

From Individual Social Responsibility  
to a collective Social Responsibility

The Role of alternative mass-media,  
South Korea

James NAM, YOUNG-JIN

The CEO of The Korean Civil Society Times

# 1. Neo-Liberalism & Globalization

- “Casino capitalism” has attacked the labor union, even the education including university and mass media.
- While the capital can enjoy cross national border without regulation, there are a log of immigration barriers against free move of human being/human power.
- Since the 90<sup>th</sup>, Pax America & IMF/WB/WTO have controlled all financial and trade – Global economic dictatorship

## 2. Globalization and Convergence of the mass media

- The development of the new information technology 'promote'/'facilitate' globalization through new media.
- The decline of printed matter such as the newspaper and magazines.
- The widespread of PC, cellular phone, homepages, blogs, UCC allow people to get easily engaged in the mass 'mobile' communication.
- The convergence of the mass media agencies such as the Timewarner merge the AOL.
- Rupert Murdoch prevail the international mass media market such as the Times Star TV.

## 2. Globalization and Convergence of the mass media

- Mobile mass communications take young people away from the newspapers.
- The young people get the news from the internet or mobile phone, but 'News' is not 'news' but a very short 'information'.
- Through new mobile news-network, it is very easy and fast to 'mobilize' or 'motivate' people to participate on certain political/social issues: People Power II in Philippines, Demonstration against US beef import in Korea etc.

## 2. Globalization and Convergence of the mass media regarding 'media industry'

- The converged big capital earn the money "one source and multi-use".
- Broken promise: 'diversity of source' through new media will guarantee the diversity of the public opinion - illusion
- In reality, what we have experience is that media industry has become bigger and bigger through M&A etc. Thus generally, only through big money from the political and economic power, we can produce cultural production to the world.

### 3. Neo Liberalism in Korea, the tragedy of the media democracy

- During 1998~2007, relatively progressive governments (under the President Kim Dae-jung and President Roh Mu-hyun) propelled equity policy in newspaper market share to prohibit the bargain sales as a bicycle gifts.
- But generally, there is trend that “Capitalism wins the democracy” in Korea including governments of Kim-daejung and Roh Mu-hyun. Money takes everything since the economic crisis in 1997. It is more difficult to criticize chaebol than the government.
- The ‘happy marriage among political power, economic power and media power’ is global phenomena : Berlusconi of Italy, President Bush of USA, Sarogi of France including Korea under Lee Myung Bak’s presidency since 2008

### 3. Neo Liberalism in Korea, the tragedy of the media democracy

- Lee Myung-Bak was chosen as a new president in 2008, who was the CEO of the HYUNDAI construction company.
- The biggest 3 papers such as the Chosun, the Jungang, the DongA daily are his biggest supporters and meritorious retainers during the presidential election.
- President Lee wants to give the TV networks to three newspaper companies as a bonus in the name of removing barriers or liberalizing media market. The conservative 3 papers have the 70% of circulations.

### 3. Neo Liberalism in Korea, the tragedy of the media democracy

- The ruling party and Lee's administration have tried to revise the media Law that prohibits newspaper company to hold the open-air TV channel.
- The opposition party and trade unions are opposing this enactment in order to protect the diversity of the public opinion.
- If new media law was passed, it's the tragedy of the media democracy. Minor papers and critical voices would be disappeared.

### 3. Neo Liberalism in Korea, the tragedy of the media democracy

- These newspapers denounced the last 10 years “the lost decade” especially to criticize ‘Sun-Shine Policy to the North Korea.
- The Prosecutor’s office under Lee government examined the former President Roh’s family and relatives, former ministers, some friends. They gave some scandals to insult the Mr. Roh ends with his suicide finally.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- “The elected king” despised the public opinion. Almost 70% of the people opposed the American beef import, and about 60% of the people opposed the new media law.
- This arbitrary behavior is permitted as “the president of economy”, the people expect him to recover the economic growth from his career “Hyundai Myth”.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- Under this civil dictator, the issue is again democratization.
- It is assumed that Koreans already accomplished the democracy, but it becomes the biggest issue – democracy “by the people”.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- Regarding procedure democracy, “Of the people” was accomplished “one man, one vote” since 1945.
- But “By the people” can be achieved only by the public opinion. Thus in order to bring the voice of the people, by the people, the role of mass media is most crucial as a watchdog for democracy as well as a vehicle to deliver voices of the people.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- In my experience, as the president of trade union in the Hanguok daily newspaper, we struggled for the independence of editing rights from CEO and political power by 6 days general strike.
- During the president of the Korea journalists' Association, I encouraged the journalists to write the articles free from political and economic power, and dedicate the peaceful change of the presidency.
- As the CEO of the weekly Media-today, I checked the connection between media company and the CHABUL.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- During last 10 years in Korea there were the blossoms of civil journalism such as the Ohmynews, the Pressian, the daily Surprise. But now these companies have the crisis to survive.
- “Go back to the original position”. Korean journalists endured hard times under military dictators during 60~80ties. We call the journalists of civic journals “guerilla reporters”.

## 4. Civic journalism could be the alternative media for democracy

- Mass media should not be a running dog accompanied with the power, pet dog by the power. Just should be “watchdog”.