through their online discussion the idea was presented to create an online fan club for Roh, like the fan clubs for sports teams.

Formed in April 2000, Nosamo, the first online fan club for a political candidate, began discussion about how to support Roh as a candidate in the upcoming election for the South Korean presidency.

On May 12, 2000, the NGO People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) held an online poll to see which of several candidates was most desired. The candidates included in the poll were Rhee In-je, a representative to the National Assembly and an advisor to the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), Lee Hoi-chang, the head of the Grand National Party, and Roh Moo-Hyun, who appeared as the underdog, the candidate who was least likely to be able to win the election for the presidency. Yet Roh won the PSPD poll.

The election campaign for the presidency started out, however, with the appearance that it would follow the form and practice of previous campaigns. The Grand National Party candidate seemed destined for victory. In January 2002, he had visited the U.S. and met with high level U.S. officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney. The Grand National Party at the time held the majority of seats in the National Assembly, 150 of 272. Also the GNP had scored a victory of the Millennium Democratic Party of Kim Dae Jung (the lame duck President) in the June 2002 local elections, winning 11 of 16 races for mayors and governors. (Steinberg)

Until March 2002, Roh Moo-hyun was polling much behind Lee Hoi-chang according to polls like one reported on March 5, 2002 by Chosun Ilbo. Lee Hoi-Chang got 38.7% of the vote, and Roh Moo-hyun, 25.2%.

In online publications, however, other signs were available that the election was going to be more of a close race than apparent in the print press. An online publication, Digital Times, as early as February 2002, showed Roh ahead of Lee. (Seongyi)

In April 2002 Nosamo held a meeting in a computer cafe in Busan. A hundred people attended the meeting. Han Sang-jin reports that using the Internet, the online newspaper OhmyNews, broadcast "live the inaugural meeting of the club held in Daejeon on June 6, 2000 through the Internet." (Han Sang-jin 2004a, p.8) An organization was formed to support Roh's candidacy. Its founding documents included a section committing Nosamo to participatory democracy.

A significant aspect of the election campaign for Roh, however, was the fact that his candidacy was strongly opposed by the conservative print press. For example, during the primary election, the major newspapers "almost everyday carried articles that both implicitly and explicitly criticized candidate Roh Moo-hyun," writes Yun Young Min in his article, "An Analysis of CyberElectioneering: Focusing on the 2002 Presidential Election in Korea." (Yun 2003:

Surprisingly, however, the attacks by the print media served to increase the public's interest in Roh and his campaign. As Yun documents, "As a result more and more voters must have wondered to themselves 'Just Who Is This Roh Moohyun?'" In his study of the online activity on the Internet during the 2002 election, Yun documents the "sharp increase in the number of visits to Roh's Web site. Also, that must have been the reason," Yun writes, "why 'Roh Moo-hyun' became one of the most popular search terms in the news section of portal sites." (Yun 2003: 154)

Describing the effect that the criticism of Roh by the major newspapers had, Yun writes that it was akin to a David and Goliath effect with Roh being regarded as the brave David able to slay the more powerful Goliath.

Lee Eun Jeung describes how attacks on Roh that appeared in the conservative print media were quick to draw responses and discussion in online newspapers and discussion forums. If there was a reference in the print media to a speech that Roh gave, the whole speech would be posted online with a response to the article that had appeared in the print media.

Similarly, online discussions were common and supporters of Roh would send each other articles they found of interest. The online discussion and exchange of views found particular favor among the younger generations who had previously found politics uninteresting.

Yun observes that a feedback system was created between the articles published in the conservative major print

publications and the comments and discussion that occurred online. (Yun 2003: 163) Lee Eun-jeung argues that the election of 2002 "was a power struggle between the main print media and the Internet." (Lee, Eun-Jeung: 634)

"In 2002 for the first time in Korean history," she writes, "the power of the so-called netizen ('citizen on the net') made itself felt." (Lee Eun-Jeung: 632) There were several well-publicized netizen actions in 2002. These included the online protest waged against the disqualification of the Korean track athlete in the Winter Olympics; the netizen directed celebration during the World Cup events in Korea in June 2002; and the candlelight protests against the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in November and December 2002. The victory of Roh in the 2002 election was but one example of Korean netizens exploring how the Internet could be helpful in their efforts to have an impact on Korean politics.

V - Role of the Netizen in Election Campaign

In his summary of his research about the impact of the online activity during the 2002 election, Yun observes that prior to the election, most experts would have assumed that it was impossible for Roh to win. But after the election, these same experts would have to agree that the Internet had played a significant role in the victory. (Yun 2003, 163) Though he is cautious about claiming causality without further study, Yun proposes that the "so-called experts" should also exert caution when making their predictions about "such events in the future." (Yun 2003: 163)

Yun's analysis is most cogent, however, when he considers the significance of Roh's victory. He writes:

Cyberspace is making it possible for citizens to choose a political position free from the influence of the mainstream press.... Public opinion, which has been almost exclusively minted by a few mass media, can no longer be hidden beneath the control of the press. The...effect is expected to break the old equation, 'the opinion of the press = public opinion = prevailing opinion.' (Yun 2003: 143)

Lee Eun-jeung's assessment similarly is that something important has happened. "In a sense the netizens mobilized themselves into the political realm," she writes, "exercising their power as citizens..." (Lee, Eun-Jeung: 635) She

continues, "With their electoral revolution the netizens had transformed political culture in Korea." (Lee, Eun-Jeung: 638)

VI - Nosamo and OhmyNews - New Online Institutional Forms In order to consider the significance of the 2002 Korean Presidential election, it will be helpful to examine two of the new online forms that played a particularly significant role.

The first is Nosamo, the online fan club created to build support for Roh.

The Nosamo Roho fan club was started by Jeong Ki Lee (User ID: Old Fox) on April 15, 2000 (Jangwoo Han, p. 15). (Note: The Nosamo fan club is also referred to by the name Rohsamo. Nosamo stands for "those who love Roh" -ed).

The fan club had members both internationally and locally with online and offline activities organized among the participants. When Nosamo was created, a goal of the organization was participatory democracy.

Explaining how the participatory process works, Kim et al provide an example from Nosamo's experience (Kim et al 2004, p.4):

Their internal discussion making process was a microcosm of participatory

democracy in practice. All members voted on a decision following open deliberations in forums for a given period of time. Opinions were offered in this process in order to effect changes to the decision on which people were to vote.

Such online discussion and decision making was demonstrated when members of Roh's fan club disagreed with his decision to send Korean troops to Iraq in support of the US invasion. Even though they were members of a fan club, they didn't feel obligated to support every action of the Roh Presidency. The fan club members held an online discussion and vote on their web site about the US war in Iraq. They issued a public statement opposing the decision to send Korean troops to Iraq.

Young-ho Kim reports that initially, Nosamo had 40 members. They shared certain political goals, which included challenging the conservative press's domination over Korean politics. They also opposed regional loyalty as the basis for electoral success in Korean politics.

The meeting launching Nosamo was held in a PC Bang in Daejeon. Over 100 people attended it and it was broadcast live by OhmyNews. Instead of following the model of political party organization, Nosamo was organized at a local level, sponsoring local activities among its netizen population. Their activities included trips to the country's highest mountains, holding campfires on local beaches and bicycling and walking between two politically antagonistic regional cities, Busan and Gwangju. (Kim Young-ho, p. 5)

Nosamo's activities were mainly organized online but included lots of offline political and social activity. Nosamo began to draw attention from those who didn't know of its online existence when members of Nosamo worked to help Roh Moo-hyun win the newly instituted primary in the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP).

Trying to win mass support for the party, the MDP instituted its first open primary election to choose its Presidential nominee. Rotating open primaries were held in different cities and provinces from January through April 2002. At first Roh was considered an underdog among the MDP candidates. He came in 3rd in the first primary, but then 2nd in the 2nd primary. By the 3rd primary, held in Gwangju, he came in first. (Kim Young-ho, p. 5) Nosamo's online membership had found the means to gain support for Roh, helped by the open nature of the primary. In April 2002 Roh won the MDP's formal nomination.

Even though Roh had the party's official nomination, however, he had little formal support from the MDP organization. Nosamo reorganized to provide a more formal organizational form for their presidential candidate. They used their online structure to raise funds for Roh, and to organize and carry out a vigorous online and offline campaign.

At one point, Roh made an agreement with another Presidential candidate, Chung Mong-joon, to hold a TV debate and the winner of the debate would run against the GNP candidate. Though Roh had trailed Chung some of the time in the polls, and trailed Lee through much of this campaign period, his Nosamo supporters made sure to be available to be polled about who won the debate. Roh emerged from the TV debate with a score of 46.8% in favor, to 42.4% for Chung. Now the challenge facing Roh was to prevail over Lee.

Another important influence, however, developed, which would play an important role in winning Roh the Presidential office. This influence was OhmyNews.

OhmyNews

In order to understand the events of November and December 2002, and Roh's victory over Lee in the election on December 19, 2002, it will be helpful to know something about the creation and development of the online newspaper OhmyNews.

OhmyNews officially began publication on February 22, 2000. Its founder, Oh Yeon Ho, was a journalist working with the Monthly Mal magazine, an alternative Korean language publication, and helping to train young journalists. In his autobiography, Oh explains that he began OhmyNews to correct the serious media imbalance in Korea that he had experienced as a Mal journalist. If Oh did a significant story in Mal, it would get little media attention, while stories in Chosun Ilbo would be spotlighted. Oh sought to create a more balanced media environment in Korea where the significance of the news, not the strength of the media organization, would determine what was considered as news.

In starting OhmyNews, as he called this new online newspaper, Oh introduced one particularly significant innovation. This was the practice that "every citizen is a reporter." Oh started with a small paid staff for OhmyNews, but he welcomed articles contributed by what he called "citizen reporters". By the time OhmyNews began officially, he had 727 citizen reporters registered with OhmyNews.

In one stroke, Oh had abolished the boundary between active journalists and passive readers. Readers could be journalists. The staff still covered stories important to have in the paper, but the staff, or at least a part of it, served as editors to publish the articles by the citizen reporters. Also OhmyNews paid its citizen reporters a small amount of money depending on how prominently the article they submitted was placed in the OhmyNews online newspaper. While there are a number of other aspects of OhmyNews worthy of attention, the purpose of this paper is to explore the democratic processes that online forms like OhmyNews provide for our times. In this vein, there are a number of articles where the staff or citizen reporters contributed to the success of the Roh campaign. The post by the citizen reporter with the login AngMA, however, is the instance I want to focus on.

First, though some background. In June 2002, 2 middle school girls were killed when an armored vehicle driven by two U.S. service men ran over the girls. In June 2002, most Koreans were focused on the world cup celebrations and cheering that proved a particularly significant event for many Koreans.

But by November 2002, there was a clear desire among many Koreans that the service men driving the armored vehicle should be punished. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the US and Korea, however, provided that the soldiers be tried by the U.S. government, instead of under Korean law. Much attention was focused on the U.S. military proceedings held to try the soldiers. A documentary was shown on TV in Korea. The soldiers were found not guilty under the U.S. legal proceedings. A few hours after watching the documentary, an OhmyNews citizen reporter, AngMA, posted a message on the Internet.

His message said:

"We are owners of Korea. We are Koreans who deserve to be able to walk in Gwanghwamun (Gwanghwamun is where the US embassy is located and it was off limits for Koreans) I cried when I watch the TV documentary broadcast of the event, because until now I didn't understand those who struggle so strongly.

It is said that dead men's souls become fireflies. Let's fill downtown with our souls, with the souls of Mi-seon and Hyo-soon. Let's become thousands of fireflies this coming Saturday and Sunday. Let's sacrifice our private comfortable lives. Please light your candle at your home. If somebody asks, please answer, "I'm going to commemorate my dead sisters." Holding candles and wearing black, let's have a memorial ceremony for them.

Let's walk in Gwanghwamun holding a lighted candle. Let's commemorate the lives of Mi-seon and Hyo-soon, who were forgotten in the joy of June. Will the police prevent us? (Even if they forbid it, I will walk in Gwanghwamun, even if the police attack me.

We are not Americans who revenge violence with more violence. Even if only one person comes, it's ok. I will be happy to say hello. I will talk about the future of Korea in which Mi-seon and Hyo-soon can take a comfortable rest.

I'll go on, this week, next week, the following week. Let's fill the Gwanghwamum with our candle-light. Let's put out the American's violence with our peace.”

Based on a translation by Lee Jinsun ("Network of Civic Participation, A Case Study of Alternative Medium 'OhmyNews'" in Korea, unpublished paper)

AngMA posted this on November 28, 2002 at 4 am in the morning. This was five hours after he had seen the TV documentary. He originally posted this at 3 different online sites. The next day he posted it at OhmyNews. Thousands of people (10,000) appeared at the first candlelight vigil for the two dead girls. This was, Lee Jinsun writes, "the first national rally organized by an ordinary individual through the Internet." (Lee, p. 20) In her paper, Lee Jinsun describes the online debate and discussion over the nature of the demonstrations that appeared on OhmyNews. She writes: "OhmyNews was not only a mediator which concerns online discussion or offline political activities but also a stage on which counter-hegemonic positions are generated. For example, regarding the second rally on November 30, 2002, OhmyNews users left 1410 of their comments and opinions. There was an intense debate around the issues of anti-American and pro-American standpoints" (Lee Jinsun, p. 20).

Also the debate went on, particularly around the issues of whether the organization of the demonstrations should be done in a nonhierarchical or hierarchical fashion. AngMA and his supports argued for nonhierarchical processes and organizational forms, while some on the committee organizing the demonstrations supported a hierarchical structure.

VII Implications

While the details of the rich online experience in Korea are important to investigate, certain general characteristics emerge which point toward some general concepts. One significant aspect is that the nonhierarchical form of the online experience contrasts sharply with the hierarchical institutional forms that many Koreans are faced with offline. Similarly, the ability to speak up and express one's opinions ("just my 2 cents" as some online are fond of saying) is a welcome change from other aspects of Korean life and experience. Discussion and debate online have functioned as catalysts for offline organization and demonstrations. Describing the rich array of online forms, Chang Woo-young writes:

"[T]he progressive camp has taken initiatives in the cyberspace by using various types of online media including PC communication communities, closed user groups (CUGs), independent Internet newspapers, political webzines, portal sites for social movements, fan clubs sites of political leaders, and 'anti' sites (Chang Woo-young, 2005a)

Yet when one reads analyses of what is happening in terms of democratization in Korea, the focus is most often on the weakness of the political party structures, or the danger of a strong civil society developing without an adequate institutional structure or that online users are interfering with the privacy of users. On the surface there seems to be little attention to the online new democratic processes and the potential they represent for creating new democratic forms like those Markoff predicts will be on the horizon.

AngMA's post, however, is a helpful example of the netizen's ability to breach the boundary between the concerns of the individual netizen and the decisions that are being made that will affect one's life. By his posts, AngMA was able to have an impact on those decisions in a way not otherwise usually possible.

Similarly, both OhmyNews and Nosamo, as hybrid online and offline forms, provide a means for netizens to be part of changing institutional forms. South Korea, as an example of a society where there is much broadband access, is a place where these new forms can be explored and lessons learned about their nature and potential for

crafting new democratic processes. Such lessons can be helpful elsewhere if the details are known and lessons shared.

The form of Nosamo is a form to be understood for those who are interested in the processes of democracy, rather than the call to create in Korea a U.S. style political party, as I have seen referred to in the democratization literature about South Korea. Similarly, the processes pioneered by OhmyNews and other online media offer a means of expanding the news and views that defines our society. Yet these are hybrid forms, which need to be documented and analyzed, not ignored or blindly admired.

More specifically, the phenomenon of the netizen, which my co-author Michael Hauben observed online in 1992-1993 and which he provided with a consciousness as a significant new identity, is a phenomenon being developed further in Korea. It is a worthy subject of study to understand whether and how the netizen in Korea is a manifestation of characteristics similar to those Hauben observed in his research in the early 1990s. (See Hauben and Hauben, "Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet" and also "The Rise of Netizen Democracy" A case study of netizens' impact on democracy in South Korea")

VIII

Carothers' advice to look at "what is happening politically" when trying to understand the experience in a newly democratizing country like South Korea helps to remove the filters from one's glasses so that one can see new and previously unknown developments.

Something fundamental occurred during the 2002 presidential campaign in South Korea. Citizens found a way to turn the election campaign into a citizens' event. They became actively involved in debating and exploring the issues that were raised. It wasn't only the candidates or the elites and their newspapers that participated in the debates. To the contrary, articles in the conservative print media about the Roh candidacy were subjected to scrutiny, and citizens could respond in both discussion forums and online newspapers. Citizens had reclaimed their role as participants in the election process, rather than being resigned to the status of passive observers. The citizenry also became watchdogs of the process, as well as participants. They were able to contribute to and spread the discussion among other citizens.

It is reported that 70% of the South Korean population has access to high speed Internet. Thus a far larger percentage of the Korean population can contribute online to the discussion of politics than the limited number of writers who can be published in the conservative print media. Also the Internet provides a much broader range of views and discussion on various issues than any print media can make available. Even if one doesn't choose to contribute articles and discussion to be available online, one can read a much broader range of viewpoints than one can read in the print media. From the controversy of ideas that developed during the 2002 election campaign, netizens were able to develop a more broad based perspective of the salient issues.

Carothers refers to an article by Dankwart Rustow "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" which was published in 1970, as a seminal article in the early academic transition literature. (Carothers, 2002: 8) In this article, Rustow raises the question "What conditions make democracy possible and what conditions make it thrive?" This, I want to argue is a critical question for social scientists and other researchers who are trying to develop a theoretical analysis of democracy. Rustow begins a process of exploring the genesis of a democratic society by a study of the origins and development of democratization in Turkey and in Sweden. Rustow's conclusion is that democratization is not about establishing maximum "consensus" but rather about creating an environment where dissention thrives. (Rustow 1970: 363) The 2002 presidential campaign in South Korea was an important development in the democratization of Korea. Out of the debate and dissention, emerged a broader form of public opinion than hitherto available in Korea. It is therefore an experience that merits serious attention from the community of scholars interested in democratization.

Notes

1. Power to the People: The report of Power: an independent inquiry into Britain's democracy. London, 2006
<http://www.powerinquiry.org/report/index.php>

2. He also writes:

"Confronted with the initial parts of the third wave -- democratization in Southern Europe, Latin America, and a few countries in Asia (especially the Philippines) -- the U.S. democracy community rapidly embraced an analytic model of democratic transition. It was derived principally from their own interpretation of the patterns of democratic change taking place, but also to a lesser extent from the early works of the emergent academic field of 'transitology,' above all the seminal work of Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter." (Carothers 2002: 6)

3. See Carothers 2002, p. 14-17. He lists what he proposes are five false assumptions of the 'transition paradigm'. These assumptions briefly are:

1. That there was a predictable democratization script that could be expected to unfold.
2. That one could assume there would be a particular sequence of stages.
3. That elections would not only provide legitimacy for government officials, but also would "continuously deepen political participation and accountability." (Carothers, p. 15)
4. That legacies from the autocratic period would not affect the democratization process.
5. That the previous power holders would not lock in the power and resources they held.

4. Committee to Protect Journalists Country Report, December 31, 1998.

5. Describing the media in 1995, Steinberg writes:

"Although the media may seem to be extremely critical of an administration, excessive negative coverage more likely represents a feeding frenzy after administrative anomalies have already been brought to light. There is little investigative reporting. Through advertising which now accounts for about 90 percent of press revenue, as well as some important press ownership, the chaebol play an inordinately large role in how the press respond to political issues. (p. 34 of 40)

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Candlelight 2008 and the 15th Anniversary of the

‘Net and Netizens’

Netizen Journalism as Watchdog Journalism

by Ronda Hauben

Abstract

In his pioneering research about the impact of the Internet, Michael Hauben recognized that the participatory nature of the Net made possible a new form of citizenship, a non geographic form. He called people who were developing this new form of citizenship, netizens. (1)

What would be the impact of this new phenomenon? Hauben investigated several areas where the impact of this phenomenon was particularly striking. One of these areas was journalism. What impact would this new form of non geographic citizenship, would netizens have on news media? Would netizens make possible a new form of journalism? The Net “gives the power of the reporter to the Netizen” Hauben wrote. (2)

This article explores the nature of what this power is. It considers the long desired goal for the press to act as a watchdog to challenge the abuse of power. During the more than 100 days of protest from May through August netizens in South Korea acted to make such a press? In this article, the events of Candlelight 2008, particularly the events of June 11 are examined to consider what can be learned from the experience of Candlelight 2008.

[This is an edited version of a talk given in Copenhagen on 10-17-08 at the 9th annual conference of the Association of Internet Researchers (The tag for the conference is IR9.0)]

The year 2008 marked the 15th anniversary of the publication of the article “the Net and Netizens” by Michael Hauben on the Internet in the summer of 1993.(3) Hauben posted this article in four parts because it was fairly long. It was based on pioneering research he had done about impact of the Internet by asking online users questions about how they were using the Net in that period of the early 1990s. Also at

the time there was some use of the term net.citizen on the net. Hauben contracted the term net.citizen into the term netizen. Based on the responses, he received, Hauben put together a paper defining a new conceptual phenomenon he called the netizen.

The article summarizing his research was spread around the Net by the Usenet software network and by people forwarding it to each other via email. People embraced the concept of netizen to describe the social and political phenomenon that Michael had identified. (4) Netizen is not a passive identity. Rather a netizen is an active participant in the affairs of the Net and ultimately of the world. Identifying as a netizen has become an identity people online have embraced. They consider themselves to be netizens.

In a recent book by Mark Poster, netizen was described as a political concept. (5) The impression is given that the concept showed up on the Net more or less spontaneously. This is not accurate. Before Hauben's work, the word netizen was rarely if ever used. After the wide online circulation of the article, the use of the concept netizen became increasingly common. It was a process of initial online research, of summarizing the research, of analyzing it, and then putting the research back online and people embracing it. This was the process by which the foundation for the concept of netizen was established.

The early 1990s was also a time when the privatization of the Internet was being actively promoted by commercial interests. Spreading the consciousness of one self as a netizen became part of the fight defending the public essence of the Net from the growing power of commercial interests over the affairs of the Internet. An understanding of the origin and development of the concept of netizen has in various ways been obscured by those forces who wanted to promote the commercial domination of the Internet.

In the "Net and Netizens," Hauben wrote that the Net represents a significant new development. "We are seeing a revitalization of society," he explained. "The frameworks are being redesigned from the bottom up. A new, more democratic world is becoming possible." This new world had a number of characteristics that he outlined. He described a situation where "the old model of distribution of information from the central Network Broadcasting Company is being questioned and challenged. The top-down model of information being distributed by a few for mass consumption is no longer the only news."(6)

Hauben observed, "people now have the ability to broadcast their observations or questions around the world and have other people respond."

The computer networks, he wrote, "form a new grassroots connection that

allows excluded sections of society to have a voice. This new medium is unprecedented. Previous grassroots media have existed for much smaller groups of people ..”

The Net, Hauben argued, was providing netizens with the ability to create the content and to set the agenda for what is to be discussed. Thus netizens had the power to not only determine the content for discussion forums but also to design the forms that online discussions take.

Hauben wrote elsewhere that in its simplest form the power of netizens to determine the form and content of online discussion characterizes democracy, making the net and netizens a significant model for a democratic society. He challenged the claim that elections are the essence of democracy, since elections merely allow citizens to vote on candidates once every few years. Democracy, Hauben argued requires the active participation of the populace and it is a process where their discussion and debate can have some effect on the decisions made by government. That is what Hauben proposed to be a more appropriate a model of democracy.

Another one of the earliest articles Hauben circulated online was about James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill. In 1825, James Mill wrote an Encyclopedia article about the Freedom of the Press. Mill wrote that government officials are likely to be corrupt. These officials are put in a situation where they have power. Therefore a means is needed to monitor and contain their use of this power. Mill suggested society needs a press that functions as a watchdog to oversee the use of power by government officials. The Net, Hauben wrote, makes such a watchdog possible.

The “Net and Netizens” was first posted online in 1993. The conceptual understanding it proposed at that time in the early 1990s was something new. The question to be raised is: How accurate was Hauben’s assessment of the potential of the Net and of the netizen to make a more democratic world possible?

In order to answer this question, it is helpful to look at recent political developments in South Korea, because netizens in South Korea have been at the forefront of the struggle to explore the potential of the Internet and the netizen to create a more democratic society.

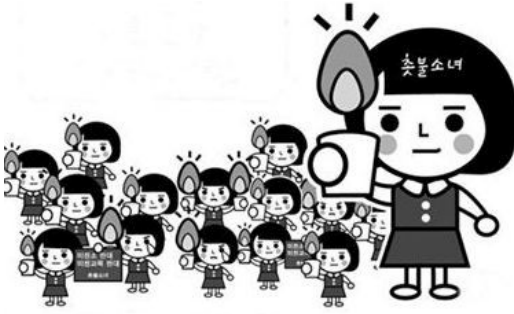
In 2003 an article in the Financial Times reported that the new South Korean President had been elected by netizens.

It described the election of 2002. The actions of netizens during this election made it possible for the president to be someone from outside the political establishment. Roh Moo-hyun was elected for a five year term as the President of

South Korea. (7) Roh had run on a platform supporting participatory democracy.

In 2004 the National Assembly tried to impeach him and netizens took up the fight against the attempted impeachment. One of the means of fighting for democracy in South Korea are candlelight demonstrations. An activist in South Korea explained that one of the sources of inspiration for candlelight demonstrations in South Korea were the candlelight demonstrations in Leipzig, Germany that helped to reunite Germany in 1989.(8)

In 2008, there were over 100 days of candlelight demonstrations in South Korea. The first of these demonstrations was held on May 2, 2008.(9)



Candlegirl and Her
Army @Nanum
Munhwa

The first candlelight demonstration on May 2 was the result of online discussion and efforts by netizens on discussion groups, which on the Korean Internet are called cafes. Realizing the concern expressed in online discussion about what was happening in South Korea, middle and high school students used cell phones and fan websites to announce what became the first major candlelight demonstration of May 2008.

The demonstration was part of an expression of popular frustration with the new South Korean President Lee Myung-bak. Lee Myung-bak, a conservative candidate, had won the presidential election in December 2007. During this election, Internet posts about the candidates by netizens were subjected to censorship, with many of the posts being removed on the order of the government, and over 1000 netizens receiving summons to report to police stations in South Korea to be penalized for their posts. (10) This was part of a harsh censorship of online activity by netizens trying to participate in the 2007 election campaign carried out by the South Korean government from June 2007-December 2007. Then in April 2008, Lee Myung-bak came to the U.S. and signed an agreement with George Bush. The agreement ended the former restrictions on the export of U.S. beef to South Korea. It eliminated the regulations that existed to provide precautions with regard to the danger of mad cow disease or other health concerns related to beef. Virtually all the restrictions were to be removed.(11)

Middle school and high school students felt the change in regulations on beef would add to their health concerns, along with their concern with other plans the Lee Myung-bak administration had announced to make unpopular changes in the laws in South Korea. Also there was an impeachment petition being circulated online. A number of people in South Korea felt that the new president and his proposed program would take South Korea back to its autocratic past. The candlelight demonstrations were a sign that many in South Korea saw the actions of the new president as a difficult problem for their country.

In August Oh Yeon-ho, the CEO and founder of the Internet newspaper *OhmyNews* gave

a talk in the U.S. about the candlelight 2008 demonstrations. *OhmyNews* which was started in 2000, as an internet newspaper pioneered a number of new forms in its commitment to be a 21st century newspaper.(12)

The Korean edition of *OhmyNews* combines articles submitted by its regular staff with those submitted by volunteer correspondents from the Korean-speaking population at home and abroad. The staff fact checks the articles and then decides which will be put on the OhmyNews front page. The Korean edition has a regular staff. The smaller English language edition of the newspaper known as OhmyNews International has only a very minimal staff and its edition is mainly based on contributions of articles by people. The Korean edition of OhmyNews is a major newspaper in South Korea.

There's been a very proud tradition in South Korea of protest and sacrifice. In 1987 through large protests the South Korean people ended the military dictatorship which had governed their country. But only in the last 10 years had people felt that they had some minimal level of democracy. In his talk, Oh Yeon-ho explained that people had committed themselves to using the Internet to try to guarantee and spread that democracy.

OhmyNews had played an important role in the 2008 demonstrations. One of OhmyNews's important contributions was to start OhmyTV. Because of OhmyTV, people around the world were able to watch the demonstrations in South Korea. Even if one didn't speak Korean, one could have a good idea of what was going on in the demonstrations by watching OhmyTV. At times, OhmyNews had 24 hour coverage. Also there were articles and photos about the candlelight demonstration. There were articles covering the Candlelight in the English edition of OhmyNews, some of which were translated from the Korean edition of the newspaper.

Though netizen is not a Korean word, it has been adopted in Korea. Some online users refer to the word netizen to describe when they are active defending democracy using the Internet. Netizens in South Korea took onto broadcast whatever was going on. They would use text messages sent via their cell phones or their laptops. They would discuss what was happening online.

A report on the demonstrations by France24 demonstrated this consciousness of oneself as a netizen. The reporter interviews someone she calls a netizen with his laptop. Even when the police were using water cannons attacking the demonstrators, one could see some netizens with plastic over their laptops trying to film what was going on. People took their cameras, their cellphones and in any way they could, would broadcast on the Internet what was happening. They would get broadcasts back from other people at other areas of the demonstrations. Along with the OhmyTV broadcasts, there were many other sources of broadcasts, as for example via the Korean online video portal Afreeca or via YouTube. People who were not at the demonstration would discuss what they saw and interact with the demonstrators via their computers or cellphones. As one person explained, netizens could go with their laptops to the demonstration. They could be at the demonstration and be online at the same time. So these two experiences really came together

in a lot of ways for a number of people during these demonstrations.

Some netizens emphasized that the Candlelight 2008 demonstrations were different from the prior tradition of demonstrations. In South Korea, there is a tradition of militant demonstrations in the struggle for democracy. The demonstrations in 2008, however, were festivals. There were people of all ages participating. There were men, women, and children at the demonstrations. People would bring their instruments. For example, in the middle of the police attacking protesters at one of the demonstrations, some people began to play their accordions. At other times, there would be singing. There would be dancing. There was debating. There was a free speech stage set up. People would line up for a chance to speak. Others would listen and react to the speakers. And the demonstrators posted their articles, photos and videos on the Internet, so that they became the press. Hence they were no longer dependent on how their demonstrations were reported in the traditional media.

In order to understand what happened during Candlelight 2008, it is crucial to recognize that South Korea is advanced in terms of the Internet.

South Korea is among the most advanced nations having the highest number of people connected with broadband access. What has happened in South Korea presents a glimpse into the future demonstrating what is possible when a large number of people in a country have access to high speed broadband connectivity.

If the Internet can spread widely and if there's inexpensive wireless available, people can have access to the internet and to write, to share their videos, and to carry on discussions about what is happening in the world. This form of broad access can function as a watchdog over government officials. This was demonstrated at times during the demonstrations when netizens filmed or took photographs of the actions of the police. These films or photos at times were a protection for people from the arbitrary actions of the police.

A significant set of events demonstrating the power of the Internet to make possible a more participatory democracy occurred during the demonstration that took place in Seoul on June 10 and continued into the early hours of June 11. A very big demonstration was planned for June 10th, to celebrate the victory twenty-one years earlier of South Koreans over the military government in South Korea in June 1987. Some estimate as many as 600,000 to 700,000 people participated in the demonstration in Seoul on June 10, with over one million people participating around the country. To prepare for the demonstration, the government created a blockade of the president's house, which is called the Blue House, to keep the demonstrators from marching to the Blue House. The police put up barriers. These were shipping containers, filled them with sand so they are said to have weighed 40 tons each. They put grease on them to prevent people climbing over the blockade.

Netizens named this structure, "Myung-bak's castle". They made a wikipedia entry for



this as a landmark of Seoul. They decorated the landmark with their posters.

This is a photo of what happened later, after the June 10 demonstration, from 12 midnight on June 11 until 5:30 am. On one side of the barrier is the crowd of people discussing what should they do about the barriers.

On the other side of the shipping containers, there are buses filled with police inside and outside guarding the President's house.

Someone brought blocks of styrofoam to the demonstration area, making it possible to create a structure to breach the shipping container barricade. After the main demonstration was over in the early morning hours of June 11, a discussion was carried out by the demonstrators debating what to do about the barrier. Some argued that the demonstrators should go over the barricade. Others argued that this was too dangerous, especially given the candles and the inflammability of the Styrofoam and the grease on the barricades. The discussion continued for 5-1/2 hours, with people lining up on both sides of the debate. Through the discussion people decided not to go over the barricade. Instead several people with their banners went up on the barricade to show that they could have gone over it if they wanted to but that they had decided not to.

The photo presents the contrast between what's supposed to be democracy, which is the side of the barricade is the area filled with police protecting the President from communicating with the people. On the other side of the barricade were the people holding a serious discussion and deciding how to resolve a difficult difference of opinion.

On this side of the barricade, the people communicated with each other, demonstrating the power and generative nature of democracy. People online wrote about how important it was to them, to see that there could be a discussion where people had real differences which they could resolve. This was significant in two ways:

First, they figured out how to resolve the differences to come to a decision among all of them.

Second, they cooperatively determined how to construct a structure that would enable them to carry out their decision. In this example, the potential to generate a form and content was transferred from the online world to the demonstration area.



The discussion and decisions carried out on June 11 were by a combination of people acting as netizens and as citizens. What they did, I want to propose, represents an important achievement and serves as a fitting celebration of the 15th anniversary of the publication online of the “Net and Netizens”.

Notes

(1) See for example, Michael Hauben and Ronda Hauben, “Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet”, IEEE Computer Society, Los Alamitos, CA, 1997. There is an online version of the book at:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook>

(2) Michael Hauben, “The Effect of the Net on the Professional News Media”, in “Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet”,. There is an online version of the book at: <http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook>

3) The “Net and Netizens” is the first chapter of the book “Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet”. There is an online version of the book at:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook/>

4) “Socially” is used here because the concept of netizen refers to having a concern for the wellbeing of others, not only for one’s own concerns and interests.

5) Mark Poster, “Information Please: Culture and Politics in the Age of Digital Machines”, Durham, NC, 2006, p. 78.

6) For example, there was difficulty getting the book “Netizens” published and distributed widely.

(7) Ronda Hauben, “Online Grassroots Journalism and Participatory Democracy in South Korea,” in Korea Yearbook 2007, edited by Rudiger Frank, James E. Hoare, Patrick Kollner, and Susan Parnes, Brill, Leiden, 2008, p.61-82.

(8) Interview with Lee Tae-ho of PSPD, 18 July 2006.

(9) See the description of how the May 2, 2008 demonstration was self-organized in the film:

(10) Ronda Hauben, “Netizens Censored in South Korean Presidential Election, OhmyNews International, December 25, 2007.

http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=381313&rel_no=1

(11) Ronda Hauben, "Candlelight 2008 and Behind the Scenes in the Beef Deal: the Role of the OIE in Changing the Category of US Beef in South Korea", OhmyNews International, May 6, 2009. http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=385186&rel_no=1

12) Online Grassroots Journalism and Participatory Democracy in South Korea, p. 64-67.

[Editor's Note: Also in celebration of the 15th Anniversary of the print edition of *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet*, Ronda Hauben made the following presentation at the Hope Institute in Seoul South Korea on Aug 10, 2012.]

Korea and the Era of the Netizen

by Ronda
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Part I – Introduction

In my talk today I want to provide some background to how the concept of the netizen came to be recognized and how the understanding and practice of netizenship has spread around the world.

Then I want to focus on developments by netizens in South Korea and try to begin a discussion of the significance of this development and its implications for the future of democracy.

Fifteen years ago, on May 1, 1997, the print edition of the book *Netizens* was published in English. Later that year, in October, a Japanese translation of the book was published. *Netizens* was the first book to recognize that along with the development of the Internet, a new form of citizenship had emerged. This is a form of citizenship that has developed based on the broader forms of political participation made possible by the Net.

The book *Netizens* documents the emergence of this new political identity. It also explores the potential for how netizens will change the social structures and institutions of our society.

A recent article in the Reader's Opinion section of the *Times of India* newspaper referred to a paper I wrote about South Korean netizens in 2006. Quoting my paper, the *Times of India* article said, "Not only is the Internet a laboratory for democracy, but the scale of participation and contribution is unprecedented. Online discussion makes it possible for netizens to become active individuals and group actors in social and political affairs. The Internet makes it possible for netizens to speak out independently of institutions or officials."

The writer in the *Times of India* article pointed to the growing number of netizens in China and India and the large proportion of the population in South Korea who are connected to the Internet.

"Will it evolve into a 5th estate?" the article asks, contrasting netizens' discussion online with the power of the 4th estate, which is the mainstream media.

"Will social and political discussion in social media grow into deliberation?" asks Vinay Kamat, the author of this article, "Will opinions expressed be merely 'rabble rousing' or will they be 'reflective' instead of 'impulsive'?" Both South Korea and China are places where the role of netizens is important in building more democratic structures for society. South Korea appears to be more advanced in grassroots efforts to create examples of netizen forms for a more participatory decision making process. But China is also a place where there are significant developments because of the Internet and netizens.

Later in my talk I will refer to Chinese netizen developments, but first I want to look at the work that the co-author of the netizens book Michael Hauben did to develop and spread an understanding of netizens. Then I want to look at some of the netizen achievements I have observed in South Korea.

Part II – About

Netizens First, some background.

In 1992-1993, Michael Hauben, then a college student who had gotten access to the Net, wondered what the impact of the Net would be.

He decided to do his research using the Net itself. He sent out several sets of questions and received many responses. Studying the responses, he realized something new was developing, something not expected. What was developing was a sense among many of the people who wrote him that the Internet was making a difference in their lives and that the communication it made possible with others around the world was important.

Michael discovered that there were users online who not only cared for how the Internet could help them with

their purposes, but who wanted the Internet to continue to spread and to thrive so that more and more people around the world would have access to it.

He had seen the word 'net.citizen' referred to online. Thinking about the social concern he had found among those who wrote him, and about the non-geographical character of a net based form of citizenship, he contracted 'net.citizen' into the word 'netizen'. Netizen has come to reflect the online social identity he discovered doing his research.

Here is an excerpt from one of the questions he posted on line during this period in the early 1990s when the Internet was just spreading and becoming more widely available: "Looking for Exciting Uses of the Net"

"...I would like to know about people's uses of the network(s) that have been especially interesting, valuable and/or exciting. I want to hear about people's delights and also disappointments."

Gathering all the replies he had received, he wrote a paper describing his research. The paper was titled, "The Net and Netizens: The Impact the Net has on People's Lives." This research was done in 1992-1993. At that time, the Internet was spreading to countries and networks around the world.

He posted his paper on July 6, 1993 on several of the discussion forums known as Usenet and on several Internet mailing lists. It was posted in four parts under the title "Common Sense: The Net and Netizens: the Impact the Net is having on people's lives." People around the world found his article and helped to spread it to others. The term netizen quickly spread, not only in the online world, but soon it was appearing in newspapers and other publications offline.

This paper initiated the conscious awareness of netizenship as a new form of citizenship.

The concept and consciousness of oneself as a netizen has continued to spread around the world.

In a talk he gave in Japan in 1995, Michael explained that there were two uses of the word netizen that had developed:

Netizens are not just anyone who comes online. Netizens are especially not people who come online for individual gain or profit. They are not people who come to the Net thinking it is a service. Rather they are people who understand it takes effort and action on each and everyone's part to make the Net a regenerative and vibrant community and resource. Netizens are people who decide to devote time and effort to making the Net, this new part of our world, a better place. (Hypernetwork '95 Beppu Bay Conference) This usage of netizens is the usage I am referring to in my talk today as well.

"The Net and Netizens" was but one of a number of articles Michael wrote about the research he was doing about the Net.

During this period I collaborated with Michael, also doing research and writing. Our different articles were often based on what we had learned from people online and which we subsequently posted online.

In January 1994 we collected our papers into an online book we titled *Netizens and the Wonderful World of the Net*, or in its shortened title "The Netizens Netbook."

In 1997 a second version of the book was published in a print edition titled *Netizens: On the History and Impact of Usenet and the Internet* in English in May, and then in a Japanese edition in October.

Among the responses Michael had received to his work was one from a professor in Japan, Shumpei Kumon. The professor wrote: "I am a social scientist in Japan writing on the information revolution and information oriented civilization. Since I came across the term 'netizen' about a year ago, I have been fascinated with this idea." Professor Kumon wrote, "It seems that the age of not only the technological understanding but, also political-socio-revolution is coming, comparable to the citizen's revolution in the past. I would very much like to do a book on that theme."

When Professor Kumon's book on netizens was published in Japanese, its title in English was *The Age of Netizens*. The book begins with a chapter by Michael on the birth of the netizen.

In the 1992-1994 period, a significant critique of the professional news media was developing among netizens. In the chapter of the *Netizens* book, "The Effect of the Net on the Professional News Media," there are a number of observations made by people online who recognize that this new media makes possible the participation of a broader set of people in reporting the news and that the range of news is also considerably expanded.

Part III – Some Examples of New Forms of Netizens Reporting the News

In order to consider in more concrete terms the new form of citizenship and the new form of media that the Internet makes possible, I want to describe some examples drawn mainly from South Korea (though there are other examples from China, and other countries that it would be valuable to discuss during the question period if we have

time.)

1) South Korea and the Netizens Movement

My first experience with netizens in South Korea was in 2003 when I saw an article in the *Financial Times* that the new president of South Korea at the time, Roh Moo-hyun, had been elected by the Netizens.

This was, as you can imagine a very striking news article for me to find, not previously knowing anything about the struggles of the netizens in South Korea. But subsequently I learned that the Netizens book was known by several in the academic community. For example, Professor Han Sang-jin of Seoul National University (SNU) told me he used the book in a class at SNU. Professor Kang Myung-koo also of SNU learned of the book from the Japanese edition and it had an influence on his thinking, and Professor Yun Yeon-min of Hanyang University learned of the book from its online edition, and it inspired him to write his early book about South Korean networking titled "A Theory of Electronic Space: A Sociological Exploration of Computer Networks" (Seoul: Jeonyewon).

When during a trip to Seoul in 2005, I asked a number of different people that I met if they are netizens. They all responded "yes" or "I hope so."

There have been a number of important netizen developments in Korea. These include:

- 1) Helping to build what became large candlelight demonstrations against the agreement governing the relations between the U.S. government and South Korea. This agreement is known as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA for short) in Nov., 2002.
- 2) Helping to build the campaign for the presidency of South Korea for a political outsider Roh Moo-hyun in Nov-Dec 2002.
- 3) Helping to create a climate favorable to the development of online publications.

In 2002 the *Sisa Journal*, a Korean weekly, named 'Netizens' as the person of the year. This represented a rare recognition at the time of a new and significant phenomenon that is represented by the emergence and development of the netizen.

A subsequent example demonstrating how netizens have been able to have an impact on science policy is the case involving the stem cell scientist Hwangwoo-suk in South Korea. Hwang had been considered a top Korean scientist and his scientific achievements were celebrated by the Korean government. Netizens in South Korea were able to demonstrate that Hwang had doctored photographs of his research to present fraudulent results.

Lee Myung-bak won the South Korean presidency in 2007. In April 2008, he went to the U.S. and agreed to a beef agreement ending the former restrictions on the import of U.S. beef into South Korea.

Starting on May 2 there were 106 days of candlelight demonstrations in South Korea protesting the administration of Lee Myung-bak and calling for his impeachment. (I was in South Korea when the first candlelight demonstration occurred on May 2 but wasn't able to go to it.)

One of the most remarkable events of the 2008 Candlelight demonstrations occurred on June 10-11. A big demonstration was planned for June 10 to celebrate the victory over the military government in South Korea in June 1987 that led to direct popular election of the ROK president.

To try to keep the demonstrators from marching on the Blue House, the presidential residence, the Lee Myung-bak administration set up shipping containers as barriers and filled them with sand. Then they were covered with grease so that people would not be able to climb over them.

Netizens named these structures the Lee Myung-bak castle. They made a Wikipedia entry for it as a landmark of Seoul. They decorated this new landmark of Seoul with graffiti.

On the other side of the shipping containers there were buses filled with police inside and outside the buses, guarding the president's house.

Blocks of styrofoam were used at the demonstration to build a structure to be able to go over the police barricade.

There was a 5-1/2 hour discussion with people supporting the different positions in the debate. Through the discussion people decided not to go over the barricade for a number of reasons. Many people felt it was too dangerous to go over it. Instead several people with their banners went up on the barricade.

The people who went up on it did so to show that they could have gone over it if they wanted to, but that it had been decided not to.

The situation presented the contrast between what is supposed to be democracy, which is the side of the barricade protecting the President from communicating with the people. And what is democracy, which is the people communicating with each other on the other side of the barricade. People online wrote how important this all was to them, to see that there could be a discussion where people who had real differences came to a decision taking those differences into account.

This was significant, I feel, in two ways. First they figured out how to resolve their differences to come to a decision. Second they cooperatively determined how to construct a structure that would enable them to carry out their decision. They took what they could do online and they did it offline.

The discussion and decisions carried out on June 11 were by a combination of people acting as netizens and as citizens. What they did, I want to propose, represents an important achievement.

There is one other netizen development that I want to mention in this talk.

This is the situation that happened with respect to the South Korean war ship Cheonan in 2010. The ship broke in two and sank on March 26, 2010. At the time, it had been involved in naval exercises with the U.S. military in an area of the West Sea/Yellow Sea between North Korea and China. This is a situation that soon became the subject of much discussion among netizens.

Initially the South Korean government and the U.S. government said there was no indication that North Korea was involved. Then at a press conference held on May 20, 2010 in Seoul, the South Korean government claimed that a torpedo fired by a North Korean submarine had exploded in the water near the Cheonan, causing a pressure wave that was responsible for the sinking. Many criticisms were raised about this scenario.

First, there is no direct evidence of any North Korean submarine in the vicinity of the Cheonan. Nor is there any evidence that any torpedo was actually fired causing the pressure wave phenomenon. Hence there was no actual evidence that could be presented in court of law to support the South Korean government's claims.

In fact, if this claim of a pressure wave phenomenon were true even those involved in the investigation would have to acknowledge that this would be the first time such an action was used in actual fighting.

What I am interested in, however, is how netizens responded to this situation.

What is unusual and something I find especially interesting is that netizens who live in different countries and speak different languages took up to critique the claims of the South Korean government about the cause of the sinking of the Cheonan. It appears, also, that such netizen activity had an important effect on the international community. And it appears to have acted as a catalyst affecting the actions of the UN Security Council in its treatment of the Cheonan dispute.

Such activity is the basis for what I refer to as a new form of news.

There were substantial analyses by NGO's like Spark, PSPD, Peaceboat and others posted online in English as well as Korean. These were distributed widely online.

There were also discussions and critiques at American, Japanese and Chinese websites that I saw when searching online during the period that the Security Council was discussing the Cheonan incident.

One example of such a critique was by an American blogger, Scott Creighton, who uses the pen name Willy Loman. He wrote a post titled, "The Sinking of the Cheonan: We are being lied to."

In a post he titled "A Perfect Match?," he showed that there was a discrepancy between the diagram displayed at the press conference held by the South Korean government and the torpedo part that the South Korean government claimed it had found near where the ship sank.

The South Korean government claimed that the diagram was from a North Korean catalogue offering this as proof that the torpedo part was of North Korean origin.

On his blog, Loman showed how the diagram was of a torpedo different from the part of the torpedo the South Korean government had put on display. The diagram was of the PT97W torpedo, while the part of the torpedo on display was of the CHT-02D torpedo.

Much discussion followed this post on Loman's blog, both from Americans and also from Koreans. At first the South Korean government denied these claims. But three weeks later in response to a question from a journalist, the government acknowledged that Loman was right.

In a post titled "Thanks to Valuable Input" Loman wrote: "Over 100,000 viewers read the article and it was republished on dozens of sites all across the world (and even translated). A South Korean MSM outlet even posted our diagram depicting glaring discrepancies between the evidence and the drawing of the CHT-02D torpedo.... But what we had, was literally thousands of people across the world committed to the truth...." It was signed Willy Loman.

Such online discussion and posts appeared to have acted as a catalyst to encourage the UNSC to act in a neutral way toward the two Koreas, with the Security Council giving time to hear from both sides of the dispute and encouraging the two Koreas to settle the dispute peacefully. A Presidential statement issued by the Council on July 9, 2010 took a balanced view, stating the different views of both sides, but without assigning blame to anyone.

Part IV – Implications

Describing the ability of citizens to discuss issues online on the Chinese Internet, an Australian researcher, Haiqing Yu, a researcher at the University of Melbourne, realized that there was an important phenomenon developing among some of the people online in China who identified as netizens. They were exploring how the Internet could help them to contribute to their society.

She explains in her book *From Active Audience to Media Citizenship* that there is a new manifestation of what it means to be a citizen and to express one's citizenship developing on the Internet, that it is a more mobile and flexible manifestation than previously. (p. 307)

She maintains that the virtual space of the net has become a public forum that makes it possible for ordinary people to take part in the traditional media's agenda setting and government decisionmaking and law-making functions. Haiqing Yu writes, "Citizenship is not an abstract concept discussed in ivory towers among elite intellectuals. It is a mediated social reality where ordinary people can act as citizens of a nation when they use the Net to talk, discuss, petition and protest."

In a similar observation, Michael Hauben noted that, "The collective body of people assisted by Net software, has grown larger than any individual newspaper."

The implication from these two different observations is that a new form of global media and a new form of citizenship are developing. Instead of the traditional news reporting which is actually the news of a certain set of elite economic and political interests, there is the ability developing among netizens to have real debate on issues on the Net. This new media includes the participation of a broader set of people who hold a wider more encompassing set of diverse perspectives.

Actually the ability to have this broader set of perspectives that the Net makes possible is helping to create a new media and a new role for the citizen. These are gradually supplanting the traditional forms of journalism and of citizenship.

Part V – Conclusion

I want to point to an analysis of the netizen by media historian Mark Poster in his book *Information Please*. The book considers the effect of globalization on the citizen and argues that with globalization the citizen loses the power to be able to have any influence on government officials. The concept of the netizen, however, intrigues Poster, as he sees in this concept the potential to forge a new identity that is capable of opposing and challenging the harmful effects of globalization.

Poster explains, "This new phenomena will likely change the relation of forces around the globe. In such an eventuality, the figure of the netizen might serve as the critical concept in the politics of globalization."

I want to support Poster's argument but I propose our time can best be described as the Era of the Netizen. The ability of the netizen to focus on communication and participation to affect the institutions of the society, is a critical characteristic of this new Era.

In his article comparing the impact of the Net on our society, with the impact of the printing press to bring revolutionary changes to the society after it was introduced, Michael wrote, "The Net has opened a channel for talking to the whole world to an even wider set of people than did printed books."

In conclusion, considering the examples of the response of netizens to the problems raised by the investigation of the Cheonan incident, I want to propose that the importance of the collaborative response of netizens supporting each other from diverse countries and cultures is but a prelude to the potential of netizens around the world in different countries to work together across national borders to solve the problems of our times.

Thank you for your attention and we welcome your questions and comments.