



Development of Press Freedom in South Korea since Japanese Colonial Rule

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Abstract

The history of press freedom in South Korea (hereafter Korea) has been characterized by periods of chaos. The major media companies in Korea have written a history of shame. Since Japanese colonial rule, freedom of the press has been more often restricted than protected by the laws and policies. There have been four main features of press freedom since 1910: severe restriction during the Japanese colonial rule; experiencing freedom with unstable democracy under the American military rule and the First and Second republics; oppression of the military regimes; and the struggle with capital power since the advent of civilian government. Several decades of Japanese colonial rule, American military rule, and military dictators have influenced the Korean society and the media politically, economically, socially and culturally.

Keywords: Press freedom, Press history, Colonial rule, Restriction, Media laws and policies, Media control, Capital power, Clientelism

Introduction

The history of press freedom in Korea has been characterized by periods of chaos, and because of this governments have tried to control the media. Youm (1985, p. 3) argues, "Press freedom has continued to undergo the concomitant ups and downs of Korea's chaotic changes both socially and geopolitically." It is in this historical context that this study of press freedom takes place. Throughout several decades of Japanese colonial rule and military dictatorship, and the severe poverty and famine caused by the Korean War, press freedom was consistently viewed by the government as a potentially disruptive influence that the insecure nation could not support. With no historical tradition of democratic principles in Korea until 1987 the press did not have the opportunity to flourish according to the principles of freedom.

Press freedom is an essential element in democracy because it checks the working of a healthy society by providing essential information about the political workings of the community. However, the media, especially major conservative newspapers, do not play this role properly in Korea (Sa, 2009a). O-J. Kim (2004) argues, historically the media have shared political power in Korea. Many proprietors of large media companies or some journalists working for news outlets have colluded with the government of the day to produce news that reflects the needs and opinions of the political party in power. Therefore, many Korean people do not have much faith in the media. One of the reasons for the lack of media credibility for the Korean people perhaps goes back to the fact that major media companies played roles supporting the Japanese colonial rule and helping the dictators. Media academic Yung-Ho Im (2002, p. 191) argues that the major media companies in Korea have written a history of shame. Some media still continue to do this. The media have been in danger of losing credibility but they do not realize it because they have become player in political power (Kim, Y-H. 2004c). This kind of close relationship between political power and the media is named 'Kwonunyoohak (political power-press complex)' in Korean.

This politically aligned media cartel was threatened for a while under the liberal Dae-Jung Kim and Moo-Hyun Roh governments, which tried to change the relations (Kwonunyoohak) between the state (political power) and the media. Actually, it started in the post 1980s, after a new daily, the *Hankyoreh* was founded in 1988. However, this attempt faced significant opposition from the major conservative newspapers, which did not want to lose their hold on power. Some major newspapers without ever saying 'sorry' about their past behavior in relation to Japanese colonialism and

dictatorships still dominate the Korean society. Their conservative voice is stronger than liberal groups.

This paper explores how freedom of the press has developed in Korea since Japanese colonial rule. It discusses the chaotic and diverse history of the media in Korea, analyzing the influence of this history on the current situation of press freedom. It was structured around two issues that develop press freedom: concepts of press freedom and the history of the media since Japanese colonial rule. This paper is a literature review (Note 1). The data is comprised of secondary data such as books, journals and current news from online services in Korea.

1. Concepts of press freedom

The concept of press freedom is too complex to sum up simply. However, freedom of the press should be characterized by independence from internal or external factors and all other elements, which might make journalists hesitant in carrying out their media work. According to classical liberal approaches, "A truly free press would be free not just of state intervention but also of market forces and ownership ties and a host of other material bonds" (Berry et al., 1995, p. 22). Press freedom is freedom from all compulsions throughout the processes of press activities. The overall meaning of freedom in the media is that all processes of press activities should be conducted freely. This includes establishing a press company, gathering news, writing articles, editing news, publishing and distributing. However, in practice the media cannot be free from governmental, political or economic control (LaMay, 2007, p. 26). LaMay argues, "The press must be dependent on something for its viability; the press cannot be free, but is locked into a cycle of interdependence."

It is easy to see media control in authoritarian societies because "governments employ strict censorship to control the flow of information to the general public, and journalists exist as mouthpieces for the government" (LaMay, 2007, p. 26). Authoritarian regimes regularly censor or control the media before or after media production (Baker, 2007, p. 5). However, there are many complex elements in this interrelationship in democratic societies because "in part theory is less important to democracy than how freedom is lived and perpetuated" (LaMay, 2007, p. 26). Freedom of the press helps maintain the health of democracies (Baker, 2007, p. 5). These two different systems, authoritarian and democratic can be seen in Korea.

Ostensibly, Korea is a democratic country, however, in practice the society has been strongly controlled by clientelism, which refers to a form of social organization characterized by personal relationships such as blood ties, regions and institutes. In Korean society, an authoritarian style still exists in practice to different degrees because of the long history of authoritarian rule. It ranges from authoritarian rule to civilian governments, depending on the ruling style of political leaders such as the president. Therefore, Korea has a mixture of authoritarian and democratic features. In the media, if freedom of the press is to be maintained it is important to be independent not just from government interference but also from other factors like capital and ownership ties.

Freedom of the press in Korea is similar to other basic rights; this means press freedom is not at a superior level to other basic rights. According to law academic J-H. Cho (2005, p. 277), the No.1 of Article 21 of the Korean *Constitution* sets out freedom of the press and freedom of publication in Korea. Freedom of the press and publication mean 'freedom of expression and delivery,' 'freedom of publication,' and 'freedom of broadcast.' The media can upgrade the values and functions of press freedom, which should be guaranteed by the *Constitution*. Members of society need to be able to participate in social and political decision-making in order to maintain democracy. Article 21 of the *Constitution* guarantees freedom of individual expression and freedom of the press. Cho describes how the Korean media laws combine the Anglo-American free press model and the European model, especially Germany (Cho, 2005, p. 275). In terms of press freedom, the Anglo-American laws guarantee the right of press freedom to media owners (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 74). However, the European laws put the stress on the rights of readers or audiences and the public good (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 74). Article 21 of the *Constitution* in Korea assures freedom of the press drawing on both models (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 74). According to Cho (2005, p. 275), the Korean laws are similar to the *First Amendment of the American Constitution*, though the *First Amendment* does not include details of the media law, instead it only was the terms 'press' and 'publication.' Cho (2005, p. 275) argues, in terms of form, the Korean laws are similar to the German law, which was the concept of the press and publication as well. For example, the No.2 of Article 21 outlines a licensing system allowing for freedom of the press and publication. Also, the No.4 of Article 21 has restrictions including that the media cannot defame other people, and cannot abuse public morals and social ethics (Cho, 2005, p. 275).

1.1 Problems of applying Western concepts to Korea

There are some problems in applying Western concepts of press freedom to Korea. Since the 1980s, Korean media scholars have continuously discussed which concepts and theories in developed Western context are appropriate for Korea (Park, Kim, and Sohn, 2000, p. 111). Some attempts have been made to overcome the problems in the application of Western theories but they have mostly failed to produce satisfactory results (Park et al., 2000, p. 111). I suggest that three main differences can be noted: the legal systems, the political systems, and the practical situation.

Firstly, there are different legal systems in Korea and the West, especially America. In most developed countries

freedom of the press is a symbol of democracy. Therefore, many developed countries do not have media laws (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 127). According to O-J. Kim, some countries do have media laws but they are not restrictions on media content but protections of media functions. Many countries try to set up a legal frame in order to boost public faith in the media and media diversity (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 127). However, the media laws in Korea are very different. For instance, the Korean media laws contain details on how the media must practice fair trade and fair competition (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 127). Korean media laws under the Moo-Hyun Roh government, the *Law Governing the Guarantee of Freedom and Functions of Newspapers* (also known as the *Newspaper Law*), and the *Law Governing Press Arbitration and Damage Relief* (also known as the *Press Arbitration Law*), include details that emphasize social responsibility and encourage newspaper companies to set up readers' rights committees and extended editorial committees (Ministry of Culture and Tourism Republic of Korea, 2005). When someone has been victimized by newspaper articles, he/she can file compensation petitions against pertinent newspapers through the Arbitration Commission.

According to lawyer H-S. Park (2004) many Korean academics quote the research of the Commission of Hutchins of America to support their argument about freedom of the press. Some owners and managers of media companies in Korea have argued that Hutchins' research be used to solve problems. For example, they quote Hutchins' idea on the need to avoid the government interference (Park, 2004). However, the *First Amendment of the Constitution* in America is a 'closed system' that is it 'makes no law to restrict the freedom of the press' (Park, 2004). On the other hand, the No.3 of Article 21 of the *Constitution* in Korea has a different system. It is an 'open system,' which means it is possible 'to make law guaranteeing for functions of newspapers' (Park, 2004). Cho argues, No.4 of Article 21 places conditions on freedom including that the media cannot defame other people, and cannot abuse public morals and social ethics that are similar to the German law (2005, p. 275). However, many academics and media owners desire the *First Amendment of the Constitution* in America and ignore the No.4 of Article 21 of the *Constitution* in Korea (Park, 2004). Park also explains regarding misunderstanding of the *Fair Trade law*: "The Korean media laws do not apply strong restrictions in the case of bad effects or an abuse. However, the American media laws do apply strong restrictions in the case of bad effects or an abuse." The *Fair Trade law* (the antimonopoly law and the competition law) is general order itself as standard of law either America or Germany (Park, 2004).

Secondly, regarding the political systems, Park (2004) argues, academics in Korea quote many ideas from the West, mostly America and Germany, as the models for Korea without considering the Korean situation. According to Park, these two countries are federal states whereas Korea is traditionally a centralized government. Therefore, it is not suitable to compare the media laws of such different political systems. Park et al. (2000, p. 115) argue, "The political system of Korea has a Western appearance, but its operation has been more dependent on informal and pre-modern methods than official and reasonable procedures." For example, the Presidential system of Korea has too much power focused on the president because past military dictators sought to control everything. Park et al. argue,

The state-press relationship wears the features of the liberal system of Western countries on the surface, but it has strong characteristics of clientelism on the inside. Clientelism is based on the feudalistic feature of Korean society, which depends on regional networking (Park et al., 2000, p. 115).

The state has led the media, which has become powerful politically in its own right (Sa, 2009a). It can affect the outcome of presidential elections (Park et al., 2000, p. 115). Woo and Joo argue that this is a feature of military dictatorial regimes (2002, p. 198). This relationship between the state and the media is very different from the situation in many Western countries, where the media support certain parties based on their political leanings (Park et al., 2000, pp. 115-116). In Korea, the relationship is based more on private and informal networks than on formal ones. "Therefore, Korean media support the state more in unofficial ways than in official ones. This relationship has caused a dysfunction in the media system in general" (Park et al., 2000, pp. 115-116).

Thirdly, the practices of the media industry are very different from the West. The Korean media structure was based upon Western models and theories but journalistic practice and content are far from Western rationalism (Park et al., 2000, p. 121). As a result, the Western theories and models do not work properly in the Korean media industry. According to Park et al. (2000, p. 121), "Political power and various premodern elements" still strongly and effectively dominate media management and practice. Park et al. point out practical problems in the media industry: "The clientelistic networking based on school and regional ties still exists inside and outside media organizations. Conservative ideologies, which are the product of the Cold War era, still dominate the mainstream media in Korea." The media both officially and unofficially have been controlled by the state. However, informal mechanisms such as clientelism have had a stronger influence through collusive relations between the state power and the media (Park et al., 2000, p. 115). Media scholar M-K. Kang points out the need to break the traditional cozy relations between politics and the media. Journalists are candidates of politicians because it is not easy to distinguish journalists from salesman who collect data for press owners (Kang, 2004). The traditional relations between politics and the media are unusual compared to developed countries (Kang, 2004). Kang stresses that journalists must stop their old habits such as having a meal and alcohol at a restaurant or a pub with politicians and lawyers as an excuse for gathering news. Shin and

Cameron (2003) say informal relations influence the news and newsgathering, which directly or indirectly involves journalists being unethical in Korea.

Furthermore, in the newspaper market generally media practice is distorted because newspaper companies engage in unfair competition and trade. The biggest influence is made by major newspapers (Sa, 2009a). The major general Seoul-based dailies dominate in most of the provincial areas. The Korean people are skeptical about a self-regulated media. The new media laws of 2005 tried to solve these problems. It must be noted that even after the application of these laws, the newspaper market is still in disorder and engages in unfair practice (Sa, 2009a).

2. History of the media since Japanese colonial rule

The history of the media since Japanese colonial rule in Korea reflects the chaotic history of political power in the twentieth century state. The *Hansung sunbo*, the first Korean newspaper was published in 1883, and was followed by the *Tongnip sinmun* (*Independent News* in English title), the first private newspaper under the editorship of Jae-Pil Soe (Philip Jaisohn) (Youn, 1996, p. 8). The *Tongnip sinmun* was first published on 7th April 1896 three times a week, with three of its four pages in Korean and the other in English (Youn, 1996, p. 8). The *Maeil sinmun* was the first daily newspaper in 1898, and was followed by the *Hwangsung sinmun* and others (Youn, 1996, p. 9). According to media academic Ho-Soon Chang, these newspapers functioned as educators of the people, as spiritual guides for national sovereignty and as critics of incompetent and corrupt government (2004, p. 29). Vipin Chandra assesses the role of one newspaper, the *Tongnip sinmun* as follows:

The *Tongnip sinmun* committed itself to fostering several specific political and educational objectives. It promised its readers nationalism without chauvinism, loyalty to the throne without subservience to the king's officials, a crusade for reforming the government with a view to making it serve *all* Koreans, and support for modern learning. The paper was thus a multidimensional organ – an investigative and editorial ally of the public interest as well as a plainly reportorial one (Chandra, 1988, p. 107).

At this time Korean newspapers had an opportunity to play the role of social leader. However, this opportunity did not have a long life because of the forced Japanese annexation of Korea in 1905. Since Japanese colonial rule, freedom of the press has been more often been restricted than protected by laws and policies. This restriction focused on the media because they had a significant level of influence on the people. There have been many different periods and forms of restriction since 1910 (see Table 1).

There have been four main features of press freedom since 1910: severe restriction during the Japanese colonial rule; experiencing freedom with unstable democracy under the American military rule and the First and Second republics; oppression of the military regimes; and the struggle with capital power since the advent of civilian government.

2.1 Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945)

There was severe restriction in the Korean press during the Japanese colonial rule. According to Francis Rey, the 1905 Japanese-Korean Protectorate Treaty was illegally signed under the physical threat of Japanese imperialistic power and therefore null (Francis Rey, as cited in Choi, 2005, p. 21). After this forced annexation the Korean media were not free. They were restricted severely and forced to serve like slaves through the media related laws and policies. In 1907, the Japanese Resident General took lawmaking power from the Korean government (Youn, 1996, p. 31). Choi argues, “Unfortunately, Japanese imperialism seized power over Korea and some parts of China. During Japanese rule from 1910 to 1945, self-identity of Korean law was endangered due to the lack of political sovereignty” (2005, p. 3). The newspaper law was promulgated in 1907 by the Japanese controlled cabinet of Wan-Yong Lee (Chang, 2004, p. 30). It required that citizens obtained permission from the Minister of Home Affairs and paid a deposit before they could publish a newspaper (Chang, 2004, p. 30). Youm describes the experience:

The press policy of the Japanese colonialists in Korea between 1910 and 1919 was draconian. Explanations can be cited for such harsh Japanese measures against the Korean press. First, the Japanese considered the Korean press as an impediment to their quick colonization of Korea and viewed it as no more than a harmful entity to Japan's intent to make Korea its docile colony. Second, the factor of the Japanese colonial government personnel contributed to the repressive policy of Japan against the Korean press (Youn, 1996, p. 33).

Most newspapers in Seoul were closed by the Japanese colonial rule except the Korean-language *Maeil sinbo* and the English-language *Seoul press* (Chang, 2004, p. 30). According to Chang, it was through the “Independence Movement of the Koreans against the Japanese colonialists, [that] anti-colonial ideas spread nationwide through informal (non-licensed) newspapers like the *Chosuntongnip sinmun* and the *Tongnipjayoo minbo*,” which played key roles as communication mechanisms (2004, p. 30).

After the Independence Movement on 1st March 1919, the Japanese rule tried to appease rather than suppress the Korean people. In 1920, the policy of the Japanese colonial rulers changed and they permitted three Korean newspapers the *Dong-A Ilbo*, the *Chosun Ilbo* and the *Shisa Shinmun* to publish (Chang, 2004, p. 30). The Japanese rulers did not

allow comment on issues about the nation's independence from the Japanese colonial rule or for the papers to be communicating mechanisms for Koreans (Chang, 2004, p. 30). The newspapers tended to be 'mouthpieces' for the Japanese colonizers. Today, the *Dong-A Ilbo* and the *Chosun Ilbo* are major conservative newspapers but many Korean people have criticized their pro-Japanese colonial rule stance during the Japanese occupation period (Ko, 2006, p. 29). The legacies of Japanese colonial rule, the American military rule and later dictators' regimes have influenced Korean society and the media politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Dennis Hart (2001, p. 163) argues, "For many Koreans, their history has only slightly more immediate significance and relevance than does Japanese or American history." There are Japanese vestiges in Korean society: two examples are Kijasil and Kijadan systems in the media industry (Note 2).

2.2 The American Military rule, the First and Second republics (1945~1961)

The Korean media were experiencing freedom with unstable democracy under the American military rule and the First and Second republics. After the liberation of Korea from thirty six years of Japanese colonial rule, South Korea was temporarily ruled by the United States Army Military Government (USAMGIK) (1945~1948) while the Soviet Union occupied North Korea. At this time the South Korean people generally experienced freedom, including in the media (Youm, 1996, p. 10). Youm says, "The libertarian press policy of the USAMGIK precipitated an explosive increase in the number of newspapers and magazines" (1996, p. 38). However, in May 1946, the American rulers promulgated licensing laws *Ordinance No. 88*, which required acquiring licenses for all newspapers and periodicals (Chang, 2004, p. 30). From the liberation of Korea in 1945 to the April Students Uprising in 1960, a licensing system existed for the publishing of newspapers (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 9). The USAMGIK, which was very anti-communist, was followed by a pro-Japanese governing group in Korea (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008).

According to Hart, there were three main different groups after the liberation of Korea in 1945: firstly, the anti-Japanese group who had been put in jail because of their affiliation to the Independence Movement under Japanese colonial rule; secondly, the majority of citizens; thirdly, the pro-Japanese group who had accumulated private property and power as result of supporting Japanese colonial rule (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). Initially under USAMGIK, the pro-Japanese group were worried they would lose their property and power so they became as one voice - right wing (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). Whereas the anti-Japanese group was more left wing.

From 1945 to 1950, the left wing and the right wing political parties disputed a series of issues including: anti- or pro-trusteeship rule, whether to eliminate the pro-Japanese colonial rule group or not, and the difference between communism and democracy as forms of government (Lee, 2003). While the left and right wing political groups were disputing these ideas, a war broke out in 1950 between South and North - the Korean War (Chang, 2004, p. 30). From 1950, the left was wiped out in Korea. Even though Korea had been liberated from Japanese colonial rule vestiges of Japanese imperialism including leader groups were not eradicated during the USAMGIK and the later Syng-Man Rhee government, nor have they been eradicated today (Lee, 2003). After the liberation of Korea, the right wing regained power within one year under USAMGIK and was transformed from pro-Japanese to pro-American (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). Since then they have remained the leading conservative group.

During the Cold War, the Soviets directly threatened Japan and North Korea threatened South Korea. America considered these threats as a challenge to its hegemony so it "extended deterrence commitments to Tokyo and Seoul" (Tow, 2003). America's bilateral security alliances with Korea and Japan are pivotal to American policies in East Asia (Tow, 2003). Korea's alliance with America became a bit strained when Bush took office. However, liberal Korean governments Dae-Jung Kim and Moo-Hyun Roh concentrated more on their 'local' dimensions of the North Korean threat while America focused on others. As Tow argues,

Washington has concentrated increasingly on North Korean nuclear and other WMD capabilities as integral to a larger global security problem. President Bush's meetings with his South Korean counterparts, Dae-Jung Kim (March 2001 and February 2002) and Moo-Hyun Roh (May 2003), yielded significant differences between the hard-line American position toward the North and a growing South Korean tendency to project more cautious postures toward Pyongyang (Tow, 2003, pp. 15-16).

In late May 2003, new 'force enhancement initiatives' was announced by America upgrading its alliance with Korea. This has included upgrading intelligence collection systems, increasing the numbers of precision-guided weapons and anti-ballistic missile systems (Tow, 2003). Since 2008, when the conservative Lee government took office in Korea, alliance between Korea and America has further been strengthened. However, the tension of Korean peninsula is growing because the Lee government has not kept the agreements, which were made by both Korean submits between South and North during the liberal rule of Kim and Roh.

According to N-S. Kim (1994), under the First and Second republics, the worsening economic situation aggravated problems within Korean society generally. On 17th July 1948, under the First Republic of President Syng-Man Rhee the constitution was first promulgated. Since then it has been revised nine times (Choi, 2005, p. 325). It pursued an

America-oriented Presidential system (Choi, 2005, p. 325), and stated that all Korean people shall have no restrictions on freedom of the press, freedom of publication, freedom of assembly and freedom of association except by Law (Chang, 2004, p. 31). However, the Korean government prohibited newspapers from supporting some issues such as “promoting communist-inspired terrorism and subversive activities” (Youn, 1996, p. 45). According to O-J. Kim (2005, p. 9), the first constitution prescribed the freedom of the expression subject to the general law. During the First Republic, the Korean media had two main difficulties (Youn, 1996, p. 11). First, they struggled with financial difficulties. Second, the media were controlled by the state’s policy. The economic problems were the greatest threat to press freedom (Youn, 1996, p. 11). A commercial newspaper, *Hankook Ilbo* started on 9th June 1954. According to Youm (1996, p. 48), under the Syng-Man Rhee government using the USAMGIK *Ordinance No. 88* rather than the new law of the First Republic, the most important opposition paper, *Kyunghyang Shinmun* was closed by the government in 1959. The reason given was that the paper had published “a misleading article on President Rhee’s news conference.”

N-S. Kim argues that in the 1950s the media industry was very weak in the market both as producer and seller (provider). In the newspaper industry, profit was mostly from subscriptions (Kim, 1994). During the Korean War (1950-1953), there was severe censorship of the Korean media, especially on sensitive political issues. Youm (1996, p. 11) notes, “During the war period, the Korean press was subject to strict military censorship, and the Korean press consequently lacked diversity in its content.” After the armistice in 1953, the Syng-Man Rhee government continued to restrict the media in various ways such as prohibiting certain stories being published by issuing guidelines (Youn, 1996, p. 11). The Rhee government collapsed after the April Students Uprising in 1960.

Under the Second Republic freedom of the press was guaranteed by the *Constitution* under Premier Myon Chang. This law was valued by many academics as the closest law to the *First Amendment of the American Constitution* at that time (Kim, O-J. 2005, pp. 9-10). The media had the opportunity to play the role of social leader and for press freedom to grow into full bloom. There were no conditions placed on the freedom of the people and rights of the people except for the public good and order (Kim, O-J. 2005, pp. 9-10). According to Youm, “The Korean press enjoyed the greatest freedom in Korean history. The Koreans in Chang’s day were exposed to a freedom bordering on *laissez faire*” (1996, p. 49). Every day the number of newspapers increased (Kim, Y-H. 2004a, p. 306). However, their mixed quality was to jeopardize Korean society because many unqualified or disreputable people in media companies exploited the freedom and made easy money as journalists (Kim, Y-H. 2004a, p. 307). This almost unlimited press freedom created problems such as the abuse of power by media owners and journalists (Kim, Y-H. 2004a, p. 305). However, this freedom did not last long. It was ended by the military coup d’état led by General Chung-Hee Park on 16th May 1961.

2.3 The military regimes (1961~1987)

Generally, there were severe restrictions to freedom of the press in practice under the military regimes those of Chung-Hee Park and Doo-Hwan Chun. However, at that time, the Korean media enjoyed freedom of the press regarding non-political and non-sensitive social issues leading to “a trend of sensationalism and an emphasis on soft-news items” (Youn, 1996, p. 13). In the beginning, it ordered “prior censorship of all newspapers, magazine feature articles, comics, cartoons, editorials, photographs, and foreign news” (*Decree No.1*, 1961, as cited in Youm, 1996, p. 50); subsequently prior censorship resulted in media self-censorship. During these two regimes the media were severely restricted and functioned largely as tamed media. There were approximately twenty different laws covering the media (Ko, 2006, p. 29). Dong-Whang Joo argues that in the 1960s press industry was driven into the enterprising process, in the 1970s it passed through a phase of large press enterprise, and formed a monopoly structure in the 1980s (1993).

In 1963, the *Constitution* of the Third Republic set out the range of new limits and responsibilities on freedom of expression. In 1963, the law of newspaper communication and registration and the broadcast law were established after the law for the registration of newspapers and communication (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 10). “It cancelled the license of the media, which were found to fall short of its production machinery and facility” (Park et al., 2000, p. 113). Basically, this system still exists to different degrees in practice, from the authoritarian rule to the civilian governments, depending on the ruling style of political leaders. As LaMay (2007, p. 26) pointed out, “theory is less important to democracy than how freedom is lived and perpetuated.”

According to N-S. Kim (1994), during the 3rd republic the economic crisis was a serious situation because of global economic downturn. During this time capitalist groups were encouraged by the state (Kim, 1994). Kim argues, because of the government’s economic stimulus conditions in newspaper production improved in the 1960s. For example, the sales subscription market was quite developed because of urbanization and the effect of economic development despite the fact that subscription market of provincial newspapers was decreasing (Kim, 1994).

Joo (1993) argues, because of the state’s crisis in the 1970s the state’s policy tended to control the media. From the end of the 1960s, the government was faced with the external economic crisis and internally, there were problems of political crisis such as the Revitalizing Reforms Constitution in 1969; the Declaration of the State of National Emergency in 1971; and the initiation of the *Siwol Yushin* in 1972 (Joo, 1993). During the same time the state merged and closed down news agencies and provincial newspapers (Joo, 1993).

After 1970, the authoritarian Park regime imposed harsh media restrictions through the *Declaration of the State of National Emergency*, and the *Martial Law Decree*, which banned “all indoor and outdoor assemblies and demonstrations for the purpose of political activities and speeches, publications, press and broadcasts” (Youn, 1996, p. 55). The *Yushin Constitution* was proclaimed in 1972. According to Choi,

The *Yushin Constitution* omitted the natural-law languages of the chapter on basic rights and duties of the citizen, and simply stated that legal restrictions on the rights and freedoms of citizens should be imposed ‘only when necessary.’ Other parts of this *Constitution* gave the president broad and unlimited power to rule (Choi, 2005, p. 380).

Freedom of expression became a core control issue for the state. Furthermore, in 1974, the Park junta outlawed the National Federation of Democratic Youths and Students, which was characterized by the authorities as an “unlawful underground organization manipulated by the North Korean communists” (Youn, 1996, p. 56). Park restricted press freedom relating to the Federation and its members through the *Emergency Measure*, which banned “any act to publish, produce, process, distribute, exhibit, and sell papers, books, disks, and other presentations” (Youn, 1996, p. 56).

Under the 4th republic, the economic crisis lessened and the capitalist groups consolidated (Kim, 1994). The control of the media industry was shown in the case of *Dong-A Ilbo* in 1975. The Park regime tried to pressure business firms into cancelling advertising so as to weaken the financial bases of *Dong-A Ilbo* reporters, who were fighting for freedom of the press and other issues. Park et al. (2000, p. 113) argue, “In 1974, one hundred thirty four journalists had to leave the *Dong-A Ilbo* and thirty three journalists had to leave the *Chosun Ilbo*, both of which were leading newspapers at the time.”

Although there was severe media control, the media industry in the 1970s continues to grow as big businesses. The situation in newspaper production and the sales market was gradually improving not only in subscription but also in advertising revenue (Kim, 1994). Newspaper companies were competitive with other media such as broadcasting but their management was quite stable due to cross-ownership of the newspaper and the broadcasting industry (Joo, 1993).

During the Doohwan Chun junta, the Korean media were again controlled by harsh media policies and laws similar to those of the Park military regime. In 1980, the *Constitution* of the Fifth Republic prescribed in No.1 of Article 20 that every person shall enjoy freedom of the press, freedom of publication, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. However, in practice this did not occur. There were conditions in No.1 of Article 20 as follows: the press and a publication could not violate others’ reputation or rights; Also, they could not violate public morals or social ethics; If the press or a publication damaged someone’s reputation or rights, the person could sue for damages (Kim, O-J. 2005, p. 10). These conditions were used and abused generally as a means to restrict the media’s ability to criticize the government or powerful people and to maintain the dictatorial regime, which used daily ‘press guidelines’ regulated the media coverage of news events.

Furthermore, the Chun junta proclaimed the notorious *Basic Press Act* in 1980. Youm (1996, p. 59) explains this law as follows: “One of the most restrictive and comprehensive laws in capitalistic societies, providing specifically for the rights and restrictions of the press.” In relating to its registration the Minister of Culture and Information (MOCI) had the power to cancel publications and to suspend them for various reasons, one of which was “When they repeatedly and flagrantly violate the law in encouraging or praising violence or other illegal acts disrupting public order” (Youn, 1996, p. 60).

During the 5th republic, the social crisis steadily decreased because of the economic recovery, and the capitalist groups became even more powerful in society (Kim, 1994). N-S. Kim argues, in the 1980s, the newspaper industry grew in excess of the newspaper market. Also, during this period, newspaper industry management was restricted in regard to its business profit (Kim, 1994). Kim stresses, policy had less influence on the newspaper industry, then the economy and the political activity of citizens. A major power group within the newspaper industry was established (Kim, 1994). Major dailies dominated the subscription market.

Curran (2002, p. 221) argues, “Many privately owned media organizations supported right wing military coups.” Curran’s view is confirmed in Korea. The bulk of the Korean media helped the politically powerful and their right wing regimes (Chang, 2004, p. 3). By helping these unjust regimes, these media companies have reaped various benefits such as interest free loans or tax favors and have become big businesses (Chang, 2004, p. 3). Journalists also have been given positions such as political office, bureaucrats, presidential secretaries or assistants and spokesmen (Kim, Y-H. 2004c). Moreover, they have had various benefits through access to public funding for training overseas or better welfare such as tax favors, loans for housing, funds for their children’s education and cash or gifts (Woo & Joo, 2002, p. 168). As a result, journalists who belonged to big media companies have become high-income earners (Chang, 2004, p. 3). This culture of nepotism continues in parts of the media today.

According to Herman and Chomsky (1988, p. 29), ‘anticommunism’ is one of the filters through which news is fed to produce propaganda: “Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the specter haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status.” Also, Herman and Chomsky state, this

'anticommunism' idea helps motivate the people against an enemy:

And because the concept is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property interests or support accommodation with Communist states and radicalism. It therefore helps fragment the left and labor movements and serves as a political-control mechanism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 29).

Herman and Chomsky's view is well demonstrated in Korea. Two military regimes abused the *National Security Act* by applying pro-North (anti-communist) control by accusing opposition groups, the media and intellectuals of anti-dictator beliefs. This provided convenient means that enabled them to control citizens. This was because of the special situation in the Korean peninsula such as experiencing Korean War and political propaganda "Anti-Communist policy." Freedom House (2004) states the abuse of the *National Security Act* in Korea, "under the authoritarian government the law was used to restrict the propagation of ideas considered Communist or pro-North Korean." Unfortunately, because of the antagonism between South and North Korea this anticommunism approach has been very effective. Also, this pro- or anti- communist issue has been used by the conservative groups to justify their position in criticizing people who have different opinions to theirs. This allows them to deflect attention from the fact that their power derives from their historic support of Japanese colonial and dictators' rule.

Dennis Hart describes the Korean conservative leader groups as supporting political power without an ethical base, depending on which one benefits them most, they ostensibly argue in favor of nationalism but in reality are in favor of imperialism demonstrated by their support of either America or Japan (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). Hart stresses that this group easily colludes with other countries and being without ethical principles they betray Koreans. According to Hart, America is an imperialist country so it is good to justify their behaviors as manufacturing 'good America.' However, their behavior makes them dependent on the power of America (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). This behavior prioritizes benefits for America over Korea's welfare while subordinating Korea's benefit (*Ohmynews*, 22/8/2008). A case in point was the beef deal between Korea and America in 2008 (Sa, 2009b).

Coming back to the issue of military rules Park and Chun, these two regimes directly controlled the media through censorship and manipulation, and then indirectly by other means (Park et al., 2000, p. 113). They focused strongly on media control as a means of maintaining their unjust power (Chang, 2004, p. 76). Firstly, they forcefully reorganized the media. Many media companies were merged or closed. Publications including highly acclaimed opinion journals were banned or merged in 1961, 1972 and 1980 (Ko, 2006, p. 29). One example of harsh media policy under the Chun regime was the merging of three news agencies into one - *Yonhap News Agency*. This monopoly system has restricted sources for the news for newspapers even today (Im, 2005, p. 192).

The two regimes limited freedom of publishing through control mechanisms such as 'the standard of printing facilities' (Chang, 2004, pp. 76, 78-79). As a result of this harsh media policy, there were only thirty-two daily newspapers in July 1987 (Youn, 1996, p. 14). These remaining media companies enjoyed an oligopoly and became big businesses during the dictators' rule (Chang, 2004, pp. 78-81). Further, many journalists were put in jail by the state or dismissed by their companies in 1972, 1975, and 1980 because they fought for issues such as freedom of the press, unionization and others (Ko, 2006, p. 29-31). The two regimes forced journalists who were critical of its rule to leave their companies. About seven hundred journalists were dismissed and one hundred seventy two publications were banned by Chun's press purification campaign in 1980 (Kim, Y-H. 2004b, p. 303). "A total of nine hundred thirty three journalists were forced to quit by 1980" (Park et al., 2000, p. 113). As a result, it was difficult to criticize political or social issues under the military dictators Park and Chun. The journalists, who were dismissed during the military regimes, have still not recovered their jobs or honor from their former employers (Sa, 2009b).

Chang (2004, p. 3) argues, acknowledgement of these abuses in modern Korean history puts pressure on media companies and the government to honor freedom of the press but there were not many large social movements supporting the democratization of the press until 1987. Before this time only a few free media movements existed such as 'a free press movement,' which aggressively supported the practice of press freedom demanded by *Dong-A Ilbo's* reporters, in October 1974 (Youn, 1996, p. 58). Press freedom was established in Korea after a series of protests for democratization in June 1987.

2.4 Civilian governments (1988-present)

Most of the Korean media have enjoyed freedom of the press under the civilian governments. However, there has been the struggle with capital power (Sa, 2009b). Both conservative and liberal political leaders such as presidents have had a rhetorical image of 'Globalization' or 'Free Trade Agreement' (FTA). Since the 1990s Korean newspapers have faced a new environment - politically the media is being democratized, economically it is a competitive liberal market, and technically it is a multi-media era (Im, 2002, p. 20). Freedom House (2006) described the way that the Korean government boosted diversity in the media industry, and as a result more than one hundred daily newspapers are published across the country today. The cartel of existing media was not guaranteed anymore. According to Y-H. Kim (2004c), major conservative newspapers do not want social changes because they want to keep their power and property.

Therefore, the attempts at reform in the political, economic, and social areas have failed every time (Kim, Y-H. 2004c). Some civilian governments indirectly control the media.

Under the Tae-Woo Roh government (1988-1992), "Freedom of the press slowly but steadily became institutionalized as democratization continued in Korea, and there was a strong indication that it was being accepted by the government as an important element of Korean democracy" (Youm, 1996, p. 76). The government prohibited censorship and revoked registration of publications. This was a significant development compared to the Chun's regime. Another noticeable change in the media industry was the founding on 15th May 1988 of the liberal daily newspaper, *Hankyoreh*. In general as Heuvel and Dennis (1993, p. 10) wrote in 1993, the Korean media during the past seven years have been freer than ever to criticize the government, address formerly taboo issues, and expand with virtually no restraint. However, Chang (2004, p. 3) points out the slow speed of the democratization of the media compared to other sections of society. Chang stresses, past groups with excessive power were not cleaned up within the press industry and so power groups within the media have not changed. These media people have changed their position from being the group helping dictators and distorting people's rights to know, to pretending to be the group promoting rights and democratization (Chang, 2004, p. 3). During the Roh government, the free market was introduced in the newspaper industry.

Under the Young-Sam Kim government (1993-1997) the media were nominally free (Youm, 1996, p. 14). However, it indirectly controlled the media by using tax investigations. It investigated the tax records of the daily newspapers in 1994 (Woo & Joo, 2002, p. 192). However, it did not report the results to the people rather it used the process to control the media indirectly (Woo & Joo, 2002, p. 192). As a result of this pressure even though the government's policies were not coherent, the media still supported them (Woo & Joo, 2002, p. 192). This support was continuous until the International Monetary Fund intervention Asian economic crisis (hereafter IMF crisis) in 1997. Until this time the Korean media had only reiterated the government's line: "The fundamentals of the Korean economy are strong" (Woo & Joo, 2002, pp. 192-193). Im argues that this economic crisis came faster in Korea because the newspapers misled the public by downplaying the seriousness of the crisis (2005, p. 161).

During the Dae-Jung Kim government (1998-2002), the Korean media were free and they freely criticized the government. According to M-K. Cho, under the Kim government there was a noticeable issue in Korean media history was the necessity for media reform (Cho, 2003). Public criteria for media reform were firstly, the guarantee of media diversity; secondly, the increase of media watchdog role; and thirdly, the guarantee of independent media (Cho, 2003). However, although the Kim government also agree on the need for media reform there were differences between the public's criteria and that of the government's implementation (Cho, 2003). For example, the government undertook the harsh tax investigation from February 2001 to 2002 and sanctions against media companies (Reporters Without Borders, 2003). The harsh method by which these investigations were carried out did not have support from many citizen groups, even though there were in favor of media reform (Cho, 2003). Interestingly, the investigations also created differences in views between International Press Institute and World Association of Newspapers, who responded negatively to them and International Federation of Journalists, who responded positively (Cho, 2003).

Under the Moo-Hyun Roh (2003-2007) government, the Korean media were free and they aggressively criticized the government. In 2003, Freedom House (2003) stated, "Newspapers are privately owned and report fairly aggressively on governmental policies and alleged official wrongdoing." The Roh government tried to re-distribute media power and encourage media diversity. Also, the Roh government opened pressrooms to more Korean journalists (It needs to be noted that they have now returned to their pre-Roh state). The media related laws and policies have focused on limiting media ownership concentration and boosting media diversity. For example, the parliament passed the two media reform laws the *Newspaper Law* and the *Press Arbitration Law* in January 2005. These laws emphasize the social responsibilities of the media to the general public and respect pluralism. They aim to stop the major newspapers engaging in unfair competition in the newspaper market (Sa, 2009a). Also, Reporters Without Borders (2006) stated that the laws impose "a duty of 'social responsibility' on the media," and by introducing them it showed the government respected pluralism. The *Newspaper Law* is a revision of the old law on the *Registration of Periodicals*. The *Press Arbitration Law* combines features of the old law with the *Registration of Periodicals* and the *Broadcast Law* into a single law dealing with press arbitration and damage relief.

President Roh struggled to deal with the major conservative newspapers. During his government the major conservative newspapers criticized most his policies. So there was great tension between these media and the Roh government. Major conservative newspapers abused freedom of the press. According to one survey conducted in April 2003, seventy percent of the journalists answered that criticism about Roh government was not criticism by the media as watchdogs but for the purpose of finding fault with the Roh government (Lee, 2003). In another survey by the Journalists Association of Korea in August 2003 again seventy percent of the journalists said some media irrationally criticized the Roh government (Lee, 2003).

Moreover, major conservative newspapers have not published information on dissenting groups within society,

especially the weaker groups. For example, according to Y-H. Kim (2004c), major conservative newspapers criticized, as selfish, the legal strike of labour groups and the resistance of farmers to the FTA. Im (2005, p. 165) points out that the conservative voice of the Korean media except a few such as *Hankyoreh* is a problem. Especially, when they are reporting on conflict between labour and owner groups. They only partially report the facts, protecting the owner's interest in the name of economic development (Im, 2005, p. 165). Major conservative newspapers served the power groups and not the weaker groups and so interrupted social harmony (Kim, Y-H. 2004c). They still do not serve citizens (Ko, 2006, p. 29). Moreover, some media companies play roles as power makers. The 2007 presidential election was no exception (Sa, 2009a). These companies, especially major conservative newspapers, aim to keep their power and property for a long time (Kim, Y-H. 2004c). The Roh government introduced the Free Trade Agreement with America but this caused a backlash amongst many of its supporters however, other existing power groups such as the opposition party were amenable to this idea.

Korea has had a long history of authoritarian rule and authoritarian vestiges still exist. Regarding the vestiges of authoritarian culture in practice, Hallin and Mancini argue as follows:

Certain remnants of authoritarian culture that are reflected in restricted access to public information and official pressures against critical reporting; and the tendency toward instrumentalization of the media, both by political elites and by commercial owners (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 140) [still exist in Korea].

Their view is evidenced from the past to the current time in Korea. During authoritarian rule some critical media were pressured or shut down. Moreover, some ethical journalists, who were anti-dictator, anti-American or critical of media owners, were sacked by their media owners or put in jail by the state (Kim, S-S. 2005). One example, Yong-Soo Cho was the owner of the *Minjok Ilbo* was killed by the state under the dictator Chung-Hee Park (Kim, S-S. 2005).

Since 2008 political power has returned to the conservative group, the Korean grassroots democracy and press freedom that developed during the liberal rule have been threatened by the dictatorial style of leading groups such as the president, the Grand National Party and major conservative newspapers. For example, the Myung-Bak Lee government has forced existing directors to resign and replaced directors in the public sector. This is in breach of the law, which guarantees their positions for certain periods (*Hankyoreh*, 19/9/2008). Public gatherings in places such as Seoul Plaza have been banned and demonstrators harshly treated and detained (Korea Times, 2/6/2009b). Police also tore down the memorial alter to the late former President Moo-Hyun Roh installed in central Seoul, a move which drew immense public criticism (Korea Times, 2/6/2009b).

It has been suggested by some public opinion that there is a connection between the death of former President Roh and the fact that he was targeted for investigation by the Supreme Prosecutors Office regarding his family affairs. Roh's wife received financial support from a political supporter Yeon-Cha Park (former CEO of shoemaker Taekwang) during his presidency without his knowledge. There was collusion between the Prosecutors and the media in the reporting of the process of the investigation with unconfirmed evidence being revealed to the public. This public disclosure of his affairs had a negative impact on his reputation as a reformer of clientelism in the government and culture of society. After his death there was major outpouring of support for him as expressed in his memorial service. Under the Roh government Korea was assessed by the Reporters Without Borders as one of the Asian continent's best performers in press freedom in 2006. Korean print journalists confirmed this view in the 2006 journalists' survey for my PhD thesis (Note 3).

Amnesty International reported, "Korea has been backpedaling on human rights regarding expression of opinion, assembly and association under the Lee Myung-bak administration" (Korea Times, 2/6/2009a). Furthermore, the Citizen's Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM, 2009), a media social movement in Korea, has expressed grave concern over the increasing use of force by police in cracking down on demonstrators. In recent rallies, police recklessly assaulted and detained non-violent demonstrators and even innocent civilians, injuring some (CCDM, 2009). However, *Chosun*, *JoongAng* and *Dong-A* (ChoJoongDong) have supported the Lee government's assault on human rights with one voice (CCDM, 2009). Additionally, Grand National Party are trying to pass seven media-related bills that include restricting freedom of assembly and association, which are guaranteed by the *Constitution*. ChoJoongDong have criticized public assembly as witness in the Candlit demonstration and have supported the seven media-related bills (CCDM, 2009). These issues are ongoing. Furthermore, these days, nationally there are increasing numbers of university professors, religious leaders and opinion leaders who are vocal in demanding no rollback on democracy, a cessation of the dictatorial style of the Lee administration, an official apology from Lee and his party for former President Roh's suicide, and other issues.

Freedom of the press has been a danger under the Lee government. The government oppresses the electronic media especially, the broadcast and internet media. The directors of media related organizations and broadcasting companies such as YTN and KBS have been replaced forcefully with Myung-Bak Lee sympathizers. As a result, the labor unions of YTN and KBS have fought against Myung-Bak Lee's followers. However, the appointed directors have abused their personnel rights. On 16th January 2009, Byung-Soon Lee, the director of KBS, harshly punished eight media workers

including sacking producers (*Hankyoreh*, 18/1/2009). On 6th October 2008, Bon-Hong Koo, the director of YTN punished thirty three journalists including sacking six journalists, one of whom was the chairman of labor union, Jong-Myun Roh (*Ohmynews*, 7/10/2008). The labor union of YTN has been desperately fighting for fair reporting since 18th July 2008 when Bon-Hong Koo, who was the Special Media Secretary for Myung-Bak Lee during the 2007 presidential campaign, was appointed director of the company (*Hankyoreh*, 18/9/2008). On 2nd April 2009, their fight was stopped with the agreement of the labor union and the managerial group.

Electronic media practitioners face harsh treatment including the wanton arrest of television journalists and producers such as Jong-Myun Roh of YTN, 'PD Notepad' producers at MBC and the detention of internet blogger during investigation such as Minerva. They were arrested and released. Moreover, according to media academic Young-Mook Choi, under the Lee government internet sites have been subject to intensive tax investigations. By August 2008, about twenty-four netizens (internet activists) were punished by the law because they campaigned to dissuade companies from advertising in three major dailies ChoJoongDong, which are publishing distorting reports (*Ohmynews*, 7/9/2008).

The Lee government has initiated laws, which have attempted to control internet activists from criticizing the government. These laws can also be used to protect power groups. Also, they can abuse these through legal proceedings of libel or complaints (Sa, 2009b). On 7th January 2009, this was demonstrated by the arrest of the financial blogger, Dae-Sung Park 'Minerva,' who wrote negative comments on Korea's ailing economy policy (He released on 20th April 2009). According to the *Financial Times*,

Minerva has become a celebrated online guru in South Korea during the crisis. He gained instant kudos for what were seen as uncannily accurate utterances on the fall of Lehman Brothers and the crash of the Korean won, which plunged twenty six percent against the dollar last year (*Financial Times*, 2009).

Furthermore, in June 2009, a critic who had been using an internet site to condemn the Lee government and existing power groups was banned by the internet site from writing commentary.

The Lee government has tried to reorganize the Korean media industry by allowing cross media ownership and creating ChoJoongDong's benefit in order to prolong the power of conservative groups (*Ohmynews*, 7/9/2008). The president, the government and the Grand National Party are trying to privatize the existing public broadcasting companies. The Grand National Party is trying to pass seven media-related bills that include allowing newspapers and big business to buy major stakes in terrestrial broadcasting stations. These issues are ongoing. Young-Mook Choi argued that the government uses the above-mentioned forms of oppression to encourage privatization of public broadcasting media and weaken the internet news providers in order to benefit ChoJoongDong (*Ohmynews*, 7/9/2008). The ChoJoongDong newspapers are the major conservative newspapers in Korea and are aligned with the conservative political power group to try to restructure the media industry (*Ohmynews*, 7/9/2008). Choi's arguments have proved accurate: in December 2008 the Grand National Party tried to introduce seven media-related laws. These attempts have however provoked the National labor unions of the media, which staged protests and strikes against the attempts to enact these new laws, resulting in an ongoing media war between the electronic media and the current Lee government.

Conclusion

This paper explored how freedom of the press has developed in Korea since Japanese colonial rule. The history of press freedom in Korea has been characterized by periods of chaos. Since Japanese colonial rule, freedom of the press has been more often restricted than protected by the laws and policies. There have been four main features and forms of restriction since 1910: firstly, severe restriction during the Japanese colonial rule; secondly, experiencing freedom with unstable democracy under the American military rule and the First and Second republics; thirdly, oppression of the military regimes; and lastly, the struggle with capital power since the advent of civilian government. Several decades of Japanese colonial rule, American military rule, and military dictators have influenced the Korean society and the media politically, economically, socially and culturally.

Many Korean media companies especially major conservative newspapers do not perceive their roles as agents of communication but as political power players. However, the media need to be responsible to the general public by playing their roles fairly and by serving citizens. The theory and practice of press freedom in Korea has been at times chaotic and changeable. The problems of Korean society should be solved with Korean laws and solutions. Basically, some laws and policies have been still existed from the authoritarian rule to the civilian governments. However, in practice, such laws vary in degree, depending on the ruling style of political leaders such as the president. This means that theory is not a core issue to democracy but how freedom lives and perpetuates in practice.

Since 2008 political power has returned to the conservative group, the Korean grassroots democracy and press freedom that developed during the liberal rule have been threatened by the dictatorial style of leading groups such as the president, the Grand National Party and major conservative newspapers. These leading groups do not look out for the majority of Korean people and socially weaker groups but look out for the small percentage of dominant groups (ongoing). Freedom of the press greatly influences, for better or worse, democracy. Press freedom without social

responsibility by major conservative newspapers has led to a conflicted society and a threat to grassroots democracy in Korea today.

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Notes

Note 1. This paper is drawn from the Korean literature review of my doctoral thesis at the University of Sydney entitled, "Freedom of the press in South Korea: Perception and Practice - A survey of print journalists' opinions."

Note 2. The systems of Kijasil and Kijadan are developed more fully in Chapter 7 of my doctoral thesis.

Note 3. One chapter (7) of my doctoral thesis more deeply discusses the degree of press freedom in South Korea.

Note 4. Material drawn from: Chang, H-S. (2004). *Freedom and Responsibilities of the Press in Korea*. Seoul Korea: Hanul Publishing Company, p34; Youm, K-H. (1996). *Press Law in South Korea* (1st ed). Iowa U.S.A.:Iowa State University Press, pp.27-77.

Tables

Table 1. Politics, media control and press freedom since Japanese colonial rule (Note 4)

GOVERNMENT / PERIOD / PRESIDENT	METHODS OF MEDIA CONTROL	DEGREE OF CONTROL
Japanese Colonial Rule 1910-1945	· Draconian policy / licensing of publications · Employed press laws actively to make the Korean press serve as its 'forced slave' · During the first 10 years, there was not a single private newspaper in Korea.	Not free Severe restriction
American Military Government 1945-1948	· Liberal policy / licensing of publications · Anti-Communist policy · Koreans had their real experience with freedom of the press. · Promulgated <i>Ordinance No.88</i>, which provided for registration and licensing of publications, including newspapers	Free Some restriction
First Republic 1948-1960 Syng-Man Rhee (Korean war 1950-1953)	· Anti-Communist policy / licensing of publications · Prohibited newspapers from promoting communist-inspired terrorism and subversive activities · A commercial newspaper, <i>Hankook Ilbo</i> started on 9th June 1954. · Closed the leading opposition paper, <i>Kyunghyang Shinmun</i> in 1959	Partly Free
Second Republic 1960-1961 Premier Myon Chang (President Bo-Sun Yoon) A parliamentary system	· Guarantee of press freedom · No conditions on freedom at all · A good occasion for press freedom to grow into full bloom · Almost unlimited press freedom created problems such as the abuse of power by media owners and journalists.	Free

The military regime (Third Republic) 1962-1972 Chung-Hee Park	· Oppressive policy / licensing of publications · Ordered prior censorship of all newspapers, magazine feature articles, comics, cartoons, editorials, photographs, and foreign news in the beginning · Media companies were merged in 1961 and 1972.	Not free Severe restriction
The military regime (Fourth Republic) 1973-1979 Chung-Hee Park	· Oppressive policy / licensing of publications · Proclaimed Emergency Measure No. 4 in 1974, it prohibited “any act to publish, produce, process, distribute, exhibit, and sell papers, books, disks, and other presentations” relating to the Federation and its members · Dismissed large number of journalists	Not free Severe restriction
The military regime (Fifth Republic) 1980-1987 Doo-Hwan Chun	· Oppressive policy / licensing of publications · Used daily “press guidelines” to regulate the media coverage of news events · Enacted the <i>Basic Press Act</i> in December 1980, which was one of the most restrictive laws · Media companies were merged in 1980. · Dismissed large number of journalists	Not free Severe restriction
Sixth Republic (The Civilian Government) 1988-1992 Tae-Woo Roh	· Prohibitions against censorship / revoke registration of publications · Visible and invisible restrictions imposed on the press had been abolished in favor of a greater freedom of information and the right of the people to know, which was guaranteed · The new daily newspaper, <i>Hankyoreh</i> started on 15th May 1988. · Free market was introduced in newspaper industry.	Freedom spreads
The Civilian Government 1993-1997 Young-Sam Kim	· Liberal policy / registration of publications · Although tax investigations were carried out, the outcome was not made public, but rather used to control the media indirectly.	Free Indirect control
The Government of the People 1998-2002 Dae-Jung Kim	· Liberal policy / registration of publications · Tax investigations were carried out the result was reported to the people. · Free to criticize the government, address formerly taboo issues, and expand with virtually no restraint	Free
The Participatory Government 2003-2007 Moo-Hyun Roh	· Liberal policy / registration of publications · Reformed the newspaper law and the press arbitration law in 2005, which emphasized the responsibilities of newspapers to the general public · Tried to distribute media power to encourage media diversity · Opened pressrooms to more Korean journalists · Introduced the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.	Free
The Pragmatic Government 2008-Present Myung-Bak Lee	· Liberal policy / registration of publications · Returned pressrooms to their pre-Roh state · The Grand National Party tries to introduce seven media related laws (ongoing). · Attempts to adopt cross media ownership and to reform media industry (ongoing) · Attempts to privatize public broadcasting companies (ongoing) · Attempts to make laws to control internet activists (ongoing)	Freedom is being threatened Partial control