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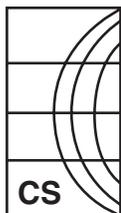
The Making of a Social Movement

Citizen Journalism in South Korea

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abstract: This article investigates the emergence of innovations in the social movement sector by exploring citizen journalism in South Korea. The findings show that the innovation resulted from brokerage activities among journalists, labour and unification activists, and progressive intellectuals. Despite different cultural visions and interests, these groups succeeded in building coalitions and constituted a sociocultural milieu that promoted reciprocal learning by allowing actors to realize new ideas and to exchange experiences. The empirical part of the study is based on a social network analysis of social movement groups and alternative media organizations active in South Korea between 1995 and 2002.

keywords: citizen journalism ✦ democratization ✦ innovation ✦ social movement ✦ South Korea

Introduction

Social movements are a powerful source of change (Rucht and Neidhardt, 2007; Tilly, 1999, 2004). While the political decision-making in modern democratic societies is highly institutionalized and the outcomes are more or less predictable, social movements are often uncontrollable, unpredictable and surprising. They change public discourses, create new problem definitions, collective identities and action repertoires, destabilize political systems and power structures, produce fundamental changes in the cultural environment, shape the historical experience of generations and significantly affect the course of individual biographies (Giugni et al., 1999).

However, protest movements are not only an important source of social transformation, they also rapidly change by themselves. They often surprise opponents as well as governments with unexpected challenges.

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Although most scholars agree that new protest waves are frequently accompanied by organizational, cognitive or tactical innovations (Koopmans, 2004; McAdam, 1983; Snow and Benford, 1992), the majority of studies are occupied with their diffusion rather than with their emergence. If the emergence of innovations is discussed at all, it is usually explained on the basis of a political process model, which focuses on the interaction between 'claim-makers' and 'political regimes' (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 2006): on the one hand, social movements continually bring up new forms of organization, cognitive frames and tactical repertoires; on the other hand, the political opportunity structure constitutes a selection mechanism, which turns down most innovations (Tilly, 2006: 44). Accordingly, only a few innovations are successful. Their emergence is considered a historically contingent product of interactions between challengers and power holders (Tilly, 2004: 12–15).

Although the political process model offers important insights in the historical dynamics of innovation processes, it neglects the situational conditions of their emergence as well as the creativity of individuals and collectives. Innovative actions are rather taken for granted than explained.[1] Furthermore, the research based on the political process model is often limited to protest tactics, while cultural aspects are hardly mentioned (Taylor, 2004: 264–6). Thus, in order to overcome these limitations, we have to move the focus on innovative actions and cultural orientations.

The following study addresses this issue through the example of citizen journalism in South Korea. As a new form of social movement, Korean citizen journalism has challenged serious structural deficits of the mass media and has played an important role in broadening the accessibility of the public sphere for civic groups and ordinary citizens in recent years. Focusing on the process of innovation, this study attempts to shed light on the emergence of the idea and practice of citizen journalism in South Korea. The questions are as follows: Which actors have participated in the development of citizen journalism? What was their motivation? What was the result of their interaction? These questions are answered in three steps. First, the basic concepts of the study are introduced and the historical development of citizen journalism is discussed. In the second step, we examine the changes in the sociocultural environment that favoured the emergence of citizen journalism in South Korea. In the third step, we focus on the interaction of different social agents and concepts that have led to different innovative practices in citizen journalism.

The Programme of Citizen Journalism

This section deals with the role of cultural orientations in the innovation process. The ideational core of innovations are 'cultural visions' (*Leitbilder*)

or programmes that determine the problem-solving behaviour of social groups (Abel, 2000; Dierkes and Hoffman, 1993). For example, in the field of technology, managers, scientists and engineers use such programmes as a 'model and a pattern of solution of selected technological problems based on selected principles derived from natural sciences and on selected material technologies' (Dosi, 1982: 152). In the social movement sector,[2] individual and collective actors are guided by cultural visions and programmes – movement scholars speak of 'master frames'[3] – as well. Alexander (2006) recently pointed out that the programmes of social movements are derived from abstract ideas of an ideal community. For example, the women's movement aims for a society without patriarchalism; the civil rights movement, at a society without racism; the labour movement, at a society without social classes.

Programmes contain assumptions about how the world is made, which problems are relevant, and which methods and standards are appropriate for their solution. They have five important functions for the production of innovations (Abel, 2000: 166–9). First, they guide the organization and coordination of collective actions. Second, by emphasizing particular values, programmes give orientation to individual and collective actions. Third, the difference between programmes and empirical reality, at the same time, raises problems and stimulates the development of creative solutions. Fourth, by distinguishing between 'desirable' and 'undesirable' actions, programmes provide internal and external legitimacy. Fifth, programmes stimulate the formation of collective identities ('communities of practice') by drawing boundaries between members and non-members.

As long as individuals or collectives act within the boundaries of a particular programme, social processes are largely predictable and calculable. For example, the decisions of democratic political systems are usually based on the programmes of the ruling parties. As these programmes change only gradually, the range of radical political innovations is limited. Therefore, the outcomes of political decision-making are rather *incremental* and a concomitant phenomenon of continuous social change (Braun-Thürmann, 2005: 44). In contrast, *radical* innovations are characterized by the rise of new programmes with a potential to shake up the institutional setting of a social field. For example, the programme of political ecology did not easily fit into the classical spectrum of left-right politics. Consequently, the rise of the Green Party reshaped the landscape of party politics in Germany in the 1980s by opening new opportunities for coalitions and conflicts. Since then, ideas of political ecology have gradually penetrated into the programmes of the other, established parties.

Citizen journalism is a programme that aims broadly at enhancing the sensitivity of the mass media to the needs and problems of ordinary citizens. The roots of citizen journalism lie in the programme of civic journalism that

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developed as a reform movement among journalists in the US. Facing the readership crises of the US newspaper industry in the late 1970s, some newspaper executives, journalists and intellectuals tried to improve the relationship between the press and the public by developing new ways of listening to citizens (Platon and Deuze, 2003; Rosen, 1999; Rosen and Merritt, 1995). They perceived the readership crisis as the consequence of a deeper problem in the relationship between the newspapers and the local communities of their audiences. People did not seem to be very interested in local public affairs because they believed that they were not able to bring about change. Consequently, many progressive journalists demanded that newspapers should refocus the 'news coverage on policy issues' and refrain 'from scandal coverage, while creating new public places for citizens to meet and discuss issues' (Sirianni and Friedland, 2001: 194).

The first so-called public or civic journalists acted as advocates for ordinary citizens. They organized public meetings and put specific problems of the local community on the agenda. The citizens contributed to the news process as interview partners and members of focus groups or by raising their voices at public meetings. The reporters tried to learn from the community and to move local issues to the centre of news coverage (Sirianni and Friedland, 2001: 217). However, the process of news production was still under the control of professional journalists and editors.

Towards the end of the 1990s, more and more intellectuals and social movement activists entered the field of media activism and developed the programme of citizen journalism, where ordinary people play 'an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information' (Bowman and Willis, 2003: 9). The activists of the so-called independent media movement criticized the unequal distribution of power and influence between the established mass media and their audience and demanded a higher degree of participation by ordinary citizens (Kidd, 2003; Platon and Deuze, 2003; Schudson, 1999). The new programme turned out to be very successful. Its rapid development was closely related to new opportunities owing to the diffusion of the Internet and the invention of open-publishing. The Internet provided new communication features that helped to close the gap between the professionalized mass media and the audience. Moreover, it offered new opportunities for public communication and participation (Sawhney and Lee, 2005).

Briefly, the first programme of media activism (civic journalism) had been largely dominated by professional journalists. In the second programme (citizen journalism), intellectuals and social movement activists from other fields of society took over. Despite ideological differences, the cultural vision of both programmes was very similar: they shared the diagnosis that the increasing concentration of ownership in the mass

media and the growing influence of 'popular journalism' (Deuze, 2005) were a serious threat to democracy. Furthermore, they agreed that the solution to this problem was largely based on a broader inclusion of the citizens in the news process.

So far, the new concept of citizen journalism has spread to many countries. As an alternative programme, it challenges the dominance of established mass media and traditional journalism. However, there is no common understanding of the concept, except that ordinary citizens actively participate in the process of news production, and the range of practices is broad. They vary depending on whether professional journalists are involved; whether citizens are mobilized for social engagement; whether public forums, focus groups or questionnaires are used; and whether solutions are sought (Kim, 2006). In order to understand the various forms of citizen journalism, it is necessary to closely examine its emergence and development.

Changes in the Sociocultural Environment

Our study deals with the emergence of citizen journalism in South Korea. Since it gained a foothold in South Korea at the end of the 1990s, it has revolutionized the social movement sector, initiated large waves of protest and exerted an enormous influence on the development of the political system and the mass media. Since 2005, citizen reporters have had a protected legal status as Internet journalists. For these reasons, the South Korean social movement sector is not only an interesting case, but also belongs to the group of worldwide pioneers in the development of citizen journalism. Changes in the mass media, the education system and the social movement sector shaped a sociocultural environment that was particularly favourable for the emergence of citizen journalism.

Situation of the Mass Media

The high concentration of the mass media in South Korea is widely regarded as a legacy of more than two decades of military rule until the June uprising in 1987. In order to exert more control over the mass media, the military regime restricted the number of newspapers. After democratization, access restrictions and censorship were abolished (Peters, 2004). Yet the South Korean newspaper market has not fully recovered from the authoritarian past. The market is still dominated by three large conservative newspapers with nationwide distribution. After the limitations for access to the newspaper market had been lifted, the number of newspapers and other media expanded dramatically.[4] However, the Asian financial crisis, which began in 1997/8, ended this growth. From 1995 to 2000, the number of media workers dropped to 36,000, by 12 percent. About

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34 percent of the positions for journalists were cut. Consequently, the number of professional journalists looking for new jobs or new business opportunities was considerably high after the Asian financial crisis.

A further condition for the innovation of citizen journalism was the rapid diffusion of Internet broadband technology. In 1998, the Kim Dae-jung government put the establishment of a highly efficient broadband infrastructure at the top of its agenda. Today, as a result, the level of broadband penetration in South Korea is considerably higher than in most other OECD countries. Broadband technology has two features that are particularly favourable for the development of citizen journalism. First, compared to conventional printing or broadcasting technologies, it strongly reduces the costs of access to the public sphere. It does not take much money, time or knowledge to operate a website or a blog. Second, the bilateral communication features of broadband Internet technology (point-to-point, point-to-multipoint and peer-to-peer) are not only superior to the unilateral features of the conventional mass media but also correspond to the participative ideals of citizen journalism (Luhmann, 1996: 11; Sawhney and Lee, 2005: 398–401).

Expansion of Higher Education

Citizen journalism developed within a changing cultural environment. In particular, the expansion of higher education in the 1980s and 1990s exerted a great influence on the emergence of the new practice. Traditionally, the Korean education system is characterized by a distinct elitism. The occupational opportunities for students who graduate from the few famous universities in Seoul are excellent. The career opportunities for graduates from American or European universities are even better. These two groups occupy almost all top positions in politics, the economy, education and science (Dormels, 2005; Kern, 2005b). In comparison, the prospects of graduates from other universities – especially those from the provinces – are not nearly as good. As a consequence, the expansion of the education system has led to the formation of a highly educated elite whose cultural capital is less recognized. These individuals constitute a new academic elite with comparatively limited career prospects.

What has happened to those who have very little access to leading social positions in spite of their high educational qualifications? On the one hand, educated young people have looked for new opportunities to obtain recognition for their cultural capital outside established institutions. On the other hand, since democratization, the public sphere has constituted a new social space with relatively low entry barriers. Against this background, we must assume that the growth of civil society and the development of citizen journalism in South Korea are in part connected to the rise of the new educated middle class. The most important skill they

have needed to enter the public sphere was specific academic competence: writing, logical thinking, persuading, discussing, etc.[5] In particular, the development of the Internet has opened new possibilities for them to participate in public life. In cyberspace, people do not have to disclose their familial, educational, sexual, regional or economic background. On the basis of their activities, many writers have gained widespread recognition from online communities. In some cases, success in cyberspace has even been a 'door opener' for careers in established cultural institutions.

Transformation of the Democratic Media Movement

The history of the South Korean democratic media movement stretches back to the early 1980s.[6] Some dissident journalists who had been fired from regime-loyal newspapers organized a civic group named the Council for Democratic Press Movement (CDPM)[7] in December 1984. In September 1986, the CDPM founded the *Mal*[8] bulletin, which challenged the repressive press policy of the military regime. Thus, *Mal* significantly contributed to the fall of the military regime in June 1987. In the years following, the political conditions for the freedom of expression improved rapidly as the Basic Law of the Press was abolished (July 1987). Taking advantage of the new opportunities, the CDPM supported the establishment of the progressive daily *Hankyoreh* (May 1988) as an alternative to the conservative mainstream press.[9] The Korea Federation of Press Union (KFPU)[10] was established in November 1988. In 1989, the KFPU organized layoffs in order to strengthen independent editing rights.

With the introduction of the online Bulletin Board System (BBS) in the early 1990s, the democratic media movement entered a new field of contention. In the beginning, progressive students and intellectuals regarded the new communication system as 'a space of liberation'.[11] Existing laws were not able to regulate the new information medium. As a result, Internet media enjoyed much more freedom than the established offline media. In the mid-1990s, the now democratic, but still authoritarian state became increasingly aware of the impact of the new media on the public sphere. As the government tried to introduce new measures in order to increase the control of the Internet, a growing number of Internet activists participated in protest actions. The media activists were not professional journalists in a narrow sense, but rather writers, amateur reporters or students who understood themselves as *citizen journalists.*

Social Agents, Concepts and Practices

Although favourable conditions in the sociocultural environment are an important factor, they are not sufficient to explain the emergence of citizen journalism in South Korea. Consequently, we have to move our focus

onto the innovative actions of individuals and collectives. This is where *networks* come into play. Most scholars agree that the innovation regimes of modern societies are shaped by social networks (Burt, 2004; Powell, 1990; Rammert, 1997; Weyer, 1997). The advantage of network arrangements lies in their ability to disseminate and interpret new information. In order to explain the role of innovative actors from the perspective of social network analysis, Burt (2001) introduces the concept of 'structural holes'. He describes structural holes as weak links between two or more separate groups:

> People on either side of a structural hole circulate in different flows of information. Structural holes are thus an opportunity to broker the flow of information between people, and control the projects that bring together people from opposite sides of the hole. (Burt, 2001: 35)

McAdam et al. (2001: 26) define brokerage as 'the linking of two or more previously unconnected sites by a unit that mediates their relations with one another'. In this sense, the innovative actor is a person or group that 'adds value by brokering the connection between others' (Burt, 2001: 36). As soon as two (or more) previously separated groups begin to exchange information, the probability for the emergence of new ideas and practices increases.[12]

Accordingly, three questions remain to be answered: Who were the agents of innovation? What was their motivation? What kinds of practices resulted from their activities? These questions are discussed in this article based on a social network analysis and a cluster analysis of social movement groups and alternative media organizations.

Social Agents

The following section deals with the leading agents of the democratic media movement who introduced citizen journalism into South Korean society. The empirical analysis is based on a wide spectrum of data sources about social movements since 1987: (1) the volume *Korean Civil Society and NGOs 1987–2002* (2004) by the *NGOtimes* contains an extensive chronological overview of 15 years of protest actions in South Korea. (2) The 'Cyber NGO Resource Centre',[13] an online database attached to the Institute of Democracy and Social Movement of the Sung-Kong-Hoe University in Seoul, also provides a chronological and categorical overview of the democracy movement. Original documents are often attached to the listed information. (3) The online 'Database Search System Related with Democracy Movement',[14] which is attached to the Korea Democracy Foundation, contains a wide range of historical material about movement groups and protest campaigns, including written documents (statements, transcripts of speeches, newsletters, etc.). (4) Two series of 'The White

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Table 1 Selected Protest Coalitions of the Democratic Media Movement

Event	Name of the coalition	Number of groups	Date of protest
1	Solidarity for Progressive Information and Communication	15	August 1995
2	Civil Union against Censorship	23	July 1996
3	Labour Media Committee	21	Nov. 1997
4	People's Coalition for Media Reform	36	August 1998
5	Collaboration Action Group against Information and Communication Censorship	29	July 2000
6	Citizens' Coalition against *Chosun-Ilbo*	38	Sept. 2000
7	Joint Committee against Government Internet Censorship	52	July 2002

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Paper Against Censorship' (1997, 2000) by the Civil Union Against Censorship were also examined.

After checking the sources, the data for social network analysis were selected and arranged according to following criteria. First, great attention was paid to collective actions that had specific issues of democratic media activism as their focus,[15] for example, collective actions against censorship or for democratic media reforms. Another important campaign addressed the coverage of the conservative daily *Chosun-Ilbo* in 1999/2000. Second, the forms of collective action included a wide range of strategies, from building coalitions to campaigns, statements, press conferences and street demonstrations. In many cases, collective actions were closely related to the foundation of umbrella organizations or coalitions.[16] Based on both criteria ('democratic media issue' and 'membership in coalition'), seven key coalitions were selected for a social network analysis (see Table 1). The selected data cover the years between 1995 and 2002. This was the crucial period for the development of citizen journalism in South Korea.

The total number of member groups is 140 (without multiple memberships). According to their issue priority, these organizations have been divided into 10 subgroups: non-profit online service providers (11 groups), online communities (15 groups), multi-issue organizations (8 groups), human rights movement (27 groups), labour movement (14 groups), culture reform movement (23 groups), press reform movement (19 groups), unification movement (8 groups), and academic movement (9 groups), and other groups (6 groups).
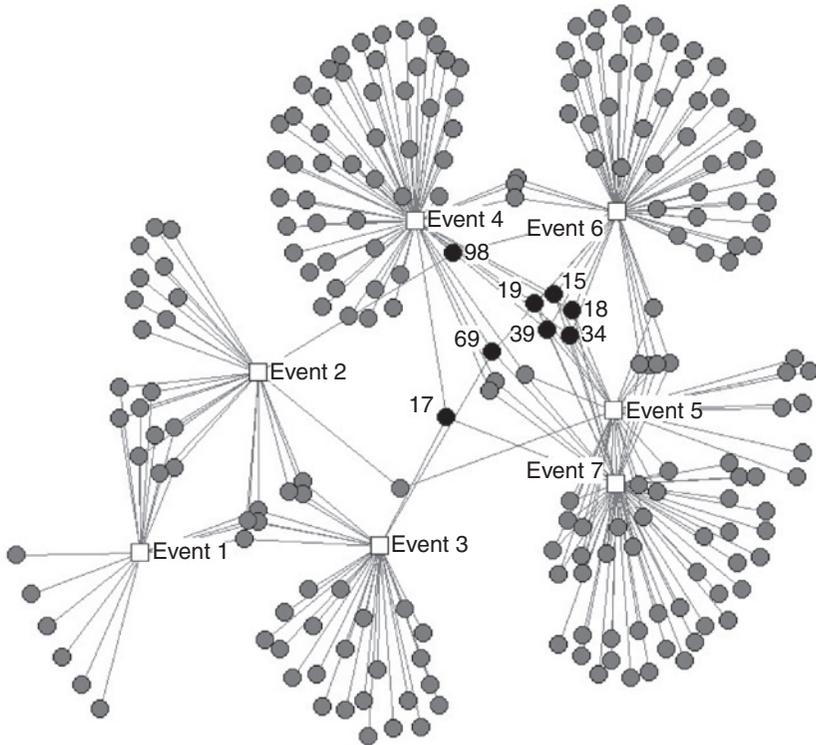
Figure 1 *Affiliation Network of the Democratic Media Movement (1995–2002)**

Source: Authors' elaboration.

*Leading Brokers of the Democratic Media Network: Node 15 = Cultural Action, 17 = Minbyun Democratic Lawyers, 18 = Citizens Coalition for Democratic Media, 19 = National Alliance for Democracy and Reunification of Korea, 34 = Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, 39 = Jinbonet, 69 = National Association of Professors for a Democratic Society, 98 = Korea Progressive Academy Council.

Based on these groups, a social network analysis was applied. Figure 1 displays the cooperation pattern of the democratic media movement in the form of a two-mode affiliation network (groups by coalitions/events). It shows that there are apparently two network clusters. The first cluster consists of events 1, 2 and 3. The second cluster consists of events 4, 5, 6 and 7. Both clusters are weakly connected. This structure is presumably the result of the transition from narrowband to broadband technology in 1997/8. In the narrowband era, the democratic media movement was largely dominated by non-profit online service providers and labour movement groups. After the introduction of broadband technology, many democratic media groups changed their names, uniting or dividing, in order to adjust to the

Table 2 *Leading Brokers of the Democratic Media Movement (1995–2002)*

Organization	Brokerage score[a]	Sociocultural background
Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media	3,174	Progressive journalists
National Alliance for Democracy and Reunification of Korea	4,184	Labour and unification activists
Korean Confederation of Trade Unions	4,360	
Jinbonet	4,480	
Minbyun Democratic Lawyers	3,150	Progressive intellectuals
Korea Progressive Academy Council	3,326	
Cultural Action	3,382	
National Association of Professors for a Democratic Society	6,438	

Source: Authors' elaboration.

[a] The brokerage scores count the 'brokerage events', i.e. every instance where an actor is located on the direct path between two others (from different subgroups).

new technological (and legal) environment. Furthermore, in this stage of development, new collective actors entered the field. Progressive intellectuals and journalists, in particular, gained importance. However, the early users and activists of the narrowband era exerted a strong influence on later forms of citizen journalism in South Korea.

The success of an innovation depends largely on an actor's ability to close structural holes by bringing people with different backgrounds together. For the purpose of this analysis, a group or organization was considered a 'broker' when it linked (two or more) 'distinct groups without having prior allegiance to either' (Gould and Fernandez, 1989: 93; 1994). Accordingly, every instance where one actor was located on the direct path between two others (from different subgroups) had to be taken into account as a brokerage event (Gould and Fernandez, 1994). For example, Group A was considered a broker when it mediated between Group B and Group C. The basic algorithm of this method has been elaborated by Gould and Fernandez (1989; see also Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). As a result, it turned out that eight organizations played a leading role as brokers in the democratic media network (Table 2, see also Figure 1). They cover altogether 69 percent of all brokerage activities. Taking a closer look at these organizations, there are three important streams of democratic media activism in South Korea: (1) progressive journalists, (2) labour and unification activists and (3) progressive intellectuals.

Progressive Journalists. As mentioned above, progressive journalists represent the first important stream of democratic media activism. The Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM, earlier: CDPM) is a leading organization of progressive journalists. After the transition to democracy, this civic group strengthened its main activities to monitor the established mass media and promote media education. In 1999, its monthly magazine *Mal* was involved in a lawsuit with the mainstream daily *Chosun-Ilbo* because progressive reporters had criticized the biased articles of the leading conservative paper. This was the beginning of a heated Internet campaign against the *Chosun-Ilbo*, which culminated in the publication of a critical statement '*Chosun-Ilbo* – Accuse Me', signed by approximately 1700 intellectuals and activists, in the daily *Hankyoreh* in July 2000.[17] In January 2000, the CCDM responded proactively to the growing importance of the Internet and formed a special group that organized seminars on the theory and practice of online journalism.[18] The participants included civic activists who were interested in establishing their own homepage or bulletin board, professional journalists who lived in the provinces and who were trying to learn online techniques in order to improve their economic situation and students looking for job opportunities as online journalists or reporters. In other words, many members of the CCDM actively contributed to the establishment of a knowledge infrastructure for and the rapid diffusion of citizen journalism.

Labour and Unification Organizations. Labour and unification organizations represent the second stream of democratic media activism. The historical and ideological roots of these organizations lie in the Minjung democracy movement of the 1980s. In brief, the Korean word *Minjung* describes the economically, politically and culturally excluded parts of Korean society (Han, 1978; Kern, 2005a; Wells, 1995). In the 1980s, the Minjung movement struggled against the repression of workers and peasants, and demanded democracy, economic justice and unification. Although the movement declined after the transition to democracy, progressive activists and organizations still play an important role in the South Korean social movement sector. The National Alliance for Democracy and Reunification of Korea (NADRK) is a leading organization of former Minjung activists. In the 1990s, the NADRK supported the unification struggle of the student movement, which used the Internet to coordinate its collective protests. When state agencies took measures to enhance control over the Internet, the former Minjung activists – including the NADRK – initiated the first protest campaigns. In winter 1996/7, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) used the Internet for the first time in order to mobilize international support for a general strike. The KCTU was supported by former Minjung activists as well. Encouraged

by the success of the campaign, the Internet activists established the independent Internet service network Jinbonet in 1998.[19] Jinbonet provided free Internet support for civic groups and protection from state censorship, and collaborated in many campaigns.

Progressive Intellectuals.   The National Association of Professors for a Democratic Society, Cultural Action, the Korea Progressive Academy Council and the Minbyun Democratic Lawyers represent the third stream of the democratic media movement. These four organizations consist of progressive intellectuals from the fields of science, education, art and law. Usually, intellectuals are highly interested in the autonomy of the public sphere (Bourdieu, 1991, 1997). However, in the 1990s, public life in South Korea was still dominated by authoritarian thinking, conformism and moralism. Using the opportunities presented by the Internet, many progressive intellectuals established online communities, web forums and bulletin boards where they shared information, initiated free political debates or published articles. The new academic elite mentioned earlier played an active role in this process. In 1997, intellectuals and citizens launched an Internet election campaign to support progressive presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung. In 1997 and 1998, many online newsgroups parodied political actors and made fun of sexual taboos. They opposed the widespread moralism and did not hesitate to criticize the social establishment with 'bad' language. 'Parody' was their protection and excuse. In addition, many intellectuals also supported the campaign against the conservative daily *Chosun-Ilbo* in 1999/2000. The critical attitude of progressive intellectuals towards established elites strongly shaped the cultural image of democratic media activism in South Korea.

Concepts

This social network analysis has shown that journalists, labour and unification activists and progressive intellectuals represent the dominant streams of the democratic media movement. They were strongly engaged in the emergence and development of citizen journalism in the sense that they placed their issues on the agenda, transferred ordinary people's voices to the public sphere and demanded the protection of human rights. By means of their own experiences and practices as media activists, freelancers, reporters, columnists or commentators, they shaped the content and forms of citizen journalism. According to their different sociocultural backgrounds, they had different ideas about how to realize the new practice of citizen journalism. Their concepts varied according to three basic dimensions (Table 3): (1) the purpose of citizen journalism, (2) the production model and (3) economic orientation.

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Table 3 *Three Dimensions of Citizen Journalism*

Dimension	Categories
Purpose	Community building News coverage
Production model	Professionals Non-professionals Mixed
Economic orientation	Profit Non-profit

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Purpose.   The first dimension deals with the *purposes* of civic journalism (Sirianni and Friedland, 2001; Steiner and Haas, 2006): What is it good for? Some activists regarded citizen journalism as an instrument for creating 'civic consciousness' and building online communities in order to promote public discussions and intellectual debates (community building). As these projects aimed to enhance and mobilize online as well as offline participation, they were often closely related to the social movement sector. The other activists – mostly professional journalists – considered citizen journalism to be a tool for gathering and disseminating news (news coverage). They established independent Internet newspapers in order to strengthen media pluralism and to counteract the high concentration of the mass media. Although they often cooperated with other civic organizations and social movement groups, they were usually embedded in the institutional realm of the mass media.

Production Model.   The second dimension concerns the *production model* (Schudson, 1999, 2001): How do activists create and distribute content? Most journalists regarded objectivity and professionalism as an indispensable condition for trustworthy news coverage (professionals). They cooperated closely with ordinary citizens, but insisted on their role as gatekeepers between the citizens and the mass media. Other groups opposed the separation of the two spheres. They promoted a concept that gave activists and citizens control over the publishing process (non-professionals). In the meantime, a third group tried to unite both concepts, for example by instructing ordinary citizens on how to gather journalistic information in a professional way or by introducing review procedures in order to raise the quality of non-professional contributions to online newspapers or communities (mixed).

Economic Orientation.   The third dimension deals with the *economic orientation* of the projects (Hanitzsch, 2007: 374–5; Hardt, 1999). The

crucial question is: Who pays the bills? The founders of many Internet newspapers and online communities considered citizen journalism a new business model (profit). They hoped to make money by attracting advertising (such as YouTube or MySpace). However, most of them were not successful. Others refused to display advertisements on principle (non-profit). In this case, they either had to budget carefully or to rely on the support of labour unions, large civic organizations or political parties, which were able to sponsor comprehensive Internet newspapers on a regular basis.

Practices

The three dimensions theoretically allow 12 new combinations. However, in the empirical case of South Korea, only a few of them turned out to be practical. In order to obtain a more detailed understanding of the different concepts, the 24 most important online projects of the initial stage of citizen journalism between 1999 and 2002 were examined.[20] This selection includes almost all the important citizen journalism projects of this period. In the first step, based on expert interviews and an analysis of websites and Korean research literature, each project was categorized according to each of the three dimensions (see Table 3). In the next step, a cluster analysis was applied in order to identify the different types of citizen journalism. Figure 2 displays a range of between two and six possible clusters with different concepts and practices. The within-group homogeneity and the between-group heterogeneity were relatively high in five clusters. In Figure 3, the five clusters are arranged with respect to the three dimensions. The vertical axis represents the 'economic orientation' (profit vs non-profit), the horizontal axis the 'production model' (professional vs non-professional) and the diagonal axis shows the 'purpose' of citizen journalism (community building vs news coverage).

1. Cluster 1 contains alternative media projects with a high non-profit and non-professional orientation. With the exception of *Seoprise*, all groups have refused to display commercial advertisements. The focus has been on interpersonal exchange, social mobilization and political debate. The projects are mostly dominated by progressive intellectuals. For example, in 1999, the open-publishing watchblog *Urimodu* was established by young academics in order to observe the conservative daily *Chosun-Ilbo*. *Urimodu* was a model for many following projects, in which citizens critically followed the coverage of established mass media agencies. Furthermore, *Urimodu*, *Nosamo* and *Seoprise* emerged several times as the leading actors in large political campaigns.
2. Cluster 2 contains comprehensive Internet newspapers, which are closely related to labour unions or other civic organizations. The
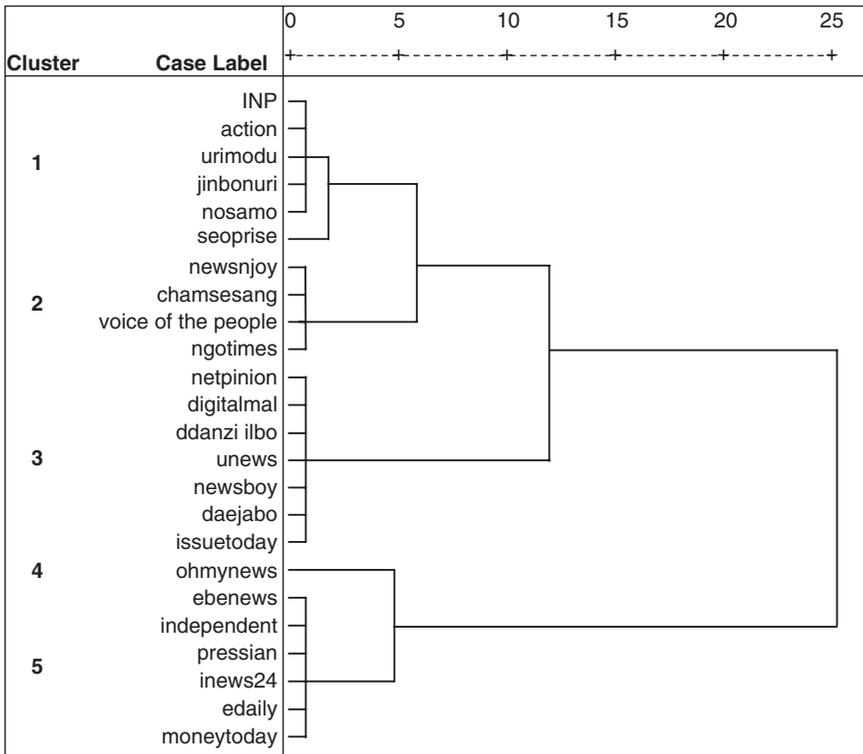
Figure 2 *Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of 24 Citizen Journalism Projects (1999–2002)*

Source: Authors' elaboration. The analysis was conducted with binary coded variables (method = Ward, distance measure = variance).

NGOtimes was originally founded by a leading civic organization[21] as an offline bulletin. It was dedicated to the development of the moderate civil sector. In contrast, *Newsnjoy* represents the conservative Christian wing. *Chamsesang*[22] was founded as an Internet newspaper of the labour movement-related media network Jinbonet. As these examples show, there are wide political differences between the Internet newspapers. Furthermore, both the *NGOtimes* and *Newsnjoy* display banner-advertisements, while *Chamsesang* is opposed to this practice. In all cases, however, the projects rely heavily on the support of civic or labour organizations. They also place strong emphasis on the establishment of a collective identity.

3. Cluster 3 also contains Internet newspapers with a strong community character. Unlike the projects of Cluster 2, those of Cluster 3 have
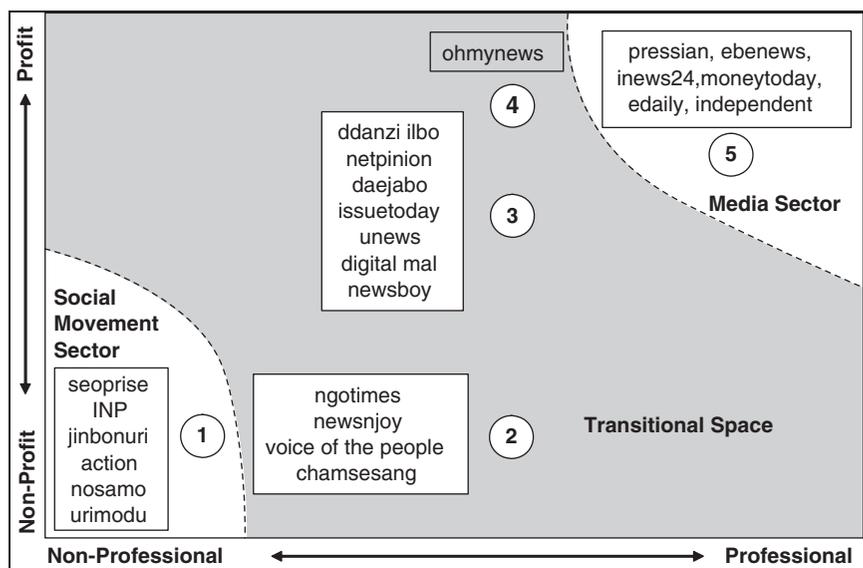
Figure 3 *Five Concepts of Online Journalism*
Source: Authors' elaboration.

mainly been established by progressive intellectuals. They usually offer space for satire, comments and discussions, and most of them rely on the contributions of citizen reporters. The satirical newspaper *Ddanzi-Ilbo* emerged as the first commercially successful Internet newspaper in July 1998. *Daejabo* was founded in January 1999. In the beginning, it was closely related to *Urimodu* (Cluster 1). The very successful and influential alternative media project *Seoprise* (Cluster 1) branched off from *Daejabo* in 2002. Although the projects of Cluster 3 are trying to make a profit, they are usually not very successful.

4. Cluster 4 contains one unique case from our sample. *Ohmynews* is a comprehensive Internet newspaper, based, to a large degree, on the contributions of 50,000 citizen reporters. The newspaper was established in 2000 and is widely recognized as the most successful Internet newspaper in South Korea with more than 2.2 million visitors a day in 2004 (Kim and Hamilton, 2006: 547).[23] It tried to unite the ideas of civic participation with a professional business concept. On the one hand, as a progressive newspaper, *Ohmynews* receives the support of many civic organizations, such as the CCDM and movement activists, who contribute content and articles. On the other hand, it tries to make a profit by competing with established offline newspapers. In our interviews with citizen reporters, we found that the business orientation of the

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organization often leads to conflict with the community orientation of the contributors. However, it seems to work because the founder of *Ohmynews* maintains close relations with civic groups as well as professional journalists. From one side, he receives contributions and articles, and from the other side, professional recognition.

5. Cluster 5 consists of Internet newspapers that have been established by professional journalists. Although they have benefited from the growing popularity of alternative media projects, most are not committed to the idea of citizen journalism. Their orientation is unmistakably commercial, and they work according to professional journalistic standards. In this respect, there is not much difference between them and established offline newspapers. Consequently, their innovation potential is very limited. However, one exception is *Pressian*, the founders of which were involved in the press union movement of the 1980s. Therefore, *Pressian* maintains close links with many civic groups, but it is committed to the idea of civic rather than citizen journalism. It offers only a little space for citizen reporters.

Conclusions

As increasing concentration and 'tabloidization' of the mass media are not only a Korean, but also a global phenomenon, many scholars welcome the growing influence of alternative media projects (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Chang, 2005; McCaughy and Ayers, 2003). However, a large body of literature often interprets the development of citizen journalism (directly or indirectly) as a mere consequence of technological 'progress' or as a response to the structural deficits of the mass media. In the meantime, the authors neglect the creative processes that have led to the invention of new practices (Joas, 1996). In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding, much more attention should be paid to the interaction between innovative actors and their cultural visions.

Innovations are crucial for the development of social movements. The findings of this study indicate that the innovation of citizen journalism was characterized by four developments: the emergence of a new programme, a new action (tactical) repertoire, new forms of organization and the inclusion of new social groups. First, the new programme aimed at broadening the accessibility of the public sphere for social movement groups and other actors. This idea went considerably beyond the earlier framework of the democratic media movement for press freedom in the 1980s. Second, the action repertoire of the social movement sector was considerably enlarged by new discursive practices such as satire, reports, studies, opinions, pictures and films. Third, by combining different purposes, production models

and economic orientations, alternative Internet projects emerged as new forms of organization. Fourth, the social movement was carried by new social groups – particularly the rapidly growing educated middle class.

These findings exemplify the broad innovative potential of social movements. Between 1999 and 2005, the emergence and development of citizen journalism was accompanied by large protest campaigns (Kern, 2005b). In the meantime, citizen journalism seems to be becoming increasingly institutionalized. The Internet newspapers close to the social movement sector have joined the Korean Internet Journalist Association, which protects the rights and interests of citizen journalists. Internet newspapers close to the commercial media market have organized the Korean Internet Newspaper Association. The government has also adjusted to the new movement by implementing a real name system and imposing severe punishments for 'netizens' who disseminate slander or wrong accusations. Furthermore, political parties, the established mass media and big economic corporations have imitated the practices of citizen journalism in order to strengthen their influence on the public. These developments might explain why the wave of citizen journalism seems to have recently slowed down. However, citizen journalism still plays an important role in the social movement sector and it has considerably contributed to the consolidation of South Korean democracy.

Notes

1. Tilly (2004: 14) describes three responsible mechanisms for the continual variation of protest forms. However, they need to be more elaborated in order to explain concrete innovations.
2. The social movement sector includes all social movement organizations within a society (Zald and McCarthy, 1977: 1220).
3. Master frames not only 'punctuate and encode reality but also function as modes of attribution and articulation' (Snow and Benford, 1992: 145). Since they imply 'both new ways of interpreting a situation as well as novel means of dealing with or confronting it' (Snow and Benford, 1992: 146), their emergence has to be regarded as a key to innovation in the social movement sector (see also Gerhards and Rucht, 1992).
4. The statistical figures are taken from the homepage of the Korean Press Foundation: Media Information Facts, available at: www.kpf.or.kr/eng/html/media/facts_2005.php (accessed 31 October 2007).
5. This discussion is related to Bourdieu's (1983) concept of 'habitus'.
6. The basic issue of the democratic media movement is the freedom of expression, information and communication. Activists try to strengthen the

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independence of the public sphere by influencing the content and practices of mainstream media, advocating change and reform in media policy, building alternative media and empowering audiences to be more critical of the mainstream media (Carroll and Hackett, 2006: 88–9).

7. The Council for Democratic Press Movement (CDPM) was renamed the Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM) in 1998; at: www.ccdm.or.kr

8. The Korean word *Mal* means 'speech' or 'statement'.

9. The daily *Hankyoreh* received its start-up capital of 5 billion Korean won from 27,223 stockholders, mostly ordinary people.

10. The KFPU was renamed the National Union of Mediaworkers in 2000.

11. This citation derives from an interview with a media activist (14 March 2007). She has been involved in the democracy movement for over a decade.

12. Burt (2004: 355) distinguishes four levels of brokerage by which a broker can create value: (1) making people on both sides of a structural hole aware of interests and difficulties in the other group, (2) transferring best practice from one social context to another, (3) discovering elements of belief or practice in one group that could have value in another and (4) creating a synthesis of different beliefs and behaviours.

13. Democracy and Social Movement Institute of the Sung-Kong-Hoe University: Cyber NGO Resource Center (database); at: www.demos.or.kr (accessed 28 October 2007).

14. Korea Democracy Foundation: Search System Related with Democracy Movement (database); at: db.kdemocracy.or.kr/kh/ams_hk_02.jsp (accessed 28 October 2007).

15. Meanwhile, the collective actions against the National Security Law (NSL) were excluded from the data because the coalition against this law covers almost all civic groups from all social fields. We must assume that the Anti-NSL Network had no discriminating effect on the development of the democratic media movement.

16. Consequently, the action of a coalition or umbrella organization was counted as a collective action on the part of all member groups (see also Diani, 2004).

17. The signature campaign referred to Emile Zola's famous letter 'J'accuse' in the Dreyfus Affair.

18. For example, Oh Yeon-ho, who was employed as a journalist at the monthly magazine *Mal*, ran a seminar titled 'Making Journalists' between October 1998 and February 2000. Under the motto 'Every Citizen is a Journalist', he taught ordinary citizens to become journalists. Afterwards, he established South Korea's, most successful Internet newspaper to date, *Ohmynews* (Kim and Hamilton, 2006; Oh, 2004a). When *Ohmynews* was established, approximately 150 participants had already been educated as 'citizen journalists' through his seminar. We must assume that Oh Yeon-ho strongly relied on the support of these seminar participants, especially in the early days of *Ohmynews*.

19. The Korean word *Jinbo* means 'progress'.

20. Oh (2004b) offers a comprehensive overview of the different projects of civic and citizen journalism. For this article's analysis, this overview was

supplemented with further important initiatives drawn from expert inter-
views and our own investigations.

21. The founding organization of the *NGOtimes* was the Citizens' Coalition for
    Economic Justice.
22. The Korean word *Chamsesang* means 'true world'.
23. *Ohmynews* has indeed attracted a good deal of attention in the field of
    media and communication studies (Chang, 2005; Kim and Hamilton, 2006;
    Oh, 2004a). Our study treats *Ohmynews* as one particular type of citizen
    journalism among others. A further discussion would go beyond the scope
    of our analysis.

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