JOURNALISTIC CHALLENGES AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS DYNAMICS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

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Abstract

This thesis explores national and international news reporting of a major controversial news story – the sinking of South Korean corvette, Cheonan in March 2010. The thesis draws upon a comparative analysis of major news coverage pertaining to the incident with a sample of US/UK and South Korean media (AP, CNN, The New York Times, BBC, The Guardian, Yonhap, The Hankyoreh Shinmun, The DongA Ilbo). In addition, 18 semi-structured interviews with foreign correspondents and Korean journalists were conducted in order to explore news gathering practices concerning the incident and to investigate factors that influence news production. There has been a growing debate that a paradigm shift in journalism theory is necessary in the post-Cold War era. This study examines how a new paradigm shift might be applicable in the case of North Korea. This study also addresses international news flow and explores the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) in light of media influence in foreign policy. Specifically, this study attempts to investigate the applicability of some filters in the propaganda model in the context of the North and South Korea’s conflict coverage, concentrating on the use of news sources and the impact of new media on journalism practices. This is contextualised by addressing journalistic challenges of covering South and North Korean conflicts.

Key findings are that the dominant news frames identified were conflict frames in international news media and human interest frame in national news respectively. The primary factor that influenced journalism practices at a national and an international level include a journalist’s ideology - one of the most significant factors in news framing. Moreover, a routinized journalism practice, and inaccessibility to North Korea that entailed limited news sources also influenced the ways in which news relating to the Cheonan incident was reported. Some filters of the propaganda model, which are routinized news sources relying on officials and ideological convergence such as anti-communism were operationalised in the case of the Cheonan. The international news agencies also played a pivotal role as primary definer and seemed to influence national and international mainstream media. Correspondents perceived that the Korean news media’s ideological cleavage hampered Korean social integration. On a global scale, South Korea’s security is under the influence of geopolitical power control with peripheral countries. Given the impact of newsmaking on society and
policy making, this study highlights that investigative journalism practices based on gathering ‘facts’ and the personal ethics of journalists themselves are indispensable.
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Last but certainly not least, I thank God for giving me wisdom and for what I have now. Thank you.

I would like to pay tribute to the lost, young, fallen Korean sailors who were implementing a military service duty faithfully in the Cheonan warship.
Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own independent work. It has not been written or composed by another person and all sources have been appropriately acknowledged by giving explicit references. A detailed list of these references is appended.

I further declare that this work has not been previously submitted or accepted in substantially the same form for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.
Chapter 1.
Introduction

On March 26, 2010, the Republic of Korea warship, Cheonan (PCC-722), sank near Bakryeong Island in the Yellow Sea (or West Sea) at around 9.22pm, killing 46 sailors. South Korea faced judgment following the result of a probe by a multinational investigation team, which had been rampant with speculations on the cause of the disaster. Furthermore, the discrepancies between competing versions of the cause of the sinking in the national news brought more speculation and rumours to Korean society. The South Korean government and a joint international investigation team from the United States, Britain, Australia and Sweden concluded that the corvette had been torpedoed by North Korea on 20 May, 2010 (Yonhap, 20 May 2010). A number of major national and international news agencies reported the result of the probe at that time. However, North Korea denied its involvement in the disaster and the UN Security Council condemned North Korea “but avoided blaming Pyongyang” (BBC, 9 July 2010)\(^1\).

The issue of who was responsible for this tragedy has become an ongoing, controversial debate throughout the nation. It may be a surprise to non-Koreans, that when there have been naval battles or North Korean nuclear tests, the Korean public seem to fear a war much less than a typhoon in summer, especially during the monsoon season. Expatriates residing in South Korea seem to have similar fears to the Korean, although foreigners sometimes worry that there might be a war and thus try to leave the country whenever they hear news about a North Korean satellite launching or nuclear tests being conducted. Where I work in broadcasting, there is a Korean radio station and an all-English radio station. Staff at the Korean station did not appear to prepare for any emergency, whilst the English radio production team seemed extremely concerned about what to do in the case of a war. Thus, American hosts at the English radio station said that they would definitely go back home, leaving their shows behind. In contrast, hosts who have lived in Korea for over seven longer years were explaining why there would not be a war despite the news that war was

\(^1\) [http://www.BBC.co.uk/news/10565560](http://www.BBC.co.uk/news/10565560)
likely to break out. Inside South Korea, North Korea’s nuclear tests and the satellite launch are not a threat because their military power is old and they think it is part of their ongoing brinkmanship. However, after the sinking of the Cheonan, there were growing feelings that there was a real possibility of war breaking out because practical military drills by the public were stricter than usual. For example, on the 15th of each month, South Korea has a civil defence drill. According to the National Disaster Information Centre, the drill is to defend and protect the public from enemy attacks and all kinds of disasters\(^2\). On that day, if a siren goes off, you should go indoors, any place, wherever you are. If you are in an office of a building, you should go downstairs to the basement. This practice had been slack so the public and institutions did not follow it very diligently. However, that year, in 2010, after the incident, government officials were much stricter about it. In the broadcasting company where I worked, all staff, including the president of my company, went to basements and waited until the siren stopped. Furthermore, South Korean males have to complete their 26 months military service when they are in their 20s. Even after finishing the service, they become reserve soldiers. They have military drills three to four times a year until they reach the age of forty. During that year, those reserve soldiers received mail saying that, in case of a war, they would have to participate\(^3\). In a similar way, every year during the four days from 20 August to 23 August, public officers or civil servants have what is called a ‘Eul Ji’ drill during which you must come to work in the very early morning and stay up all night at work. During the night duty, you receive and send faxes to other institutions, like the police station or a fire station nearby, simulating a state of war. After the sinking of the Cheonan, the country went into a state of alert and public officers had to do the drill twice that year. Also, if the government issued the draft for all public officers, they had to go to work within one hour wherever they were. In Gangwon province, which is nearest to the North, the government issued an emergency alert.

As described above, after the incident it appeared to many that the government were preparing for war. However, although practicing and experiencing those stricter drills issued by the government, the public did not seem to fear a new war at all. There were criticisms of the government about their untimely and weak reaction towards the

\(^2\) For more information, www.safekorea.go.kr.

\(^3\) For more information www.yebigun1.mil.kr.
North and also, at the same time, the public were eager to know more about the incident, especially after watching the families of the sailors killed. National newspapers conducted opinion polls asking whether people believed that North Korea attacked the Cheonan warship, but public opinion on the issue was contradictory. It seems that this incident represented a watershed which was different to past news of the clashes between South Korea and North Korea. The international news coverage about the Cheonan incident was arguably confusing for most of the public, including myself.

The aim of this study is to explore the implications of the reporting of the sinking of the Cheonan warship, nationally and internationally, and to examine the ways in which news about the sinking of the Cheonan warship was constructed, mainly by foreign journalists in Seoul. This allows me to explore the role of journalism on the Korean Peninsula by questioning why the news about the Cheonan was reported in this way, as well as its impact on Korean society and international communities. More specifically, this research takes a critical view of the warship sinking in a domestic and global context, since China is a new, rising superpower and the Obama administration is initiating its pivot strategy to the Asia Pacific region. Whilst many previous studies about news coverage of North Korean issues frequently adopted framing theory, and analysed news texts as to how they were framed and reported, the influence of the Korean socio-cultural, political and economic factors together with international relations and journalists’ professionalism provided the extended journalism study approaches which this study attempted to demonstrate and explore. Journalism studies were very much concentrated on the media systems, with comparison between countries, in particular, Western countries and developing countries, and news text analysis by predominantly applying framing theory about news related to North Korea, such as nuclear programme tests or any perceived global threat. This research is based on major news production studies and theories about the role of the news media and journalism studies. I have tried to concentrate on the nature of news production in covering the Korean conflicts by interviewing foreign correspondents in Seoul in addition to Korean journalists, in order to investigate the circumstances in which journalism practices and major factors that affect their news framing.
The present research seeks to investigate journalism practices by Seoul correspondents as well as Korean journalists in Seoul, South Korea, with a particular focus of discussing the reporting with those who covered the case of the sinking of the Cheonan warship. The Korean situation is unique. The peninsula is divided into two Koreas and they are technically at war because the Korean War concluded with an armistice, not a peace treaty, with limited accessibility to news materials and news sources. In particular, the Cheonan incident sparked conspiracy theories among the public and the news media. The sinking of the vessel has also emphasized all of the possible conflicts and tensions on the Korean Peninsula - between the two Koreas and between China and the US.

As very limited information and news sources are available, the public cannot help but depend on the news regarding North Korea related issues. North Korea is the most reclusive country in the world and there is no access to any original information about the nation. While the Cheonan warship sinking is known as the most tragic incident to have occurred on the Korean peninsula since the end of the Korean War, the investigative work by journalists seems to be absent compared to other news about North Korea. In other words, it has been proposed that there were different news framing practices in the news, even after the final conclusion about the cause of the sinking of the vessel was announced by the Korean government and the Joint International Investigation team. Thus, this research intends to explore the factors that influenced the journalists who covered the Cheonan issue, and news framing, by mainly comparing three nations: South Korea, the UK and the US. It is necessary to investigate how the news was reported in various nations and why it was framed the way that it was, in order to fully understand news as a social construction of a reality by a journalist in a socio-political, economic context.

1. The sinking of the Cheonan warship: Establishing the ‘Facts’

Events critically reflect social and economic problems (Rojek, 2013), as crises such as the divided Germany 1948-1989, the Vietnam war 1954-1975 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 illustrate, and the nature and reflection of the Cold War, are part of striving after truth (Cottrell, 2003). Hence, through reflection, we, the public, can acknowledge what really lies beneath what we might have lost in the normal
decoding process of events. My research aim is not to investigate whether the conclusion reported by the South Korean government and the international Joint Investigative team, which states that North Korea torpedoed the Cheonan, is ‘true’ or not. Despite the government’s official report, it seems that numerous theories and ceaseless conspiracy theories and conflicting statements emerge on an almost daily basis, in the media as well as in academia, citing naval warfare experts and military analysts from all over the world. Rather, this study aims to examine the reasons that the incident has attracted such public attention, because a few months after the Cheonan sinking, the Yeonpyeong, the artillery shelling by North Korea occurred. Yeonpyeong is an island lying 11 kilometers from North Korean shores, and the North fired artillery bombs on November 23, 2010. Since then, tensions between South Korea and North Korea have been raised much higher than before. In March, 2013, worsening relationships between the two Koreas looked like indications of war breaking out; especially when Kim Jung Eun threatened to nullify the 1953 Korean armistice (The New York Times, 11 March 2013), more than 40 journalists flocked to South Korea from all over the world to cover what might happen, a war on the Korean Peninsula. The Republic of Korea (ROK) naval 1,200-ton vessel (The New York Times, 29 March 2010 said 1,200-ton, The Guardian said 1,500-ton on 27 March 2010, BBC reported 1,200-tonne 28 March 2010, CNN on March 27, 2010 said 1,500-ton, all of the Korean news media said 1,200-ton). The Cheonan sank about 2km south of Bakryeongdo, a South Korean island in the Yellow Sea, at around 9.30pm local time on 26 March 2010, killing 46 sailors. The patrolling corvette was ripped in half. I think this needs to be a new page for each figure

4 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/12/world/asia/north-korea-says-it-has-nullified-1953-korean-war-armistice.html?_r=0
Figure 1. Location of Incident

For the first few days, according to the national news, it seemed that no one knew very much about what had happened. In the first coverage by KBS (Korean Broadcasting System, the Korean public broadcasting company, which is equivalent to BBC in the United Kingdom) ‘Breaking News’ on 27 March, right after the incident, a military official openly showed the operational situation map and a family of one of the missing was put up and shown by the news team, along with speculation about what might have happened. On the map, the spot of the sinking of the Cheonan was asterisked and ‘the first running aground’ was written by hand. On the KBS 9 o’clock news (Korean), it was mentioned that there were directly opposed assertions on the cause of the sinking between the maritime police and the navy. On the second day, military officials said that there was little chance that North Korea had attacked but rather it could have been an internal explosion, because there had not been any unusual movement by the North. Television news reported on the site, saying that rescue teams had stopped searching for the missing sailors because of high waves, a
strong tidal current and darkness, and that the search was postponed to the following day. Later the second day, at night, there were a few words from the father of one of the survivors. He said that it was not an internal explosion, but that there had been an impact from outside. Choi, Won-II, captain of the Cheonan, said that there was a clashing sound and the electricity went off. There wasn’t any explosive smell but only the smell of oil. He said that the ship’s back was broken from falling and that it sank in seconds, while he was locked in a cabin for about five minutes and escaped after breaking the door with a hammer (Yonhap, 27 March 2010). However, the BBC quoted Choi Won-il’s explanation in their report on 28 March 2010 “I was trapped in the cabin for five minutes before my colleagues broke the window in and let me out”.

According to Newsis, the second largest private Korean news agency, in a report by Duk Chul, Lim on 27 March 2010, military officials experienced a backlash from families of the missing over unacceptable explanations for the belated rescue attempts, and approximately three hundred people demanded clarification about who was responsible for this. Together with about fifty people from the news media, they penetrated into the military unit, scuffling with soldiers. The soldiers restrained them at gunpoint. On the third day, 28 March at around 12.00pm, the families arrived at the spot where the incident happened. The Navy Chief of Staff, Kim, Sung-Chan, said that there was little possibility of survival and the families cried and cried and some of them fainted (YTN TV News, 28 March 2010).

On the fourth day, discussing the cause of the sinking, Newsis exclusively reported that there was suspicion that an accidental explosion had occurred during the Korea and US joint military drills. According to the news, lawmakers Kim, Moo Sung and Yoo, Seung Min of the Grand National Party asked the Defence Minister Kim, Tae-Young whether there was any connection between the sinking of the Cheonan and the Korean and US joint military drills. They said that, judging from the fact that the corvette had fired their 76mm artillery, mistakenly, at a flock of birds during the Korean and US joint military drills, there was a possibility that US naval warships and Korean warships were involved. However, the Defence Minister denied this, saying “there is absolutely no connection between the two.” The newsperson remarked that since the naval officials had not publicised the fact that an ‘Eagle’ military drill was being implemented near Bakryeongdo, between the 23rd and the 27th of March, where the
Cheonan sink, it was conceivable that the naval authorities were covering the possibility that naval gunfire during the drill could have caused the sinking (29 March 2010). Even after four days had passed, there was no clear indication of what had caused the sinking.

Following the sinking of the Cheonan warship, the South Korean government established the international Joint Military-Civilian Investigation Group (JIG), including the US, the UK, Australia, Canada and Sweden, to investigate the cause of the sinking. Finally, 55 days after the Cheonan warship sank, the investigation team completed its report and the South Korean government announced firmly on 20 May 2010, “The evidence points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that the torpedo was fired by a North Korean submarine. There is no other plausible explanation.” (Yonhap 20 May). According to the investigation results on the sinking of ROKS ‘Cheonan’ by the Ministry of National Defence, Republic of Korea, the JIG concluded that the South Korean navy ship, Cheonan was sunk by a “shockwave and bubble effect” from an explosion set off by a North Korean torpedo, which caused “significant upward bending” of the centre keel. As further clear evidence shown to the public, components of a torpedo that was found matched that of a diagram that the South Korean military had in its possession, the North Korean CHT-02D torpedo. Also, inside the rear section of the propulsion system were Korean letters “1 Buhn”, meaning number 1 in blue ink, which is similar to the marking on a North Korean test torpedo obtained in 2003.
Although the Korean government officially announced that the Cheonan warship was sunk by a North Korean torpedo, based on the conclusion reported by the international civilian-military Joint Investigation Group, a torrent of suspicion and questions has since arisen. For example, Lee and Suh (2010) maintain that there are a number of problems in the report, and consequently raises the question of possibly fabricated data, which was made to fit the conclusion. Lee and Suh also criticized the computer simulation, tests, electron-dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) and x-ray diffraction (XRD) conducted by the Joint Civilian-Military Investigation Group (JIG), saying that they constituted a CSI-like scientific investigation. In fact, the scientific experiments and analyses were not easy to understand for lay people like me. However, by providing scientific findings and questions, Lee and Suh (2010) demonstrate that there were many inconsistent explanations and suspicious data given as evidence. Whilst there are criticisms of the investigation team’s probe results, Bechotol (2010) points out that the sinking of the Cheonan was a provocation.

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6 CSI: (Crimes Scene Investigation) is a popular American TV crime drama series that premiered on CBS
and this is very important to highlight. He said that there were two key events that happened prior to the attack on the Cheonan warship. The first one was a naval skirmish that happened on November 10, 2009, when a North Korean patrol boat violated the NLL (the Northern Limit line, which I will discuss below) near Daechoeong Island. A South Korean naval ship responded quickly to the North Korean vessel, pounding it with more than 4,900 rounds of gunfire, killing at least one sailor. The second event occurred a few months before the Cheonan attack. It was a large-scale artillery fire exercise that North Korea conducted on the West coast in January 2010. The drills were conducted right next to the NLL and they consisted of coastal artillery pieces, multiple rocket launchers, and self-propelled howitzers. Thus, according to Bechotol (2010), the North Korean provocation could have been revenge.

Even among academic journals, there are continuing debates concerning the cause of the tragic incident and motivations that lay behind it. Previous studies (Thompson, 2010, Snyder & Byun, 2011) show that the Cheonan incident has tested China’s foreign policy and relations in the region. Snyder & Byun (2011) said that the Cheonan sinking can be best explained by continuing concerns about North Korea’s instability, especially with regard to leadership succession, and the consequence of North Korea’s provocations have been an opportunity to show the firm solidarity between allies, the United States, President Obama and the Lee Myung Bak administration. However, there has been little studies conducted with regards to what caused all of the questions and suspicion. The most important aspect of this research is to make one think about the reason that it is only the Cheonan incident that has created all of these endless debates and questions, going on after so many years. As Martin Fackler reported on the “Cheonan effect” in The New York Times on 1 June, 2010, the sinking of the Cheonan brought on an international crisis that has involved the US and China. Also, the Cheonan incident has largely been entangled in political issues. Therefore, it is of significance to reconsider the implications of the Cheonan incident and revisit the ways in which the Cheonan has influenced Korean society, policies and international relations. In order to understand the implication of the Cheonan incident within many theories and questions, I categorized three major dimensions on which to focus. First, I am going to discuss the geo-political dynamics on the Korean Peninsula. Next, domestic political issues with regard to the Cheonan will be explored. Finally, I will examine the ways in which the news media reported on the Cheonan incident.
Doubtless, it might be of significance to define whether or not the Cheonan incident was an attack by North Korea, since so many questions and conspiracies are still in the media discourse, especially in the wake of a documentary film, ‘Cheonan Warship Project: Silence ends now.’ The film was released first at the Jeonju film festival in April 2013. According to a DongA Ilbo report on 9 September, 2013, the Defence Ministry requested that the film not be shown because of the controversial content that the Cheonan was run aground, and also that it dealt with suspicions and rumours. However, the documentary was presented at the festival. Although the South Korean government and the International Joint Investigation team concluded that the North torpedoed the South Korean naval ship on 20 May in 2010, and it has been over three years since the sinking happened, the Cheonan still appears to be sensitive and controversial both to the public and the government, in particular, to military officials. The release of the new film ‘The Cheonan Warship Project’ did not go smoothly. Before its official release, naval officials and the families of the Cheonan victims had applied for a provisional disposition of its release. Looking at the issues around the Cheonan, I began to think about why the Cheonan incident was shown not as an undoubted North Korea attack but as a conundrum with many suspicions behind it.

The public understands the reality of the outside world through the media, hence it would be pivotal to examine the ways in which the news was constructed about the incident. Starting from Water Lippmann with “pictures in our heads” to the agenda-setting theory of McCombs and Shaw (1972) and to studies of media framing, a great body of studies have researched the power of the mediated politics that shapes the public understanding of the world (Williams and Delli Carpini, 2011). Thus, it is imperative that we analyse the news coverage about the Cheonan and the process of news production by journalists, and how news production operates, mainly by international news media in South Korea. In order to discuss the key aspects further, it will be essential to look at the historical and political upheavals on the Korean Peninsula, in particular, explicating the landscape before and after the Korean War.
2. Background: The Korean War between great powers

Historically, Korea has been the subject of greater powers for centuries, located between China on the west and north and neighbouring Japan to the East. The geographical situation surrounding the Korean peninsula has made Korea vulnerable to invasion by big powers outwith. Korea has been a surrogate of various Chinese empires since the Chinese Han dynasty invaded the peninsula in 109 B.C. They often demanded contributions and took royal family members from Korea as hostages. Moreover, Japan invaded Korea, ruled by the Chosun Dynasty at that time, in 1592 and the resulting war lasted for seven years, ending with the Chosun Dynasty’s victory. However, even before a complete recovery from Japanese rule, the Chinese Ching Dynasty attacked Chosun in 1627. Incessant foreign invasions made Korea insist on a closed-door policy during the prince regent Taewon’s rule, 1863-1873. However, Japan assassinated Queen Min in 1895, leading Korea to open her door to western countries (Sheen, 2009, Jung et al., 2011).

Japan’s fear of a rival power, Russia, and its desire to prevent Russia’s military conquest, led it to war with Russia in 1904-1905 and in the wake of the war with Russia, Japan annexed Korea in 1910; the colonization of the Korean peninsula lasted until the end of the Second World War (Williams, 2004). During the Japanese colonization, hundreds of thousands of Koreans were sent to Japan and a continuing debate on Korean sex slaves, also known as ‘comfort women’ for Japanese soldiers, remains unresolved because Japan denies the system of comfort women and consequently, refuses to offer any official apology7. This issue, as well as the Dokdo Island dispute with Japan, often leaves Koreans feeling great resentment. Korea became independent from Japan on 15 August 1945 when Japan declared unconditional surrender and the Second World War ended. However, at the Yalta Conference on 11 February 1945, Stalin promised to fight against Japan and, in return, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union would restore all

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7 Japanese Prime Minister Noda claimed that there is no evidence that Japan forcefully recruited young Korean girls as sex slaves. These women, now elderly, protest regularly in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, asking for an apology. Japan’s brutal and repressive colonization, and their denial of the recruitment of sex slaves, have engendered strong feelings of animosity toward Japan and caused an exacerbation of the conflict between the countries that continues to this day. Also, Korean organizations continue to seek legal measures to force Japan to accept responsibility for this unresolved issue (Cho, 2011, Kim, 2011).
of their authority and rights that they had before the Russo-Japanese War. On 9 August, in 1945, the Soviets began to attack Manchuria and the Korean peninsula and on the following day, Japan accepted the UN’s suggestion, the unconditional surrender. At that time, the US set the 38th degree parallel of latitude. So the Soviet for North Korea and the US for South Korea respectively handled Japan’s surrender and disarmament. It appeared that, even at the end of the Pacific War, the fate of the two Koreas remained undecided.

By July 1945, the United States’ concern about the spread of Soviet influence in the Far East was growing, and on 10 August 1945, two American army colonels were ordered to draw a line across Korea, which followed the 38th parallel, the demarcation line in the demilitarized military zone on the Korean peninsula (Lee, 2001). Lowe (1997) explains that, in the aftermath of the sudden death of President Franklin Roosevelt on 12 April, 1945, Harry S. Truman, without much foreign affairs experience, held the vice-presidency (Truman was President from April 1945 to January, 1953). There is an argument that Truman’s trenchant dislike for communism and hostility to Russia led him to deploy the atomic bomb against Japan partly to persuade the Soviet Union toward a less abrasive policy in Eastern Europe (Cumings 1983: 67-91). According to Lowe (1997), however, the colonel who believed the 38th parallel line was the most satisfactory, the goal of the United States was to prevent the Russians from occupying the whole of Korea and to restrict the Soviet Union from expanding its occupation to the entire peninsula. It seems that containment between the Soviet Union and the United States existed, but there was an agreement between the two powers that the north and south zones divided by the 38th parallel line would be the areas the Soviets and Americans controlled and consequently, both the Soviet Union and the United States did not want to expand the war without achieving a clear-cut victory. Halberstam (2007) called it a failure of Secretary of State Dean Acheson to include non-Communist South Korea in America’s Asian “defence perimeter.” To make the lengthy historical background short, it would be worthwhile to concentrate on the role of China in the Korean War and in the region briefly. There are many revisionists and scholars looking at the Korean War. I am not going to go into much of the debate in detail, rather I would like to cover general facts about the Korean War to prevent my studies from becoming a further debate. As shown above, throughout

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8 The 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee, www.koreanwar60.go.kr
centuries of history, Korea has been a victim of power politics in the region. It looks like it never ends.

In South Korea, the Korean War is better known as the ‘6.25 war’- It began on 25 June. At Dawn on 25 June, North Korean infantry with armed units attacked the Republic of Korea and within three days, Seoul, the capital of South Korea was occupied by the North. Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of Kim Jung Un, the current supreme leader of North Korea, had sought authorization from Stalin in 1949 to launch the invasion of South Korea and Stalin consented. With air support from the Soviet Union, North Korea launched a surprise attack on June 25, 1950\(^9\). In defence, President Truman sent American troops from Japan, and the attack was so effective that it has been said that it may have been the first nuclear crisis against North Korea by the use of nuclear weapons by U.S forces. British Prime Minister Atlee made an emergency trip to the United States and argued against the use of nuclear weapons (Perry, 2006). Truman agreed and instead built up massive conventional arms. In addition, General Douglas MacArthur, who was supreme commander of the UN forces, made a successful Inchon landing, forcing the North Koreans into a retreat to the north. The UN military force, with soldiers from 21 countries, joined the war. They were from Australia, Belgium, Luxemburg, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Greece, India, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Great Britain and the US. As Leckie (1962) points out, the number of ‘dead’ and ‘wounded and missing’ for communist forces is not known; 900,000 and 520,000 are the total number respectively. The Korean casualties alone were approximately 8 times more than the casualties in the Iraq War, where almost every day there was a suicide bomber. Additionally, the Korean War lasted less than 3 years, compared to the years in Iraq. This gives a sense of the scale of the Korean War.

East Asia was secondary to Europe in the U.S struggle with the Soviet Union (Stueck, 2004). Cumings (2010) and Halberstam (2007) note that America intervened this war without a plan and MacArthur, a commander, could not even consider that China would dare challenge them. What was China’s interest in the War? There are lengthy discussions about whether China knew of the North Korean invasion, which means

\(^9\) The 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee, www.koreanwar60.go.kr.
questioning whether or not Stalin informed Mao Tse-tung of the forthcoming attack. Whiting (1960) points out that the transfer of troops from China to Korea certainly shows that Beijing knew of North Korea’s attack on the South well in advance. In addition, the hastened redeployment of Lin Piao’s crack Fourth Field Army from southern to north Eastern China during May and June 1950 indicates that China anticipated direct involvement in the war (1960:45). In terms of Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations, the fact somewhat shows a significant point to look at because a victorious result of the war would serve China’s interests. North Korea launched a surprise attack on June 25, 1950. However, the Korean War, which is rather widely called, 6.25, is not only the North Korea’s invasion on South Korea but also a brutal war game between great powers in the Cold War era. Leckie said “So the decision to invade was made probably by Premier Stalin, whose retouched photograph graced the wall behind Premier Kim’s massive mahogany desk in Pyongyang” (1962:38). As Johnson put it, “It is also worth remembering that what we call the Korean War ended as a war between the United States and China fought on Korean soil”. (2000:140).

Eisenhower was elected, promising to bring the War to an end but he found it difficult to end the conflict (Perry, 2006). In 1953, the North and China agreed to an armistice. This means that the South and the North are still at war because the two sides called a truce to cease the bloodshed. As the documentary ‘Battle for Korea,’ produced by the American public broadcaster, PBS and Malin Film and Television Ltd. framed, the Korean War was a battle of the Western powers after the Second World War and showed international power relations in the context of the Cold War (Choi, 2009).

The Korean War of 1950-1953 reflects China’s foreign policies during the Cold War era. The victory of the War, to China, will definitely mean an expanded communism. Moreover, the conflict can put Chinese Communist power into a position where the Soviet Union, from the Communists, will come closer as an alliance and at the same time China can be a ruling group in relation to the West, mainly the United States. Therefore, the Chinese Communist volunteers into the War represent another rising ruling power group in Asia. As they intended to, the consequences of the Korean War to China shows that even now, the role of China militarily and politically has been playing an important part in international community in both the East and West. Observing the fall of the Soviet Union and the unification of Germany, we look at the
world in a Post-Cold War era. However, the rise of China as many economists anticipated and the new capitalism order bring us a new Cold War. The rising superpower’s highly calculated strategies have been visualized concretely since the Korean War, and through other conflicting events and crises on the Korean Peninsula.

2.1 The Rise of China

Ever since Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese leader who has experience of Western democratic and capitalist prosperity from his early childhood in France, opened up China’s economy in the late 1970s, China has grown in wealth, power and military sophistication, having cooperative relations with many other nations (Vogel, 2011). Vogel (2011) emphasizes his character, which is straightforward and very disciplined, and he speaks through actions. Also, importantly, Vogel stresses that Deng’s youthful experience in France made him very close to the Western world, compared to Mao Zedong. Deng played a significant role in shaping social and economic developments in China. Consequently, the rise of China has become one of the most significant events in international politics in the post-Cold War era (Yang, 2009) and undoubtedly one of the great dramas of the twenty-first century (Ikenberry, 2008). In addition, China’s rise as a new superpower embraces social, political, and economic agendas and has been viewed as one of the most essential subjects in foreign policy, as well as international security, since the 1990s (Kristof, 1993, Christensen, 2006, Cooney and Sato, 2009).

A vast amount of academic research has been conducted on the impact of a new superpower on the world. Nye (2003) strongly emphasizes that China’s growing soft power is never neglectful, and that the United States is losing its place in East Asia, thus the US should pay more attention to East Asia, considering the declining poll results on its positive influence, compared to that of China; the East Asian Summit does not have a place for Washington. In terms of the media discourse, the topic of the rise of China seems to have become one of the hot media agendas. For instance, in January 2012, Jeremy Paxman on ‘Newsnight’ on BBC commented on China’s growing influence in the world and its grand ambition to become a superpower in the 21st century. Moreover, ‘Inside Out London’ hosted by Matthew Wright examined how big-spending Chinese visitors to London are helping to revive the city’s economy; he
interviewed staff at one of the major department stores in London, talking about how staff should treat Chinese customers. For example, Selfridges’ sales team says, “they don’t like sales to be pushy – very important to hand with both hands.” Department stores like Selfridges employ dozens of Mandarin-speaking staff because 150,000 Chinese tourists come to the UK every year and spend five times more than Americans (4 February 2013). Likewise, the advertising companies in the United States must now consider what style of cars Chinese people like. The comparison of GDP per capita and exports of goods and services respectively between China and the United States from 2008-2011 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>3,749</td>
<td>4,433</td>
<td>5,445</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>46,760</td>
<td>45,305</td>
<td>46,612</td>
<td>48,112</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>43,147</td>
<td>35,331</td>
<td>36,238</td>
<td>38,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>19,028</td>
<td>16,959</td>
<td>20,540</td>
<td>22,424</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 1. GDP per capita 2008-2011

GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current U.S. dollars. I modified data from World Development Indicators\(^\text{10}\).

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\(^{10}\) http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD
<table>
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<th>2008</th>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Korea</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(\% of GDP)

Table 2. Exports of goods and services 2008-2011

Exports of goods and services represent the value of all goods and other market services provided to the rest of the world. They include the value of merchandise, freight, insurance, transport, travel, royalties, license fees, and other services, such as communication, construction, financial, information, business, personal, and government services. They exclude compensation of employees and investment income (formerly called factor services) and transfer payments. I used data from World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files for the table. On the World Bank website, the Data section is interactive and shows results by subjects or countries. When we look at the tables, we can see that there is still a big gap between the two countries. However, according to the analysis by the World Bank,\(^{11}\) in 2011, China’s gross national income per capita of $4,940 ranked 114th in the world and stated that over 170 million Chinese people are still living below the international poverty line, which is the second largest number of poor in the world after India. However, with a population of 1.3 billion, China recently became the world’s second largest economy and is increasingly playing a very influential role in the global economy. As shown below, China could overtake the United States as the largest state in 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>China</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>OECD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Trillions)

**Table 3. Projections of GDP, 2005-30 at Purchasing Power Parity in U.S. Dollars**  
(Ikenberry, 2008:36)

As shown above, China’s extraordinarily rapid economic growth has been causing the United States concern, because the United States itself is economically heavily invested in China. In other words, there are already economic ties between the two countries, influencing each other (Cooney and Sato, 2009). Given the fact that, in spite of the low GDP per capita in China, the U.S. and China dominate the list of global billionaires (CNN, 2 March 2013), the gap between rich and poor is extremely wide in China. There is also an argument that it will take China 25 years before it becomes a proper geopolitical actor in East Asia and in the Western Pacific, capable of rivalling the U.S; some say that to close the gap with the US, a more sophisticated Chinese military force and enormous technological advances will be required (David and Grondin, 2006). Apart from China’s rapid economic growth, it looks as though the United States sees China as a threat to American security. According to the report to Congress on the Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2006, the Department of Defence questions China’s intentions, noting that Chinese leaders have not provided an adequate rationale behind a great number of recently purchased arms (Cooney and Sato, 2009). The United States might not be fearful of China yet, because China has been, and continues to be, their trading partner, and China still remains a developing country.
However, analysts and experts seem to anticipate that it could eventually counter the American hegemony. Like other countries, the fear and the threats that the U.S. now direct toward China look like they are based on a situation in which no one knows the future, so they are just being cautious of their future rival potential. It is very difficult to know Chinese strategy and their ambition because they have a communist political system, unlike other, democratic, countries and therefore their policies are not transparent. Because they seem veiled and covered and we do not know them very well, we feel fear. That is why the world, including the US, seems to try to interpret China through its actions and indicating indices, and any kind of engagement with other nations. Thus, it seems vital to focus on Chinese foreign policy in terms of international security, and to understand the directions of the Chinese power game, along with the U.S.

2.2 The Obama Administration’s Pivot to Asia

The US President, Barack Obama, announced that they are ‘rebalancing’ power in the Asia Pacific region, what is called the pivot to Asia. President Obama sees the “opportunity, the obligation, the new challenges and opportunities that will define our future.” According to his speech:

“The Pacific region has enjoyed peace and stability for over 60 years, and in that climate, first Japan, then Korea, and even, yes, now today China have had an environment in which they could develop economically and politically without war or conflict. That’s not a birthright. That is something that was guaranteed, reinforced by the pivotal military power of the United States in that region.”

Thus, they will continue to play a pivotal military role in that region “to keep on with that good thing.” In addition, the report says that the US is shifting its naval presence to the Pacific with carriers, destroyers, attack submarines, and the new littoral combat ship, all going into the Pacific theatre, and there will be a reduction in Marine Corps end strength, reflecting the wind-downs in Iraq and Afghanistan but more of the Marines out in East Asia. Finally, “we sustained or launched new capabilities specifically for the Asia-Pacific region-the new bomber, the Virginia payload module

for the Virginia-class submarines conventional prompt strike and a host of upgrades in radar, electronic protection, electronic warfare, new munitions of various kinds and on, and on, and on, all not only protected but enhanced going forward.” (Deputy Secretary of Defence, Ashton B. Carter’s speech, 30 May 2012).13

Schuman and Scott (1989) said that the Korean War might be hard to resurrect in American collective memory. They asked a national sample of adult Americans to report “the national or world events or changes over the past 50 years.” Their findings showed that while 21.3 per cent reported the Second World War and 11.6 per cent the Vietnam War, only 1 per cent mentioned the Korean War. Choi (2009) points out that the Korean War has been unpopular both in mass media and with scholars, and a large portion of Korean War images have been kept exclusively in communist countries. In contrast, while the Vietnam War has been discussed frequently among critical scholars and exploited by photography, films and other media, the Korean War has been hidden behind the aura of the Cold War. Why then, more than 60 years after the Korean War, are they shedding new light on the conflict? What does the “magnificent” permanent display in the Pentagon to honour veterans of the Korean War dedicated by Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel (U.S. Department of Defence, 18 June 2013)14 tell us now? Since the end of the Cold War, in particular, in the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, due in part to the ‘glasnost’ policy, several former North Korean officers involved in the Korean War have published their memoirs about the war. Furthermore, the newly released information about the Soviet and Chinese roles in the War introduced enlightened views into the study of the Korean War (Weathersby, 1993; Pierpaoli, 2001). It would not merely mean the old Communists changed gestures but also demonstrate the US pivot policy to the Asian Pacific is in practice, the US military shifts to the East as it were, ‘rebalancing’ power in their terms. This is perhaps because Beijing angrily protests against the US and South Korea joint military exercises in the Yellow Sea, as they did before the annual military drills when the Cheonan incident happened in March, 2010.

Obama’s pivot policy to Asia also shows the shifts of the US military and diplomatic standpoints from a traditional European base to a Pacific base, and it demonstrates

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their support for both Japan and the Republic of Korea, a long-standing military alliance to reassure the people from both countries. They will be protected under the US nuclear umbrella because the US and other countries might not want to see Japan or South Korea pursuing their own nuclear weapons program. Hence, it is important that the message has gone out clearly, which is that the region of South Korea and Japan will be protected by the United States from any North Korean nuclear threat.

Feng at Beijing University maintains that “Beijing’s paramount goal in Northeast Asia is to prevent any neighbour from evolving into a rival” (2008:69-70). Feng (2008) argues that the policy is not in compliance with the Chinese ‘good neighbour policy’, but firmly within the Chinese “merchantalist” grand strategy. It means that China is concerned with other rival parties in the peripheral countries. Grave instability on the Korean peninsula could lead to Chinese domestic insecurity. However, Feng explains that as for the issues on the Korean peninsula, China’s biggest concern is what would happen to Korean strategies toward China after Korean reunification. One of the Chinese biggest geopolitical consideration on the Korean peninsula is that Seoul would tilt towards the US and become hostile to China. They think that the Chinese military intervention in the Korean War would rebound on China with hostility if the two Koreas unified. Feng’s arguments imply two key themes. One is that they are concerned about the aftermath of Korean reunification, which means that China does not wish to take any risks by playing an active role in persuading North Korea to come to the table. The other one is that there is a possibility that since South Korea is a very strong ally of the United States, Korean reunification would mean that Korea would be pro-US, and anti-China, because of the Chinese Korean War intervention and subsequently, the US would have even greater power in the region. It looks like Beijing is concerned about this issue.

As for the Cheonan case, it seems that Beijing downplayed the incident and thus did not take a strong stand against North Korea’s attack on the Cheonan. Certainly, Beijing does not want US forces approaching the Chinese border after Korean reunification. In addition, because economic sanctions imposed on North Korea by the United States would increase the North’s economic dependence on China, Beijing wants stability within North Korea, not a collapsed North Korean state bringing a large number of refugees to China (Thompson, 2010, Rich, 2010, McGlynn, 2010).
addition, China was criticized for not reacting against North Korea’s provocations in a timely manner, because inexplicably it took so long for China to say ‘the two Koreas need to calm down.’ It is hard not to get the impression that China was strategically reacting (Doran, 2012).

As Thompson contends, China did not see the Cheonan as a paradigm shift but rather as a part of the continuum of inter-Korean conflict, which has been the same since the end of the Korean War and remains unchanged. North Korea has been called a Chinese “puppet regime” because China has been a key partner for trade and aid with North Korea, so that it does not want to, or have to, worry about a North Korean collapse (Thompson, 2010, Feng, 2010). However, the Cheonan incident offered two important indications. First, North Korea does not seem to be acting as a Chinese puppet regime, although it might happen in the future. In other words, China has failed to influence Pyongyang. China’s failure to persuade North Korea to stop provocative actions comes not from Beijing’s changed policy toward North Korea but from economic logic. It is argued that China has been skeptical about North Korean escalation tactics and its unwillingness to participate in the international community (Snyder and Wit, 2007, Feng, 2010). North Korea has been watching China’s rising power in the social and economic sectors. In order to preserve their regime, the North must have been seeking its way. China would not want North Korea to have nuclear weapons, but they might seek even greater power in the world and Beijing has discovered that it looks like it is possible and it comes from economic growth. This economic logic brought to China power in international relations, empowered military forces and the territory for which they hoped. Therefore, a North Korean issue is a complex one for Beijing.

2.3 Foreign Policy and National interests

Condoleezza Rice (2000) suggested in her journal, “Promoting the National Interest” that American foreign policy in a Republican administration should refocus the US on the national interest and the pursuit of key priorities. These tasks are:

-to ensure that America's military can deter war, project power, and fight in defence of its interests if deterrence fails;
-to promote economic growth and political openness by extending free trade and a stable international monetary system to all committed to these principles, including in the western hemisphere, which has too often been neglected as a vital area of U.S. national interest;
-torenew strong and intimate relationships with allies who share American values and can thus share the burden of promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom;
-to focus US energies on comprehensive relationships with the big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can, and will, mould the character of the international political system; and
-to deal decisively with the threat of rogue regimes and hostile powers, which is increasingly taking the forms of the potential for terrorism and the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

At that time, she had been appointed as National Security Adviser after George W. Bush was elected president. In 2008, she reflected on US foreign policy over the past eight years in her article “Rethinking the National Interest.” She states that the US national interest is democratic states building and restoring an American world leadership role. However, after 9/11, she maintains that there should be some changes in foreign policy, like keeping good strategic ties with nations like India and Brazil, a newly emerging great power (2008:5). In accordance with US national interests and foreign policy under the globalized US security, North Korea continues to be a threat, a potential terrorist. As Rice (2008) states, if some significant transitions in US foreign policy need to be made, what would those be? Considering the Iraq War, no one can guarantee that there will not be a war on the Korean peninsula, according to US national interests and foreign policy addressed above.

As President Bush defined it, the members of the ‘Axis of Evil’ are Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Compared to Iraq and Iran, prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it was revealed that North Korea has the largest military force as well as the most advanced WMD program of the three. For instance, the Active Troops, Active main battle tanks, and self-propelled artillery are only more than twice what can be found in Iraq or Iran (Howard, 2004). In other words, despite the fact that North Korea had a greater material capability than Iraq or Iran, the U.S. chose to negotiate with North Korea, in lieu of a war at that time. Howard (2004) argues that the reason that the US didn’t
invade but negotiated with the North, concerned American foreign policy toward South Korea. On the other hand, according to Victor Cha\textsuperscript{15} (2002) who was President Bush’s top advisor on North Korean affairs, the Bush administration resisted any dialogue with North Korea until it resolved and ceased its uranium enrichment activities. Also, he said that “Kim Jong-Il’s credibility in Washington is not at zero, it is less than zero”. Cha said that Kim Jung Eun is not a reformer and that economic sanctions would not make any difference, as they never have (\textit{AP}, 8 March 2013).

Importantly, Victor Cha said that US foreign policy toward the North will be dependent on the Korean President’s policy. If Park Geun Hye, President of South Korea follows a ‘containment’ policy, the Obama administration will do the same, but if the Park administration starts an ‘engagement’ policy, US will follow suit. Therefore, North Korean issues cannot be separate from politics, US foreign policy and national interests under the umbrella of globalized security (\textit{YTN}, 26 February 2013). In addition, Guy Sorman, one of the most-invited French scholars and philosophers, said that China and North Korea are unpredictable countries and not stable. Thus, a good relationship and cooperation between Japan and South Korea are important (\textit{The KyungHyang Shinmun}, 18 Sep 2012).

As I have outlined above, the issue of North Korea is not only Korean conflicts between South Korea and North Korea but it is also related to US foreign policy as well as Japanese, Chinese and South Korean policy and power relations. In particular, Mandelbaum (2007) states that the deployment of American military power near the border of Russia and China, together with post-Cold War American foreign policy and the US decisions and peaceful policies that they believe, other countries would not fail to agree that it can be so sensitive that it could bring serious consequences. He explicates that each country would regard their steps as legitimate but it can be a threat to opponents, as in the case of American admission of Taiwanese President Lee Teng-huit to the United States in June 1995, which made China to see that US promote Taiwanese independence, although China think it is part of Chinese territory historically (2007:87-88). Furthermore, Livingston emphasises that “Of the presumed media effects on foreign policy...the U.S. foreign policy agenda itself is at times merely a reflection of news content” (1997:6). He adds that the media content does not

\textsuperscript{15} Victor Cha joined Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) as a senior advisor and a professor at George Washington University in US
necessarily create issues out of nothing but that foreign policy agendas are re-rated by news (1997:6). In spite of Livingston’s stress on television news, such as CNN, due to its dramatic visuals, he shows how the news media impacts on the operation of the foreign policy and the dynamic interaction between news coverage and U.S. foreign policy making that could bring about military intervention. In a country like South Korea, which is confronting North Korea and once it was occupied by Japan and its current wartime operational control is in the United States, national policy making can be affected by the U.S. foreign policy and peripheral countries’ foreign policies. Thus, it would be of significance to study what the international media sets and how they frame a news agenda, and how the media interacts with foreign policies.

3. The Cheonan incident – Conspiracy theories

First in this section, it would be worth questioning why, unlike other conflicts between the South and the North, the Cheonan incident generated so many conspiracy theories and questions. Why did the news media conduct polls on the public’s belief about the Cheonan, even after the government’s final report based on the conclusions of the international investigation team? In order to investigate the possible causes of the controversy over the sunken ship, the approaches that I present here are twofold. One is that North Korean issues are merged with political weapons from both political parties. The other is an examination of the national and international news reports on the Cheonan issue. I will show the range of questions addressed with regard to the Cheonan, in order to discuss the reasons the incident brought so many questions later on, during the case investigation period and even after the South Korean government announced its final report.

One of the civilian experts from the JIG, Shin Sang-Chul, who was the highest-profile figure appointed by the opposition party, was removed because he said that the Cheonan corvette had hit a reef, and accused the South Korean government of fabricating evidence and then trying to hide it. He is facing charges of defamation from the navy (The Financial Times online, 31 May 2010).

He said, “I couldn’t find the slightest sign of an explosion…The sailors drowned. Their bodies were clean. We didn’t even find dead fish in the sea…It was the equivalent of a
simple traffic accident at sea\textsuperscript{16}. Shin inspected the damaged ship with other experts on 20 April 2010 but he claimed that he was removed because he had expressed a contrary opinion, which is that the Cheonan hit ground in the shallow water off the Korean peninsula and damaged its hull trying to get off the reef (\textit{The LA Times online}, 23 July 2010). In addition, two South Korean-born US Physicists, Yang, who is a laboratory manager in mass spectrometry at the University of Manitoba in Canada, and Lee, who works at the University of Virginia in the US, updated reports on the Cheonan, claiming some problems with the South Korean investigation. They held a press conference in Tokyo, on 9 July, raising some issues about the JIG investigation and maintaining that “a piece of torpedo propeller with a handwritten mark in blue ink reading “Number 1” in Korean, the smoking gun, is suspicious.” Lee, a professor of physics said that “you could put that mark on an iPhone and claim it was manufactured in North Korea.” On the same day, “the United Nations released a long-awaited statement, condemning the incident, but it conspicuously failed to blame North Korea.” (\textit{Nature online}, 14 July 2010)\textsuperscript{17}.

Donald Gregg, a former US ambassador residing in Korea, maintained that incumbent South Korean president Lee’s policies toward North Korea were tougher than those of his two predecessors, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, both of whom met with Kim Jong-il, and that President Obama had formed a strong relationship with Lee Myung-bak, whom he saw as the dynamic leader of a strong American ally. Gregg also pointed out that one problem was that not everybody agreed that the Cheonan was sunk by North Korea. Pyongyang has consistently denied responsibility, and both China and Russia opposed a U.N. Security Council resolution laying blame on North Korea. He wrote, quoting one of South Korea’s leading diplomats, that “The Lee government has burned all its bridges with North Korea, and has been undertaking hardline policies with no exit strategy. The current North-South relationship resembles a classic game of chicken.” Interestingly, he said that Pyongyang has consistently denied responsibility and that Russia opposed a U.N. Security Council resolution laying blame on the North. (\textit{International Herald Tribune}, 31 August 2010). He conducted an interview live on the phone with a Korean radio news programme - ‘This Morning’ at tbs eFM, an All-English radio programme, on 2 September 2010. He said

\textsuperscript{17} http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100708/full/news.2010.343.html
the Korean government did not report the result of the Russian team’s investigation and simply claimed that North Korea attacked the Cheonan, ignoring the Russian’s team’s input. Why does the official result about the cause of the incident bring all this distrust on the government?

Christian Oliver in *The Financial Times* criticized the South Korean government over the way in which they treated those families who lost their sons and grandsons, headlining “South Koreans see their state as the real monster,” while comparing the incident with the Russian Kursk submarine, which sank in 2000. Bringing up the 2006 huge hit film ‘The Host,’ about a killer monster terrorizing the banks of the Han river in Seoul (as the river Thames in England), he compared the story’s real villain, the heavy-handed South Korean state, to the Korean government itself. This is an excerpt from the article.

“…real South Korea has made huge strides since military dictatorship ended. However, its 22-year-old democracy still struggles to build trust between government and people. The past few days have been a perfect example, treating the families of the lost like a troublesome enemy and dealing with the incident with a lack of communication” (*The Financial Times*, 1 April 2010).

*The Financial Times* harshly condemned the way the families were treated and pointed out that it was the way in which information was relayed that led to the public’s anger and suspicion. Furthermore, the news penetrated the relationship between the state, its top conglomerates, what are called ‘Chaebol,’ and the South Korean media.

“This skepticism about the government and mainstream media has made the web the main forum for dissent and coordinating protest...The supreme challenge for Korean democracy is to steer the cathartic debate on corruption and corporate governance away from angry tweeters and into the mainstream. Until that happens, South Korea will remain an explosively polarized democracy. And the authorities will continue to be blindsided by tortuous conspiracy theories and spectacular outbursts of rage from the masses it refuses to trust.” (*The Financial Times online*, 31 March 2010)\(^\text{18}\).

\(^\text{18}\) http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d77d855e-3d26-11df-b81b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3Qvfe8dYL
The debates on the issue of the Cheonan seem ceaseless. At the same time, however, as the international news media pointed out, public opinion has been very much polarized, especially on issues related to North Korea. For instance, in the Seoul mayoral election in 2011, Na, Kyung-won from the Grand National Party, which was the ruling party in South Korea, asked a question directed to an opposition party candidate, Park, Won-soon, who won in the election, whether or not he believed North Korea attacked the Cheonan warship. Song, Chang-Hun, KBS TV news reporter, remarked that candidate Na made an issue of candidate Park’s view on security (KBS 9 o’clock news, 10 October 2011). There were polls asking whether you thought North Korea attacked the Cheonan or not. This is a very good example of the ways in which South Korea is dealing with issues about North Korea. This kind of prevailing dichotomous political partisanship is very much embedded in Korean society.

4. The role of the media

The role of the media can be explained in many different ways; in particular, the media in wartime, especially in the Cold War era, and media propaganda as a mouthpiece for a government, has been one of the most discussed issues in media literature (Zaller, 1992, Allen, 1999, Allen and Seaton, 1999, Carruthers, 2000). However, in the media on the Korean peninsula, due to circumstances that differ from other situations, and where a journalist is at war on the frontline since the two Koreas are ‘technically’ at war, it is slightly more difficult to apply the shifted literature on media at war in the post-Cold War era to the current Korean conflicts. North Korea’s media, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), is still a propaganda medium for the state and for the leader, now Kim Jung Eun, whilst South Korea has a close-to-Western democratic media system. In particular, in a neo-liberalism paradigm, South Korea has a media system with multi-channels and free competition dependent on advertising revenue. However, when it comes to Korean conflict issues, because North Korea is so closed, the public can rely on the media for more information. Thus, it would be essential to examine media reports by accepting the pivotal role of the media in shaping popular attitudes and beliefs (Gans, 1979, Bennett, 1990, Gleissner and De Vreese, 2005).

According to Park, Kim and Sohn (2000), the Korean media industry has been advancing, and media education and research in South Korea has been continuous for more than forty years. Despite its long history in media studies, similar to that of Western democratic countries, the concepts, theories and contexts developed in the Western countries do not seem to fit in a Korean context, mainly because of Korea’s historical background, the Korean state power during the military regime, and other cultural structures. Due to the division of the Korean peninsula following the Korean War, which happened right after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, the Korean state power became superior. In addition, dictatorial rule for over a decade had long controlled the media, and was the most powerful force in Korean society in the past. Apart from the superior state power, Sa (2009) also emphasized that a "habitus" of Clientelism has been a powerful factor shaping media culture in South Korea. As government officials are from the hometowns of Presidents, it is a very usual reshuffling, and high positions in the media companies are replaced with staff from the hometowns of Presidents.

From this social and cultural background, the role of the Korean media companies has been seen as strong allies with political power through partnership. Park, Kim and Sohn (2010) argue that media companies often played an important role in “making a president” in order to extend their power to the next administration. They criticize the unofficial and rather secretive, private, relationship between the media and the state, which could lead to the loss of journalistic ethics, distorted news reporting, dependence on private relations, and negligence in investigating the truth. The Korean media is still on the threshold of change. After experiencing the economic crisis followed by the IMF bail-out, when Korean people donated their gold jewellery to their country voluntarily, and facing globalization, which was the starting sign of neoliberalism, has the relationship between the state and the media changed? In 2010, Park, Kim and Sohn (2010) raised this question, and concluded that the restructuring of the media system, the rules of market competition, and the functions and operation of media are still under the government’s purview. Starting at that point then, it is important to review the prolonged Clientelism based on regional antagonism, state power and its relationship with the Korean media at this time.
For decades, the intimate relationship between the mainstream media in Korea and political power has been discussed in substantial Korean media studies, largely during the period when the military regime was in control (Kim and Hamilton, 2006:554). Before 1987, the military regime controlled the media with aggressive censorship and economic benefits approved by the state, what is called a ‘carrot-and-stick’ policy (Park et al., 2000). Therefore, restructuring media systems and new measures for highly competitive environments in the neo-liberal market system would seem an urgent matter. Hence, this study will attempt to explore the ways in which news media production operates, in particular, the process of national and international journalists’ news making on North Korea, including the Cheonan incident from day one. Furthermore, this thesis will explore the roles that the news media plays in order to make sense of the ways in which they framed the news about North Korea. It would be of significance to examine if there are any differences between investigating the Cheonan incident and covering other North Korean issues. In order to do that, it is crucial to explore the ways in which news journalists in national and international news media shape the news and construct a reality. What is the nature of journalism practices in Korea, a country which is still technically at war? What kind of role does the new media play if they do? Does the alternative media contribute to Korean democracy?

5. The news media and the public

Public opinion is supposed to be the great engine of democracy, shaping what governments do. In fact, public opinion does influence policy making (Page and Shapiro, 1983, Petry et al., 2004). Hence, various measurements have been used by politicians and the media as an indicator or an index of public opinion. The proliferation of polls would seem to show that they provide an accurate assessment of the popular sentiments of the public, and are very important in a democratic society. In particular, the latest presidential poll results have become an everyday news topic whenever we have elections coming up, although there are criticisms on the inaccuracy and reporting of public pre-election polls in presidential campaigns in political communication.
The literature on the media and public opinion has researched the media effects on public opinion for decades. In particular, among them, a great body of studies has explored the relationship between media coverage based on polls and its effects on voters in political communication (Gunther and Christen, 1999, Irwin and van Holsteyn, 2002, Blais and Bodet, 2006). The findings show that the media power is able to reflect social issues in ways that indicate that the media intend to influence and shape the public mind (Henry and Tator, 2000). In other words, in the formation of its impact regarding public opinion, the media representation of a subject plays a significant role in affecting citizens’ interpretations of the issue. In the same vein, Curran asserts that news media “facilitate the formation of public opinion by providing an independent forum of debate; and they enable the people to shape the conduct of government…The media are thus the principal institutions of the public sphere” (1991:29).

It is rare for South Koreans to visit North Korea, even after reclusive North Korea opened its doors for tourists for the first time on 18 November 1998, due to incidents and constant surveillance by North Korean officials. As BBC news reports, North Korea is one of the world’s most secretive societies (29 September 2011). Under these circumstances, how does the news media report news about North Korea? As Entman (1993) defines it, news frames indicate to the public what to think about, what to look at, and what not to, and how to think about an issue. In other words, news journalists and editors decide what the public will think about and how they will think about it. Thus, a few judgments have already been made before you touch the news; in Entman’s terms, the media “make moral judgments-evaluate causal agents and their effects and suggest remedies-offer and justify treatments for the problems and even predict or forecast their likely effects.”(1993:52). However, Castells (2009) contends that information per se is unlikely to change the public’s attitudes because they tend to obtain information according to the set frames in their minds, so there should be stimuli in order to make people change public emotions and influence their decision making. He states that there were two major frames that mobilized Americans in support of the Iraq War and they were the war on terror and patriotism. Castells maintains that the “Bush administration and the media formed connections between the war on terror and the Iraq War” (2009:169) so the images and frames constructed by the media through those formulated connections were associated in
the public's mind and brought the fear of death to the public. According to Norris et al. (2003), journalists often use ‘conflict’ and ‘economic’ frames to simplify the story lines of complex events, by adopting repetitive ‘personifying’ political conflicts. They argue that after 9/11, the ‘war on terrorism’ frame was rapidly employed in the White House as the new standardized labelling, and was used to categorize “friends” and “enemies” around the globe.

Choi (2009) notes that the news media influence public perception of North Korea, but that the U.S. news media has ignored other positive aspects of North Korea and portrayed North Korea in a purely negative way as a dangerous, radical, and violent country, especially after Bush designated the North as an “axis of evil” to justify his war on terror. He examined the frames of the four newspapers - The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Chosun Ilbo and The Hankyoreh Shinmun constructed in news coverage on North Korea and presidential rhetoric in texts about North Korea. The results showed that without investigation, the U.S. newspapers emphasized the negative images of North Korea, just repeating the ‘axis of evil’ label “like parrots”. Additionally, the dominant frames that the U.S. newspapers adopted, were only the negative characteristics like evil, terrorist, enemy, and blackmailer and made them salient in their news coverage, in accordance with the information that the dominant political institutions such as government and the president used to make decisions for foreign policies. Hallin called this “the hegemonic process” (1994:59). On the other hand, in South Korea, Chosun Ilbo stayed neutral, providing facts and other quoted sources, while The Hankyoreh Shinmun reported how Bush’s remarks could be dangerous and problematic in terms of the peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula. Further, The Hankyoreh Shinmun said critically that Bush’s labels were used “for the purpose of the justification of his national security plan and missile defense plan” (The Hankyoreh Shinmun, January 31 2002).

Lim and Seo (2009) were interested in whether or not the news media’s frames regarding North Korea affected public perception following President Bush’s axis-of-evil speech. They examined how the U.S. government and the news media frame North Korea and what specific frames are transferred to the American public and their attitudes toward the country via the U.S. news media. The findings show that The New York Times framed North Korea as a military threat, a human rights violator, and a
dialogue partner. Importantly, the American public preferred non-military solutions. Consequently, they conclude that “the White House no longer holds hegemonic control over foreign policy discourse, and the news media have enhanced their power to challenge the White House’s framing of foreign affairs issues” (2009, 218-219). Furthermore, Jamieson and Waldman say that “Journalists help mould public understanding and opinion by deciding what is important and what may be ignored, what is subject to debate and what is beyond question, and what is true and false” (2003:15). Therefore, it is crucial to understand and examine journalistic practices in terms of the production of news frames and journalists’ ways of making sense of news events, considering the nature of news production under a technical war situation because the public’s perspectives and opinions about those events depend on the ways that journalists mould and construct news stories based on the available facts.

A few comparative studies of the news coverage in China and the US have been done by analyzing news articles about the Cheonan in The Inmin Ilbo and The New York Times to investigate the political and economic relationship between the two countries (Yoo et al., 2010). In addition, there is also a comparative study of the news coverage about the incident between a conservative newspaper, The Chosun Ilbo and a liberal newspaper, The Kyunghyang Shinmun in South Korea by adopting a semiotic network analysis (Baek and Lee, 2011). However, there has yet to be any research done on a comparative analysis of the UK news coverage and the US news coverage on the sinking of the Cheonan corvette. It is of significance to examine the UK news coverage on the Cheonan sinking because it might be able to show not only different frames constructed by news media outlets but also that the UK and US own the world’s leading news and information providers, news agencies (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998). Moreover, from international communication theory perspectives, both the UK and the US are “Western dominant empires (Said, 1978, 1994) – “the North (Thussu, 1998, 2002)”, constructing ‘Western’ views over “Orient (Said, 1978, 1994)” and “the South (Thussu, 1998, 2002)”. Thus, the challenge of this study is to examine whether global communication theory is applicable in the case of the Cheonan by looking mainly at the use of news sources in news articles, which are an effective tool to frame a news story (Sigal, 1987). In particular, this study is going to focus on the Propaganda Model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) in order to examine
whether the mainstream media manufactures news by serving elite consensus and elite interests. Following the examination of this study’s data through the five filters of the Propaganda Model, I will discuss further the applicability of the Model in the case of the Cheonan incident. Thus, the aim of this study is to analyse the news content and explore the factors that influenced the news production at national and international level and importantly, to examine the international news dynamic in the Korean Peninsula. It would contribute to extending current journalism literature by implementing news framing analysis and approaching socio-cultural-economic-political and historical contexts in the issue of broadly North Korean issues. From these viewpoints, this study formulates the following research questions and hypotheses as follows:

Research Questions:

1. What are the main news sources employed in news coverage of the Cheonan, both nationally and internationally?

2. What are the dominant news frames?

3. What were the primary factors that influenced the news frames?

4. What was the role that the international news media played in the case of the Cheonan?

5. Do digital technologies such as the internet have an impact on news production in international news communication?

Hypotheses:

1. Based on the Propaganda Model, the main news sources of sampled news data in this study are likely to be officials.

2. Based on international communication theories, news agencies and mainstream media are likely to play a role in disseminating certain established narrow frames that serve to sustain the status quo and elite consensus.

3. The new technologies will have an impact on journalism practices.
The structure of the thesis is as follows. First I elucidate the incident of the sinking of the Cheonan corvette as regards the main questions and issues concerning this incident. In order to give contextual information about the current political situation on the Korean Peninsula, a historical overview of the Korean War is presented. Finally, I explore the disputed sea border, called ‘the Northern Limit Line (NLL),’ where previous naval clashes took place in the Yellow Sea. In addition, the great powers’ foreign policies and influence on the Korean conflict are introduced. In Chapter 2, in the literature review, journalism theories and global news communication are discussed in a socio-cultural and international context. In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed description and explanation of my methodological approach. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the results of the news analysis and in-depth interview materials are presented, respectively. Following this, the findings of this research will be shown. The final chapter includes a discussion and conclusions. In the discussion, some limitations on what this research attempted to achieve are discussed and further arguments stemming from what has been explored are presented. In the conclusions, based on the outcomes of this research, I identify a series of major issues and factors that influence journalism practices in South Korea and this research will offer the necessity to revisit the role of journalism in the new media era.
Chapter 2.
Literature Review: Journalism Theories

This chapter explores key journalism literature and theory and provides a rationale for my research, positioning it within studies of international communication. At the same time, under the conflict confrontation between the two Koreas, whether current major journalism theories, in particular, international news communication approaches can be applied to the examination of Korean news production will be discussed. In particular, I examine the international news agencies and intermediation of national and international news media. In addition, I address the political economy of the media, media imperialism and the propaganda model developed by Herman and Chomsky (2002).

1. News as a social construction of reality

Social science scholars say that journalists make news or ‘news is constructed by reporters’. According to Walter Lippmann (1922), one of the pioneers who attempts to explore the nature of news, news is a product of a series of selections by journalists not through objective selections but through conventions.

“To say that a news report is a story, no more, but no less, is not to demean news, nor to accuse it of being fictitious. Rather, it alerts us that news, like all public documents, is a constructed reality possessing its own internal validity” (Tuchman, 1976:97)

Tuchman defines news as a window on the world. Like Lippmann, she maintains that news is not just reflecting a reality but constructing a reality. “Even journalists who are critical of the daily practices of their colleagues and their own organizations find this talk offensive.” (Schudson, 1989:263). Schudson (1989) argues that journalists act as gatekeepers in constructing news in order to ‘pass’ their news item. In other words, news items are selected by journalists and constructed by them in the ways that they see events. Hence, cultural, as well as sociological, perspectives in context need to be
considered because, through that window, the news delivered to the world is defined by the ways in which people who are holding power wish to construct it. In a similar vein, Shoemaker (2006) states that news is a social construct, a thing, a commodity, whereas newsworthiness is a cognitive construct, a mental judgment.

In addition, Allan emphasizes that “news’ does not reflect reality, ‘rather it provides a codified definition of what should count as the reality of an event” (2004:4). He argues that it is crucial to consider the process of news selection because market-based impartiality leads to the objectivity of the practices of the newsroom for the need of the news market and independence from political control, and because there are a myriad of factors that affect the shaping of news content, including journalistic practices of sourcing and narrative writing (Allan, 2004). Hall et al. (1978) also stress that the process of the construction of a news story or topic is significant due to its involvement in the presentation of the article disseminated to the assumed audience. According to Hall et al., the process of identification and contextualization, which means that the news story is encoded within a context of social and cultural frames, is important to be conveyed in terms that not only makes it comprehensible but also maps meaning – making the media message understood by the audience- and that these messages are structured through the procedures. Thus, they assert that the media’s mapping is the ways in which the media defines and interprets an event (1978:54-58). Therefore, it is worth noting that the news is not a simple reflection of reality, as in a Mirror Theory, instead it has been argued that the news structures not only the public’s perceptions but also the frame of social reality (Hartley, 1982, Bennett, 1982).

The concept of the social construct of reality has been embodied since then. In the process, scholars tended to find operational frames in a news text. In particular, for studies related to ideological aspects of the mass media, the news frames become conceptualized and used as a mechanism or a device. The concept of a frame has been adopted by researchers who study the characteristics of media messages and the process of media production. McQuail states that “there can be little doubt that the media, whether moulders or mirrors of society, are the main messengers about society.” (2010:82). Todd Gitlin, defines a frame, saying that “what makes the world beyond direct experience look natural is a media frame” (1980:6). He argues that in a corporate capitalistic society, the media plays a pivotal role in forming and disseminating hegemonic ideology. In addition, he asserts that “frames are principles
of selection, emphasis, and presentation constituted of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” (1980:6). He analysed how the American mainstream news media, The New York Times and CBS News, covered ‘Students for a Democratic Society’ in late 1965. In the beginning, the media selected a positive frame for the group, the New Left. But as the group grew in size and power for the anti-Vietnam War movement and became a threat to dominant elite ideologies, the news media described students as a terrorist group, selecting and making various negative frames salient. Additionally, they relied on statements by government officials. Furthermore, Hallin examined the American media coverage about the Vietnam War in the 1960s and the Civil War in El Salvador and demonstrated how news media coverage of the war in Vietnam, up until 1968, was largely supportive of the war, which was the view of Washington, and rarely published material that criticized official US policy (1989: 25).

2. The media in politics

Castells explains that “media politics is a composite social practice made of media and politics.” (2009:228). He points out that “While politicians feed the media, the media often feast on raw politics, either to cook it for the audience or let it rot, so that the feeders become exposed, thus attracting the interest of the public in both cases.” (2009:227-228). In the same vein, Keane argues that journalists need politicians and governing officials for the raw material that is constantly required to fill space and programme gaps. The relationship between officials and journalists is geared toward attracting public attention, which means constant announcements made by the news source, governing officials. However, he is critical of the way that they are likely to be in search of mutual favours rather than detectors or triggers of political scandals. Therefore, mediacracy that accredited journalists and politicians mutually favours each other hampers the circulation or co-existence of other, different pictures of reality, which is democracy, and does not render the powerful accountable to the citizenry (The Conversation, 1 September 2011,.)

A substantial amount of work has been carried out on proposing models that will explain the factors that influence how journalists cover certain news events, in attempts to enhance our understanding of the production of news stories (Kepplinger

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20 http://theconversation.com/the-hidden-media-powers-that-undermine-democracy-3028
et. al., 1989; Schudson, 1991; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) classified the factors influencing journalists’ news decisions into five levels: the individual level, media-routine level, organizational level, social-institution level, and social system level. The individual level of analysis involves the characteristics of individual people; the routine level is concerned with general patterns of communication work; the organizational level looks at the characteristics of organizations; the social and institutional level examines forces outside of media organizations, such as governments and advertisers; and the social-system level accounts for social structures, ideologies, and cultures. As for the individual level perspective, Bennett (2012) contends that a journalist’s ideology and partisan biases do not seem to be a concern. However, despite this, a poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre for the People & the Press finds that the majority of people believe that their political views have an effect on journalists’ objective news reporting. Taking these survey results into account, he argues that many journalists are more liberal than even the general public, but that they are having difficulties in keeping consistent with their news organizations, such as editors, who are there to “enforce norms of balance and fairness” (2012: 39).

Bennett (2012:41-42) concludes that in reality, journalists write a story to bring the public’s attention to an issue. In his view, then, this is much more important than infusing political biases in the news. In addition, he argues that the Hutchins Commission report on the American press, which emphasized that various opinions should be exchanged face to face and the ‘truth’ to be discovered through local market competition seems to have failed because dominant views are the results of government publicity and interests, and bringing together the views of diverse communities that usually lack face-to-face deliberation is difficult. That is why American news is very much dramatized, with little information and the narrowest choices of various views when they cover events in different situations in mainstream news reporting, although American journalists are considered to be the freest in the world.

Patterson and Donsbach explicitly address the idea that journalists are partisan actors, and the press and political parties were once closely linked (1996:455). However, they conclude that partisan news organizations had nearly disappeared in the modern society of the United States in the late 1990s and there has been a gradual decline for
a long time in Europe, as well. They compared and contrasted partisanship in Europe and in the United States. For example, their study shows that a journalist’s partisanship has little relation to that of news organizations in the U.S. In contrast, in Europe, including Great Britain, there is correlation between British journalists’ political partisanship and their perception of the editorial position of the news organization where they work. They show that the differences across countries in the extent of partisanship are associated with the employment pattern of journalists in different countries. For instance, compared to other European countries like Germany and Sweden, the few British national daily papers are on the political left, while the Daily Telegraph, Times, Daily Mail, Sun, Daily Express, Star, and Today (which ceased on Friday, 17 November 1995) in UK, are on the right.

According to Allan (2004:7), journalists should take democratic control over governing relations. Also, he points out that a journalist has a mission of ensuring that the public are able to draw upon miscellaneous ideas and plural opinions and have a responsibility to provide an abundant ‘pluralistic spectrum of information sources’. Through comparative analysis between Finland and Britain, Curran (2010:14) concluded that more public service regulation, like in Finland, leads to a higher level of public affairs knowledge than the market-driven media systems in Britain, and consequently they better serve the public good. In other words, while the public service media system provides more interpretive journalism, which gives rise to the management of a corporatist consensus, a liberal, market-driven system brings objective journalism based on information and maintains a pluralist political system in a neo-liberal sense.

3. Journalism theories

Earlier theoretical approaches to journalism have been concerned with the role of journalism in a Western democratic society and questions of press freedom in the twentieth century (McQuail, 2010). The first media were newspapers. Hence, the original press theory refers to political power of the press as ‘fourth estate’ (McQuail, 2010:168). The Hutchins Commission of Inquiry which emphasised the social responsibility of the press by highlighting news’ objectivity was set up in 1942 against American newspapers’ commercialism and sensationalism. Social responsibility was adopted by Siebert et al. (1956) as the third theory of the Four Theories. Although the Hutchins Commission examined free expression of the press in the United States and
was critical of the press, it showed its limitation and there was growing necessity of theoretical and practical treatments of journalism and democracy (Christians, et al., 2009). Moreover, according to McQuail, journalists’ ethics and professionalism were another practical principles for sublating newspapers’ commercialism and boosting political independence. However, the codes of journalism consist of limited western value and do not embrace a variety of cultures (2010:172-174). Thus, as Christians, et al. (2009) state, what is needed is to have a theoretical approach in general based on the foundations in normative and political theory. Amid growing scholarly pursuit of normative theoretical approach to the media (at that time, the press) and democracy, the Four Theories were introduced (McQuail, 2010).

The Four Theories are set out by Siebert et al. (1956) in , ‘Four Theories of the Press’. The four theories introduce key typological concepts, “The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do.” They argue that the press reflects the role of journalism in society and the system of social control which are associated with socio-political systems and social values (Christians et al., 2009:3-4). These theories are overlapping conceptually. In brief, the Authoritarian theory refers to the media as a function of an elite group’s propagandic social control. The media under the Libertarian theory plays a role in presenting ‘the truth’ though this may contain pluralistic viewpoints. The Communist theory refers to the media as a government instrument. Lastly, Social Responsibility theory stems from the Hutchins Commission and is similar to the Libertarian theory but stresses the media’s responsibility to society. Petley notes that the Four Theories of the Press underline the role of the press as a ‘fourth estate’. He argues that the purpose of the press is to “help discover truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decisions” (2004:68). Hence, he emphasizes the significance of the role of the media as a watchdog, which is a central component of creating democracy in the media and in the field of journalism. I now turn to explore the key work, the Four Theories, which concerns the functioning of the press.

The Four Theories provides the models to map different media systems in different countries and attempts to reflect the role of the media in society in a socio-political context. However, as Christians et al. (2004) state, the collapse of the Soviet Union, increased the global South’s independence and there has also been an increased
criticism of these theories because contemporary society is more fragmented and complex. Additionally, the classic ‘Four Theories’ tends to fall into patterns of overgeneralization and conceptual narrowness. Others have argued that there should be a shift from the theories to a new reflection of the press (Christians et. al., 2009; Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Stromback, 2005). It is worth re-examining the limitations of the Four Theories in the post-Cold War era, and explore new theories that might fit better with the Korean context which is technically at war and is a highly capitalized and hybrid society, As Hallin and Mancini (2004) say “Four Theories of the Press has stalked the landscape of media studies like a horror-movie zombie for decades beyond its natural lifetime. We think it is time to give it a decent burial and move on to the development of more sophisticated models based on real comparative analysis” (2004:10).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) stress the importance of comparative analysis in social investigation that can contribute to forming a concept and to refining the conceptual apparatus. They contend that most of the literature concerning the media is highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a dominant Western country -mainly Britain, The United States, France, and Germany- yet is written in general terms, as though the models are universal (2004:279). In other words, especially for less developed countries, it is a question of whether the theories developed in the West can be applied to them. Hallin and Mancini introduce three media system models, which are the Liberal Model, which is dominant in Britain, Ireland, and North America, the Democratic Corporatist Model, which is dominant in northern continental Europe, and the Polarized Pluralist Model, which prevails in the Mediterranean countries of southern Europe (2004:67-70).

Hallin and Mancini emphasise that the classification relates to “ideal types” but could be a useful concept for organizing the media and political systems in a comparative perspective (2004:69). According to their explanations, the Liberal Model is one of market dominated mechanisms, resulting in a market driven commercial media.; the Democratic Corporatist Model is an historical coexistence of commercial media and the media associated with social and political groups, which can limit state power. Finally, the Polarized Pluralist Model evidences a strong bond between the media and party politics, thus the role of the state is very strong. Newspaper sales and readership, the relationship between the media and political orientation/parallelism,
journalists’ professionalism and the role of the state were taken into account for the components of the media system models in these theories. However, it has been criticised on the grounds that the models rooted in the Four Theories are lacking in the context of media systems. The models did not consider the size of a state or political contexts, which influence media systems (McQuail, 2005, Potschka, 2012, Richani, 2012). For example, the role of the press in the UK has been applicable to the Liberal model by Hallin and Mancini (Petley, 2013:131). However, in broadcasting the model has limitations. For example, Britain has different political structures and television systems from the United States, which lies in the same category to the UK. Additionally, compared to America, Britain has a strong public service model of television and imposes strict regulation on commercial TV channels. Furthermore, Hallin and Mancini exclude media production and distribution from global market perspectives (Curran, 2011: 44-45). Critically speaking, some of the elements of those components in each model overlap each other. For instance, journalists’ professionalism has several dimensions of definition. One of them is the degree of journalistic autonomy. Thus, it would be worth discussing these factors, therefore I now turn to explore concepts of journalism practices.

4. Journalistic autonomy

Bourdieu (2005) explains the notion of field before he addresses the question of degree of autonomy.

“A field is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field (2005:30)”

The quotation above is originally from a lecture delivered in Lyons, France, in November 1995 entitled “Champ politique, champ des sciences sociales, champ journalistique” (Benson and Erik Neveu, 2005). A field is a sphere of actions and reactions executed by social agents and how they react to relations of the pressures from ‘heteronomous’ and ‘autonomous’ poles, which are economic and cultural forces respectively by constructing, perceiving, forming, and representing those relations. What he meant by ‘social agents’ is journalists, politicians, television journalists. In the
lecture, Bourdieu notes that the field that he analyses is an expanded form, which is the political world, the political ‘microcosm’, which is a social universe equipped with a ‘relative autonomy’. He stresses that the ‘relative autonomy’ has to be taken into account in order to understand the nature of the social universe. In other words, a journalist’s autonomy needs to be considered to comprehend a journalist’s practice. Hence, as he states, it is of significance to know “who wrote them, when they wrote them, how they wrote them, in which language, who defined the canon” (Benson and Erik Neveu, 2005:32) in order to understand a text and to analyse laws, literature, science, art, philosophy or any cultural productions.

Couldry (2003) contends that economic pressures and cultural forces have increasingly influenced the journalistic field and reduced journalistic autonomy, whilst the field plays an important role in cultural production which distributes to the audience. Hence, he argues that the field does not imply a general concept of ideology but the struggle between journalists and other pressures in the process of constructing social objects under the increasing influence of other socio-economic-political forces. However, Bourdieu stresses that among the three fields – the field of the social sciences, the journalistic field, and the political field, the journalistic field is a very weak autonomous field. It means that, to understand what happens in journalism, it is not sufficient to know who finances the publications, who the advertisers are, who pays for the advertising, where the subsidies come from, and so on ... unless one conceptualizes this microcosm as such and endeavours to understand the effects that the people engaged in this microcosm exert on one another” (Benson and Erik Neveu, 2005:33). Thus, taking the concept of a ‘field’, Bourdieu addresses that the producers of the works, the universe of writers, and the ideological background of the writers, such as education, are important elements to know and places emphasis on the importance of journalistic autonomy in its field.

According to Patterson and Donsbach (1996), whilst only 7 percent of German journalists said that pressure from management was important, 27 percent of Italian journalists answered that it is ‘very’ or ‘quite’ important. In South Korea, when the journalists who are based in Seoul were asked, 20 percent of them said that there is no freedom of the press. In addition, the younger a journalist is, the stronger the belief that there is no press freedom. Those aged between 30 and 39 said that “it is impossible” (Sa, 2009). According to the survey of South Korean journalists, the
internal factor that most influences the restriction of press freedom is media ownership, media managers, and media editors. Outside factors that influence journalists’ autonomy are the advertisers and the government. Sa quoted some Korean journalists who participated in the survey. “The press cannot be free from the government’s pressure. Some media do not report the truth in order to protect power groups, and also they release information in favour of them” (2009:5). This is what we discussed earlier, the state and the conglomerates, also known as ‘Chaebol,’ provide the media with large amounts of advertising revenue.

![Job Satisfaction and Perceived Job Autonomy](image)

**Figure 3.** Job satisfaction and perceived job autonomy (Willnat et al., 2013: 8) - % saying “very satisfied”

As shown earlier, the degree of journalistic autonomy and heteronomy can be useful in measuring the forces that influence journalism, and gauging their effects on society. More specifically, Willnat et al. (2013) conducted surveys of more than 29,000
journalists in 31 countries or territories between 1996 and 2011. Figure 3 above shows journalists’ Satisfaction and Perceived Job Autonomy. Consideration of the journalists’ demography—age, education, working conditions, professional values, opinions and attitudes, including new media technology skills, were all taken into account. Compared to other countries, Korean journalists’ satisfaction and autonomy level were both very low. The authors conclude that self-reported competencies of reporters in each nation have correlations with the quality of the news products they create (2013:1).

5. Beyond the Four Theories

However, Hallin and Mancini (2004) criticize two elements of Bourdieu's concept of a field. One is that as in contemporary France, an evolutionary process of fields is already happening through the struggle of agents who are working within the field toward the field of economics rather than politics. It means that the nature of the fields is not predetermined thus, they can change. The other point is that Bourdieu does not pay attention to power. Hallin and Mancini (2004:83) emphasize inequality in access to the media and distribution of power. In other words, media systems are competing with each other for voice and power. Comparing systems in terms of exerting power and influencing others, however, is not considered in the concept of a field by Bourdieu. It is important to compare media systems because the structural imbalance in the media system could mean unfair competition between the systems; in addition to the competition between the media institutions with different media systems. Therefore, this definitely needs to be taken into account.

Critiquing those models and maintaining a shift to a new terrain of journalistic research which is beyond the Four Theories, Hallin and Mancini (2004) conclude that it is still necessary to make substantial modifications to apply those models to reality, but it would be very useful for now to consider these models because they are a good foundation to set up a new model based on concrete research work into specific political and media systems that a researcher may be pursuing. However, in order to apply the models to assess journalistic roles, it would not be easy to gauge the degree of political orientation, autonomy, and professionalism which are components of these models. If a practical measurement is not suggested, they would not be able to function as a useful tool, in practice. Although they have some deficits, the concept that each country has a different political and media system should be taken into
account, and that they should be compared and contrasted first is very important to consider.

Christians et al. (2009) also maintained that there should be a shift from the Four Theories to the new theories beyond the Four Theories. They contend that the articulation of new types of normative thinking is inevitable, which is a new normative reflection of the Four Theories due to the new media division of the Second World War and the fall of Soviet Communism, the post-Cold War era and globalization, Christians et al. (2009) argue that the models by Hallin and Mancini (2004) are mainly a comparative analysis of many countries in Europe and North America. Some developing countries reflect Fourth Theories or its revisions. Moreover, some of the developing Asian countries, Indonesia for example, media systems do not fit the Western developed press theories because of their tradition or Confucian philosophers. Hence, additional nuances and perspectives should be taken account (2009:12-13). Thus, it is necessary to search for normative theories based on the emphasis of the democratic role of the media and different socio-cultural traditions and values of a different nation. Christians et al. (2009) added consensus, autocratic, pluralistic and participatory into the four normative characteristics, which are corporatist, social responsibility, libertarian and citizen participation. From the same root, Schudson makes a definition of journalism as that “set of institutions that publicizes periodically information and commentary on contemporary affairs, normally presented as true and sincere, to a dispersed and anonymous audience so as to publicly include the audience in a discourse taken to be publicly important” (2003:11). Thus, the role of journalism should be considered as a democratic role.

6. Media and democracy

Political communication researchers often regard democracy as a political system that represents the public’s preferences, in particular, in making a decision in election, concentrating voters’ turnout and political campaigns. Among them, some social scientists tend to give more weight to citizen participation and engagement in political discussions whether it takes place at home, a private space, or at work, in the context of informal everyday life, which is ‘deliberation democracy’. The idea of a public sphere is at the heart of any principle of democracy. As the advent of the internet and new communication technologies develop, in “Virtual Communities”, Rheingold had built on the Habermas concept of the public sphere: “The idea of modern
representative democracy as it was first conceived by Enlightenment philosophers included the recognition of a living web of citizen to citizen communications known as civil society of the public sphere (Rheingold, 1993:13).

As Curran explains, Habermas’s early work is not so helpful in terms of the modern political system because his first study is the ideas, which come from traditional liberal theory. In this liberal model, Habermas argues that a bourgeois public sphere came into being in the eighteenth century. He thinks that the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which individuals come together to form a public. In other words, Curran states that through personal interaction and debate in the press, privileged private citizens reach a consensus that influences government (1991:135). However, this public sphere is limited by being socially restricted. According to Habermas, “with the interweaving of the public and private realms, not only do political authorities assume a certain function in the sphere of commodity exchange and social labour, but conversely, social powers now assume political functions. This leads to a kind of “re-feudalization of the public sphere” (Lassman, 1989:40). Habermas’s early concept was criticized and debated because it does not seem to take into account the modern democratic structures. However, his recent work would seem to have been revised according to a contemporary context.

Habermas analyses the critical role of the media in the public sphere, abandoning the early failed concept. His revised understanding of the public sphere does not consist of persons coming together as a privileged private citizens but ‘as a network for communicating information and points of view’ (1996:360). In early 2000, the idea of the public sphere by Habermas (1989) prevailed in journalism studies, employing the theory that in a democratic society there is a space, the public sphere, where the public can discuss and form public opinion. There has been a lot of criticism on the Habermas’ theory, pointing out that it is too idealized and that political bias aspects were ignored. For instance, McKeon (2004) criticises Habermas’s presumption that the discourse and debates are performed by participants who have an equal social status and equal ideological self-consciousness which is the bourgeois public sphere. However, this idealized status will not exist. We are not living in a vacuum. Polkinghorne said that if human beings are living organisms, we cannot live in a closed system. According to the second law of thermodynamics, a closed system tends to be in disorder. In a closed system entropy never decreases so in a high level
of entropy, in a ‘chaotic world’, orders and pattern come into being after battles with each other. These patterns and orders are what we wish to observe (1983:145-147). Hence, humans are like living energy, so the state should be in an open system where air should come in and people from different ideologies and social status come in and out. Eventually, after the discourse and debates, patterns will emerge to be observed. Therefore, the theories of Habermas’ public sphere can be seen as idealized concepts. From this perspective, case studies, as well as comparative studies, are important and they should be added to the conditions of the models of the new normative theories.

7. The role of journalism in the new media era

Sonia Livingstone has conducted a plethora of studies concerning the internet and young people and argues that the social shaping and social consequences of the internet have been the subject of much speculation both in academic fields and among the public (2010:123). Moreover, debates about the internet as either saviour or villain, or transforming society for better or for worse continue (Thussu, 2000, Couldry and Curran, 2003; Dahlgren, 2009, Kahn and Kellner, 2004; Baker, Bennett and Entman, 2002; Fenton, 2010). One of the most important and emerging issues is whether the internet revitalizes democracy or not. On the one hand, in lieu of merely sending messages by media producers to the audience in one direction, the internet has brought two-way communications online by posting audiences’ opinions and comments. On the contrary, there are criticisms of the online news media environment, as well in terms of journalist practices. Curran (2011) claims that the rise of the internet has led to the haemorrhaging of paid jobs in journalism and the current crisis of journalism has been lowering the quality and depth of the news because constraints on time mean there is less time for investigative field work. In the same vein, Fenton (2010) identified that pressure from competitive dynamics has resulted in low-quality journalism. The rise in citizen journalism is an additional challenge to professional journalists as well. However, in terms of interactions between the media producer and the audience and the role of the media audience, such as citizens’ participation in discussing and making media content, the alternative media creates a public sphere and fosters the public’s engagement by contributing to a media democracy.
Chantal Mouffe said in an interview (Carpentier and Cammaerts, 2006) that many people believe that through the new media, especially through the internet, they could realize democracy, but this idea probably stems from a very limited interpretation of democracy. Mouffe said:

“In fact, it (the new media-the internet) perversely allows people to just live in their little worlds, and not being exposed anymore to the conflicting ideas that characterize the agonistic public space. Old and new media are making it possible to only read and listen to things that completely reinforce what you believe in” (2006:970-971).

As far as I understand her interpretation of democracy, deliberative democracy is important but ideally the participants should be exposed to different opinions and ideas. Through discussions by talking and listening to others with an open mind, ‘agonies’ will occur. In the wake of those ‘agonies’ and struggles, a consensus will be achieved. But the new media will attract or mobilize people who are in favour of similar ideologies and attributions and consequently, instead of facing different, opposing opinions and thoughts, there are more possibilities to discuss issues with like-minded people online.

Given that confrontation with agonist pluralism for deliberative democracy is essential, Dahlgren (2009:164-165) argues that internet users (netizen) who live (visit) in a particular fragmented ‘network society’ can play a role such as consolidating a collective identity and the process would risk them promoting, one-dimensional mentalities. He also points out that such mechanisms will not foster the internet’s positive potential for promoting agonistic civic cultures featuring citizens’ vigorous participatory performances. Ettema (2007:144-146) stresses that deliberative discussions must be analysed at the inter-organizational and inter-institutional levels, suggesting a definition of journalists’ mission as a reason-giving actor for mutual responsiveness between institutions or a democratic polity and informed citizens. In particular, he emphasizes the procedural principle in the process of finding common ground together with publicity because Journalism plays a significant role in seeking and offering reasons that neither citizens nor their representatives can resist in order to achieve reciprocal cooperation. The concept of accountability for the realization of deliberative democracy is of significance. Curran (2011:80-82) states that ‘media doing different kinds of journalism can make different contributions to the functioning
of democracy' and introduced four perspectives of democracy – the liberal-pluralist perspective, the rational-choice perspective, the deliberative model of democracy and radical democracy. Radical democracy emphasizes the need for the media to scrutinize not only government but also social and economic institutions, stressing the role of partisan media to encourage people to identify themselves and to make the voice of the marginalized heard. He also concludes that combining the two for contrast within a media system would be ideal to foster democratic media practices, adopting Baker’s synthesized ‘complex’ model of democracy.

A pioneer in the alternative media field, John Downing, approached alternative media as a radical social actor to attempt to practice for social movements in his classic 1984 book ‘Radical Media’. In addition, Downey and Fenton (2003:187) reinterpret Habermas’s revised notion of the public sphere and says that Habermas recognizes both the existence of alternative public spheres and their capacity for challenging domination, highlighting the facet of the radical political potential of the internet. Media power might be part of what is at stake, as Couldry and Curran (2003:7) state, and the mainstream media may be challenged and disrupted by amateur media practices in alternative media. Hence, the ‘symbolic power’ by Pierre Bourdieu, that is, participatory alternative media could contest the concentration of institutional and professional mainstream media power and challenge the media monopoly on producing symbolic forms (Atton, 2007). In other words, considering alternative media is to examine the relationship between dominant, mainstream media performances and marginal, subordinated alternative practice. The power struggle between them is for the arena of media power.

Couldry states that “the media themselves are a social process organised in space’ and therefore may be challenged by other kinds of social processes, such as more inclusive and democratic forms of media production.” (2000: 25). In particular, the borders between producers and the audiences are fading away and now user generated media content has impacted on the mainstream media as well as the media consumers (Couldry, 2010). Arguably this is the case, as Bennett (2003) shows, with the advent of interactive communication and information systems, the distributed property of web sites makes it difficult for journalists to work in a routinized manner in a newsroom. Reporters should incorporate the content of alternative media in their stories, and the empowerment may become widely shared, guaranteeing an important
adjustment to media hegemony theories. The dynamics of the new media are hard to project because all the processes of the new technological communication proceed so quickly and immensely within such a short time. He points out that the importance of the new digital media in contesting power involves more than just their sheer existence as new communication tools within an ontological perspective. Rather, the political impact of emerging new technology media reflects the changing social, psychological, and economic conditions experienced by citizens who use them. Therefore, it is of significance to explore what political impact the new media has on news journalism and society – the public.

Christians et al. (2009) argue that the ‘monitorial role of journalism’ would be still the core task of delivering information to the public, and that role should not be challenged by any in our news media environment. The new online media has been contributing to the diverse needs and uses of the audience. However, in the news media landscape, a lack of news sources and in-depth investigation of the online media are problematic in terms of credibility and uncertainties. In addition, those factors, the competitive market and news institutions pressures that still influence the news, are up for debate. Thus, they conclude that the “facilitative role of journalism, in our account, has been associated largely with encouragement of deliberative democracy at the grassroots level and with encouraging debate and circulation of ideas and information in the public arena (2009:238).” In addition, they emphasize that independent criticism and comments are more important and the internet media cannot possibly represent critical viewpoints in the media spectrum because they see that the internet, in their term ‘personal media,’ cannot play a facilitative role in the mainstream media in the long term. However, it could be argued that some of their views are contradictory. They say that the rapid innovation in the use of computers and the internet for communication was already challenging the dominance of the old media. Then, in contrast, they argue that the internet is not good enough to challenge the mainstream media. It is interesting that they say that the structures of media ownership, political economic critiques, and the patterns in the media discourse include a persistent bias toward the strong role of the state, racism, ethnocentrism, the Cold War framework and reliance on the threat of nuclear war. Fundamentally, what they argue is that a whole new branch of communication law and governance should be created. As shown above, scholars maintain that it is necessary to have a new approach to examining journalistic practices as a new media era arrives with new
media systems, as well as global culture (Christians et al., 2009; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Multiplatformed media and user generated media provoke a series of questions and challenges for those seeking to develop an analysis of media patterns.

8. Agenda setting and Framing

Agenda setting theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their ground breaking study of the role of the media in the 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The most cited description of agenda setting effects is “telling people not what to think but what to think about”. The agenda setting theory posits that the media attention to a particular issue makes the public aware of the issue. Also, the agenda setting concept is that the media makes a particular issue prominent based on the level of coverage, thus the importance attributed to the issue is created for the audience (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). In other words, the media makes a certain issue salient in the public’s mind so the media agenda influences the public agenda (McCombs and Estrada, 1997). The first level of agenda setting, which is ‘traditional agenda setting effects,’ focuses on relative salience and implies the ability to influence the formation of the public agenda (McComb, 2004:13). Although agenda setting has been used and prevalent in communication research over the last three decades, there seems to be growing criticism against the theory. Takeshita (2006) argues that the three major agenda setting process can be problematic because the nature of the agenda setting process is unthinking and the concept is not clear enough to be distinguishable from framing theory. Finally, as the technologies develop and the media becomes multichannel, the public agenda would be fragmented accordingly.

Takeshita (2006) notes that agenda setting theory has three major problems. They are the problems of ‘process, identity, and environment’ (2006:276). The first problem - the problem of process, concerns the nature of the agenda - setting process, particularly, the degree to which the agenda-setting process is automatic and unthinking; the identity problem concerns the blurred concept between agenda setting and framing; the environment problem is a concern that as communicational technologies develop and the media becomes multichannel, the public agenda would become fragmented, accordingly (Takeshita, 2006). As for the problem of the process, Scheufele (2000) points out that the transfer from the media agenda to the public agenda can be problematic in terms of the measurement because the public agenda
is measured by an individual media audience’s self-report about their schema/perceived recall (Shoemaker and Reece, 1996), whilst the media agenda is measured by words counts on a computer screen (Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). The agenda setting theory has been developed, and McCombs et al. (1998) introduced the second level agenda setting, which pays more to attribute salience of an issue. The first level agenda setting highlights the media’s salience of a topic while the second level agenda setting emphasises the media’s influence on salient attributes of a particular issue. That is why it is debatable that the second level agenda setting, which is also called ‘priming’ has blurred lines with framing theory. It has been argued that framing is a refined version of the agenda setting theory and both the agenda setting theory and framing falls under the umbrella of agenda setting (McCombs et al., 1997; McCombs, 2007; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007) However, Price and Tewksbury differentiate the two concept as follows:

Agenda setting looks on story selection as a determinant of public perceptions of issue importance and, indirectly through priming, evaluations of political leaders. Framing focuses not on which topics or issues are selected for coverage by the news media, but instead on the particular ways those issues are presented (1997:184). Attribute agenda setting, which is also called second-level agenda setting or media priming or attribute priming, are derived from the traditional theory of agenda setting by McComb and Shaw (1972). A concept of agenda setting is a useful research tool to examine public opinion processes as well as the media effects, in particular, in electoral campaigns. However, it is necessary to differentiate framing theory from the second agenda setting. Because priming is salient attributes of an object and the public who is exposed to the prominent attributes can easily recall them. However, a media frame is “the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Tankard, et al, 1991:3).

Framing is a process of organising ideas or systemizing messages in media content in order to transfer a media producer’s interpretation of a particular issue. Entman states that to frame is to select certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient to promote the definition that they made within the selector’s framework (1993). Thus, according to Scheufele and Tewksbury, “an integral part of the agenda-setting story is how news reports portray, and how people understand, issues. Research in
framing may certainly inform how those processes work and how they influence agenda setting” (2007:17). In political communication, in particular, the agenda setting theory supports the effects of a media campaign. For instance, the media set a specific agenda or attributes in favour of a Presidential candidate that they support and the voters will be influenced by the attributes promoted by the media. Although agenda setting theory has limitations and receives criticism, it has been placed as one of the most influential paradigms from the aspect of the media effects on the audience/the public in media and communications research for over three decades (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008; Jennings and Miron, 2004, Walgrave and Aelst, 2006). In addition, both first and second agenda setting theory and framing theory plays an important role in understanding the relationship between the media message and its impact on the public perception. The core issue here is that as Song argues, while the media plays a role in forming the public agenda as explicated in the agenda-setting theory, ‘who sets the media agenda to begin with’ is a question to be raised (2007:75). Likewise, the most significant fact to be addressed in framing theory is that the media producers, as journalists and news institutions, set the agenda and have frames in their media messages that they produce. Hence, it is worthwhile to reconsider the reasons that the subject (i.e. journalists) who sets an agenda and who frames the agenda as well as what the agenda is and why they set the frame because ‘setting an agenda’ has a connotation that the subject might have a particular intention.

As discussed above, according to agenda setting theory, the media tells the public what to think about, a topic or issue. In framing theory, the media or journalist frames the agenda or issue based on his/her ideological or psychological context along with other influential factors (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). It means that a news agenda can be highlighted with attributes, which is the process of making an issue or attribute salient while framing, which is a generalized interpretation of a subject or an issue being constructed in the news by journalists. In other words, the difference between the two is that an agenda or attribute can be a component of the issue whilst framing is integration of frames as a whole. Thus, it would be delineated that framing denotes perspective as a whole view, “the substance of a particular issue”, as Pan and Kosicki (1993:58-59) pointed out. Through the process of gatekeeping and news selection, news values are determined and constructed by making some aspects salient. (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980). In order to define an issue and make it comprehensible or to promote a certain value and message, frames,
“scattered conceptualization” are constructed by making some aspects salient. Entman (1993) stresses that framing has important implications for political communication because it can exert great social power and can lead the audience to have different reactions. Moreover, he says that the public is not well-informed and cognitively active. Hence, framing heavily influences the public responses to communications (Entman, 1993:55-56). Thus, a research question concerning what factors influenced the way journalists, or other societal groups, framed the issue will be explored in the case of the Cheonan news.

Agenda setting is one of the most valuable theoretical frameworks in communication research, as it is quoted the most in media and communication journals. However, as I have discussed so far, I would say that framing theory is an interpretative paradigm enabling an investigative understanding for a text of many texts. Borah (2011) points out that although framing theory has been criticized a great deal by many scholars, there have been very few systematic examinations of the published literature. Thus, Borah examined 93 peer-reviewed journals identified as communication journals for a decade by text analysis. The finding shows that the most common type of method in framing analysis was content analysis (61.5%), followed by experiments (19.8%), which concentrated more on the examination of a message design. The important point from the findings is that framing studies should pay attention to the various aspects, such as "interaction of organizational and ideological factors, gender of the reporters, or cultural repertoires"(Borah,2011:256) that influence media frames rather than just examining the media content, although the fundamental concept of framing is to examine the media message. Thus, this study aims to examine not only the news content but also the dominant factors that influence news content.

9. Factors that influence the news frames

At this point, I turn to explore American critical literature about those factors in journalism that influence news frames. According to Shoemaker and Reece (1996), there are several factors that influence the ways in which news stories are framed and shaped by journalists. These factors can be divided into internal and external factors. In addition, they set up five dimensional models. As to external factors, they are individual, media routines, news organizations, extra media and ideological dimensions. Internal factors that influence journalistic news content can decide the ways in which the news institution that a journalist belongs to frames the news.
Among the five dimensional models, the first dimension is the individual journalist himself/herself. First, this individual aspect includes the individual, occupational background, and education; second, individual experience, political and religious beliefs and attitudes, social values and faith; and third, the value that a journalist places on the profession, whether it is as a mere neutral deliverer or as an activist who plays a significant role in society – what role they are playing and what role they should play. However, these factors do not influence the news directly. In other words, the influence would be quite limited (Weaver and Whilhoit, 1996). The attitudes toward their occupation, however, are very important elements which can help them make decisions regarding a news story and develop it in terms of journalistic roles and ethics. The second dimension is Media Routines. This can be obtained through routine daily work, which means repetitive, routine work patterns. This can create a certain context on a particular issue. Media Routines have some positive aspects, producing the media product efficiently without any uncertainty because they know what to do with it (Tuchman, 1973). For instance, news routines can help journalists to distinguish good, professional information, in order to write about cancer or diabetes, from low quality materials. Moreover, they know what the audience is interested in and what they perceive as important news. However, this would lead to the reason we should focus on the relationship between news sources and journalists.

When journalists report breaking news, they are the ones who contact the news source for the process of framing for the first time (Entman, 1991). For instance, when flight KAL 007 was shot down in 1983, with the very first description by the U.S. government officials and their stereotypical schematic understandings about international issues with the Soviets, journalists quickly created news headlines like ‘KAL attacked,’ which is an event-specific schema. This schema requires that a journalist interpret, perceive and understand the event in a government-supporting way and eventually make the news and report it. In other words, through the interaction between news sources – U.S. government officials and journalists, most framing is started and the frames made; the process of framing the event is a so-called ‘event-specific schema’. Thus, within the frames, journalists interpret and report the news (Kuypers, 2002, 2009). De Vreese (2005: 52) also explains that there are interactions going on between media frames and the frames that individuals have in their minds. Hence, news organizations try to report with the goal in mind of attracting as much of the audience’s attention and support as possible. Consequently, the news
stories are likely to conform to what the audience wants or would like to see (Gamson, 1989; Schudson, 1978). This results in a close relationship with the advertisers (Vligenthart and Zoonen, 2011). Therefore, media routines have a very close relationship with news organizations in order to attract the audience with an end goal of increasing revenues from advertising.

From a slightly different point of view about media routines, a journalist is not likely to pursue more information. Also, a journalist tends to keep a consistency with other news institutions. As journalists work more in a web-based work environment, and given their tendency to have similar topics with other news organizations, they approach and interview the same people. Consequently, they rather depend on the newswire, such as the Associated Press (Crouse, 1972; Hansen, Ward and McLeod, 1987). According to Sigal (1973), two thirds of the total news sources in The New York Times and the Washington Post that he analysed were official news sources. Apart from that, the findings show that the news reports of American elite newspapers, particularly about wars or military conflicts, are heavily dependent on official government announcements, press conferences, and press releases (Hayes and Guardino, 2010, Schudson, 2011, Waisbord, 2002). The dependence on the controlled official news sources discourages the interchange of dissenting opinions, disturbs a journalist’s ability to gather from a wide range of news sources, and is likely to strengthen the relationship between the state and the press (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

One of the most important elements in routinizing news sources is ‘the expert.’ Because a journalist’s personal view is supposed to be hidden in objective reporting, it is necessary for them to find an expert who can interpret an event well. However, the findings show that the total number of experts who appeared in broadcast news was very few and they were from the same elite group (Soley, 1992). No matter how objective and non-partisan they were, they were from this group, which includes the conservative Think Tank in Washington, former Republican Party members, and people from elite universities in the Eastern area of the US. For instance, the news reporting about the Gulf War depended on a very limited number of experts. Most of them were retired military officials from the Think Tank in New York and Washington, and there was clearly a great deal of political partisanship (Steele, 1995; Reese, Grant and Danielian, 1994). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) say that, except for the briefings
and pool journalists, general journalists’ access is denied and the news reports are censored by military information experts; the military officials’ controls create source-oriented media routines. This routine is implemented under the name of national security and military policies (Kellner, 1992). Consequently, news could do nothing other than depend on government military officials and their announcements (Carpenter, 2007).

The next stage is news organization. News organization determines the role of the institute and news frames based on their politics and economics. The ownership, news editors, producers and higher management comprise the news organization. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), regardless of the kinds of the media, the most powerful force is ownership. It is said that ownership functions in favour of the conglomerates and brings media bias. Hence, this stage has a very close relationship with the effects of ideology. The most powerful ownership influences, indeed determines, company policy, and editors are likely to be influenced by their policies and ideology. As a result, the ideological preferences of editors influence the direction and ideology of a journalist’s news report. Gulati et al. (2004: 239) state that structural bias refers to the tendency in which “norms of journalism or reporter behaviour favour news about some topics over others and that this news emphasis is advantageous for some candidates and disadvantageous for others”. In other words, it is stated that the news is biased against candidates whom they are not supporting, “not because of their policy positions, but because of reporters’ decisions about what is ‘news’”. However, the reality is that reporter’s decisions cannot be seen as separate from their institute that they work for or from other factors. We first looked at the role of frames in the social construction of reality and then discussed one of the factors that influences the media frames in a reporter’s news selection. In a broader sense, Goffman (1974) notes that a journalistic framing is shaped by the frames sponsored by other actors such as politicians, organizations in a heuristic way, which is experiencing broader structural and ideological processes. In other words, a journalist selects issues and frames issues challenged by other social, political, and economical actors like elites and politicians, and the framing contests one of the actors sponsored by other actors.

In studies in political communication, regarding journalists’ partisanship as well as citizens’, a great volume of research has been conducted, particularly, on the effects of the news coverage about a particular candidate in an election on the public
behaviours, such as decision making in voting and voters’ turnout in political communication. Although, Bennett and Iyengar claim minimal media effects on persuasion and attitude change (2008:15-34). There are heated debates on whether the negative campaign or the news coverage also influences public attitudes and turnout. Findings show that despite a great volume of debates and studies on the negative political campaign, attack campaigns do not have significant effects on voters’ attitude and candidate preferences. However, it is notable that the news content does influence political participation and the public attitudes (Min, 2004). Therefore, the news media influences the public perception directly or indirectly as we see in the findings. Consequently, the ways in which a news story is framed are very important in terms of the public perception and its political attitudes. In other words, news frame would be a very influential factor that influences the public and their political participation and attitudes.

Finally, among the external force factors that influence news coverage, I would like to consider foreign policy. Previous studies have shown that the United States’ foreign policy influences media content to a great extent. For instance, Chang (1989) analysed news reports about China in The New York Times and the Washington Post. The findings show that the better the United States’ relationship with China, the more positive the news reports produced. In other words, foreign policy actually influences the news content of the media. In the same vein, according to Lim and Seo (2009), the Bush administration denounced North Korea as part of an ‘Axis of Evil’ and framed the North as the most threatening to existence. Consequently, the news framing influenced the perception of American citizens. Thus, the government’s foreign policy plays a pivotal role in framing a news event because, through the president and the government’s foreign policy decisions, they can control the flow of information from government officials to the news media (Entman, 2004).

As we have discussed above, there are several factors that influence news reports and news frames. As foreign news media emphasizes very often in their news reports, the Korean peninsula is actually at war because the war lasted for three years and one month, and ended with an Armistice, not a peace treaty. In this situation, what factors are most likely to influence foreign correspondents? In particular, the Cheonan incident is covered with theories, conflicting stories and questions. So, how did they frame the news and how did they report it? As discussed above, the factors that
influence the news frame differ from country to country and, depend on the media system, especially under circumstances like those found on the Korean peninsula, the only country in the world divided into two. First of all, in order to understand those influential factors in the Korean context, it would be essential to look at the Korean media system along with Korean history.

There is a great body of critical literature discussing the relationship between the Korean media and the government (Sohn, 2004; Park, Kim and Sohn, 2000; Nahm, 2006; Sohn, 2011; Sa, 2009; Choi, 2009). However, the study of media-government relations in the Western hemisphere does not seem to fit to the media-government relations in South Korea (Park and Curran, 2000). They say that this is because the Korean historical background is quite different from that of Western countries, stressing ‘Clientelism.’ In other words, Korean political systems and governments cannot be similar to those in developed countries. Park, Kim and Sohn (2000) describe Clientelism, which is the give and take notion that the state gives a position to a political supporter in exchange for their support. In 2006, Jonathan Hopkin (2006) at APSA annual meeting, Philadelphia, 31 August – 3 September unpacked the concept of ‘Clientelism.’ ‘Clientelism’ is “a way of describing the pattern of unequal, hierarchical exchange characteristic of feudal society, in which patrons and clients were tied to durable relationships by a powerful sense of obligation and duty”. He explained that there are two major concepts of ‘Clientelism’ in the neoliberal era. The old and traditional Clientelism is a form of social and political exchange, which is that a person does another a favour and in return, the one who bestowed the favour is likely to receive or is expecting some benefit. However, they say that the new Clientelism is rather a marketing idea, one in which the client seeks to exploit and maximize the utility available. In other words, economic dynamics have more influence on political relationships and in exchanged action. Hallin and Macini (2004) clearly explain:

“Clientelism is generally seen as destructive of ‘horizontal’ forms of organization such as mass parties and voluntary organizations, but it might be argued that forms of ‘democratic clientelism’ that aided the growth of such organizations did sometimes emerge in Southern Europe, as they also did when mass parties first developed in the United States in the nineteenth century” (2004:136)
Hallin and Mancini (2004) point out that France is an exception to this pattern of clientelist relationships and weakened rational-legal authority. Thus, France is considered to be at the boundary between the Polarized Pluralist and Democratic Corporatist systems. Importantly, I would like to stress what they contend, which is that “In Clientelist systems, information is treated as a private resource, not shared publicly, and this is one of the reasons journalism was slow to develop as an institution (2004:136-137)”. The traditional concept of ‘Clientelism’ might still prevail in Korean society in terms of domestic news production, but it would not be easy to apply it to the news-making of foreign journalists in Korea. Thus, I divided the discussion into two dimensions. First, I am going to discuss the factors influencing news framing at a national level and to explore the relationship between the United States and Britain in an international context. If we can briefly mention here, it is not enough just to compare the media systems between countries because, for those issues about North Korea, several countries are involved and their own goals and policies are intertwined. Therefore, it would be of significance to approach international communication theories in order to explore and expound the international news dynamics in the Korean peninsula.

10. The media at War

“It is not enough for journalists to see themselves as mere messengers without understanding the hidden agendas of the message and myths surrounding it.
—John Pilger21”.

‘The War You Don’t See’ is a British documentary that was released in UK cinemas on Sunday 12 December 2010, filmed by John Pilger. It was also broadcast on ITV in the UK. The narratives of the documentary describe the First World War where 16 million died and 21 million were wounded. At the height of the carnage, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George had a private chat with an editor of The Guardian, CP Scott. If people really knew the truth said the Prime Minister the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don’t know and they can’t know. The British public desperately wanted to know what was really happening, the truth and the reality, so more than half of the British public gathered to watch an official propagandistic film

21 www.johnpilger.com, First page
‘the battle of the Somme’. The camera showed marching young soldiers smiling and waving their caps, saying ‘Hello, Mum’. But the narrative adds that the horrifically injured and decomposed bodies without limbs were never reported. This documentary was presented by Rageh Omaar, BBC World Affairs reporter 2000-2006 and Julian Assange, an Australian editor and journalist, better known as the editor-in-chief and founder of WikiLeaks, which publishes secret information on a global scale. Omaar reported onsite in Bagdad when the U.S. troops in tanks rolled into the main square in Bahgdad in Iraq, saying ‘Iraqi people are welcoming the U.S. troops and their arrival is liberation’. There was a scene in which a boy is seen hitting the toppled statue of Saddam Hussein and people are filmed kicking it with their shoes. I remember the scene was reported on TV in Korea as well, repeatedly. The pulling of the Saddam statue to the ground was the symbol of the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, representing the US triumph.

This documentary is not to accuse the big powers, such as the Obama administration or the Bush administration or even the British Prime Minister, but to bring to our minds an intellectual rationality for rethinking the value of journalism and the role of journalists. In the same vein, Susan Sontag (2004) also gave us a journalist’s framing of a war, in particular, how photo journalism can create perceptions and images about the war. She describes from her own sensitive viewpoint how photography, which she believes has a deeper level form of memorizing than ‘Nonstop imagery’ such as television, streaming video, and movies, impacts our memories of a particular frozen moment. Like the Pilger film, Sontag says that “the photographic image, even to the extent that it is a trace (not a construction made out of disparate photographic traces), cannot simply be a transparency of something that happened. It is always the image that someone chose: to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude” (2004:46). The production of a news story, news construction equivalent to this process, which is creating an image, has an impact on the images that people perceive in photography and in documentaries. As Tuchman says (1978:183-184), news constructs a reality and in the process of doing it, defines and shapes an event, a journalist makes a story more salient by “highlighting bits of information through placement, repetition (Entman, 1993:51-58). Entman emphasizes that “what is excluded from a story or a text is equally as important as what was said.” Thus, salience can be achieved through framing a certain aspect in a story (1993:53).
Adopting framing theory, many studies focus on salient frames by analysing what frames the news has used in reporting. It might be equally important, however, to focus on investigating what was excluded in news by a journalist and why it was excluded. With news text analysis with framing theory, Carragee and Roefs (2004) criticises framing research, which is a current trend in media research, by maintaining that the relationship between media frames and issues of political and social power, which are frame sponsorship in a broader sense are ignored. They point out that framing theories should focus not only on reading media texts but also how media frames are shaped. They integrate media hegemony thesis, which stems from Gramsci’s framework, claiming that the ideological nature and the power relationships influence the process of framing. In order to find out what was excluded in news, it is crucial to explore the news production and its process, especially news about war conflicts; and how it operates. It is possible that a certain issue was excluded because a journalist could not get information or it could be because the journalist framed the story giving salience to other matters ‘under different circumstances’(Carragee and Roefs, 2004). Hence, it is necessary to explore not only the news frames but also the framing process, which is influenced by a number of factors.

11. The political economy approach on international communication

Prior to specifically discussing international communication theories, it is essential to elucidate the concept of political economy and its evolvement in mass communication research. As Thussu states, the political-economy approach to communication looks at the structures of political and economic power relations and it stems from the critique of capitalism produced by Karl Marx (2000:41). Hence, he notes that from the Marxian perspectives, the role of international communication is construed as the ruling classes’ power exertion and control. Thussu further explains that especially in the wake of the Second World War, communication theories map to develop media technologies and an incorporated international economic and political system (2000:41). The early critical political economy was discussed by Murdock and Golding (1977). Mainly their criticisms were against media sociologists’ ‘dominant paradigm’. They argue that a media sociologist ignores class stratification by criticising Marx’s deterministic and static position. They say that there is no need to scrap Marx’s
connections between economics and cultural production, between base and superstructures. However, as Hall asserts, the media reinforces dominant assumptions and ideas and exclude alternatives and broadcasting is the reproduction of power relations and its ideological structure is far more central than ‘financial kickbacks’ (Murdock and Golding, 1977:9). Hence, proprietors attempt to continue to maintain newspapers and analyse economics ceaselessly because it is one of the determinants of newspapers’ survival. It does not mean that the media directly transmit a ruling class’s ideology to subordinate groups but political economy theorists maintain that the role of the media and the imbalanced relationship between the two classes in a social order needs to be analysed.

Murdock and Golding (1977) concentrate on the questions of ownership of the contemporary communications industry, control and production in their earlier work. They maintain that newspapers are part of conglomerate’s profitable assets because the running of a national newspaper rewards prestige and publicity indirectly. Therefore, it would be important to understand the economic context of a material-cultural production. Hence, they contend that it is of significance to examine media ownership and their relationships with other institutions. Nationally, this would focus on the media relationship to the economic and political contexts, highlighting the role of the media in the ‘inegalitarian’ market system and social structures. Internationally, it would mean that knowledge (news in this study) flow between developed countries, mainly the West and developing countries in the stratified global system, in particular, the unequal transfer of technology and programmes from developed countries to peripheral developing countries. Such an approach shows the process of legitimation which naturalises unequal structures of social relations as ordinary seems to be inevitable. Hence, the processes of incorporation and legitimation entail contradictions, gaps and interruptions between what should be happening here and what is actually taking place. Thus, from the rediscovery of the ideological perspectives in the critical paradigm, Hall was concerned with the reconceptualization of ideology and sought to define the key framework of the paradigm. He states that in the structuralists’ approach, the key issue lies in the question of ‘signification’, as it were, how a meaning is constructed (1982:67). He argues that the essential questions that needed to be addressed in the signification related to how a dominant discourse is produced and legitimised, and marginalize alternative constructions around a
particular event. The second question is how the media successfully and systematically sustains the maintenance of a preferred meaning over dissent meanings in the same event in the dominant systems of communication.

According to Garnham (1986), the purpose of a political economy of culture is to elucidate control of the means of mental production, which was never meant to be fixed into a simple dichotomous static state. He also said that without the base/superstructure relationship, it would be impossible to discuss a political economy of culture whilst Raymond Williams (1980) particularly focuses on the wide spread use of the base/superstructure model in Marxist cultural analysis. Garnham formulates cultural materialism and postulates that cultural form, what Marx called ‘non-material production’, is not always effective unless it is converted to social forms with material effectivity. For example, an individual would use their body not for cultural reproduction but merely for leisure and art because culture is a complex unity of ideas, institutions, distribution, technology and audiences. Here, the role of the media is construed as the relatively autonomous ruling elite’s ideologies and as they become concentrated, cultural production is influenced by a few large corporations with increasingly concentrated power. As technologies developed and communication digitised, due to the lower cost of the media production, a few large corporations seemed to have reduced their power. However, digitization helped conglomerates to enhance globalization and to sustain their power efficiently through privatization of the media and deregulation (Boyd-Barrett, 1995; Thussu, 2000; De Beer and Merrill, 2004). Then, how can we view media communications through the political economy lens? Media imperialism can be a useful concept for understanding the social relations under the political economy in the neoliberal era (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, 1998). According to Boyd-Barrett, Marxist analysis of imperialism helps to examine “the continuing dependence of post-colonial states on previous imperial powers within a context of post-Second World War US dominance” (1998:158).

“Political independence had to be judged within a context of continuing economic and cultural dependence, not simply on specific ex-imperial powers, but on a capitalist world order which was dominated by the prevailing US industrial-military-political coalition” (Boyd-Barrett,1998:158)
Classic scholar, Herbert Schiller states that from the end of World War II, the U.S. played a critical role in the development of ‘media imperialism’ (1992). Schiller (1992) largely focuses on the U.S. dominant infrastructure all over the world and its hardware system, such as a satellite, whilst other scholars approach their position in ‘media imperialism’ on media content such as Tunstall and Boyd-Barrett (Tunstall, 1994; Boyd-Barrett, 2006). According to Boyd-Barrett, there are two main models of media imperialism. One is Schiller’s model and the other is an alternative model, a ‘generic’ model’, as it were, which was developed in Europe and is associated with dependency/imperialism rooted in Marxist theory and the media history of colonialism. He contends that although both Schiller’s model and the ‘generic’ model were developed in the 1970s, they are still a useful approach to media practices, not only between developed and developing countries but also within nation-states, such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Russia, and other republics of the Russian federations and Germany, Austria (1998:158-160) due to considerably unequal international media practices. Among the various positions which argue that the US is a dominant media imperialism, one of the major studies is an international communication theory, which relates to the news flow of the global news. It has been proposed that the global news flows from the North – Western, mainly US to the South – developing, peripheral countries (Boyd-Barrett and Thussu, 1992). Furthermore, it includes a geographical and infrastructural hegemonic power as well as framing ‘others’ in media content.

12. International news system: Global news agencies

Dominant literatures on global communication are largely discussed from a political economy perspective. International news agencies play a significant role in the globalization and commodification of international information (Thussu, 2000:130; Boyd-Barrett, 1997). In addition, western media, which dominate the world news, set a news agenda and report news that reflects the West’s global economic and strategic interests such as the Israeli ‘good guy’, and the Iranian ‘bad guy’, depending on government statements (Thussu, 1997). Hence, global agencies are agenda-setters for other media, through selecting the allocation for their resources and how much their covered stories should be distributed to national agencies, newspapers, magazines and broadcasters (Thussu, 1997, 2000; Paterson, 2005; Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998). Boyd-Barrett (2000) explains that a modernized nation has entered
into a global hierarchical structure between states, and then, the hegemonic order of industrialization, trade and information, maintains the global system structure. Thus, a news agency is a form of communication which stems from the necessity of information about state and capital in modernity and it consolidates a status quo through the construction of global and national agendas. Global news agencies provide clients with global news through photos, video and texts because the elite media outlets have only a handful of reporters in major capitals or crisis locations (Boyd-Barrett, 1997). Hence, as Horvit (2010) states,

“more than 80% of the material in newspapers and other media worldwide emanates from global news agencies based in four of the world’s major capitals - all of them in the West” (2010:73).

She also points out that as influential nations, such as Russia, China and France, are also home to global news agencies that sometimes function as a propaganda tool for their own countries, the U.S. has the world’s dominant news agency, The Associated Press, which is one of the biggest suppliers to most U.S. daily newspapers (Horvit, 2010).

Traditionally, principle ‘wholesale’ suppliers of international television and print news are news agencies who indirectly represent a global hegemonic power in economy and politics (Boyd-Barrett, 1997). Also, a global manufacture of hardware and software in computers is the dominant US Corporation - Microsoft - and the manufacturing of parts for personal computer products is also almost in the hands of another US corporation, Intel (Boyd-Barrett, 1998). However, Rantanen says that global news agencies have already lost their power due to their struggle with financial difficulties and the competition with other media rivalry (2004: 304). Hence, the world in the twenty-first century has three major global agencies – the British Reuters, the Associated Press (AP) and the French Agence France-Presse (AFP) (Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett, 2004:39-40). The British Reuters is now the Thomson Reuters because in 2008 the Thomson Corporation purchased the Reuters Group. Thomson started from being a Canadian newspaper and once owned The Times and The Scotsman and Scottish Television. Furthermore, the Thomson Newspapers’ circulation was very high in the United States in the 1970s. Merging with the International Thomson
Organization, it became the Thomson Corporation in 1989. The Thomson family owned 70% of the company and controlled it through the Woodbridge Company, based in Toronto, and owned The Globe and Mail daily in Toronto and CTV, Canada’s largest commercial TV network22. According to Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett, the Thompson Corporation controlled approximately 53 percent of the new company and Thompson and its rival business information supplier, Bloomberg controlled 34 percent and 33 percent of the market for financial data respectively. It would not only show the extension of sources of revenue, but also the concentrated wealth in North America, to which four wealthiest news agencies, AP, Bloomberg, Dow Jones, and Reuters belong (2009:43).

Rantanen (2004) point out that the wholesale international news agencies compete with global broadcasting companies, such as the CNN and the BBC World, which operate both as wholesalers and retailers. Thus, Western Europe face a competition with the U.S. to lead the world. She also stresses that news agencies are significant, even if they are not the only sources for foreign news, because they can afford to send costly foreign correspondents to the location where an international conflict occurs and have the largest resources for news-gathering. Hence, all central and eastern European countries use Western sources (2004: 305). Furthermore, in time of a digitized and technological communication era, through the Internet, an individual can access the international newspapers and broadcast materials electronically in real time, offering alternative ways of consuming news services nationally and internationally (Boyd-Barrett, 2000). However, the proportion of the output produced by news agencies is very small because most material that can be accessed through the internet is limited compared to the proportion available to major retail clients. Thus, the wholesalers and retailers’ dominance may seem to have weakened in the advent of the new technologies in communication by reducing the cost of media production and easy access to media products. However, the existing global media system – large foreign correspondents network, has close affiliations with established media or non-media conglomerates (CNN, part of Time-Warner, Bloomberg with Merrill-Lynch and Yahoo with Reuters) should still be taken into account (Boyd-Barrett, 2000: 302-304).

To summarise, international news agencies, which are Western-dominated, act as global agenda setters so that their views are most likely to be presented as the norm (Paterson, 1998, Thussu, 2000, Rantanen, 2004). Rantanen (2004) argues that as more global news becomes easily accessible, the national media tend to indigenize global news texts by translating into their languages and reframing them in order to complement international news. Thus, it is important to examine the news flows between national and international news media because this will reveal the current news production structures concerning North Korea and the ways in which such news are constructed.

13. Global news flow

The boundary between hegemony and imperialism seems to be disappearing and the two words are frequently used interchangeably. Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1981-1937) is a very important scholar in the theory of hegemony, which derives from when Athens exerted its power over other Greek cities. Gramsci adopted the term to explicate the failure of revolutionary movements in Europe in the early 20th century. Gramsci was able to analyse how the dominant ideologies of ruling elites permeated national institutions and civil society in the capitalist society. According to (Croteau and Hoynes, 2013), Gramsci’s notion of hegemony assumes that ruling groups do not need to enforce their power by making use of culture and ideology by gaining consent. “Consent is something that is won; ruling groups in a society actively seek to have their worldview accepted by all members of society as the universal way of thinking” (Croteau and Hoynes, 2013: 159).

Curran (2006) explicates Gramsci’s work, which stresses that the social order is maintained through active consent. According to him, in hegemonic societies, cultural leadership of the dominant social group leads to securing this consent. This gives the public an understating of society within horizontal thought. However, creating a ‘popular front of the mind’ through different groups together in opposition, and developing a coherent alternative understanding of society that connects to people’s social experiences and identities, and is expressed through different symbolic forms. Hence, the media is perceived as a battleground (2006:132). In the same vein, Hall
emphasises the vital issue, which is that hegemony has secured the ruling class’s
economic processes by cultural leadership. The leadership under capitalism is gaining
power over a subordinate group and the media does not only reflect consent but also
produces consensus, which is a manufactured consent (1982:86)

Harvey (2007) points out that after 1970, radical transitions in global capitalism
through the neoliberal counter-revolution occurred and amalgamated with the Clinton
and Blair administrations in the mid-1990s. Harvey said that the new imperialism
evolved under the hegemony of Europe, North America and Japan and the
interconnection between the new imperial forms, and the neoliberal oppositional
resistance, was steered by capitalist class intent upon re-structuring their power. He
states “in this project, the classical range of forces – military, political, and cultural, as
well as economic, was freely deployed in highly destructive ways. An anti-imperialist
politics has now evolved through deflection, diversion and outright opposition to all of
this” (2007:69-70). Based on Harvey’s assertion – changes in global capitalism in the
1990s and the shift to anti-imperialist would be a helpful way to think of the transition
from globalization, which was the concept of the world as a single, homogenized place
by Robertson (1992) to ‘glocalization’, which means local culture with global
influences in global news flows. Could ‘localization be a phenomenon that local power
is contesting a hegemonic power? Should it be considered as a resistance of power?
The role of the media in society is to help ruling groups in manufacturing consent
make certain social structures and relationships seem normal and natural, which is
what Croteau and Hoyes state, “a kind of permanency and legitimacy that elevates
them to the realm of the uncontested” (2013:159). Who is playing the main role in
manufacturing consent in international communication?

14. Global contra-flow of the media

Thussu (1997) argues that the Anglo-American media monopoly have portrayed Islam
as a global threat for a long time and “with the expansion of western electronic
empires” (1997:267), which enables them to reach the global communities through
high-technological satellites, the US media dominates the online services and
television as well as TV programmes for children, movies, news agencies and print
journalism worldwide. However, the dichotomy of the news flow that illustrates
structural inequalities from the North to the South has been challenged by the international telenovela. The Third World country made the television fictional programme ‘telenovela’, which became huge in the global market, including its success in post-communist countries of Eastern Europe (Biltereyst and Meers, 2000; Marina, 2008; Stavans, 2010). Indeed, Telenovelas attracted a great deal of academic attention, despite later criticisms that the impact and the revenue were very limited; compared to US soaps, such as Dallas and other TV programmes (Smith, 2008; Thussu, 2006). Nevertheless, not only the ‘telenovela’ drama (soap opera) within popular culture, but also ‘Al Jazeera’ in the news, partly demonstrates the typology of the news flow.

As a representative example of ‘contra-flow’, especially after the 9/11 Attack, Al-Jazeera had received praise for its footage being relatively independent and diverse, despite it being a state-financed station (Wessler and Adolphsen, 2008:439). As such, among the young international news channels, the first channel in the Arabic-language that stood up to contest ‘the monopoly of Western-dominated global TV news journalism’ was the Al-Jazeera station. Al-Jazeera, which means “the peninsula” was founded in Doha, Qatar in 1996 after the new Emir of Qatar, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, purchased the rights to the Arabic TV division of the BBC. In addition, it originally served the Arab and Muslim worlds and has become the first contester, which can compete with Western-dominated, global, TV news journalism as an alternative news source by weakening Western news views. Al-Jazeera has been regarded as a counter-hegemonic source of contra-flow and stated as a best example of the news transnational flow from the ‘South’ to the ‘North’ (Thussu, 2007: 129). Geographically, or rather based on the news flow theory, Al Jazeera might be shaping a new structure, in terms of the news produced by peripheral countries - the Arab worlds to the developed countries. However, to what degree, is it impacting upon Western views and its policy? It might be agreeable that Al Jazeera influenced Western policy to some degree because according to Wadah Khanfar, director general of Al Jazeera, who claimed in an open letter in The Guardian on 11 December, 2010 that there was a “leak-the Bush-Blair memo in which both leaders discussed the possibility of bombing Al-Jazeera’s Qatar HQ, where more than 1,000 people worked in December 2005” but its detailed contents were never disclosed until early in 2010, “I learned from a senior US official that the discussions indeed had
taken place.” In the article, Khanfar maintains that “Cable from the US embassy in Doha, was made accessible by WikiLeaks, “alleging that Qatar was using Al-Jazeera as a tool for its foreign policy. In addition, he explained that the region was situated by the most repressive governments in the world with silenced freedom of expression. Under the circumstances, before its English version broadcasting, Thussu states that Al-Jazeera’s challenge to the West was magnified (2007:129). However, the English version of Al Jazeera International was not bringing a moderate viewership, in spite of its ambitious English-language channel launching in 2006 (Thussu, 2000: 192). Moreover, it is still seen that the so-called CNN effect, the impact of the global media on the conduct of U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy, is widely implemented, and the wealthy ‘North’, elite Western media is effectively influential in a globalized world (Bennett, 1990, Livingston, 1997, Herman and Chomsky, 2002, and Eldridge, 1991, Thussu, 1998).

15. The Propaganda Model

Herman and Chomsky developed the Propaganda Model (PM) in order to exposit the unequal operations of the elite domination of the media and marginalization of dissents that allow the government and the ruling establishments’ to send their messages of private interest to the public (2002: 2). They say that the framework, which is a form of news media discourse analysis, can be applied to the elite media. Although Boyd-Barrett (2004) maintains the sixth filter ‘buying out’ of individual journalists by government agencies and authorities has to be extended to give powerful evidence on the media’s alignment with the propaganda objectives of the administration, the original Propaganda Model comprises of five filters. The first filter is the size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media. Large, profit-seeking media systems are owned by a small number of giant corporations and controlled by their corporate interests, partly because the large media companies are integrated into the market system by not restricting the media ownership system in the neo-liberal era. The media has become profit-oriented and therefore, strives to reach large audiences. The second filter is the advertising license to do business. Similar to the first filter, the media is profit-oriented because they aim to maximize the large scale

23 The Guardian, 10 December, 2010 written by Wadah Khanfar
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/10/al-jazeera-us-integrity-wikileaks
audience to bring more revenue by advertisers’ subsidies. The third filter is sourcing mass-media news. In other words, the public information operations, such as the Pentagon and corporate bureaucracies, are the primary news sources because it warrants the media’s special access. Herman and Chomsky point out that powerful sources, such as the Defense Department, authorities, and experts, regularly take advantage of media routines and dependency to manage the media, to manipulate them into following a special agenda and framework by making a particular salience on a certain frame on the media. The fourth is flak and the enforcers. The government threaten and correct the media to regulate any deviations from the established line. Hence, the mass media fear any negative criticisms from the flak machines or news management. The fifth filter is the ‘ideology of anticommunism’. According to Herman and Chomsky, “Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the spectre haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status (2002: 29)”. They state that the anticommunism ideology helps the public to mobilise against an enemy. The mechanism renders issues to be framed in terms of a dichotomized world of contesting powers.

Herman and Chomsky explain that the Soviet’s shooting down of the KAL 007 was the government propaganda campaign as a means of enlightening the public by victimizing the Soviets-enemy powers through the dichotomized anticommunism politics and using official sources as discussed in the Propaganda Model approach. The propaganda campaigns resulted in the advance of the Regan administrations arms plans (1998: 32). Corcoran (1986) also examined the dominant media discourse surrounding the downing of the KAL, which, as he says, prevails in academia. His findings show that the news frames in American major news magazine-Time, Newsweek and US News and World Report coverage of the shooting were the Russophobic frame- the USSR’s attack, threat, conflict and the Soviet’s savagery. Moreover, Entman (1991) compared the media narratives of the two incidents, the KAL 007 and Iran Air Flight 655 in, Time, and, Newsweek, along with the CBS Evening News, The New York Times, and the Washington Post for the two week’s period, using the framing analysis. Iran Air Flight 655 was shot down by a U.S. Navy ship, the Vincennes on 3 July, 1988, killing 290 passengers and crew. The findings show that the number of news articles and news programmes were significantly different between the two events. KAL 007 was covered almost as twice as much as
Iran Air - news worthiness in the first filter. The KAL news texts were attributed to the Soviets’ guilt by humanising the victims and stressing deliberate words of cruelty, such as killer, murder, massacre and enemy, whilst the Iran Air was in fact due to technical problems. To sum up, the news discourse examined about the KAL 007 shows that dominant views of the Soviets, which is aligned with the Reagan administration in US, was constructed as natural and the established ideology orchestrated by the US news media and the administration functioned as a support to the government’s view (Corcoran, 1986; Herman and Chomsky, 2002; Entman, 1991).

Considering one of the major news values - ‘proximity’ (Galtung and Ruge, 1970), it might be worth noting the Korean media discourse about the incident here. From Korean ‘peripheral’, ‘South’ perspectives, in spite of what Corcoran (1986) says, the prevalence of the study about the event, KAL 007, and the incident of KAL 858 was more prominent in the Korean news. The KAL 858 was bombed by a North Korean spy, Kim Hyun Hee, who was first sentenced to death but later pardoned, and later was married to a Korean intelligent officer who investigated the incident. The KAL 858 disappeared in the Indian Ocean near Bangkok on 29 November in 1987, since its last communication with the control tower. It was scheduled to fly from Baghdad, Iraq to Seoul, South Korea carrying 104 passengers and 11 crew members. All were dead except for the two spies. The cause was still controversial and the families of the victims who were on board have still been pressing the investigation of the truth/facts of the case (Yonhap News, 22 January 2013). The spy Kim Hyun Hee spoke to the Monthly Chosun saying that it was highly probably that North Korean did the Cheonan incident and Kim Jong-Il ordered it as he did with the KAL flight. She said “trying to drop the plane into the deep sea to erase all the traces, and trying to destroy all the evidence by attacking a submarine with a torpedo”

For instance, the total number of news stories about KAL 007 is 358 but the number of the news articles about the bombing of KAL 858 in 1987 was 2,222. These were retrieved from the ‘Naver’ news archives. For the same period, the results of the keywords KAL Flight 858 and KAL 007, returned 53 and 134 respectively in The New

York Times news archives. The frequency pattern was not much different in The Guardian newspaper. Only 2 articles were reported in relation to KAL Flight 858 and 71 about KAL 007. From quantitative aspects of coverage in ‘worthy and unworthy victims’ in the propaganda system, the KAL 858 was portrayed as having unworthy victims in the Western media. The prominence and the heightened media attention that occurred from producing larger amount of news texts, provided a better probability for the audience to connect with the news messages which might be able to reinforce the dominant frame (Entman, 1991). We have looked at the frequency, but what about the news frames in the peripheral, ‘South’ in the news flow, South Korea? How did the South Korean news construct the tragic event, KAL 007?

Lee (1985) compared the news editorials of Korean daily newspapers and U.S. daily newspapers- The Dong-A Ilbo, The Korea Herald, The New York Times and The Washington Post on the KAL 007 incident. He examined the Korean media’s reactions to the comments claiming it was a Soviet attack, the U.S. Reagan administration’s handling of the situation, the UN actions and the causes, such as human error or a spy mission. The findings show that the primary theme in both Korean and U.S. newspaper editorials was the Soviet’s attack. Thus, the attribution in the Korean news texts was not much different from the US news editorials framework but the editorials in Korean newspapers were more critical of the Reagan administration’s retaliatory reactions toward the Soviets. Very few - only four - dealt with the cause of the plane’s intrusion into Soviet airspace in U.S., whilst 19 Korean editorials did. That year alone, 28 and 11 editorials were printed in Korean and US news, respectively. Although the case of KAL 007 would support the filters of the PM model-large scale of news coverage, news worthiness, victims of an enemy, anticommunism and dichotomization in the two countries, based on the size of news data, which shows that it is possible that the same issue can be dealt with in different countries from different perspectives.

Herman and Chomsky (2002) state that “the force of anti-communist ideology has weakened with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the virtual disappearance of socialist movements across the globe, but is easily offset by the greater ideological force of the belief in the ‘miracle of the market’”(p.xvii). In lieu of anticommunism, the force of market ideology has consolidated the successful market rules and reinforced the global power of market mechanism. Moreover, Journalism has been incorporated
into the market ideology. They argue that these market-driven mechanisms have strengthened advertisers’ interests that feed the public in favour of entertainment to increase their revenues. It results in precluding the proliferation of a public sphere regarded as democratic and bringing a political apathy that helps them to maintain a status quo. Therefore, Herman and Chomsky contend that the fall of the Soviets and the triumph of market ideology have strengthened the applicability of the propaganda model (p.xviii and xix).

16. News Sources

“News is not what happens, but what someone says has happened or will happen. Reporters are seldom in a position to witness events first-hand. They have to rely on the accounts of others …Readers, whether they are attentive citizens or interested officials, tend to lose sight of the fact that news is not reality, but a sampling of sources’ portrayals of reality, mediated by news organization…Whatever procedure they (newspapers) adopt unavoidably biases their selection of content.” (Sigal, 1973: 189)

The major argument on news sources in Journalism is a journalist’s dependence on official sources, according to dominant power interests. As aforementioned, in the third filter in the Propaganda Model above, the media heavily relies on official sources and the official sources dependency links to media routines and journalists’ practices (Herman and Chomsky, 2002; Boyd-Barrett, 2004; Schudson, 2011; Rantanen, 2004). Davies (2009) states that the concept of objectivity that a good news merely collects and reproduces the truth in modern journalism is a myth. He says that it is widely believed, but the Flat Earth tale is not a reality. From the moment a journalist reports a news story, he or she has to select and make judgements from their point of view. In the process of judgements, what is most important should be considered in terms of angle, the language and the presentation. He contends that those judgements should not be under the influence of a particular ideology or ownership or advertiser or government. In addition, Davies argues that journalists are required to put both sides’ claims with signification which would lead to conflicts in the virtues of neutrality, letting the readers decide (2009: 111-112). He classified ten news production rules embedded in the process of what he terms ‘churnalism’ under the two major themes.
They are ‘Cutting the costs’ and ‘Increasing the Revenue’. ‘Cutting the costs’ has subcategories. 1. Run cheap stories 2. Select safe facts 3. Avoid the electric fence 4. Select safe ideas, and 5. Always give both sides of the story. According to Davies, the rule discourages investigative journalism because it requires a journalist to select a story, which is ‘quick to cover and safe to publish’ (2009: 114). He takes an example and explains, for instance, that during the Korean War, there was a massacre of Korean civilians by US forces in a place called No Gun Ri. Civilian massacres committed by US troops occurred on July 26-29, 1950. However, it had not been investigated and reported until the late 1990s. The killing of South Korean civilians who were taking refuge on the trestles at a bridge near No Gun Ri26, during the Korean War were committed by US soldiers. In the response to the reporters’ claim, the U.S. Armed Forces Claims Service said that there was no evidence that the U.S. First Cavalry Division was in the area at that time.

However, Randy Herschaft, an AP investigative researcher found the standing orders from U.S. Army commanders to fire on civilians (Hanley and Mendoza, 2000). It had been covered up until 29 September 1999, when the AP released an investigative report about the No Gun Ri incident in which American soldiers killed an estimated 300 civilians, most of whom were women, children and old men during the early stages of the Korean War. The Pulitzer Prize award winning report showed in-depth analyses of declassified military records and testimonies from Korean War veterans as well as No Gun Ri survivors (Hanley, Choe, and Mendoza, 2001; Choi, 2008; Hanley, 2010). Bob Port, the head of AP's Special Assignments Team in New York, gives evidence of how hard it was to produce the story with the obstruction. He had to strive to continue to investigate the story for reporting. Following this, the Special Assignments Team that Bob Port had run for three years was closed and he was moved to a side-line job before finally resigning. According to the ten rules for ‘Flat Earth News’ by Davies (2011), in the same vein with Rule number three – select safe facts, Rule four is– “select safe ideas” toward any institute or an individual with the power to give disadvantage to news organisations, which would flow with the consensus. For example, when North Korea tested a nuclear weapon for the first time, in October, 2006, it was safe for the mainstream media to make routine signification to the idea that their supreme leader was mad in their news story, while not reporting the

26 The village of No Gun Ri is located in 100 miles (160km) southeast of Seoul.
possession of nuclear weapons in the USA, the UK, Russia and China (2009: 129).

Rule Five: Always give both sides of the story stems from the idea of reporting a balanced story. However, Davies (2009) argues that it is sometimes paradoxical because the purpose is aiming for an honourable journalism practice. However, it could be a handy tool for the convenient churnalism practice (2009: 132).

A news source seems to be hidden behind the news but it is a main actor in a news text, while it is a very important element in making news. Franklin and Carlson (2011) also stress that the relationship between journalists and news sources is ‘perennial questions’ or rather concerns considering the contemporary practice of news production. For example, journalists are heavily dependent on elite’s news sources - government, researcher and politicians, or they are using materials that another news organization has already published. They also point out that the study of news sources is growing in significance even more in the, new, news media era as producers and users are converging. Thus, news sources are becoming a more important part in the news to measure transparency, credibility and objectivity.

Han et al. (2010) analyse the news coverage in the U.S. and Chinese newspapers for four international terrorist events that occurred in 2004 and 2005. They focus on whether or not news sources predict the prominence of news coverage. Dominant news sources consist of government officials (Gans, 1979; Ericson et al., 1989). Shoemaker and her colleagues examined the People’s Daily and Southern Urban Daily in China and The New York Times and The Washington Post in the U.S. By using the content analysis method, the findings confirm that the U.S. media is contingent on government officials as main sources. Likewise, government officials as sources are also predominant in the Chinese newspapers for information about international terrorist events as expected in China, there might not be alternative information sources due to the authorities’ monitoring. In the case of the Cheonan, what news sources did the news media use in covering the incident? Rantanen (2004) evaluated how the European news agencies evaluated their sources. The findings show that AFP was regarded as the most important source, while Reuters and AFP were mostly used by national agencies in Europe. CNN was considered as the fastest news but agencies doubted the reliability of AP, Fox and CNN as news sources, which was similar for Al-Jazeera and Iraqi television. I have discussed journalism theories
and explored the international news system and the role of elite international media. In order to explore international news dynamics in the Korean peninsula, I attempt to examine whether these journalistic conceptual tools can be applied to a Korean context in the next chapter.
Chapter 3.
Contextual Background to Media in South Korea

This chapter begins with an historical overview of the Korean media alongside an historical context of Korea since the beginning of the Korean War in 1950. As South Korea experienced Japan’s occupation, a war, and the consequent division and political turmoil, the Korean media had to transform accordingly. The chapter explores socio-political and historical upheavals that have affected the Korean media, and severe restraints and censorship prior to Korea becoming a stabilized liberal democratic country in 1987. I also explore the dynamics of the intermediation between the traditional media and the alternative media, and the role of the new media in democracy. In addition, this chapter considers the major causes of the fall of ‘Ohmynews,’ which was one of the most successful alternative news media. The discussion develops a debate on whether the new media plays a crucial role in media democracy from the public sphere perspectives, or if alternative media contributes to polarizing an individual’s ideology in South Korea, which has a very high internet penetration rate. Hence, through the understanding of Korea’s socio-political context, in this chapter, I seek to identify journalistic challenges, and give context to the reporting of the Cheonan incident and other issues about North Korea.

1. A historical overview of the Korean media

Choi (2005:36-37) asserts that in the wake of democratization after the military regime, like other western countries, the Korean media conglomerates became empowered, prohibiting different political ideologies. Their monopoly is at the level of not being able to rate fair newspaper readership, controlling and framing the government. Choi goes on to say that this structure gives rise to a hindrance of democracy in Korea. Rhee and Choi (2005) argue that partisanship in South Korea does not have a legitimate partisanship from a journalistic perspective, and the deficiency is regarded as a significant cause giving rise to the impartiality crisis that the Korea press is facing. They assert that partisanship itself is not problematic, but lack of legitimacy in partisanship can cause various problems for Korean society, such
as a communication crisis. Hence, the consequence of the Korean partisan press hinders proper public discourse and communication between individuals, or between institutions. Thus, they criticize the Korean press partisanship, emphasizing that, due to the deformity of the partisanship construction in the news, factual information that has been investigated cannot be shared with the public.

Lee (2004) notes that the problem of partisanship practices in journalism is that the press intentionally include and exclude certain facts in news reporting in favour of their partisanship. As a result, the public fails to see and perceive reality, which makes discursive deliberation impossible. Kim (2011) goes as far as to say that the press has their preferred partisanship. However, there is a need to differentiate between reasonable partisanship and inadequate partisanship. He suggests that it is necessary to consider concepts related to partisanship, which are fairness and balance that the Korean media require, all sorts of communications, especially impartiality, which is a basic journalistic norm as a public service, and objectivity. A question arises here. Why does South Korea have a different kind of, or rather a flaw, in the partisan construction in the media, unlike Western democratic countries? As shown earlier, among the United States and European countries, British newspaper journalists have stronger partisan tendencies, although there has been a growth of competitiveness and commercialization (McNair, 2000). South Korea has shown extremely strong partisanship since its democratization in 1987, as we saw earlier (Kim, 2011). Why does the Korean press partisanship remain strong even under commercialized circumstances?

Sohn (2004) says that in the 21st century, the difference in the views toward the conflict with North Korea has transformed its characteristics. The conflict now has become an issue, not between the South and the North, but between the two partisan groups, conservative and progressive, within South Korean society. The two main axes are nationalism and the U.S-South Korea alliance. The former is based on progressivism, and the latter is grounded in conservatism. He examines the factors in the media that influence the forming of public opinion and the public attitudes in their points of view toward North Korea. The finding shows that media frames affect public opinion and attitudes, stressing that as Lazarsfeld (1948:53, 56) addresses, news media consumption does not necessarily change one’s view but reinforces prior
partisanship or leads to even deeper political polarization. Kim (1995) maintains that, historically, under the decades of dictatorship, Korean authoritarian government had exploited the media as a tool to keep power in the name of stabilizing national and geographical security while the country was transforming itself toward a democracy, experiencing de-colonization from Japan in 1945, the Korean War in 1950-1953, and miraculously rapid industrial economic development. In order to have a better understanding of Korean media systems within their historical and socio-political background, it is necessary here to look at the Korean media systems chronologically, focusing on the ownership of the Korean main media outlets from the perspective of press freedom.

The Korean media systems transformed its ownership like other countries’ media systems, but because of the military regimes, there were some cases of the media systems’ mergers being done forcefully by the state, and some changes in the process of transforming the South Korean press during the transition from military dictatorship to functioning democracy. In order to aid an understanding of each period of political rule in South Korea, I divided chronologically each administration and the major political changes, as well as the media changes corresponding to the political reforms in Korea. It is customary to separate each regime into five periods; American military government (1945-1948), the First Republic (1948-1960), the Second Republic (1960-1961), the Third and the Fourth Republics (1962-1979) and the Fifth Republic (1980-1987). Han (2011) states that if you look at the political or military regimes and the Korean media systems, it is not difficult to see that as the President of a state is changed, the Korean media system changes. He said that he does not think this is coincidental. It means that the Korean media, particularly the Korean broadcasting system, was very much dependent upon the state because, unlike other long-term democratic Western countries, like England and the United States, Korea had to go through very brutal political experiences before democratization, and at the same time, at the beginning of the 20th century, it was ruled by the Japanese colonial government. The Korean press has been typically authoritarian since then.

On September 11, 1945, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commanding general of the U.S. Army force in Korea proclaimed that the American military government’s policy would not intervene with the Korean press at a news conference with Korean
journalists. He said, “Since U.S. troops have entered Korea, freedom of the press comes into being in Korea now. U.S. Army would not disturb or interfere with the thought and expression of the Korean people. Also we will not censor any of your publishing. Freedom of the media should stimulate public discussion and formulate public opinion. In this way, the U.S. Army will not tamper with investigative activities of the Korean press”. However, he added, “in case of disturbance of public security, those measures will be reconsidered. I hope I will not face such an occasion. Also I would hope this opportunity will function appropriately for the Korean press” (Jung, 1985:248).

1.1 The Korean press under the U.S. military government

However, it was less than a month after the proclamation on press freedom that on October 10, Major General Archibald V. Arnold, the military governor, declared, “As long as freedom of speech and the press is permitted, it is possible that foolish and careless stories can be published by inexperienced editors. Nevertheless, these childish acts … can be dismissed as a matter of nature unless they disrupt law and order and interfere with the orderly administration of the Korean government. South Korea below 38 degree North Latitude is directed, controlled or managed only by the United States …” (Song et al., The Korean Press 100 years, 2000:128-129).

The Korean media openly criticized the statement from General Arnold. According to Kang (2007), the U.S. military government suspended Kyungsung Ilbo, which was the Japanese Government General of Korea’s controlled newspaper, issued in Japan on 25 September, 1945. Furthermore, they also tried to suspend Maeil Shinbo, which was a Korean newspaper in Korea, but failed because about six hundred staff members resisted. However, on 10 November of the same year, General Arnold ordered the discontinuance of Maeil Shinbo issues, justifying themselves by claiming that the suspension was due to the output of a Maeil Shinbo financial probe. Under the Japanese colonial rule, Maeil Shinbo had practically been the Japanese regime’s mouthpiece; after independence, the staff organized their own committee, consisting of anti-Japanese members. With the suspension measure, Maeil Shinbo disappeared but continued printing its issue from 23 November, 1945, when they changed their name as ‘Seoul Shinmun’ (Song et al., 2000:115-116).
Kang (2007:302) points out that as seen in the case of Maeil Shinbo, the U.S. military government suppressed the left-wing newspapers in contrast to their assertion, ‘the guaranteed freedom of speech’ (the press). He contends that on the other hand, right wing newspapers such as DongA Ilbo and Chosun Ilbo, which have been of the top three dailies up until the present day, received the benefits of the U.S. government’s nurturing after the discontinuation of the left wing newspaper. However, Song et al. (2000:116) maintain that DongA Ilbo and Chosun Ilbo were conservative but they were not influential newspapers at that time. Rather Haebang Ilbo, which was a pro-Communism and radical newspaper, was equipped with better publishing facilities and offices. Kang (2000) contends that whether the papers were left wing or right wing, if they had some nuances in their report against the U.S. government, then they became the target of repression by the Americans. On one hand, it might be understandable that during the period when American authorities governed South Korea (1945-1948), the society was very poor and in political chaos after a brief moment of celebrating its sudden liberation from Japan’s repressive colonial rule. Communist newspapers, as well as publishers, came in to being and continuously flooded the society. Choi states, “Posters, leaflets and newspapers were flooding … In particular, newspapers swept away in Seoul freely and lively after shutting down for six years (1987:338).

The Constitution of the First Republic under President Seungman Lee was promulgated on July 17, 1948, and South Korea was renamed ‘Dae Han Min Kook,’ a name he decided upon himself (Hickey, 2000). The freedom of speech (press) was supposed to be ensured and unrestricted, according to the basic constitutional rights of Koreans (Lim, 1998). However, in September, the Korean government under the Lee administration issued a decree to prohibit newspapers from promoting communist-inspired terrorism and subversive activities. The decree was proscribed as harmful to the State, very similar to the decree officially reported by the U.S. military government. The decree states that the U.S. military government rules the southern part of Chosun, the Korean Peninsula below the 38th parallel, and residents must obey all the commands ordered by the U.S military government (Kang, 2000:326-327). In addition, it said that a person who resists or disrupts the order of security will be severely punished, and that a person who violates a decree or a command, or
person who harms an American or other person in the United Nation countries or defames their property or security or interferes with the justifiable administration will be sentenced to death or other punishment passing through an Occupation Forces’ military disciplinary meeting (Kim, 2005, 2010).

Under its uncompromising anti-communist policy, the Lee government systematically restricted newspapers of left wing ideology. The Lee regime closed or suspended about 56 newspapers including Seoul Shinmun and Segae Ilbo and two news agencies, claiming that they carried positive frames about North Korea and the government assumed that articles reported by them allegedly supported the North Korean formula for national unification (Song, 2002:107-108, Lee, 2008:130). In June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out. The Korean press had to report about it but the Lee government imposed severe censorship on newspapers. According to Kang, when the North occupied Seoul on June 28, all the media disappeared and ceased. In contrast, the activities of the foreign media were vigorous (2000:329). For example, at the beginning of the Korean War, the number of international journalists who came to Korea was 238 (Jung, 2003, Lee, 2001:83).

According to McDonald, General Douglas McArthur, a UN military leader, provided films for free to a Newsreel company and TV network, and instructed that he was to be accompanied by a cameraman during the front line inspection (1985:32). He was probably a person who knew the impact of the media when it was used as a tool of propaganda. On the other hand, General McArthur strictly repressed the investigative activities of independent war correspondents. For example, American authorities were furious over the interviews of journalists from AP and UP with injured soldiers, so they were expelled to Japan for retraining (Mott, 1962:848). In addition, According to McFarland (1986), in 1951 six war correspondents won Pulitzer awards in the international section. It was unprecedented, never seen before. Moreover, all of them were Korean War correspondents. This demonstrates that reporting and investigating were dangerous, and the situation was more serious than was presumed. In fact, in only one month, July, 6 journalists were killed and 14 injured. Also, 17 foreign journalists, including 10 Americans, were killed by the end of 1950. The Lee government was replaced by a parliamentary system under Premier Jang Myun. The
guarantee of press freedom in the 1960 Constitution seems to have differed from that of the First Republic. The new Constitution stated:

“Citizens shall not be subjected to any restriction on the freedom of speech, and of the press… Liberties and rights of citizens may be restricted by the law only in cases deemed necessary for the maintenance of social ordering and public welfare. In case of such restriction, the essential substance of liberties and rights shall not be infringed. With regard to speeches, the press, assemblies and associations, licensing, censorship or any kind of permission shall not be recognized” (Lee, 1999:119).

Jang’s government seemed to allow the Korean press broader freedom than before, replacing the old licensing system with a system of registration. These legal changes in favour of press freedom helped the Korean press enjoy the greatest freedom in Korean history. The number of newspapers increased exponentially, to nearly 389 from 41 (Dailies), to 476 from 136 (Weeklies), and to 470 from 400 by December 30 for about five months. Also, 160,000 reporters were employed. Furthermore, the left wing newspapers such as Minjok Ilbo, which were closed because of their promotion of North Korea for its unification policies, reappeared (Kim, 1996:404). During the Chaotic period, the numbers of the press rapidly increased, regardless of the quality, and press freedom seemed to accompany this increase. However, the duration of this press freedom was not long-lived because Chang was overthrown in a military coup in 1961.

1.2 The Korean media under the Korean military regimes

This is Park Jong Min’s testimony, KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) producer. On May 16 1961 at about 4.15am, General Park occupied KBS with airborne troops equipped with machine guns. PD Park Jong Min and announcer Park Jong Sae, who were night shift workers, hid themselves under a desk. Suddenly, they heard ‘Come out announcer Park!’ So Mr. Park came out and followed the troops to a common room. There were high-ranking officers, General Kim Dong Ha and General Park Jung Hee. General Park asked him to broadcast that “the 5.16 revolution has just started now” (Yoo, 1998:247).
From the very beginning, the military regime under Park proclaimed its suppressive policy toward the Korean press. In its Decree No.1, the regime first established the Military Revolutionary Committee, which was later renamed the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR). It ordered prior censorship of all newspapers and magazine feature articles, comics, cartoons, editorials, photographs, and foreign news. Furthermore, in an effort to "purify" the Korean press, the SCNR drastically restructured the mass media of Korea. As a result, 15 major Dailies survived out of 64, 24 local newspapers out of 51, 11 news agencies out of 316 (local news agencies were all shut down), 31 major Weeklies out of 355 and only one local Weekly out of 130 (Chosun Ilbo, 19, October, 19989, page.24). In association with this ordeal suffered by the Korean press during the military regime period, the Minjok Ilbo case shows how far Park’s regime went in controlling press freedom. For instance, The Revolutionary Court sentenced to death three executives (including Jo, Yong Soo, a Minjok Ilbo publisher) of Minjok Ilbo newspaper in August, 1961, for advocating political and ideological doctrines similar to those of North Korea, promoting the neutrality of Korea. In addition, the newspaper was in favour of negotiations with the North Korean communists, exchanges of mail with North Korea, and student meetings between North and South Korea. It is said that hundreds of people, from Korean writers and the press societies to the Japanese Pen Club, International Pen Club, and International Press Association submitted a petition to Park. However, Mr. Jo was executed in December 1961, while the other two were granted a commutation from a death sentence to life imprisonment on December 22 (Jung, 1985:289-290, Kyungnam Domin Ilbo, 11 December, 2012).

Although President Park accomplished notably rapid economic growth in Korea by fostering the ‘Saemaeul Movement’, it is regarded that he was a strong man who controlled the Korean press to sustain his power all over the country (Chae, 2000). The Saemaeul Movement, also known as the New Village Movement, was a state-initiated revolutionary economic boosting programme nationwide, which launched on April 22, 1970, and the Park regime vigorously implemented it for about 10 years. Although the military coup d’etat led by Park Jung Hee, and his brutal repression of freedom of speech of the Korean media at that time, have been roundly condemned, his strategic and systematic economic boosting movements, Saemaeul, has been praised by many (Han, 2012, Jung, 2012).
Consequently, Park Geun Hye, President of the Republic of Korea, who is the first daughter of President Park, former head of the Grand National Party (now known as Saenuri Party) inherited blame that has accumulated from the suppressive repression of the Korean people of the past, when her father ruled the country. However, the most rapid economic growth under Park Jung Hee’s regime cannot be denied. Therefore, although there were dark side stories under the military rule, perhaps because of the most significant issue, boosting economy in an economic crisis era, Park Geun Hye was supported by many Korean and has now become the first female president in Korean history for winning the 2012 presidential election. When she won the election, Time magazine placed President Park on the front cover with a title ‘the strong man’s daughter’ (*Time online*, 17 December). During the campaign, the criticisms that she received were about her father Park’s suppression and ruling power in the past, so Park tried hard to compensate somehow to those who had suffered under the military regime. The confrontation between the press and government had been an issue for some time. The Park government tried to place fetters on the press, but the Korean press often refused to yield to governmental pressures, both direct and indirect. However, the climax of the press-government battle occurred in August 1964. The Park administration enacted the Press Ethics Commission Act in spite of strong opposition from both the press and the public on 2 August. This was not agreed upon by any political party whatsoever but enacted by Park’s own decision. The Press Ethics Commission Act aimed towards “enhancing the effectiveness of self-regulation by the press and broadcasting” (Kang, 2000:401).

When the Act was promulgated, it was strongly criticized by the Korean press. The National Assembly and Capitol hall journalists association refused to report any kind of news. On 5 August, The Press Ethics Commission Act Lifting institution was created by the Press Associations. However, the government did not seem to consider the rejection of the code and instead took a number of measures against the opposing newspapers including *DongA Ilbo* and *Kyunghang Shinmun, Chosun Ilbo* and *Daegu Maeil Shinmun*. One of the measures was that subscription would be stopped by governmental institutions (Joh, 2007:66-67). As a result of the press campaign, the press-government crisis over the Press Ethics Commission Act ended when President Park agreed to withhold enforcement of the law (Park, 2014). On
September 22, *JoongAng Ilbo*, one of the top three dailies in Korea was founded by Samsung (Kim, 2000:92-93). The Samsung Group owned practically all the media because they had already bought RSB (Radio Seoul) in 1964, and had already launched the first private commercial TV broadcasting company, DTV in the same year (Kang, 2000:405).

In South Korea, the major news agency is *Yonhap* agency, launched on 19 December 1989. Before a private news agency, Newsis, launched in September 2001\(^{27}\), *Yonhap* was the only option. Further, ‘Newsis’ has not yet been seen in the mainstream media. For the last couple of years, thanks to online journalism and the news box in a dominant Korean portal site ‘Naver’, news by Newsis has been starting to receive some attention from internet users. In terms of the news source for international news, the contribution of Newsis is rather negligible, to the point that you cannot find any articles using them as a news source. On 11 April, 2011, the economic newspaper, ‘Money Today’ launched a news agency, the so-called ‘News 1.’ As far as I understand, the English version of *Yonhap* news, which is quickly updated, and their English native level in terms of language usage, have contributed to the international news sources. In addition, they have 550 journalists, which make them the biggest news agency in Korea. There are other English language news media but they are not thought to be quickly updated, the topics that they cover in English are very limited, and the language that they use is not sufficiently fluent for English-speaking people. Liberal newspapers, such as the *Kyunghyang Shinmun* and *The Hankyoreh Shinmun*, have been claiming that Korea should implement a restructuring of *Yonhap* news agency’s ownership, because it has become a government institution and a child of the military dictatorship, in order to enhance the nation’s democratic status to a higher level and consolidate its aims and position as a public service (*The Hankyoreh Shinmun*, 12 June 1999, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 12 June, 1999.). The military dictator president Chun Doo Hwan forcefully merged three broadcasting companies – TBS (Dong Yang Broadcasting), DBS (Dong Ah broadcasting) and KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) into one, KBS, in 1980 (Han, 2011:161-167).

According to Han, in 1967 when there were certain financial incentives offered, the normal loan interest rate was 25%, newspaper companies were loaned money at

\(^{27}\) www.newsis.com
18%. Also, instead of a 30% tariff rate, 4.5% was applied to them on imported paper, and foreign loans were allowed to the press companies (2010:33). On one hand, these kinds of benefits gave the Korean press opportunities to enrich their assets; it was a turning point in that a few major newspaper companies became a conglomerate. On the other hand, it hindered newspapers in functioning in their role as watchdog because sometimes they had to act according to government directives in order to keep receiving benefits. On April 27 1971, there was a presidential election. At that time it could be seen how far the press went to protect themselves, because most of the press were occupied with praising the government, and campaigning to support the republican party - Park’s (Kim, 1993:348-349).

Michael Breen, British analyst says, university student protests against the military regime in power in the 1970s and 1980s became almost de rigueur for students in Korean history, although he said that student protests were not so effective in terms of bringing more democracy into this country (The Korea Herald, 1 February 2012). However, students and citizens’ movements contributed to the motives for journalists and politicians to try to read public opinion, such as what people think, or at least whether or not they like a particular issue throughout Korea’s modern history. Under the severe repression by the state, there might have been some cases where the press might have compromised with what the government wanted and what they had to say. However, university students played a pivotal role in Korea’s democratization. The so-called ‘386’ generation, who were born in the 1960s, were educated during the military regime and participated the most in democratic movements, are those people who contributed to Korea’s democratization (Kim, 2000; Han, 2009:209). Castells (2008:84) also stresses that “Student movements remain an influential source of social change in East Asia, particularly in South Korea”.

For example, thirty representatives of universities in Seoul put up a placard with a written ‘warning to the press’ in front of the building of DongA Ilbo and delivered a warning message with a megaphone. The content of the message is as follows: “You cannot write political matters for fear of violence, and do not report social problems because of the received bribes. Also, the culture section is rushing to lower standards – it is full of sexualities … newspapers are not for newspapers but for the public. Even if the money is so tempting and violence is scary, is it right to forget what you should
do? It’s not a watcher keeping a robber but an outsider just wandering around..." Furthermore, over five hundred students at Yonsei University in Seoul held a demonstration, warning the press about their activities leaning toward the regime. Student rallies continued and influenced many journalists. Consequently, a great number of journalists from different newspapers declared freedom of the press altogether (Dong-A Ilbo Labour Union, Dong-A free press activities, 1989:25-26, 150).

In October 17, 1972, Park initiated the ‘October Yooshin (Reforms)’. This was a big turning point for Korean broadcasting because a new broadcasting law was followed. Hence, the broadcasting media was used to promote its news, laws and policies such as the economy boosting programme, Saemaeul Movement, as mentioned above. Moreover, other long-running TV programmes had to add content promoting the Yooshin system (Han, 2011). In October 1979 the general-turned president Park was suddenly assassinated. It was 12 December 1979 when another general Chun Do-Hwan seized power with the backing of the Military Corps. The Chun era was so-called the ‘biggest purge’ in the history of the Korean press, forcing a sweeping structural reorganization of the mass media.

According to Kim, the Chun regime sacked about ten thousand journalists, including staff, and forced about two hundred kinds of publishing venues to close on 30~31 July 1980 (2012:.152). As suppression was repeated, the demand for political democracy seems to have been growing stronger. The political activation of the student movement escalated greatly during April and May of 1980. Students called for the withdrawal of martial law, quick modification toward a democratic constitution, and the release of Kim Dae-Jung. In early May, students started to stage street demonstrations to express their requests more strongly. They urged citizens' political activation and participation in the reformation movement. The movement reached at its peak at the rallies in front of Seoul Station on May 14 and 15. The demonstrations turned into about 10,000 citizens rising up. The paratroopers were deployed and they attacked people with clubs and rifle butts Ahn et al., 1999:111). It is hard to calculate the number of people who were killed at Gwangju. It has been said that there was no United Nations investigation as in the case of the Hungarian uprising. The South Korean government settled on a figure of at least 240 killed but Gwangju sources claim more than 3000 killed or injured (Johnson, 2000).
Television in South Korea changed dramatically in the 1990s. South Korea had three terrestrial television stations. They were KBS1, KBS2 (Korean Broadcasting System – public broadcasting) and MBC (Munwha Broadcasting Corporation). MBC was originally Busan Broadcasting Corporation in 1959 and later launched in Seoul in 1961. The government owned it once during the 1980s, when a military regime controlled all the media. Significantly, a commercial channel, SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) launched in December, 1991 (Han, 2011). As I have shown above, there were decades -37 years- when the military regimes ruled the people and controlled even an individual’s behaviour. For example, for 37 years there was a curfew which stipulated that you could not go outside after 12 pm from 1945 to 1982 (Doosan Bakgua)\(^{28}\). The media contents in news, dramas and songs were strictly censored and often prohibited. Former presidents, both Chung-Hee Park and Doo-Hwan Chon, who was a former ROK Army general, put South Korea under military dictatorship from 1961 to 1987. Right after Jeon Doo-Hwan, in Oct. 1987, Tae-Woo Roh was elected president but he was also a former ROK Army general and had joined the coup d’etat by former president, Jeon Doo-Hwan. Finally, in 1992, Kim Young-Sam was elected president. He was the country’s first civilian president in 30 years. Consequently, the nineties is an important era because liberalization and democracy in society was being formed and, in the wake of social and political changes, the Korean media transformed itself accordingly. 

Journalists were kidnapped by the militant government and others were put in jail if they talked about what had happened in the 1980s. Shin (2012) described the process in detail when he was gathering information and reporting about the death of Park, Jong-Cheol, an undergraduate student at Seoul National University, which is one of the top universities in South Korea. Shin is a journalist at Joongang Ilbo. He is the first journalist who reported the incident. The police tortured Park, Jong-Cheol to death, but the incident was not covered properly. So Shin started to investigate. In his thesis, he described that, at that time, journalists were told by the government what to report and how to report – for example, news length or the size of a picture and so on. His status was almost at the danger point after reporting the truth that Park died of water torture. Initially, it was reported that the police hit the desk and the student fainted and

\(^{28}\) [http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=1216768&cid=40942&categoryid=31778](http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=1216768&cid=40942&categoryid=31778)
died. It caused a stir throughout the nation, feelings that the Chun Doo-Hwan regime had gone too far, killing a college student and trying to sweep the affair under the carpet. Hence, the reason why we mark 1987 as the year when South Korea finally achieved a democratic society is that there are so many pro-democratic resistance movements in June, 1987. Even in Seoul only, there were large-scale demonstrations in about 30 places. They developed as a nationwide movement of about 240,000 people in 22 cities. The police arrested about 3,500 demonstrators. In the meantime, Roh Tae Woo, presidential candidate announced a system of direct election of the president, the release of Kim Dae-Jung, former president who was in jail due to his democratic movement on 29 June, 1987 (Shin, 2012).

1.3 The establishment of The Hankyoreh Shinmun

The Hankyoreh Shinmun was established as a liberal alternative newspaper in traditionally conservative dominant press circumstances. It was founded by journalists who fought against dictatorship on 15 May 1988 and has more than 60,000 citizen shareholders, none of whom have more than 1 percent of the share. With a circulation of some 600,000, it is the fourth largest after Chosun Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo, and DongA Ilbo. It claimed to be independent from the powers, which meant the government. According to Han (1996:160-161), one of the main reasons the media cannot be as democratic as it should be, is because the media has failed to achieve independence from the media capital and the state. He emphasises that The Hankyoreh Shinmun raises its capital from the general public and set the maximum shareholding rate at 1% of total issued shares. The total number of shareholders reached as high as 61,866 and the largest shareholding rate was only 0.24%. Therefore, neither the state nor any individual shareholder could have control over the paper. However, although Hankyoreh came into being, it is widely recognized as a left-wing, independent newspaper but they do not seem to be regarded as an affective communicator in Korea.

We have looked at the historical socio-political changes alongside press oppression by the government in South Korea. Under the circumstances, and in spite of the radical newspaper, the Hangyoreh, another affective communicator beyond the

29 www.hani.co.kr
rational framework, such as television fiction as a vehicle, might have been needed. Affective communication is required to condition positive dissent and dialogic reason for genuine democracy and melodrama can function as entertainment but also an education (Dahlgren, 1995; McGuigan, 2005; Gripsrud, 1992). Jostein Gripsrud (1992) has commented upon the historical role of melodrama in the public sphere and states that melodrama performs not only an entertainment but also an educational function, which is also true of tabloid journalism: “Today’s popular press…teaches the audience a lesson, everyday” (1992:87). From this perspective, the Hourglass was not only one of the most successful dramas with highly phenomenal ratings (average 50%, 69%-highest) (Yonhap, 9 February 1995), but it also rekindled debates about the nature and role of the Gwangju Uprising.

The Hourglass (1995) ‘Moreshegye in Korean’ is a Korean drama dealing with South Korea’s politically turbulent recent past, airing on SBS in 1995. The drama lasted 24 episodes, and is one of the highest-rated dramas in Korean history. It is the story of two men whose friendship is put to the test through the 1970’s and 1980’s, one of Korea’s politically tumultuous periods. Park, Tae-soo, tough and loyal, grows up to become a gangster and Kang, Woo-suk, smart with firm moral values, grows up to become a prosecutor. Yoon Hye-rin, beautiful and spirited daughter of a very wealthy casino owner, is a classmate of Woo-suk in college. Hye-rin is introduced to Tae-soo via Woo-suk and they subsequently fall in love. One unforgettable subject that’s dealt with in the drama is the 1980 Gwangju Democratization Movement, when General and President Chun Doo Hwan sent paratroopers into Gwangju to put down the rebellion. What happened was the subsequent massacre of hundreds of innocent people. The horrific scenes based on true accounts, of those people being murdered, sparked off a deep sense of shock and grief for Koreans at that time (in the mid 90’s Korea still had not come to terms with what had happened after the governments muzzled free speech).

The popularity of the drama implies a number of things that need to be revisited. First, the broadcasting company that produced and aired it was SBS (Seoul broadcasting system). The company was launched in the same year as the first private broadcasting company in South Korea. So, unlike other companies, its launching marks the first free, independence from the government and private aspects. In
particular, TV drama and soap opera is constructed by commercial imperatives, advertisers (Henderson, 2007). Thirdly, the breaking down of ‘hard news’ and ‘soft news’ was happening for the first time through this drama. The issue in this drama-democratization movement under the militant government is different from social and medical issues, the challenging representation of an issue by soap opera and the breaking of what it means by ‘news’, regardless of ‘hard’ or ‘soft’, certainly encompassed lay people, especially a 386 generation (who were university students in the 1980s). Thus, television fiction forms part of a wider approach to eliciting change in social attitudes and health behaviour (Henderson, 2007:19). After this drama went on air, there were more films that were made dealing with this very subject, such as The Petal (1996) and Peppermint Candy (2000). Significantly, the drama about the Gwangju Democratization Movement challenged the representation very naturally, which none of the newspapers or television documentaries could do. In the same year, in December, former President Chun Doo Hwan, who was responsible for the massacre, was put in jail.

A new President, Roh Tae Woo, was elected by 36.6% votes on 16 Dec 1987. The year 1987 marks the beginning of Korean democracy. During his era, a number of positive changes took place in the Korean press. First of all, President Roh abolished restrictions on the press in favour of a greater freedom of information. In addition, according to Kim (1999), Roh revised the Constitution in October 1987 and prohibited censorship of speech and the press while guaranteeing freedom of expression. The government’s view of the press in the era of democracy is seen in the number of newspapers. In Dec 1987, the number of the daily newspapers went up from 30 to 65 within a year, reached 85 in 1990, and became 112 in total at the end of 1992. Weeklies were 226 in December 1987 and increased by more than 1,000 in 1990. Furthermore, after June 1987, when the Roh government enacted the new press law, 3,728 periodicals had been registered by the spring of 1989. This meant that periodicals had increased by 1,492.

It is noteworthy that on May 15 1988, the radical newspaper Hankyoreh Shinmun, was founded. A nation-wide democratization movement allowed the journalists to drive a fund-raising campaign to found this newspaper. It is striking that the journalists quit their jobs and declared that The Hankyoreh would be a progressive press in
comparison to the largely conservative newspapers that had (what they say) ‘refrained from criticizing authority’ (Shim and Lee, 1998:8-9). It can be controversial and is argued that The Hankyoreh has been a counterpart of conservative news dailies, but in the facet of journalism practices and its impact, evaluating their role seem so hard. While the history of broadcast reformism in Britain could well be subtitled a study of success, Curran says that “the record of press reformism has been one of failure” (2000:35). However, I am looking at the bright site. There is doubt about whether the internet, which is now available to ‘anyone’ – meaning easy to access- would prove to be an alternative medium in communication. However, the internet has already had an impact on the media and society tremendously. The Internet is everything in our everyday life.

1.4 The Internet and public participation

McChesney (2000:159) maintains that digital broadcasters and many other media companies have indulged in their pursuit of internet riches in the new media era. He believes that all of the phenomena stem from both a desire for more profit and out of fear of being behind competitors on the internet if they don’t proceed aggressively, but he points out that the crucial factor that will be necessary for the internet to become dominant, will be the expansion of broadband capability to the bulk of the population. When this happens, the internet may well become a vast converged communication machine, eliminating traditional distinctions between communication and media sectors as everything goes digital.

It is well-known that South Korea is one of the most wired countries in the world, with more than 90% of households connected to broadband internet (The Associated Press online, 6 July 2012, The Chicago Tribune online, 24 June 2012). According to the Survey by the Millward Brown Media Research in 2009, 57.7% of South Koreans use TV to receive the news and 19.8% of people use the internet. Only 14.8% read newspapers to access news stories. However, people in their twenties use the internet the most to get the news. Korea’s rate of internet news use was ranked number one among OECD countries in 2008 (Maeil Broadcasting Network online, 21 June, 2010). Korea was a leading country, with the greatest proportion of users in the world. Perhaps this is due to the common and shared characteristic among Korean people,
which is ‘quickly, quickly’, ‘everything, do it quickly’. As the expansion of the internet makes computer mediated communication very popular, internet users, (hereafter called netizens), have become an influential group of communicators. In particular, in the news media, netizens have been playing a critical role not only in consuming the media but also in producing media messages in society. Netizens gather specialized information and inform the public. Some news sources used on TV news programmes every day, such as video and audio clips, have been recorded by netizens. It is not rare to watch video clips about citizens’ deviant behaviours in the subway, recorded by netizens, on terrestrial television news programmes. According to previous studies done by many international scholars, Ohmynews is one of the most successful online journalism sites in the world. The CEO, Oh Yeon Ho has become a world famous inventor, and Google has online news taps on the right hand side of the window for international users, which are very Western views on the reality in Asia; for many reasons, the site has gone down in popularity (Curran, 2012). It is well known but to make the argument flow, it would be necessary to look at Ohmynews and its foundation background- how it came into being, its structure and, importantly, its impact on the media as a whole until now – about 10 years after its publication. When it first started, the number of ‘news guerrillas’, citizen journalists, was about 15,000 (email from Ohmynews Company). If all of them worked in one company, it would be bigger than a ‘Chaebol’.

As citizen participation increased, the interactivity of internet users led to the launch of the first, successful online news media, Ohmynews in South Korea. As was reported,

“With its 65,000 contributors, the Korean news organisation, OhmyNews, is not just one of the biggest in the world but also one of the most established, having been launched back in 2000” (The Guardian online, 19 Jan 2011)\textsuperscript{30}.

Moreover, as Kim and Lee (2006) show, the shocking controversy on the fabricated stem cell research by top human cloning scientist at the Seoul National University, Professor Hwang, Woo-suk, became part of the public agenda through the efforts of two ordinary young scientists, who raised suspicion using communications on the internet. In other words, the alleged ‘fabrication’ of papers on cloned embryonic stem

\textsuperscript{30} http://www.theguardian.com/media/pda/2011/jan/19/ohmynews-korea-citizen-journalism
cells was first proposed not by the media but by the public. Thus, according to Kim and Lee (2006), this instance shows that agenda setting theory can be challenged and the public agenda can be proposed, not only by the media but also by the general public, which is in opposition to the traditional agenda setting theory. A very good example of the concept of agenda rippling would be the presidential election in 2002. Studies on the election show the power of netizens on politics and its impact on Korean society. Oh Yeon Ho, founder of Ohmynews attended the Berkman Center internet and Society Conference at Harvard University on December 11 2004 and explained as follows: 

“Let's look back to the last day of the 2002 Korean Presidential election campaign. Just 8 hours before the start of voting, at around 10.30 pm on December 18th, Mr. Chung Mong Joon, Roh Moo Hyun’s campaign partner suddenly withdrew his support. This astonished the whole nation. Because the competition between the reform candidate Roh Moo Hyun, and conservative candidate Lee Hae Chang was too close to call, Mr Chung's withdrawal was a kind of atomic bomb. Interestingly enough, the news provoked a last minute confrontation between Old media and new media. The conservative mainstream newspaper Chosun Daily changed its editorial and posed a question to voters along the lines of 'Mr. Chung withdrew his support for Roh, will you?’ But reform-minded netizens, including OhmyNews readers, quickly mobilized overnight to fight Mr. Chung’s atomic bomb. They visited many internet bulletin boards and posted urgent messages like "Mr. Chung betrayed his party, Roh Moo Hyun is in danger. Save the country, please vote for Roh." They even called their conservative parents to persuade them, crying "If Roh Moo Hyun fails, I will die." OhmyNews reported Mr. Chung's withdrawal and updated the story of netizen reactions every 30 minutes, all night long. The number of hits for that main breaking story was 720,000 in just 10 hours. Thanks to nonstop reporting through the night, OhmyNews was the epicentre of reform-minded netizens. On the night of December 19th, when Mr Roh's victory was confirmed, I wrote on OhmyNews: "As of today, the long-lasting media power in Korea has changed. The power of media has shifted from conservative mainstream newspapers to netizens and internet media.”
The Guardian reported on the presidential election, with an article entitled ‘World’s First Internet President Logs On’. They covered the development of internet technology and services in South Korea, comparing the 70% broadband saturation in South Korea with about 5% in Britain. Quoting diplomats in Seoul, who said that Korea is the most online country, The Guardian reported on the power of online communication like Ohmynews in South Korea (The Guardian online, 24 February 2003)\textsuperscript{31}. Together with the rapid development of the broadband internet infrastructure, it has been questioned what kind of historical, socio-economical background of Korean society and its politics might have given birth to successful alternative online journalism such as Ohmynews in South Korea.

2. The role of the new media in democracy

Yang (1995) argues that after democratization in 1987, the government’s censorship has decreased. However, due to media commercialization, the market became highly competitive amongst the press, and the media now heavily relies on the commercial-driven market. Moreover, as Cho (2002) asserts, the process of media reform by the first non-militant government in the early 1990s, and Kim Dae-Jung, the winning president from the opposition party, made the conservative press reinforce their prior partisanship. It has been said that this historical, socio-economical background gave birth to very successful alternative online news media like Ohmynews in South Korea, which almost all major international news media, like The New York Times, The Guardian, and The Financial Times, covered in relation to the Presidential election. In this regard, Kang (2000) claims that after democratization, the press continued its meteoric rise in power over political authority. In other words, what he is saying is that the media became dominant over political forces. As an attempt to examine the argument, Kim (2009) analysed editorials about regulations on conglomerates by four different major Korean newspapers during the period in which four different presidents were in office, from 1988 to 2008 for five years each period. The findings show that the press has the potential to be independent from the government, functioning as a watchdog. A conservative newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, tended to support government policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s and became neutral and criticized the

\textsuperscript{31} http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2003/feb/24/newmedia.koreanews
regulation policy by Roh Moo Hyun while he was in office, whilst a progressive newspaper, The Hankyoreh, supported the four governments at all periods of time.

There is a large body of studies concerning press and partisanship in South Korea (Yoon, 2003; Park and Roh, 2009; Kim and Lim, 2009). Most conclude that the press’s partisanship hampers objective journalism practice, which is an indicator of a democracy in a country, and hence, the role of the public broadcasting service needs a reappraisal. In spite of its highly accelerated export-fuelled economic growth, called ‘Miracle on the Han river’- rephrased version of ‘Miracle on the Rhine’, which means the economic rebirth of West Germany after the Second World War, South Korea is at the beginning stage of stepping into a democracy that ends 26 years of military dictatorships in 1987. The President of South Korea appoints the president of the public service broadcasters, KBS and MBC. In addition, as media channels have multiplied, the press is heavily dependent on advertisers so that the online news media is plastered with pictures and ads of suggestive, lewd advertisements (Ha and Kim, 2011). Moreover, as Kim (2011) argues, in lieu of making an effort to appear credible to the public, the news media’s strategic means were taking a strong stance politically, which is reinforcing partisanship, in order to survive in a fierce competition and to attract public attention. In light of the arguments about inadequate partisanship formulated in Korea, Kim says that restructuring the news media’s system is necessary.

2.1 The fall of ‘Ohmynews’

South Korea, which is often described as ‘the most wired country in the world’ by major US and UK newspapers, offers a perfect example of the new media’s impact on politics and journalism practices. Ohmynews, based upon citizen journalists, generated support for Korean former president, Roh, Moo Hyun via e-campaigns – mainly emails, text messages - and eventually Roh became president. Korea regards his victory as the netizen’s victory (Allan, 2006:131). Previous studies have examined the mobilization effects of the online news media ‘Ohmynews’ for the Korean presidential election in 2002 (Chang, 2005; Allan, 2006; Hauben, 2008; Joyce, 2007). However, in terms of news sources, news formats, and news content, there has been scarcely any research done, comparing and contrasting the texts between the
dominant news media and the alternative media. From global public sphere perspectives, openDemocracy is considered a space for posting news from all over the world, ensuring that ‘marginalized views and voices are heard, although social and global inequalities still exist in terms of the geographical and demographic distribution of its authors (Fenton, 2010:102-117). On the other hand, the internet could bring a crisis of journalism.

According to Curran (2011:116), British journalists are working under pressure to produce more stories within a less amount of time than before due to the newly established system of traditional news media, demanding that news be updated in a twenty-four-hour news cycle. Consequently, the quality of the product is lowered, sometimes by lifting news from rival news companies’ websites, forcing journalists to find other alternatives to generate more stories as quickly as possible. Sunstein (2011:387-397) also maintains that the internet has the potential to be part of the public sphere but it is not a blessing for democracy because in political discussion, in particular, we see the phenomenon of group polarization where groups with distinctive identities tend to engage in within-group discussion.

However, for over a decade, Ohmynews, which is one of the most cited Korean citizen journalism arenas in communication studies, has represented the democratic role of the internet in journalism, and has shown all the celebrated positive facets of the internet in academic fields, because the internet has been regarded as a virtual space where the public has the opportunity to express their own opinions and debate issues. One of the reasons Ohmynews was regarded as a public sphere would be the fact that all citizens could be reporters. It enabled the viewers to participate and interact more actively in making commentaries and having public debates and discussions. What about now? Does Ohmynews still contribute towards a Korean democracy in journalism? Is there any difference between domestic views and views outside of this country on Ohmynews? As far as I am concerned, there have certainly been changes over a decade in terms of the role and the representation of Ohmynews. Also, there have been some changes in terms of its influence both on society and on journalism in Korea. However, there are only studies which highlight its positive facet, and there are almost no examinations of how it has changed over time in terms of socio-political and cultural perspectives, including the media landscape.
Curran (2012) dealt with Ohmynews a great deal in terms of its ups and downs in a Korean context. He states that from the time the non-military president, Young-Sam, Kim was elected in 1992, there has been a long-running campaign for greater media independence from government. Public attacks have been made on collusion between conglomerates and government, and the neoliberal policies pursued in the wake of the Asian 1997-98 economic crisis, which is also known as the I.M.F. (International Monetary Fund) crisis in South Korea. During the currency crisis of 1997, there was an unforgettable sight of South Koreans queuing for hours to give up their gold and donate it to the national treasury to help the country. South Korea exported the first 300 kilograms of gold collected in a public campaign in a gesture of support for their country in its economic crisis at that time. Also, the public’s anti-US army presence sentiments were growing. Ohmynews was launched in 2000 and it differed from the big three dominant national dailies; it became engaged in the political mobilization that led to the election of President Roh. In 2003 Ohmynews became profitable due to its substantial online advertising and by 2004, Ohmynews had become a website ‘daily’. According to Curran et al. (2012), this remarkable achievement of attracting volunteer reporters with professional skills and building a mass audience was only possible because there was ‘the ground-swell of progressive support’ behind the website. However, he concludes that the causes of the decline of the ground-swell are attributed to a growing disappointment with President Roh’s government, a branch in Japan with low traffic and the international website set-up in English in 2004.

Curran specifically pointed out the underperforming Korean economy under Roh, and his suicide when faced with the prospect of criminal charges for bribery and corruption (2012: 23). As for Roh’s underperformance in boosting Korean economy, in Korean media scholarship, it has been argued that the relationship between Mr. Roh and the dominant big three daily newspapers -Chosun Ilbo, Joongang Ilbo and Donga Ilbo- was problematic and has been said in South Korea that former President, Roh, was blamed for everything by the Korean media. Lee (2007, 2010) analysed the economic news in the period of Moo-Hyun, Roh and Dae-Jung, Kim respectively because he considered economy news to be a non-partisan and impartial news section, compared to other sections such as politics and social issues. Hence, Lee analysed the economic news during the two different administrations in order to examine whether
there were any differences in the tone of the news between the conservative and the liberal newspaper companies, in terms of partisanship. He analysed the big three daily newspapers and his findings show that during the Roh administration, more negative economic news was reported by the mainstream news media, although the economy was better because the social index, unemployment rates and prices, were better than during Kim’s administration. Consequently, due to more asymmetrical negative economic reports in relation to the President’s underperformance, the public’s support for the President was decreasing. In other words, the news media made the negative news even more negative and didn’t make positive news salient in the economic news sections during Roh’s administration. Curran (2012) concludes that due to the consequence of its close association with a ‘failed’ President and from the decline of the left, the proliferation of new websites, the heavy concentration of volunteers in Seoul with a disproportionate ratio of male and females, 40 and 77 per cent and financial difficulty, Ohmynews has ceased to be the natural home of cultural dissent. However, it is probable that the main causes of Ohmynews’ falling will be argued further, because from the Korean perspectives, it could be controversial to see that Ohmynews ceased to continue to prosper due to disappointment with the Roh’s administration, the decline of the left and not enough attention to its Japanese branch from the Korean perspectives.

A third of the Korean population, which is over 10 million people, lives in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. As for the decline of the left, Dae Han Mail Shinbo and the Korea Daily News in the English Edition were founded on 18 July in 1904. They are now the Seoul Shinmun, which publishes nationally about 780,000 issues a day. The biggest shareholder of the Seoul Shinmun was the government with more than 64%. But, on 15 January 2002, the employees became the biggest shareholders (www.seoul.co.kr). There is another major daily newspaper called Kyunghyang Shinmun in South Korea that was founded in 1945 by the Catholic Church. Before the Korean War, it was edited by Fr. Peter Ryan, a refugee from the North, with about 100,000 circulation. It was temporarily closed down in May 1959 by the Seung-Man, Lee administration but revived after the pro-democracy revolution of April 19, 1960. It was owned by the Hanwha Chaebol, but they relinquished their control of the newspaper after the 1997 I.M.F. crisis. Importantly, in 1998, Kyunghyang Shinmun
became an independent newspaper with employee ownership at 96%\(^{32}\). The CEO is elected by the employees and significantly, the editor-in-chief must be approved by a majority of the journalist-employees, although he or she is appointed by the CEO. It is well known that Kyunghyang Shinmun describes itself as moderate progressive, like *The Hankyoreh Shinmun*. What I would like to point out is that the two major daily newspapers became independent from the Chaebol and government respectively during the Kim and Roh administrations, thus more progressive newspapers came into being. Consequently, progressive newspapers were rather dominant at that time. Hence, Ohmynews's falling could be led by a two consecutive Presidency from the Democratic Party and by its lost objectivity as the non-partisan press.

In South Korea, Ohmynews is not regarded as a major news outlet. Just as *The Hankyoreh Shinmun* was founded by sacked journalists and citizen who voluntarily collected funds as the alternative media (Curran and Park, 2005:106), resisting a military authority’s repression on the press on 15 May in 1988 and their stock market shareholders are citizens, Ohmynews was rising as another media reformer about ten years ago when they first started. However, as time passes, Ohmynews turned out to be somewhat partisan in favour of the Democratic Party and the young Internet users seem to lose their passion to revive democracy in Korean journalism. That might have been the cause of Ohmynews’ falling at some point. Nevertheless, Ohmynews has had many exclusive interviews with scholars and researchers in socio-political, economic fields from abroad amid growing financial difficulties without a huge amount of cost input because from the outside world, the foreign audience perceive that Ohmynews is still one of the most influential online media in the world and has its own novel quality and democratic journalism nature. Raymond Williams defines ‘culture’ in his 1958 essay "Culture is ordinary". His concept of ‘culture’ implies the transitory nature of culture, emphasizing a nation’s own shaping through its own experience and for its own purposes (Szeman and Kaposy, 2011:53-56). In the same vein, between 2002 and 2006, Ohmynews was the most influential of the online news media but there has been a downturn for more than five years. However, as user generated technologies have developed and become popular, the impact of the Social Network Systems (SNSs) seem to become very powerful in Korean society.

\(^{32}\) [www.khan.co.kr](http://www.khan.co.kr)
2.2 Korean Google, ‘Naver’

In July 2008, ‘Naver’, which is the top Korean portal site, stopped editing major news articles in their news box on their homepage after criticism that they had distorted the news and had not been responsible for the content of the edited news. According to Nielson Korean Click\textsuperscript{33}, Naver visits, via PC, totalled 31 million for one month, October 2011, Daum visits totalled 28,800,000. The ranking has been the same since 2004. In 2007-2008, a discussion forum site, Agora, in Daum, which is the second largest portal in Korea, was very popular and often the issues in Agora became hot news. As if proving how popular the virtual discussion site was, one internet user whose internet username is ‘Minerva’ (his nickname was ‘the internet economic president’) was jailed in January 2009. He wrote his predictions on the Korean economy and the government’s economic policies on boards. The predictions he made were the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the drastic decline of South Korean currency value against the US dollar at a specific time, government policy regarding banks purchasing foreign currencies and more. His imprisonment was a very controversial issue in Korea and it was one of the top 10 news items.

Some argued that it hampers freedom of speech. Others claimed that ‘Minerva’s false information would negatively influence the public because some people who believed his predictions bought or sold their stock shares. Amid criticism and debate among the public and in the media, ‘Minerva’, Dae-sung Park was charged with electronically spreading false rumours that damaged the public good. Later, it was found that the economy pundit had no academic background on economy at all and did not go to university but went to a junior college. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the whole nation was in shock at that time. The Internet seems to have two faces. On one hand, its anonymous nature has celebrated its encouragement of the public’s participation in virtual discussions. On the other hand, the internet has the potential to give rise to an unexpected negative outcome to the public because internet users cannot read the social cues and body language of other users that they are talking to, with their eyes on the virtual community and tend to believe what is on the Internet without verification.

\footnote{33 By using scientific measures and reliable data, KoreanClick is recognized as the number one internet research company (www.koreanclick.com)}
2.3 The proliferation of the SNSs

From 2010 up until the very beginning of 2012, the power of SNS (Social Network Service) and the radio podcast called ‘Naneun Ggomsuda – known as ‘Nakkomsu’, meaning ‘I’m a weasel’- has been very influential. The New York Times and the LA times covered the widely popular podcast with an article entitled ‘By Lampooning Leaders Talk Show Channels Young People’s Anger’ 1 November 2011 and ‘South Korea’s ‘Weasel’ Ferrets out the Funny’ 18 November 2011 respectively. The four hosts of the show are made up of a politician, a former politician, a current journalist for a news and current affairs magazine and a former online news president. Kim Ou-Joon is a main host, Kim Yong-Min is a former politician and a critic, Joo Jin-Woo is a reporter at Sisa-In, which is a weekly news & current affairs magazine and Chung Bong-ju is a politician. Their main target for lampooning is the president, Lee Myung-Bak. On the programme, they call President Lee ‘His Highness’, or Gaka in Korean, in a sarcastic fashion. In order to show more details about the podcast program, it is necessary to explain the background of one of the four hosts of the podcasting program. That is Kim Ou-Joon. Kim Ou-Joon, leader of the show had a close relationship with the CEO of Ohmynews. I would like to briefly introduce here the background information based on the book titled ‘South Korea’s specialty, Ohmynews’, Daehanminkook tteukssanpoom (meaning ‘national specialty product’), Ohmynews in Korean published in 2004 by Youn Ho Oh.

Ohmynews is very well known as well as its CEO, Youn-Ho Oh who had been invited to symposiums and conferences, such as the symposium hosted by World Association of Newspaper (WAN) which was attended by about 1,400 presidents of press companies from all over the world, in order to explicate the development of Ohmynews, which is one of the most successful online journalism sites in South Korea. However, a rarely known or mentioned fact is that, before Ohmynews was launched, there was an equally popular online journalism site, called ‘DDanzzi Ilbo’ and the CEO of ‘DDanzzi Ilbo’ was Ou-Joon, Kim, the leading host of the most popular radio podcast ‘Naneun Ggomsuda in Korean-I am ‘Weasel’. I ‘Ilbo’ means newspaper in Korean as in Donga Ilbo, Chosun Ilbo and Joongang Ilbo. ‘DDanzzi’ is a colloquial term meaning ‘deviant behaviour’. The site started about a year earlier than Ohmynews, in 1998. DDananzi Ilbo was a parody of news in traditional newspapers.
Youn Ho Oh, current CEO of Ohmynews visited him and discussed how to launch online news, differing from traditional newspapers in pursuit of the goal that all citizens would be journalists. Oh asked for advice about how to create successful online journalism. Oh even asked Kim to think of a name for the online news. Kim advised him that “in order to make a successful online news site, you should make a site where netizens’ choose to go, as they will visit and share and spread information and eventually, the website is successful.” He meant that each of those netizens should be able to become an honorary ambassador for letting people know about the online news, so the online news company does not necessarily incur any expense advertising costs for their website. It was an absolutely important point according to Oh. He says that a citizen reporter wrote a news article and his or her article was on the Ohmynews and they got excited about the fact that their stories were on a web page where everybody could see them so they told people about their publication online, saying ‘I became a reporter’, ‘my story went on the top news’, ‘news viewers love my story because so many people made comments on my news’. This process is exactly what Kim spoke of when she said ‘netizens become honorary ambassadors for promoting the website’ (Oh, 2004).

The most popular podcast has been the top keyword for months and it is all over the news and broadcasting in Korea right now due to its powerful influence. Last year they arranged a talk concert in an auditorium on the 20th and 30th October 2011; one minute after ticket sales went online, 1,600 seats were sold out. ‘Naggoomsu’ has been breaking records for downloads in Apple iTunes each month, keeping its top ranking easily. Its download numbers are much more than NPR’s ‘Planet money’ or HBO’s ‘Real Time’ (Munwha Journal, 2 March 2012). In particular, after Chung, Bong-Joo was sentenced to one year in prison, charged with mentioning information related to President Lee’s alleged stock fraud, the radio podcast became one of the world most downloaded political podcasts. In the wake of Mr Chung’s imprisonment, citizens have been demonstrating for his release not by scuffles with the police, as was usually done in the past but by using their SNSs. For instance, female citizens, including a current journalist, have been demonstrating via SNSs by uploading the photos of themselves in bikinis with ‘Release him!’ written on their chests. Again, freedom of speech has become the hottest debate. I often hear people say that they feel catharsis when they listen to the radio show because it reveals things directly. The
audience feels that there is no hidden or behind the scenes story. It seems to be frankly spoken. The public knows that what they say on the show is not 100% correct. However, the public keep listening to it despite the fact that there are mainstream shows available. As I have described thus far, the new media craze has been sweeping the nation in many different ways. Hence, it would be worth noting its popularity and its impact on society from the socio-economic and political perspectives. Amid growing concerns about the new medium’s power, one army unit designated ‘Naggomsu’ as a pro-North Korean app and ordered that it be deleted from smartphones in January 2012; they announced that they would check smartphones every Wednesday and Defence Ministry spokesman, Min Seok Kim said that “Korean soldiers are supposed to protect a nation from North Korea’s threat so it was appropriate measures” (Yonhap, 6 February 2012). Moreover, the Korea communications commission, which is a broadcasting watchdog, stated that they would soon censor podcasts that used to be exempt from scanning. The commission is independent and consists of nine members who were appointed by the president to the public broadcasting service, KBS. Why is the alternative form of journalism like left-wing centred ‘Naneun Ggomsuda’, so popular and currently having such an impact on Korea society? Does the phenomenon imply Korean democracy in the press and politics? Picard states that “To survive and prosper, news and information media must provide better and different news and information than that provided by competitors, and news and information for users who value it” (2010:374). However, in the facet of a nation’s security dissent views and various opinions on the North, related issues might exacerbate the already complicated situation.

The movie ‘Dogani (2011) - The Crucible’ in English- showed the power of netizens once again. The film is about the revelation of former school staff over repeated rapes and sexual harassment that took place at Inhwa School in Gwangju in the southern part of South Korea, and is based on a true story. A former teacher at the school, Kim, Yeong-il, claimed two students there had been abused, subsequently died, and were secretly buried about 50 years ago. He claimed in a media briefing that, in October 1964, when he was working at the school, the vice principal starved an orphan boy and beat him to death. In another incident, a six year old girl’s death occurred about six months later. Kim said that a woman taking care of the girl threw her off a building. He reported this to police but was ignored; they said that they could
not find any evidence. It appeared thousands of Korean netizens and bloggers started a petition, demanding that the abuse case be reinvestigated. In an interview, the director of the film said that he had never expected that this movie release would gain such huge public attention. Also he said that netizens, especially who those who used SNSs-Social Networking Services, played a key role in making this film successful, a viewership of more than 4 million. Approximately two months after the film was released, the City of Gwanju officially announced that they would shut down Inhwa School, and the education office in the province said that they had notified Wuseok, a social welfare foundation that owns and runs the school, that its license would be cancelled on Nov.14 2011. Moreover, a city spokesman said that the 57 disabled students who were attending the school would be transferred to other schools in adjacent areas (Yonhap, 18 November 2011).

The SNSs has become one of the most important media socially and politically in South Korea like in many other countries. In contemporary news coverage of major incidents such as crimes in a subway or natural disaster in a region, video images captured by the mobile phones of the public, especially the young, often constitute an important part of the coverage in the news on TV as well as on the Internet. Journalists also use user-generated content (UGC) such as Youtube or Facebook in news coverage. Lee (2012) analysed the ways in which journalists have adopt online video coverage in mainstream newspapers in Hong Kong. He discovered that journalists are in favour of footage of breaking news events which can be easily incorporated into mainstream/traditional journalism for news media institutions' professional and organizational needs by adopting them as human interest space-fillers, coverage of conventional news events, watchdog journalism, and representations of public reactions. His study shows the significance of the new media in a society for news sources and the representation of public opinion.

As shown above, netizens have become a new powerful and influential social class in the realm of media, and journalists have been using their comments and opinions as a news source. Previous studies about online journalism and the new media are mainly research about the public's participation in discussions, creating a public sphere in pursuit of democracy. However, in the post-Cold war era, Korean alternative news seems to be more than just participating in discussions online. They talk together,
share opinions and work for mobilization on a socio political scale in a virtual space. They do everything on the Internet. Again, the war has not finished; we have been at war for almost 60 years. There have been small and big incidents and events between the two Koreas since the ceasefire of the Korean War. Hence, it is very complicated in that there coexists vestiges of the Cold War period and the citizen's pursuit of democracy in Korean society. Under this circumstance, what roles would the SNSs be playing in the divided Korea of an unfinished war?

Egypt's demonstrations in pursuit of democracy, using the new media, created a Facebook page under the name ‘We Are All Khaled Said,’ against police brutality and rights abuses in Egypt, shows what citizens want and what they are against. Atton (2007:17) emphasizes that it is necessary to research further about particular alternative media practices and the ways in which the audiences use their content. However, in a Korean historical context, it is very hard to think about Korean journalism and Korean democracy without considering the political and historical turmoil from the Japanese colonization, the Korean War, the military regimes, student democratization movements, protests and demonstrations for rights. It has been less than 20 years since South Korea was ruled by a military regime. South Korea has passed those times that Egypt is going through, but not so long ago. Only about twenty years ago, university students protested and died, killed by the police and the military government in the middle of a campus where now national and international students and professors walk peacefully. Hence, the public still seems to have some distrust toward their government and it looks like Korean politics always become embroiled in North Korean issues.

1.9 Blogosphere

Kim et al. (2011:102) studied how bloggers recode the news media discourse and reframe what the mainstream news media reports about the Cheonan issue by studying 35,000 sampled blogs out of the population of 120,000 in ‘Naver’, the largest portal in South Korea. The findings show that bloggers criticise and nullify the government's officials reports delivered by mass media and the top selling daily newspaper” The study shows that most bloggers showed not hegemonic position (5%) but the negotiated (30 %)-humanist and nationalist or oppositional positions (65 %)
class struggle and ideological conflict in their reception of the mainstream media discourse. As for the culprit ‘Number 1’ letter in blue ink inside the torpedo, a majority of bloggers disproved the government’s official report. The rumours that it was provided by the South Korean government was widespread in a blog sphere (2011:103). The study concludes that bloggers ‘blame the irresponsibility of government officials who misused their power to avoid the military obligation and disposes them of the symbolic authority to decide the truth over the Cheonan disaster” (2011:103). In addition, it shows that the Cheonan issue contributed to reinforcing the conservative party and current government’s hard-line policy in relation to North Korea. Furthermore, the expectation for ‘Bookpoong’-North Korea Wind, meaning the North Korean issues influencing the Korean election was wrong. Although it was expected that after the Cheonan sinking, the public would be anxious so it is likely to support a conservative party as it used to be, the result was that the 6.2 election brought a defeat to the Grand National Party, the ruling party (2011:104). Considering that a majority of bloggers are a rather young generation, young people do not seem to believe what the mainstream media says but rather criticizes them. The research shows that young people’s distrust toward the mainstream media could cause their distrust toward a government.

3. The conflicts with North Korea in a socio-economic-cultural context

In an international context, US economic sanctions on the North were anticipated. Usually, condemnation for refusing the six-party talks, including the United States, China, Russia, Japan and the two Koreas, is followed in the news and, automatically, the North Korean nuclear issue comes forward. However, in the wake of the official report on the Cheonan warship sinking attacked by the North, the Lee Myung-bak administration implemented, what is called, ‘5.24 measures (24th May measures)’ which banned all investment in, and trade with, North Korea and humanitarian aids, except for the Kaesong industrial complex, which now accounts for nearly all inter-Korean trade; expansion planning has been frozen since then. According to Shin Jong-Su, editor at the Kookmin Ilbo (a Daily newspaper), the volume of manufacture hit a record high in 2005, reaching $14,910,000 and had been steadily increasing. It was $256,380,000 dollars in 2009 and $323,320,000. 2010 respectively, which is a
26.1% increase rate within one year. In 2011, the output accounted for $518,500,000 dollars, which shows a 24.3% increase compared to the year before. He quotes the remarks of Park, Sung-Cheol, the chairman of Shinwon- one of the top fabric, textile and clothing groups, founded in 1973. He said that “the labour power in North Korea has an excellent quality. The products made in North Korea have a much better quality than those made in South Korea. For South Korea, we can have benefits such as no language barrier and easy accessibility because we are geographically near the North.” It is possible that North Korea is negotiating economic development with China, particularly Najin and Sunbong provinces and HwangGeumPyung and Wihwado areas for cooperative development and management in the near future, because a high profile official in North Korea recently visited China together with 50 economic representatives. They are very likely to use the Kaesung industrial complex as a benchmark. Thus, it is necessary to lift the 5.23 measures and find strategic measures to open up the trading and businesses as the new leader, Kim Jung-Eun, moves and changes his policies outward (The Kookmin Ilbo online, 15 August 2012).

Steven Borowiec wrote a news article entitled “More than a game: when North Korea meets S. Korea at Olympic ping-pong” (The Christian Science Monitor, August 6 2012)\textsuperscript{34}. The story is about how “ping-pong diplomacy” helped thaw relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of China in the 1970s; table tennis matches have never stood out as significant international events, however, he says that any contest between North and South Korea is a special event indeed. The match at the London Olympics, in which second-seeded South Korea was victorious, 3-1, leading it to reach the quarterfinals, provided a unique window into inter-Korean relations. It was a unified Korean team that won the 1991 World Championships after the two top ping-pong players from South and North Korea were brought together to take on powerhouse China. They were Hyun, Jeong-Hwa from South Korea and Lee, Boon-Hee from the North. They had been rivals but learned to cooperate. Steven Borowiec describes the moment that “the team’s success offered a sign of hope for those who still long for the Korean peninsula to be unified. Interest in the event was renewed this past May, when a film based on the team’s story, was released. The

\textsuperscript{34} http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Olympics/2012/0804/More-than-a-game-when-North-Korea-meets-S.-Korea-at-Olympic-ping-pong
movie recreates the tensions of their coming together and their dramatic victory.” The title of the movie is ‘Korea’ in Korean but ‘As one’ in English (Very often, it is the case that the Korean language title and the English language title of a movie differ, which means that it is not the translated meaning from Korean to English and vice versa).

There are some stories surrounding the film’s release. Hyun, Jeong-Hwa is now the head coach of South Korea’s Olympic women’s table tennis team and Lee, Boon Hee is the secretary-general of the (North) Korea Disabled Athletes Association. She is raising her own disabled child and she trains with disabled North Korean athletes in Beijing. Since the 1993 World Championships, the two table tennis star players have not met, so Hyun was going to visit Lee, Boon-Hee in Beijing for the premiere of the film ‘Korea’ aka ‘As One.’ However, according to Lee Su-Nam, president of Tower Pictures, who produced the film, the Unification Ministry, which had initially shown a positive attitude, made a last-minute request to postpone it and the director of the Unification Ministry said that “with North Korean conducting its missile launch after the first request was approved, we are currently unable to approve even private requests.” The president of Tower Pictures production delivered a gold ring from Hyun, which has their first names inscribed on the inside of the ring with a hand-written letter from Hyun. Hyun had given a ring to Lee Boon twenty-one years ago. In the letter, Hyun wrote, “I would really like to meet you again. We should be able to. I miss you so much.” However, Lee did not accept the ring this time, although she said that she missed Hyun so much. On video, Hyun said “I miss you so much. You haven’t forgotten me, have you? Unni, meaning ‘sister’ in Korean, you look the same in this photo. I hoped that we could see this film, sitting down together. I’ll visit you with this film. Please wait for me till then. Miss you so much, Unni.”

Hyun Jeong Hwa created the Hyun Jeong Hwa Foundation, which sends economic support for Lee Boon Hee and the Korean Disabled Athlete Association, by using SNSs. The name of Hyun’s foundation is known as ‘Goodbye Selly.’ She said that “if I make a profit out of this foundation, I’m going to support the disabled athletes who are going to play in the London Olympics. I don’t want to solely depend on the cooperative’s fund. I believe that the foundation, by communication with consumers through SNSs, will be based on mutual trust with the SNSs users.” (MoneyToday, 14 May 2012). Soon after, she announced that there was a signature gathering campaign
to be able to meet the two players, Hyung Jeong Hwa and Lee Boon Hee. Hundreds of replies and tweeters left supporting messages on her SNS account. Also, the fund earned through the SNS account as well as donations in the movie premiere were delivered to the disabled athletes who were playing at the London Paralympics (Asia News Agency, 29 August 2012).

The globally renowned South Korean conductor, Jung, Myung-Hoon is currently music director of the Seoul Municipal Symphony Orchestra. He has many titles in the classical music world globally. One of them is music director and conductor of the French Radio France Philharmonic in France, since 2000. Five members of the French Philharmonic are South Korean from the Seoul Municipal Symphony Orchestra. The performance which was conducted in Paris, in collaboration with the North Korean orchestra, whose name is ‘Eun Ha Sue (meaning Galaxy in English)’ on 14 March 2012 was given by three nations, South Korea, North Korea and France. Jung, Myung Hoon explained “a few months ago, I went to Pyongyang and conducted two Orchestras. Since then, I have tried hard to find a way to have a South and North joint performance, discussing and counselling with people who are involved. As a result, I decided to invite the North Korean Orchestra, ‘Eun Ha Soo’ to Paris. Initially, what I wanted was to have a performance of South Korean and North Korean Orchestra accompanying each other, but I think there are yet some political issues preventing that. It is not possible to do it now but the performance will be held on 14 March in Paris will be the first step forward, I reckon. Also, I’m discussing other various projects,” he said, at the press conference that took place at Hyundai Card Headquarters in Yuido, Seoul on 21 March 2012. He went to Pyongyang, North Korea in September, 2011, for three nights and four days at the invitation of the Chosun Art Exchange Association of North Korea. At that time, he attended a North Korean Orchestral performance and became one of the judges for the Orchestra member auditions. (The Kookmin Ilbo, 21 February 2012)

In order to make sense of some the ideas and situations regarding the conflicts and difficulties between the South and the North, national socio-cultural, political and economic aspects of the relationship between South Korea and North Korea have been shown, bringing up some political and cultural issues and barriers. What is clear, as discussed above, is that the relationship between South Korea and North Korea is
very complicated. North Korea is a country against which South Korea must defend itself militarily, but does not want to lose the benefits that are now enjoyed by stopping trade with them, because our loss might become China’s economic gain. In addition, emotional compassion towards North Korea through sports and music, which are global languages, allows South Korea and North Korea to feel that somehow we should unite together and support each other as Mike Breen, analyst and author of a book about North Korea said “Koreans can be so easily united without much effort, just because they are Korean”.

Over the last couple of years, the US secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has visited South Korea a few times. On 21 July 2010, Mrs. Clinton, who has travelled to 112 countries during her term in office, (BBC online, 31 December, 2012) and Defence Secretary Robert Gates visited the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea. At the time, Mrs. Clinton said “In contrast to the South’s extraordinary progress, the North has not only stagnated in isolation, but the people of the North have suffered for so many years,” and added “I want Pyongyang to know there is another way. But until they change direction, the United States stands firmly on behalf of the people and government of the Republic of Korea, where we provide a stalwart defence along with our allies and partners”. Mr. Gates said their visit to South Korea was meant as a message of solidarity with an ally, and a message of deterrence towards the North. Does this mean that the firmer the solidarity with an ally, the worse the relationship is with its counterpart?

United Colors of Benetton, the fashion group, launched an ‘Unhate’ campaign with a list of photos of global leaders’ kissing, including kissing between North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Lee Myung-Bak, president of South Korea, Chinese leader Hu Jintao and Barack Obama on 17 November 2011. The Vatican and the White House condemned the fashion group and United Benetton’s provocative advertising campaign, and later Benetton withdrew an ad campaign image of the Pope kissing an Egyptian imam. But its aim, which was to highlight the culture of hatred and promote closeness between peoples, faiths, cultures and the peaceful understanding of each other’s motivations” should be considered a bold gesture for reconciliation in politics and religion. The Daily Mail online updated the news about the advertisement and commented that North and South Korean leaders are not likely to be keen on the photo (29 November
2011). Possibly, the two leaders might not have any interest, but the public did. The campaign became a hot issue in this country.

4. Social media, mobilisation and control

Donohue et al. (1995) address that the role of mass media as an independent and powerful force in society is a controversial issue. The fourth estate role of the watchdog media should include autonomy for the media in order to represent the interests of the public rather than the dominant groups. However, the idea of media autonomy is ideal. Thus, it seems hard to be independent from each other as well. Curran (2011) observed that the media is controlled by institutions, mainly governments and authoritarian states, and said that in contrast with the independence of American journalism, there are overt ways in which the media are still controlled in other parts of the world. Castells (2009: 282-283) notes that since the late 1990s, the Chinese government has attempted to control the internet by censoring words such as ‘porn, Tiananmen, Taiwan or democracy’, adopting surveillance technologies which can keep records and provide content upon the authoritarian government's request. Dozens of internet users have been tracked down, arrested, and jailed.

A TV actress, Min-sun Kim, wrote against US beef import resumption, saying ‘I would rather take potassium cyanide than eat US beef’ on the Korean social networking service Cyworld35, which is the Korean equivalent to Facebook. It was not known which mainstream media reported the comment first, however, politicians from the ruling party raised an issue regarding her comment, criticizing her behaviour as a nonsensible act. The US beef importers filed a suit against her, asking for 150,000 pounds in compensation for damage. Thus, it became a hot issue and other fellow celebrities and professors defended her; netizens also criticized the government. Luckily, she won the lawsuit but changed her name to Gyu-ri Kim. Surprisingly, the website of the national election watchdog, was attacked with DDoS (distributed denial of service) a few times. In addition, according to the Korea Herald, citing the National Election Commission (NEC), a search engine on the website that helps voters find

35 Cyworld was launched in 2001, which is much earlier than Facebook and it is the largest online social network service in South Korea because the number of members equates approximately to one quarter of the nation’s entire population, which is 45 million. Cyworld has also been expanding internationally, reaching China and Japan (Choi, 2006, Chun et al., 2008).
their designated polling station was also attacked. The NEC said it resumed all services within minutes by moving to a cyber-shelter, and asked the police to investigate the attack. Even during the 26 October by-elections for the Seoul mayor, the website was under attack, triggering a lot of suspicion and a large-scale investigation. A special counsel was set up to clear up lingering suspicions that ruling party lawmakers may have controlled the attack to affect the elections. At that time, the younger the voters who participated, the more likely the opposition party will be elected. Through the SNSs, especially Twitter, celebrities write campaign messages to encourage young voters to participate in voting. Also, they announced that they would pose for a photo with people after voting, in front of the polling station, what is called ‘Inzeung Shot’. However, the government stated later that the photo shooting was illegal and it was prohibited (11 April 2012).

Weeks of demonstrations and anti-US beef candlelit protests by civic and labour groups, against a government plan to resume U.S. beef imports, occurred in 2008 in South Korea. These protests began in May with student demonstrations and peaked in June with at least 80,000 people taking to the streets of Seoul and over one million demonstrating nationwide that year. One of the reasons that may have brought those huge and long lasting protests were, of course, the fear of mad cow disease, since the first suspected case of mad cow disease in the U.S. was detected in Washington State in 2003. In the wake of the first case of mad cow disease - bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the South Korean government had banned imports of U.S. beef in 2003, but they resumed it in 200836. Furthermore, the investigative current affairs TV programme, ‘PD Note’, fuelled these demonstrations against U.S. beef imports. In the climate of demand for banning the US beef in the public and private sectors, the TV programme, PD Note, produced by MBC (Munwha Broadcasting Company), which is one of the major terrestrial broadcasting companies in South Korea, featured the almost life-threatening risks of U.S. Beef on air. In the April 29 and May 13 episodes of PD Note titled "Urgent Report! Is US Beef Safe from Mad Cow Disease?" they showed video clips of a US downer cow, a cow that cannot walk, saying that it was infected with mad cow disease. It was later found that the report was done mistakenly, with problems in translation from English to Korean. In addition, on the show, they interviewed a Virginia woman, Aretha Vinson, who died after contracting variant

36 AP news online, 21 June 2008
Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease (vCJD), which is the human equivalent of mad cow disease, when she succumbed to a similarly named illness, but it was also discovered later that mad cow disease was not related to Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease (CJD). The hosts of the programme, who were the actual producers of the show, also added that Koreans are genetically more susceptible to vCJD and claimed that mad cow disease can be contracted from ingredients in instant noodles, medicines, and cosmetics. The five staff members of the episode were arrested by prosecutors who claimed that the recording of PD Note distorted facts to amplify the risks linked to mad cow disease and defame the agriculture ministry. They were released and acquitted in September 2011.

The biased TV programme ‘PD Note’ shows how local socio-political mobilization is organized by means of the internet and mobile communication, as Castells (2009:85-88) says, like in the Philippines, Spain, Ukraine, Ecuador, Nepal, and Thailand. He argues that it illustrates the new capacity of movements to organize and mobilize citizens in their country while calling for solidarity in the world at large. The first demonstrations were relatively small, but they soon became huge, after filming with their own cellular phones and immediately uploading to YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. He says that the vision of the determination of the demonstrators and of the brutality of the military regime amplified the movement. The mainstream media rebroadcast and repackaged this citizen produced content by reframing it to fit their personal, institutional purposes. Castells (2009) emphasizes that global civil society has the technological means to exist independently from political institutions and from the mass media. However, the question of whether or not social movements could change the public mind still depends, to a great extent, on their ability to shape the debate in the public sphere. Since 1987, conditions, both socially and politically for the freedom of expression, have improved rapidly because the Basic Law of the Press was abolished in July 1987, and the mass media, including newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting stations, were regulated by the Act Concerning the Registration of Periodicals and the Broadcasting Act. With the removal of market barriers, many provincial newspapers were founded. Taking advantage of the new opportunities, the CDPM supported the establishment of the progressive daily, The Hankyoreh Shinmun in May 1988 as an alternative to the conservative mainstream press (Kern and Nam, 2008). The CDPM (Council for Democratic Press Movement) was literally aiming to
plan social movements for press democracy, which later changed its name to Citizens’ Coalition for Democratic Media on 27 March, 1998. The coalition consists of 13,000 members who are dismissed journalists and radical-minded publishers, and several hundreds of associated fellow members. They set up seminars about journalism practices, such as video journalism, writing for the news by Oh Yeon Ho- founder of Ohmynews, making documentaries and more, in 1998.37

According to Kern and Nam (2008), the Korea Federation of Press Union (KFPU), which was renamed the National Union of Media Workers in 2000, was established in November 1988. In 1989, the KFPU organized lay-offs in order to strengthen their rights to independent editorial work. They say that in the 1990s, the democratic media movement changed profoundly. First, many new social movement organizations were founded to promote the political liberalization of society. In contrast to the democracy movement of the 1980s, which broadly demanded democratization in terms of social justice and unification, the new groups quickly evolved into specialization in single issues such as environmentalism, feminism, and labour activism. Following those strategic media movements for democracy, priority was given to specific media issues, such as the structural deficits of the press market. However, Kern and Nam (2008) emphasized that the top three major newspapers – DongA Ilbo, Chosun Ilbo and JoongAng Ilbo were still dominant in the newspaper market, although some political barriers to the establishment of media companies had been removed. In the past, most of the newspapers had repeatedly provoked public outrage with questionable management practices and frequent intrusions by the newspaper management upon the editorial procedures. Furthermore, the campaigns of the media activists continued to address the allegedly strong conservative, anti-communist, and neoliberal bias of the mainstream press. It is very difficult to conclude that the effect of those campaigns and social movements in Korea and previous empirical studies with similar findings are rare. However, it is seen that, as shown above, there are cases where social movements, often by citizens and the alternative media, are used as tools to express their opinions. Why would it be important to address the divided ideologies, anti-communist and neoliberal bias of the dominant mainstream news in contemporary Korean society?

37 www.ccdm.or.kr
5. North Korean news as a political agenda

A former president of the Seoul Foreign Correspondents’ Club, Yun-Suk Lim, said live on air on a radio programme in Seoul, “North Korea is our favourite news topic because news companies at home are more likely to pick the news.” In addition, “North Korea has become one of the top news agendas, since the former 43th President of the United States, George W. Bush named North Korea, together with Iran and Iraq, as part of the ‘axis of evil’ in his Inaugural public speech in 2002”. The global media, mostly US/UK-based media organizations, has been playing a critical role in setting and developing the international news agenda by creating public awareness and concern of salient issues (Wanta and Hu, 1993). Consequently, incidents relating to North Korea’s missile launch and nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, gave rise to not only heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula but also global communities’ insecurity concerns over nuclear proliferation. Later, we will discuss this further, but at this stage Lim’s remark implies that issues related to North Korea can be used as an agenda set by the media. Consequently, if the media set the agenda, it is likely to be a public agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Hence, a news agenda related to the North could mean increased tension or insecurity.

Thus, whenever we have an election, for example, a presidential election, North Korea is a significant agenda item in swaying public opinion. What is called Bookpoong – the northern wind, refers to the tension between the North and the South that the North ratchets up ahead of a Korean election. For example, left wingers condemn right wingers, arguing that by exploiting the Bookpoong, they want to bring voters’ support for the conservative party because the public would feel more insecure so tend to support a ruling party with a strong defense policy by uniting more conservative voters. (The Korea Times, 2 June 2010). On the contrary, right wingers claim that the opposition party is using Bookpoong in order to create disturbance and aggravate the situation.

According to the usual rules, in the local election on 2 June, 2010 in the wake of the Cheonan incident, the ruling party’s win should have been the result, as it has been for decades. However, the Democratic Party won more votes than the governing party, contrary to what the political analysts had predicted, so the chairman of the
governing party, Chung Mong-Joon stepped down and the president’s chief of staff, Chung Chung-kil offered to resign (The New York Times, 2 June 2010). Thus, the tradition that insecurity related to the North leads the public to vote for the ruling party - ‘Bookpoong’ was not applied to the Cheonan case. In other words, the agenda related to North Korea usually set by the media, together with the political field, had been influential ahead of an election in the past but it was not in the Cheonan case (Lee, 2010).

However, as Rhee (2011) maintains, Korea is a country where political parallelism, which is the degree of connection between the media systems and the party system, prevails. He also points out that Korean top daily newspapers routinely decided to take sides with major political parties, while the public service broadcasters oscillated depending on who was in power. In addition, as the ideology of the media is heavily engaged, there has been a decline in the public trust in the Korean press over time. The survey results show that a decline of public trust in the press was a prime factor influencing the decline of newspaper readership. Importantly, major national newspapers’ coverage regarding the government policy of North Korea had significantly changed in such a way that the “ideological orientations of the conservative and liberal dailies became differentiated and aligned to ideological positions of conflicting parties over time between the Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae-Jung Governments” (2011:351). Historically, it is not only those two administrations, but also other administrations, that decided that the main issue, every time a new president was elected, was about whether the president is from the ruling party or the opposition party. As in other Western democratic countries, the highly competitive market-driven media scene influences the media content in South Korea, however, an ideological binary division even in the post-Cold War era in politics is still rooted in the media and society, which consequently brings lowered trust by the public in the press.

In this chapter, I have introduced the background of Korean politics and the Korean media since the Korean War with a detailed historical timeline in order to help understand the current Korean society and the media system. In the overview, we could see the role of the media in socio-political contexts, in particular, according to the transition of the Korean government. During the turbulent regimes, the media was under suppression, there were also resistances for journalist autonomy and
independence. As Korea transformed into a democratic country as well as the developments of the digital media, the resistance in the new media and netizen's (Internet users) vigorous social activities has been demonstrated in this section through the SNSs and the alternative media. Additionally, I discussed the role of the alternative media and media discourse in the new media about the Cheonan in order to comprehend the current Korean media phenomenon and the background of the ideological division, by looking at South Korea in a sociological, political and cultural context in this section.

To sum up, in chapter 2 and chapter 3, I set up some of the necessary journalism frameworks and place them in Korean contexts in order to examine the Cheonan incident by applying them. Thus, I introduced contextual background to the Korean media and society in detail. In addition, I attempted to shed new light on international relations, foreign policies, and national interests in the post-Cold war to proceed a better evaluation of the journalism theories in Korean contexts. Additionally, this would provide a rationale for examining the news frames and the factors that influenced the news frames and exploring the nature of news production on North Korean issues, as well as the Cheonan. In terms of methodologies, Rhee (2009) argues that unfortunately, many studies that have adopted framing theories tend to concentrate on analysing formed frames in a text and often exclude the factors or background contexts, or processes of which a certain frame is constructed, stressing the vital role of elements in expression, structures of narratives, and implied values in news texts. His argument seems to be in line with what Bourdieu emphasizes - It is crucial to know who wrote it, how he or she wrote it, and the background of the writer (Benson and Neveu, 2005). Therefore, the following chapter explicitly states details of the procedures and the methodology employed in my research project.
Chapter 4.
Methodologies

The method utilised in this study is twofold. This study focuses on exploring the factors that have influenced the national and international news coverage of the sinking of the Cheonan naval vessel. In particular, I am interested in examining the dominant news frames of the news coverage of the incident shaped by journalists and exploring internal and external factors that influenced news content. In other words, this research concentrates on both the ways in which news is reported and the reasons why it may be reported in this way. In addition, I wanted to explore the extent to which international news agencies affected elite national and international news content in terms of international news flow. Firstly, I conducted framing news analysis and examined the salient news frames in news agencies and elite news media outlets of the US, UK and South Korea in relation to their coverage of the sinking of the Cheonan. News narratives of the incident were compared in order to do this. Secondly, I interviewed foreign correspondents and Korean journalists with the purpose of investigating the factors that influenced journalists’ practices in covering the event and the news frames that were employed in news texts. This chapter explicates the methods that I employed for this research, the results of which will be presented in chapters 5 and 6.

1. Methods

Quantitative and qualitative social research are two major paradigms in social science. Since my study is to examine news frames and to explore the factors that influenced those frames, quantitative and qualitative research methods will be combined. For news content analysis, I am going to adopt news framing analysis. Framing analysis can be largely divided into two approaches. They are inductive and deductive. An inductive approach is to analyse news texts with ‘a priori defined frames in mind’ (De Vreese, 2005:53). This approach has been criticised for its typically small sample size and the difficulty it creates to replicate. The other approach is a deductive framing
analysis, which is more widely used by scholars (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese, 2005). This approach is utilised to investigate frames by applying operationally defined frames in content analysis adopted from previous studies, such as the conflict frame or the attribution of responsibility or human interests’ frames. In contrast to the former approach, the latter is easy to replicate and is better with a large volume of samples (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Since my news data is not a large sample, I am going to conduct an inductive framing analysis.

There has been a large volume of framing studies concerning the cross-national news coverage on various issues, this highlights the relationship between the news media frames and public perceptions (Castells, 2009; Norris et al., 2003; Dimitrova and Stromback, 2005; Freedman and Thussu, 2012; Altheide and Grimes, 2005; Moeller, 2004). In addition, some studies show that the U.S. news media frames of North Korea were terrorism, weapons and a global threat and the public perception of them was that they were terrorists (Moeller, 2004, Choi, 2009; Lim and Seo, 2009). Considering the impact of news frames on public perceptions discussed in previous studies, it would be of significance to investigate news frames employed in the news coverage of the Cheonan. Thus, for this study, I analysed news texts to investigate the comparative news frames in news coverage of the Cheonan in the US, UK and South Korea, focusing on elite newspapers and news agencies. Entman (1991) states that analysing news narratives is one of the critical and reliable ways of detecting frames (1991:6). In addition, Zelizer (1997) emphasises how the study of news narratives leads to a deeper understanding about journalism and its practice.

 Adopting the Entman’s categories in news framing analysis, I compared and contrasted news narratives in mainstream news outlets in order to investigate the dominant news frames. The size of news articles is an essential element in news framing analysis because it can show whether the media was making the issue salient or not (Entman, 1991). In addition, identifying news sources cited in news stories are one of the most significant ways of examining the main determinants that influence news frames (Entman, 1991; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Hence, I examined what form of news sources were employed in the news coverage of the Cheonan. Therefore, in this study, for the method of news data analysis, I measured the
frequency of news texts of each media outlet and identified news sources that were adopted in news stories.

2. Data Collection and Coding Mechanism

The major news agencies in the world in the twenty-first century are Reuters, AP, and AFP (De Beer and Merrill, 2009). The global news agencies have a significant impact on shaping news contents of the mainstream media in the world. In particular, “global and regional news agencies are all the more crucial due to their potentially substantial agenda-setting influence on other media” (Paterson, 2003:2). Thus, in order to investigate whether major news agencies do indeed influence elite and international mainstream news media, it was essential to know the ways in which such news agencies covered the Cheonan incident. Hence, I chose the Associated Press, which is among the big three news agencies because I could search the news articles reported by the Associate Press with a keyword ‘Cheonan’ from the ‘LexisNexis’ database.

In terms of each country’s mainstream media, for the UK, the BBC news was selected because it is a public broadcasting corporation in the UK in addition to the fact that Korea has this television news channel- the BBC world equivalent to CNN and the BBC’s entertainment TV channel, BBC Prime on cable and satellite. In addition, according to Thussu, “after CNN, the BBC is the most important global television news broadcaster” (2000:138). Hence, I chose the BBC for this research. As for the US news media, as mentioned above, CNN is one of the most pioneering examples of a global television news network (Thussu, 2000). For the U.S. daily newspaper, The New York Times was selected because it is an elite and influential newspaper and plays a role as an agenda setter to other news media (Thussu, 2000; Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998; Meraz, 2009). The Guardian, London was selected for the UK daily newspaper. According to Bantimaroudis and Ban (2001:176), both The Guardian and The New York Times are ‘major gatekeepers in the United States and Europe respectively’ and the news articles are redistributed by other local media. Therefore, examining the two elite newspapers’ news coverage patterns and trends is a very useful tool to understand various perspectives and views in the two continents (2001:175-176).
For domestic news media news analysis, again, in terms of international news flow, it is necessary to examine the news coverage by the biggest Korean news agency, Yonhap agency. Also, for domestic daily newspapers, I chose the DongA Ilbo, which is one of the major three conservative newspapers, and The Hankyoreh, which represents one of the top liberal newspapers in South Korea (Jeong, 2011). Moreover, according to Rankey.com-website ranking software, the big three conservative newspapers’ online version- the Chosun.com, the Joins.com and the Donga.com, have the highest traffic rate38. In short, for international news, I chose BBC, The Guardian in the UK and CNN and The New York Times in the US. For news agencies, the news coverage of the AP will be examined and compared. If it is necessary, news excerpts from other news media companies will be presented in order to explicate the detailed information and background. I included standard news reports but excluded opinion and editorial items because this study is to explore the ways in which a journalist constructed a reality and framed the issue.

As for the frequency of the news texts that mentioned the incident, news texts were collected from 26 March 2010 to 31 May 2010. A previous study concentrated on key dates for their semiotic news analysis (Baek and Lee, 2011). These are, the first day when the incident happened on 26 March 2010; 6 April 2010 when the rescuing survivors stopped; 7 April when there were interviews with survivors at a press conference; 25 April-a funeral day for the lost; 26 April when there was an interim official report; and 20 May 2010 when there was a final official report by the government. However, within this study, the focus is on the total number of news articles relating to the incident between 26 March, 2010 when the incident happened and 31 May, 2010, which is about a week after the final conclusion by the government. For the framing news analysis, news texts reported in the first week after the incident happened were used because during this period, there was a great deal of uncertainty and speculation concerning the incident. Therefore, I conducted news narratives analysis during the very first week of the Cheonan sinking.


English does not overlap with any other word, unless it would mean the name of a city in the Southern part of the Metropolitan area in South Korea. However, during the period of my data collection, there was no international news about the city, ‘Cheonan’ so an overlapping of the word was avoidable. Other than that, the word ‘Cheonan’ does not have any other meaning. To retrieve Korean news articles, I used the two words ‘CheonanHahm’ as the pronoun in order to avoid getting news about ‘Cheonan’ related news (‘Hahm’ can mean ‘warship’ ‘corvette’ or any other ship related words in Korean). For collecting domestic news articles, Yonhap, Donga Ilbo and Hankyoreh, I retrieved news from the biggest portal ‘Naver’ news archives with a keyword ‘CheonanHahm’. For the BBC and CNN - that the LexisNexis database does not provide - I used their company websites. Whilst all other international news outlets displayed their news with the keyword ‘Cheonan’, for Guardian news articles, if I typed ‘Cheonan’, no news text was available. However, if I typed ‘the Cheonan’, the list of news articles pertaining to the Cheonan incident was shown. For data sampling, Riffe et al. (1993:139) states that one constructed week for six months population and two constructed weeks for an entire year will be reliable respectively. Therefore, since my data is from 26 March 2010 to 31 May 2010, the unit of analysis was an individual news story and for data sampling, I used one constructed week, which was 26 March 2010 to 1 April 2010. For Korean news data sampling, I used random sampling. The very first news of each day was used for data analysis.

3. In-depth Interviews

Shoemaker and Reese (1996:28) argue, “A study of content alone is not sufficient … to understand either the force that produced that content or the nature or extent of its effects”. Furthermore, according to Wengraf (2001:37), 90% of all social science research involves interviews and as Kvale (1996:14) asserts, through interviews, a researcher collects data and obtains knowledge. In addition, interviews are a way of gaining views, opinions and perceptions of interviewees through their confessional responses or ‘biographic’ narratives. Also, as for in-depth interviews, Wengraf (2001:6) states that they function “to get a sense of how the apparently straightforward is actually more complicated, of how the ‘surface appearances’ may be quite misleading about ‘depth realities’”. In lieu of finding patterned norms and common characteristic conceptions of narrative knowledge, he points out that a rather detailed
description of narratives would preclude failure that might follow due to a consequence of generalisation. Thus, Wengraf (2001:333) contends that well-designed interview plans in advance and the role of the interviewers that facilitate informants’ storytelling are very important.

Therefore, two series of semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for this study. One set of interviews were conducted with a group of journalists who had actually covered the Cheonan incident (nine journalists). The other group consisted of journalists who have had many years’ of experience in covering news about North Korea in general (nine journalists). I did not approach the interviews with a specific hypothesis (David and Sutton, 2004:87), but rather, with prepared questions and issues to be addressed. In the form of a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has discretion, thus the order of the questions could be changed, depending on the flow of the conversation. Therefore, depending on the journalists’ answers and directions, the order of questions varied. In addition, if further questions and explanation needed to be asked, I could ask the interviewee to elucidate further at any stage without interrupting the flow of the interview. Detailed descriptions about the process of the interviews conducted for this research are as follows:

Semi-structured, individual, in-depth interviews with 18 journalists (fourteen correspondents and four Korean journalists) were conducted in order to gain knowledge about how journalists operate and the nature of news production. In particular, this thesis concentrates on investigating what influences their practices and how they collect information, since a comparative news analysis alone could not provide detailed background information about the processes of news production and the nature of news production (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:28), especially, in covering news about a sensitive issue like the Cheonan.


In order to gain access to the interview sample, I tried a range of methods. From my work experience as a producer at broadcasting companies, I had a few existing foreign correspondents contacts. They were my studio guests or call-in reporters for news programmes, so I already had some personal contact details, such as email
addresses. In addition, I sourced the relevant journalists directly from their article using online methods. In order to contact other journalists, a few different methods were used. *The New York Times* has set up a click next to the news headline, which leads to email sending mode so if you click the menu, write your email and content and click ‘send’, the email will go to the reporter who wrote the article. In addition, many news articles had a reporter’s email address at the bottom of their news article, so I was able to email them. However, most of them did not respond. Later, I found out that I could buy a contact directory book at the Seoul correspondents’ Club, so I went to the Korean Press Centre building in Jongro, Seoul and purchased it. Although the phone book was updated, I could not reach some of the correspondents from the international mainstream media that I wanted to interview.

After each interview finished, I asked for recommendations regarding other potential interviewees that would be suitable for my studies. This was a very helpful way of obtaining more data, even though it did not mean that the recommended person would be guaranteed for my next interview. At least, it provided me with more email addresses. In addition, once I had gained the trust of my interviewee I found that frequently, they were able to suggest colleagues who would be willing to take part in my research. Sometimes they gave me one or two contacts. For instance, a journalist kindly wrote the contact information in my notebook and told me not to tell them that he had given it to me. Or journalist B gave me contact details for journalist C and said that “he’s a good friend of mine, so he would do an interview if you refer to my name in the email”. This gave me a valuable insight into the personal relationships that developed between foreign correspondents. Two journalists called me after I had sent them an email with my phone number and personal email address. They suddenly called me and asked me what I would want to know. I explained all the details and emphasized that ‘I’m not a journalist but a student who wants to learn how a news story is made and to hear of the difficulties that foreign journalists’ face. This was done in order to make them feel that this was not an interview which aimed to accuse journalists of their work. I made a point of using my university email address in order to ensure that they understood that this was for the purposes of a student thesis. Some people supported and actively helped me, whilst others did not even respond or email me back, saying ‘I’m not there (Seoul) anymore’ or referring to someone else.
Sometimes interviewees asked me who else I had talked to at that point, so I briefly answered. On some occasions, I emailed them, and despite there having been no response for months, but if I sent an email referring to a journalist’s name, with their permission, that I had interviewed, then they responded to me. There were some changes due to reshuffling and allocation. For example, Christian Oliver39, a correspondent for The Financial Times, went back to UK possibly working for The Guardian and John Sudworth, a BBC correspondent, who covered the Cheonan, went to Singapore. Also, Simon Martin at AFP was a Seoul correspondent when the incident happened but later moved to Shanghai. New allocations and correspondents’ positions had been changed. Hence, Jeremy Laurence, a correspondent at Reuters, Seoul, who was recently allocated to Singapore as an editor in Asia, was interviewed by telephone. Simon Martin, former AFP Seoul correspondent, was in Shanghai and so he was interviewed via email. Mike Breen, a former Washington Times correspondent, responded to me when I was in the UK, so we did a telephone conversation. With the exception of one of the two KBS TV journalists who I had interviewed via telephone, face to face in-depth interviews were conducted with correspondents at VOA, a former Financial Times correspondent, current Financial Times correspondent, Bureau Chief at the Wall Street Journal, Bureau Chief at the Mainichi Shimbun and KBS TV journalist.

The agreement for an interview with journalists turned out to be different from what I had expected. I thought more Korean journalists would respond to me than foreign journalists. As Korean lay public did not want to talk about, or rather generally don’t talk about the Cheonan, Korean journalists also did not respond as I had thought. The Hankyoreh Shinmun, current editor, Kang Tae Ho talked to me via telephone. Shin Seok Ho, DongA Ilbo had a face-to-face interview with me but my colleague, also a journalist in a law department, DongA Ilbo, helped me to arrange the interviews. I did not receive any response from all other major broadcasting companies and newspaper companies that I had contacted in the Korean media. Fortunately, the DongA Ilbo, a conservative and The Hankyoreh Shinmun, a progressive newspaper were interviewed, thus for the purpose of my comparative studies, it turned out to be very effective in terms of a methodological strategy. Also, the reporters for the

39 The Guardian had a news article about North Korea by Christian Oliver in 2013, not under the name with The Financial Times.
Swedishwire and the Local, which are the two English newspapers in Sweden, were contacted via emails to obtain balanced views related to the Cheonan, since Sweden is one of the neutral countries. Only Tommie Ullman at the Local responded to inform me that he is no longer a reporter and suggested that I check information at the Korean Embassy in Sweden.

Importantly, many of the foreign correspondents and Korean journalists who participated for the first session of my interviews actually covered the Cheonan incident - except for Mike Breen, former Washington Times. However, he had been cited frequently in the news about the Cheonan as a news source. The interviewees for my second session have many years of work experience as a journalist in Seoul, so I approached them more to discuss the geo-political dynamics around the Korean Peninsula. Hence, I asked extended questions to Steven Herman, Voice of America, John Burton, columnist at the Korea Times, as well as formerly with The Financial Times, and Gale Alastair at the Wall Street Journal. There are two professors who are quoted as news sources most frequently. They are Andrei Lankov at Kookmin University and John Delury at Yonsei University. Correspondents said that one of the reasons why they are good news sources is that “they’re quick” in responses. However, I tried using emails and calls, sometimes referring to correspondents' names but they did not respond. Later, I found out that I could buy a contact directory book at the Seoul correspondents’ Club so I went there, located it in the Korean Press Centre building in Seoul and purchased it. Although the phone book was updated, some of the correspondents that I wanted to have an interview with had returned to their country, which reflected the nature of foreign correspondents’ job.

5. Ethical issues

When conducting interviews, especially for this research, there were clear ethical issues not least because the topic itself was so sensitive. According to Brunel University’s code of research ethics 32, it says, “Researchers must ensure they have each person’s explicit consent to obtain, hold and use personal information. All personal information must be coded or rendered anonymous as far as is possible and consistent with the needs of the study, and as early as possible in the data processing”. For an interview request, I emailed interviewees a researcher’s personal
information-name, background, the topic of this study, the aim of this study and this research direction. The interviewees from whom I received complete consent and whom I interviewed told me their preferable venue and time, thus meetings were set up at their convenience. In addition, because I always asked for permission to tape record first every time before starting an interview and left my recorder on the table, they were aware of it and comfortable with audio taping. Importantly, interviewees sometimes made a little joke or told me some behind the scenes stories or funny episodes while working as a Seoul correspondent, then they would say “Don’t quote me on this”. The interviews were stories of the informants’ individual experiences. All the questions and answers between the interviewees and the researcher are in the researcher’s email inbox. All the interviews conducted by telephone, email, and face-to-face were under complete consent by the interviewees, and they were fully aware of what they were doing. The confidentiality dilemma is whether the interview materials and their usage by a researcher could harm or damage the interviewees (Gray and Malins, 2004:235). As described, all the interviews in this thesis have been conducted with the interviewees’ complete consent.

6. Developing the Interview Protocol

In order to achieve the goals of the interviews, before conducting each one, I read almost all the news written by an interviewee and wrote key points that I was interested in asking, sometimes for the purpose of creating bridges between conversations and highlighting key points. This way I could discuss and interpret the perceptions of the interviewees and gain knowledge from original, individual data. In addition, it helped to encourage interviewees to tell me more. I learned this when I did my first interview with The New York Times correspondent. Choe Sang Hun has many years of experience as a correspondent, both in AP and The New York Times. In particular, the news sectors that publish his stories are various. For example, news in Korean culture and Korean society and other international news by foreign correspondents in Seoul are mostly news about North Korea. So, I have been following his news for a long time. It helped me to talk with him and to conduct a more in-depth interview. Thus, before having an interview, it became my principle that I read the news articles written by an interviewee. Next, I did some research in order to gain knowledge about the person, such as remembering his published books. Finally, I
tried not to be a formal investigator but rather to approach them with an open mind. After the interview, many of them invited me to the Seoul Foreign Correspondent Club gathering and told me to contact them again if I have any further questions. I prepared a fifteen pounds coffee voucher for my interviewee to thank them after an interview. Although some of them pleasantly accepted the voucher, no Korean journalist did, rather, they bought me a coffee. It seems part of Confucianism in Korea, in that this is the way a senior, or a man, treats a younger person or a woman. In addition, after each interview, I ensured that I emailed them to thank them for their interview.

For recording interviews, SONY PCM M-10 was used. When an interviewee agreed to participate in an interview, they were informed of the tape recording device. Every recording was conducted under the agreement of all the interviewees. For a telephone interview, I used a speakerphone function and recorded it. One telephone interview and one question and answer email could not be recorded due to a technical problem. Three interviewees wanted to remain as ‘anonymous’ but two of them agreed to be tape-recorded. With the exception of one, interviewees told me “no problem” for audio tape recording when asked because they said, “I do it all the time”. The list of the interviewees with details-name and media organization is as follows. In order to give a reference to the quotations by each journalist in this study, each one was given ID (under each interviewee name) so hereafter when quoting, the ID will be referred:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalists</th>
<th>Media Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choe, Sang-Hun, Correspondent</td>
<td>The New York Times, International Herald Tribune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin, Seok-Ho, correspondent</td>
<td>Dong-A Ilbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Kirk, Correspondent</td>
<td>CBS radio news, Christian Science Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang Tae-Ho, Editor</td>
<td>The Hankyoreh Shinmun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(anonymous), news Producer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(anonymous), Correspondent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Martin, Correspondent</td>
<td>AFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Laurence, Editor in Asia</td>
<td>Reuters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 8</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Salmon, Freelance Journalist</td>
<td>CNN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 9</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastien Falletti, Correspondent</td>
<td>Le Figaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ID: Journalist 10</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Breen, Analyst, former Seoul Correspondent</td>
<td>The Washington Times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Steven Herman, Bureau Chief  
**ID: Journalist 12**  
*The Voice of America*

Simon Mundy,  
Correspondent  
**ID: Journalist 13**  
*The Financial Times*

John Burton, Columnist,  
former Seoul Correspondent  
**ID: Journalist 14**  
*The Financial Times, The Korea Times*

Sawada Katsumi,  
Bureau Chief  
**ID: Journalist 15**  
*The Mainichi Shimbn*

Gale Alstair,  
Bureau Chief  
**ID: Journalist 16**  
*The Wall Street Journal, The Dow Jones Newswire*

(anonymous),  
Journalist  
**ID: Journalist 17**  
*KBS TV in Defence and Foreign Affairs*

Ji-young Suh,  
Journalist  
**ID: Journalist 18**  
*KBS TV in Foreign Affairs*

**Table 4. List of Interviewees.**

Each recorded interview averaged 1 hour and 30 minutes. All the interviews were fully transcribed. It was a very time-consuming process but the process helped with interpretations that were much more comprehensive because I had to listen to the recorded files many times to write down all of the words. Seale and Silverman (1997) contend that verbatim transcription is only one method of capturing verbal data content and hence, it should be treated as a central part of qualitative data collection in terms of reliability. According to Kvale, the requirements for transcribing an interview are a proper recording without any technical defects or human errors and
audible recordings that do not blend with background noise (1996:93-94). As a former radio producer, it is essential to check background noise and a recorder battery, especially when doing a vox pops. Also, I arranged a place for an interview in advance in order to ensure it was suitable and met the requirements. For transcription, I made sure I wrote the words as they were and did not “clean up” by removing any language even if they are slang, grammatically incorrect or even swearing words (McLellan et al., 2003:73).

Prior to an interview, questions were not sent to the interviewees unless they asked for them, in order to prevent possible biases or structured answers. Journalist 9 and Journalist 7 asked for an interview questionnaire so I sent Journalist 9 brief questions, adding a note saying that further inquiries could be asked. For Journalist 7, I had to send detailed questions because I was supposed to be answered via email. When I emailed a journalist for the first time for an interview, I included a brief idea about my thesis. In the individual interview, I did not follow the questions in order but tried to allow them to lead their own answers. Frequently, interviewees moved away from discussing the Cheonan to discuss the Yeonpyeong artillery shelling. This may be because the Yeonpyeong case had video footage that North Korea fired and it was far less contested. Thus, often, I had to try to lead the discussion back to the Cheonan case. In this case, the decision had to be made on whether or not it was taking a risk of losing additional useful information that might follow (Patton, 2002). However, as each interview was at a highly individualised level, it was not difficult for me to know when to interrupt the conversation gracefully. Overall, semi-structured interviews with informants went well in a productive direction.

7. Analysing Interview Data

For the interpretation of the interview materials, a thematic analysis was used. According to Arksey and Knight (1999:162), “In grounded theory, analysis is interwoven with data collection, a process of finding, analysing and theorizing...the discovery of theory from data is a crucial process”. It would mean that data and research processes are integrated. Thematic analysis is also a qualitative research methodological framework for identifying, analysing, and reporting within research, but it is more nuanced and constructed so patterns of meanings in data tend to be latent.
Hence, defining themes out of the data, or the coding and analysis of identified key themes are the most important. As Braun and Clarke (2006:77) points out, thematic analysis is a more ‘deliberate and rigorous’ method that find patterns ‘in relation to different epistemological and ontological positions’. Therefore, through transparent thematic analysis, key themes and patterns will be discovered and refined in order to understand the phenomenon.

8. Interview Questions

As two sets of interviews were conducted, two separate questions will be presented. I did not intend to perform two separate interviews. Initially, I was going to conduct interviews with Korean journalists and foreign correspondents who actually either reported or edited the news coverage of the Cheonan incident. However, the number of journalists who covered the Cheonan and responded to my email or phone call for an interview were few so I extended the range of my interview sample to former foreign correspondents who had covered North Korean issues. Thus, the first group of interviews consists of interviewees whose duties were related to the Cheonan news at that time. The other group is composed of journalists who did not cover the Cheonan but have work experience as a journalist who covered North Korean news. The first set of questions mainly concerned the process of news-making about the Cheonan incident, North Korean news in general, and journalists’ views on Korean journalism. There were some questions that overlapped in the first and second sessions because the questions were closely related to general news gathering and reporting and journalism practices, so they were applied to all the journalists whether they covered the Cheonan or not.

For the second set of interviews, I made up new questions which were more related to the recent tension in Korea in March 2013 as a way to explore any possible relationship between the Cheonan issue and the recent tension in order to discuss the necessity of the Korean reunification further, amid concern about great powers, mainly China and US. The recent conflict was quite serious, more than 40 foreign journalists came to Korea to cover the story because of the possibility of war breaking out. News content written by the interviewee sometimes linked to the next question naturally, or I asked a question to show my interest and, more importantly, to bring out more information and maybe offer insightful comments. Depending on the interviewee,
different extra questions were asked. Thus, at the end of the first set of my interview questions, I am only going to add the extended questions that are related to my research topic. The main purpose of the interviews was to link dominant frames and the factors that influenced the frames, in order to understand the implication of the Cheonan through the reflection of the event, as well as to think about the role of the news media and its impact on society. For a detailed example of the interview protocol see [Appendix. 1]

In this chapter, I have explained two major study methods used for this study. I conducted news framing analysis and in-depth interviews with journalists. In order to perform news framing analysis, I have demonstrated how I gathered national and international news data. For international news data, I used the ‘LexisNexis’ database and BBC and CNN news websites using a keyword. For domestic news data, I used ‘Naver’ news archives. For data sampling, I set one constructed week, which is 26 March 2010 – 1 April 2010. For Korean news sampling, due to its vast volume of news articles, a random sampling was used. For an interview method, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with current and former foreign correspondents and Korean journalists. In the following chapter, the results and findings of news framing analysis and interviews will be presented.
Chapter 5.
Results and Findings

In chapter 4, I outlined my research design, describing my two major methodological approaches. Firstly, I conducted news framing analysis by comparing and contrasting the news narratives of news outlets in the US, UK and South Korea. Secondly, I carried out semi-structured interviews with foreign correspondents and Korean journalists. This chapter presents my findings concerning how news frames were used in my sample of news stories. In particular, this chapter focuses on the frequency of news articles and the use of words in the news coverage of the incident in different news outlets. The size of news texts is an important element in news framing analysis and it is of significance to interpret the news media messages employed in certain news frames. In addition, In terms of international news flow, I will examine the use of news sources in the news articles pertaining to the Cheonan incident.

1. The frequency of news articles

As discussed in a previous chapter, in order to investigate news frames, it is essential to examine the prominence of the issue through the measurement of the size of the news data. News data for news framing analysis was collected between 26 March 2010 and 31 May 2010, focusing on news articles on the three important dates - 26 March, 2010, the date when the incident happened, 16 April, 2010, the date of the interim investigation and when the results were announced and finally 20 May 2010 when the final government official report announced the conclusion of the investigation. The dates may differ, a day before or after the date written above due to time differences between the UK, US and Korea. For instance, the incident happened on 26 March 2010 at around 9pm local time (Korea Time) but the date when it was very first shown in news reports was 27 March 2010 in CNN. Considering the time differences, I included all the news texts of the very first full week from the day when the incident happened.
Table 5. The frequency of news coverage of the sinking of the Cheonan in a sample of UK, US and Korean media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>No. of news articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Donga daily newspaper</td>
<td>1236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hankyoreh Shinmun</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonhap</td>
<td>14123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By contrasting the number of news stories and the news reportage of the volume of the KAL and the Iranian Air incident, Entman (1991) states that the KAL incident had more airing time in news broadcasts and more news texts and it was considered as a far more prominent and politically important news event. He adds that the more the media covered the story the more the audience is likely to be exposed to the media content (1991:10). Table 5 shows comparisons between national and international media. The number of the coverage from the Korean news agency, Yonhap, was 14,123. The two Korean national newspapers reported a far greater number of news articles. The DongA Ilbo was 1,236 and The Hankyoreh Shinmun was 890. In contrast, The New York Times and The Guardian covered the Cheonan relatively little, 29 and 19 respectively. In addition, the BBC reported 23 and CNN reported the event twice as much as the BBC, at 57. The number of news stories by the global news agency AP was 80. Compared to the global news agency, Yonhap reported far more news reports about the Cheonan. Also, both the UK newspaper and network reported the news topic far more than the US news media. This finding does not generalise the volume of news data about the issue in all of the UK and the US media but it should limit the
validity of the result to the media measured for this study. Despite the news report
calling it one of South’s ‘worst sea disasters’ since the Korean War (BBC, 27 May
2010, 28 May 2010) and considering that the findings demonstrated that the number
of news stories about KAL 007 and Iran Air incidents, in The New York Times for two
weeks were 286 and 102 respectively (Entman, 1991) the Cheonan incident, which
killed 46 young sailors, did not appear to be treated as a critical event by internati-
onal media in terms of sizing in framing.

2. News frames

Entman explicates that frames in news narratives consists of ‘a series of idea clusters’.
He says that the ideas are established in the process of formulating familiar cultural
components to make the matter comprehensible (1991:11). Entman analysed both
words and images that were used repeatedly in news. However, in this study, I will
focus on words used in news stories because the cause of the incident was unknown
and all the news retrieved from the LexisNexis database did not contain images. First
of all, the number of news articles in AP, BBC, CNN, The New York Times and The
Guardian during the week between 26 March 2010 and 1 April 2010 was 9, 6, 9, 3 and
4 respectively. In contrast, Korean media in Yonhap, the DongA Ilbo, and The
Hankyoreh Shinmun was 2040, 114 and 109, respectively. Looking at the news data,
it was very noticeable that the news content in the international news media, including
AP, was almost identical and the news source patterns and background information
were also almost the same.

From Day one, the words ‘North Korea’ were used more than five times each day, ‘a
disputed naval border, NLL’ and ‘three bloody skirmishes’ - naval battles in the past
between North Korean fishing boats and the South Korean marine police who are
prevented from crossing the NLL - were routinely used in news texts. On the first
report on the Cheonan, AP reported that ‘Accident happened hours after North
Korea’s military threatened ‘unpredictable strikes against the U.S. It was repeated on
the second day of the incident. Emphasising the situation that the two Koreas are
technically at war and that the sinking happened near the disputed naval border, NLL,
it was reported that North Korea is likely to be involved despite the news citing a
Korean official saying that there is no sign of North Korea’s movement. In Korean
news, the news content detailed the history of the warship and included many interviews with the families of the sailors who were on board. Both the national and international news media tried to wait and hear what the steps were rather than trying to find out what and how it happened, presumably due to the sensitive security issue.

According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the literature in framing studies has detected common frames that are employed in the media. They are the conflict frame, economic consequences, human interests, and morality frames. The five news frames investigated by Semetko and Valkenburg’s are as follows (2000:95-96):

*Conflict frame.* This frame stresses conflict between two opponents in order to receive the audience’s attention.

*Human interest frame.* This frame, which usually comes together with conflict frame in the news, arouses emotional and humanised apathy, again, in order to attract the audience interests.

*Economic consequences frame.* Literally, this frame, which is commonly employed, reports an event from the perspectives of economic consequences.

*Morality frame.* The news reports an event by making moral attribution prominent, usually utilising the views of other parties through quotation or inference.

*Responsibility frame.* This frame attributes responsibility for the cause or solution of an issue to either the government or an individual. As for social problems, the news tends to attribute responsibility to individuals. For example, poverty can be attributed responsibility to individuals rather than the social systems or the government.

Based on the identified frames above, the dominant frame in international news outlets was conflict frame. Prominent messages of news narratives in news outlets were disagreements between the two Koreas about the disputable sea border, NLL, North Korea’s threat, tension, warfare, North Korea (written as totalitarian country), technically at war. Entman (1991) detects two major frames – moral and technical frames in the two KAL and Iranian Air incidents. As for this study, from the deductive
framing approach, I first counted repeatedly salient words and languages. Categorising those terms and the frequency that they were used, enabled me to identify dominant frames. As mentioned above, there were distinguishably repeated words from day one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“North Korea”</th>
<th>“Neutral”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=</td>
<td>N=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DongA Ilbo</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hankyoreh Shinmun</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yonhap</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Use of words “North Korea” and “neutral terms” in coverage of the Cheonan Sinking in UK, US and Korean Media.

As Table 2 displays, words about North Korea were very prominent in international news. The same content in international news narratives were 'Korea is in a state of war', 'the disputable sea border, NLL', ‘North Korea’s nuclear ambition', ‘a tension between the two Koreas', ‘North Korea’s threat’, ‘Three bloody skirmishes between the two Koreas’. In other words, from day one, international news used words related to conflict between South Korea and North Korea. Compared to international news, the number of words related to North Korea or conflict was far lower. In addition, North Korea was mentioned four times in Yonhap but the content was that there was no unusual sign in North Korea, suggesting that there is a low probability that North
Korea was involved (27 March 2010), whilst the Yonhap reported that military officials said that they were investigating the North’s involvement only once. In the DongA Ilbo, the terms related to North Korea were nine times on 39 March 2010 because they reported on the KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) broadcast on North Korea’s reconnaissance aircraft, which they claimed was flying toward the South about three hours after the incident, by reframing KBS news as escalating the disastrous situation and placing the event in the context of a North Korean conflict (20 March 2010). The Hankyoreh Shinmun used the term ‘NLL’ in their first news story but it said that the incident happened far from the NLL so it is unlikely that the North is involved, they quoted anonymous military officials. On the following day, The Hankyoreh mentioned North Korea nine times because they reported how the Korean mainstream media leads a new story toward North Korea’s involvement. The Hankyoreh also criticised South Korean’s old military equipment and lack of personnel by quoting the families of the victims. At the same time, they indirectly criticised the government’s ways of dealing with the incident. The Hankyoreh introduced the news articles written by Christian Oliver, (at that time) Seoul foreign correspondent for The Financial Times. They criticised the Lee administration by citing Oliver’s news report. He reported that the Lee government seems to be going back to a pre-democratic country because the government provides only official information to the mainstream media and treat the families of victims as troublesome (The Hankyoreh Shinmun, 31 March 2010).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News frames</th>
<th>AP</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>CNN</th>
<th>The New York Times</th>
<th>The Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict frame</strong></td>
<td>The Cheonan happened near the disputed seas border, NLL.</td>
<td>Korea is in a state of war.</td>
<td>Conflict between the two Koreas.</td>
<td>Three bloody skirmishes between the two Koreas in the spot.</td>
<td>North Korea’s nuclear ambition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There was a tension between the two Koreas before the incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North Korea’s threat</td>
<td>North Korea’s torpedo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict frame and Human interest frame</strong></td>
<td>Possibility of North Korea’s attack.</td>
<td>Families and relatives of injured and missing sailors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human interest frame</strong></td>
<td>Amplifying theories and raise questions about the cause</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility frame</strong></td>
<td>Criticise the Korean mainstream media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7. Dominant news frames in international news and national news media.**
From Day one of the incident happening, as shown in table 3 above, the *BBC*, *CNN*, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* repeatedly reported that the Cheonan sank near the disputed sea border, NLL where three skirmishes occurred in the past. Also, lines such as ‘there were tension between the two Koreas’, ‘The Korea is technically at war because the Korean War was not finished by a peace treaty but a truce’. The news included a line that there is no sign that North Korea is involved in this incident. However, international news were making the conflict and tension between the two Koreas salient by repeatedly invoking the historical context of North Korea’s attack and skirmishes in the past. Importantly, the AP news, *CNN*, *BBC*, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian’s* news coverage was almost exactly the same in terms of news frames, news sources and information. Some of the details are as follows:

*BBC* included that “The naval patrol vessel sank near the disputed maritime border with North Korea”, (28 March 2010, 29 March 2010, 30 March 2010) which is situating the NLL in almost all the news stories. Other international news, such as *AP CNN*, *BBC*, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, also included this information in their news report. Also, the news quoted Kim, Tae-Young, Defence Minister, telling Yonhap agency, “The vessel appeared to have been split into half.” Interestingly, *BBC* cited what *AP* news agency reported, saying “A group of 80 family members have sailed around the crash site and watched the rescue efforts.” Additionally, the *BBC* included “But some relatives are accusing the navy of a cover-up, saying the ship was in need of repair.” A number of the crew jumped into the water, Yonhap said. "Yells and screams filled the air," witness Kim, Jin-ho, a seaman who was on a local passenger ship bound for Bakryeong, told the cable news channel YTN. "Marines on deck were desperately shouting: 'Save me!'. The *BBC* almost always included “North and South Korea are still in an official state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended only in a truce” every time they reported about the incident. The *BBC* finished its first story with “South Korea recognizes the Northern Limit Line, drawn unilaterally by the US-led United Nations Command to demarcate the sea border at the end of the Korean War. The line has never been accepted by North Korea" (*BBC*, 28 March 2010). The following day, nothing was found but only theories and the rescue operation. Both *BBC* and *CNN* emphasized the Northern Limit Line (NLL) as a controversial area. *BBC* included this line more than three times in a row whenever they covered the Cheonan, at the end of each article. They stirred up the controversy related to the line.
They also said, “South Korea recognizes the Northern Limit Line, drawn unilaterally by the US-led United Nations Command to demarcate the sea border at the end of the Korean War. But it has never been accepted by North Korea and the area has been the scene of deadly clashes between the navies of the two Koreas in the past (CNN also repeated this line), and fatal naval skirmishes in 1999 and 2002.” CNN said that the two Koreas exchanged gunfire in 2004 and 2009, framing the NLL as an area where the two Koreas have had clashes many times in the past. What is noticeable is that The Guardian, which is widely known as a liberal newspaper in UK, only used the Korean conservative daily newspaper, the Chosun Ilbo as a news source and their news about the Cheonan was very straightforward, unlike other news media who tried to play it down. Whilst the BBC tried to balance its neutrality, The Guardian news started with “The South Korea ship was apparently attacked near Baknyeong Island, near the North Korean demarcation line” under the graphic. It claimed that the damage may have resulted from an attack by its ’neighbour’ but Seoul sought to play down suggestions after claims that the ship may have been sunk by a North Korean torpedo (26 March 2010, Tania Branigan in Beijing, Caroline Davies and Associated Press in Seoul).
Figure 4. The South Korea ship was apparently attacked near Bakryeongdo, near the North Korean demarcation line (The Guardian, 26 March 2010 19.30 GMT).

In contrast, The Hankyoreh had a graphic that shows the sinking spot with words that the Cheonan sunk far from the NLL, indicating there is less chance that North Korea was involved in this incident (26 March 2010)
Figure 5. The NLL in *The Hankyoreh Shinmun* (26 March 2010) (The firing sign in red on the left indicates the spot of the sinking, and the orange line is NLL).

In the situation where the actual cause was unknown, the international news already suggested (although they reported that Seoul played down suggestions that the North attacked) that North Korea was involved. It is seen that international news thought it was another naval skirmish between the two Koreas and that they are technically at war because the Korean War was finished not by the Peace Treaty. There will not be any war like it to bring the audience interests, and terms related to war, such as attack, torpedo, warfare, and bloody skirmishes were heavily and routinely used on almost a daily basis in news reports about the Cheonan.

3. News sources

As Sigal (1986) states, looking at the use of news sources in news stories is an effective tool to frame a new story. In addition, as discussed in the literature review, a news source is an important factor in framing a news topic and in examining international news flow (Thussu, 1998; Entman, 1991, 1993; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Entman says that the media tend to depend on official sources because it is comparatively easy to access and journalists rely on what officials provide because they are considered to be useful and legitimate sources (2004:92). In addition,
reporters can be free from criticisms of bias and the threat of libel suits so they rely on officials rather than investigative reporting. (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). As for the categories of news sources, I referred to the third filter-sourcing mass-media news in the propaganda model (Herman and Chomsky, 2002) as well as Entman’s (1991) comparative news narratives analysis. In order to identify news sources, I counted every single source quoted or cited in each news story and classified them into groups. Officials were mainly Korean and U.S. and these figures were classified and then calculated as a percentage.

Table 8 shows news sources that each news media used for their news stories. The results demonstrate how the news media heavily depend on government officials’ news sources. 88% in AP, 92.9% in BBC, 73.1 in CNN, 64.3 in the New York Times, 81.84 in the Guardian, 84% in DongA, 84.2 in Hankyoreh and 55.6% in Yonhap were officials’ news source. Overall, Korean government officials were the most dominant news sources in the news coverage of the Cheonan incident. What is noticeable in the news source distribution in Table 8, is that the media does not use a variety of news sources. In addition, in terms of the percentage of U.S. officials, CNN in the U.S. and The Hankyoreh Shinmun used more U.S. officials compared to other media outlets. It is hard to see the differences in the ways in which news sources are cited in Table 8. Based on news texts, AP and CNN quoted U.S. officials directly in their report but the Hankyoreh usually cited what the international news media reported and reframed it in their news stories rather than interviewing U.S. officials independently. Additionally, in terms of the news narratives and the use of news sources, The Guardian was heavily dependent on AP. As the dominant news frame was human interest in Yonhap, Yonhap gave more weight to families and relatives as news sources in news stories. There were citations such as ‘some analysts said’ or ‘some experts’ without a specific name or institutions they belong to so it was unclear exactly whom they are citing. In short, based on the results, both the national and international media were dependent on officials news sources. Does it mean that the media supports propaganda campaigns that have been established by the government? Now I turn to discuss propaganda campaigns in the Propaganda Model (Herman and Chomsky, 2002) in the case of the Cheonan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AP</th>
<th>BBC</th>
<th>CNN</th>
<th>NY Times</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Donga</th>
<th>Hankyoreh</th>
<th>Yonhap</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. Korea official</td>
<td>39 (75.0)</td>
<td>65 (92.9)</td>
<td>29 (55.8)</td>
<td>9 (64.3)</td>
<td>17 (81.0)</td>
<td>21 (84.0)</td>
<td>13 (68.4)</td>
<td>20 (55.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US official</td>
<td>3 (5.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (17.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (15.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (14.3)</td>
<td>1 (5.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (5.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyst</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4 (7.7)</td>
<td>3 (3.8)</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (21.4)</td>
<td>3 (12.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14 (38.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rescuer</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td>2 (2.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (14.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (4.0)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Korea defector</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(local fisher) (5.3)</td>
<td>2(internet user) (5.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. News sources in news texts.
The final conclusion concerning the cause of the Cheonan sinking was announced by the Korean government and the International-Joint investigation team on 20 May 2010. The conclusion was that North Korea had torpedoed the Cheonan. However, news data for this framing analysis is reported during the first week of the incident happening, when the real cause was unknown, but international news repeatedly mentioned North Korea’s threat, North Korea’s nuclear ambition. AP reported “Friday's accident happened hours after North Korea’s military threatened "unpredictable strikes" against the U.S. and South Korea in anger over a report the two countries plan to prepare for possible instability in the totalitarian country” (27 March 2010). “On Friday morning, the military warned of "unprecedented nuclear strikes" if the foes sought to destabilize the communist nation (29 March 2010). The Guardian also said the same. “Earlier yesterday (Friday) Pyongyang had threatened "unprecedented nuclear strikes" against the US and South Korea after reports that the two countries were to plan for potential instability in the North, but it often issues such threats when angered” (27 March 2010).

Moreover, the same background information – “The Cheonan happened near the disputed sear border, NLL”, “Korea is in a state of war”, “Conflict between the two Koreas”, “Three bloody skirmishes between the two Koreas near the Baknyeong”, “North Korea’s nuclear ambition”, “There was a tension between the two Koreas before the incident”, “North Korea’s threat”, “North Korea’s torpedo” was repeated in the international news media. This suggests that the international media is highly routinized. For instance, both the BBC and The Guardian included, “Seoul sought to play down suggestions that the damage might have resulted from an attack by its neighbour, after reports of an explosion and claims that the ship may have been sunk by a torpedo” (29 March 2010) and “Seoul sought to play down suggestions that the damage might have resulted from an attack by its neighbour, after reports of an explosion and claims that the ship may have been sunk by a torpedo” respectively (27 March 2010).

As discussed in the literature review in earlier chapters, Herman and Chomsky argued that the force of anti-communist ideology has faded with the fall of the Soviet Union and was offset by the market ideology (2002:xvii). However, the news text analysis presented in this chapter suggests that there is still a residual anti-communist ideology
as well as market forces in the Korean Peninsula acting on news media. As Isabel Hilton said “The Korean peninsula is the final holdout of the cold war” in a comment in The Guardian, London (1 April 2010). From the very first report of when the Cheonan sank, international news media repeatedly made ‘anti-communism’ ideology prominent by mentioning “North Korea’s military threatened the U.S. North Korea, which is totalitarian country, communist country, South Korea’s rival. They include ‘there is no indication that it was North Korea’s attack but kept a vigilant watch’ (27 March 2010). International news media consistently highlighted the North Korean engagement in past naval battles with South Korea and the tensions between the two Koreas by making the conflict frame salient in news texts, whilst national news had a human interests frame. In terms of news sources, Korean officials were dominant and the second most dominant news source was U.S. officials. The New York Times and Yonhap used families or relatives as their news source. It would mean that the national and international news depend on the incumbent government officials which have better credibility. Additionally, based on the Propaganda Model by Herman and Chomsky (2002), the dichotomized and established facts such as ‘threat’, ‘totalitarian’, ‘unpredictable nuclear strikes’ and ‘torpedo’ were salient. It should be differentiated from the KAL 007 disaster and the media’s support for the Reagan administration’s arms buildup. However, in particular, international media seems to have played a role as systemic partisan mechanisms in determining North Korea as negative state by constructing the issue in elites’ favourable ways without investigation on one of the most tragic incidents since the Korean War.

From the news data in this study, I was able to identify the frequency of news reporting and dominant news frames. Additionally, the use of news sources were examined by applying the filters in the Propaganda Model by Herman and Chomsky (2002). In the next section, in order to support a fuller discussion concerning the dynamic of international news flow addressed in chapters 2, I attempt to conduct an additional news analysis, hoping to demonstrate news flow within the news data. Therefore, in the next part, I try to show the ways in which news stories were being constructed and what factors might have influenced news narratives.
4. International news flow

As discussed in the literature review and proposed in research questions, Western-dominant international news agencies are likely to represent their views as a norm and the domestic media has a tendency to indigenize international news texts by reframing global news content (Thussu, 2000, Rantanen, 2004, Boyd-Barrett, 1998). In order to test the theory, conducting only comparative news framing analysis and interviews was not enough to clearly demonstrate whether the news flow adheres to the traditional news flow from the North to the South. Hence, I further devised to examine the international news flow in the case of the Cheonan. The traditional news flow structure is the flow from the Western dominant news media. Thus, one of the almost identical patterned and distinguishable issues in the news coverage of the Cheonan in international news texts was the background information about the NLL. Thus, I searched news articles with the use of a keyword ‘NLL’ in national news outlets that were selected for this test during the same time period for news framing analysis and tried to follow the same step for sampling data. They are the Yonhap, the DongA Ilbo and The Hankyoreh Shinmun. The time period was the same as what I have done with a news narrative analysis, which is the first week from 26 March 2010 to 31 May 2010. For retrieving news articles, I used the Naver news archives. The word ‘NLL’ is an acronym for Northern Limited Line and this is a sea border drawn by the US so the original word is from English and in Korean it is ‘Book Bahng Hahn Gye Suhn’ but in Korean news they always included ‘NLL’ in English in a bracket following the loanword orthography.

The number of news articles that the word ‘the NLL’ was included in was as follows: The Yonhap, 41, the DongA Ilbo, 7 and The Hankyoreh Shinmun was 10, respectively. The significant fact is that The Hankyoreh Shinmun first reported a news article with the ‘NLL’ included and next Yonhap reported a news with ‘the NLL’ and the DongA Ilbo news with ‘the NLL’ was followed on the second day, which is 27 March 2010. Moreover, it was necessary to examine the ways in which the news represented the NLL. As shown above, international news used the NLL to provide information that near the NLL there were a few times of bloody skirmishes between South Korea and North Korea in the past. In order to examine the news texts, I examined sentences that included the NLL. Due to the unequal number of news articles in each news outlet
(e.g. the Yonhap has greater number of articles than the other two news outlets) I took a sampling procedure as I did earlier in news analysis of the Cheonan incident. I selected the very first news article of each day for news narrative analysis. The important point here is to compare and contrast news articles at time frames and how news framing about the NLL has changed.

On the first day when the Cheonan incident happened, only The Hankyoreh included the NLL in the news story. At 11.13pm, the paper quoted a military related official, “The spot that the Cheonan sank was Southern sea far from the NLL so it is not clear whether North Korea attacked or not.” The following day, all of the three media included the NLL in news stories. But The Hankyoreh news was the same news to the article uploaded at 11.13pm on 26 March 2010. Yonhap also reported the same content at 12.28am “the spot that the Cheonan sank is the Southern sea between Bangnyeong Island and Daecheong Island far from the NLL.” The DongA Ilbo reported the similar content by quoting another military related staff who said, “Given the fact that the sinking spot is far from the NLL, they can see that the possibility of North Korea’s attack is small” However, from 28 March 2010, the Korean news media started to mention the NLL with the exact number about how far it is from – 10~12km from the NLL but still reported that the cause is internal explosion.

For instance, the Yonhap said “Moreover, because the spot of the incident is in the Southern sea 10~12km from the NLL, in the case of North Korean vessel's infiltration, it is easily detectable and based on the fact that the depth of water is approximately 20m, a submarine’s movement is also limited, the Joint staff think that the cause is an internal explosion” The Hankyoreh consistently said “the spot of the incident is far from the NLL” (28 March 18:44). The Donga did not have a news article with the NLL included on the 28th March but the Yonhap reported “It is the first time for a Dokdo corvette, which hit the water in July, 2007, to implement its duty at sea near the NLL (Dokdo corvette was placed for further investigation and rescue)” at 00.01. On the same day at 03.00, the DongA Ilbo simply repeated the information of the Dokdo corvette investigation and rescue near the NLL, which was what the Yonhap said. The DongA Ilbo reported three news articles pertaining the NLL at the same time, 03.00 on the 29th of March, reporting about the possible cause of the sinking. The paper said “In preparation of contingencies against the ROK and US Joint military drill ‘Key
resolve’ a mine laid by the North Korean navy at their sea in the North of the NLL was swept away by the current and could have collided with the Cheonan warship”. In addition, “Since the defeat at the DaeCheong naval battle on 10 November 2009, North Korea has raised tensions by announcing a peacetime zone of fire in the Southern sea of the NLL (21 December 2009) and firing shore bombardment (17 January 2010) near the NLL”, “For the nuclear issue resolution in the six-party talk ahead, it could be a provocation by North Korea that intends to remind the international community of which the NLL is still a disputable area and press the US to a peace treaty” On 30 March, the Yonhap quoted a policy maker explaining “it is unlikely to be a mine that has been swept to the downside of the NLL from the North due to hills under the sea near Bakryeongdo.” The DongA Ilbo reported a news with a sub headline ‘North Korean observation aircraft was flying near the NLL after the Cheonan sinking?’ at 03.00 on 20 March. Again, The Hankyoreh reported that the Joint Staff said the incident spot is 12km in the South of the NLL.” On 1 April, the DongA Ilbo mentioned the NLL in two articles (at 03.00) saying “the North laid mines in the North of the NLL and the possibility of a North Korean semi-submarine boat that had sometimes maneuvered near the NLL torpedoed the Cheonan.”

The data shows that the NLL, which was reported ‘far from the spot of the incident’ in the Korean media has changed into a possibility of a North Korean mine, which swept across the NLL and the NLL is still a disputed area, which was repeatedly emphasised in international news media. Additionally, by highlighting the line, North Korea’s possible involvement in a disputable area was nuanced by all the Korean media although the South Korean government was cautious about pointing at the North’s involvement by reporting. This included The Hankyoreh and the DongA Ilbo reframed the KBS's report “Right after the Cheonan sinking, a North Korean observation aircraft was flying down near the NLL but officials repeatedly denied it, saying ‘it's not true’.”

On the 31 March at 02.00, the Yonhap reported that illegal Chinese fishing boats had crossed the NLL between Bakryeongdo and Daecheongdo” In addition, like the other two media, even The Hankyoreh finally reported that “With regard to shooting, the military officials said, “there was no trace of a submarine near the incident spot so if it was a North Korean submarine, we expected that it would run away toward the North
so the rescuing ship-Sokcho vessel was driving toward the NLL and found an object which was moving quickly toward the North in the radar”.

As shown above, I specifically added the time when the news was uploaded to give an idea of tracking who reported first and who was likely to set an agenda related to the NLL. To sum up, the NLL was mentioned as ‘not related to the incident because the spot was far from the NLL when the incident happened. However, the Korean media soon changed that by giving an exact distance between the spot and the line and eventually, the DongA Ilbo reported what the International media repeated ‘disputable line’ and the possibility of a North Korean semi-submarine’s torpedo on the Cheonan. These results might not confirm that the international news media’s consensus or dominant views directly influenced the domestic news’s indigenized news framing because the data cannot show the visible path in which news flow and newly discovered facts and information were updated and reported. However, I attempted to test the news flow through what the international news highlighted consistently and aimed to examine whether the Cheonan case follows the traditional news flow structure or not in terms of the news content. Based on the findings, Cheonan news pertaining to the NLL was following the traditional news flow structure, implying the possibility that the international news media influences the national news and as in the DongA Ilbo, the national news agency, the Yonhap was potentially influential in the national news media discourse.

As briefly mentioned earlier, there are limitations to conducting news analysis alone to examine what factors influence the ways in which news stories are framed. Hence, my aim is also to explore the factors which influence how and why news reports appear as they do. In order to do this I explore major factors that influenced a journalist’s news frame in covering the Cheonan issue, and investigate the nature of news production by placing this in a socio-cultural context. In chapter 6, I therefore turn to in-depth interviews with a range of journalists to discuss the processes of news production and the challenges faced by foreign correspondents and Korean journalists.
Chapter 6.
Results and Findings Part II: Interview Data Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the interview data, focusing on exploring the main factors that influenced the primary frames. Key themes were drawn from the interviews. First, this section will show the process of news construction in news coverage of North Korean issues, including the Cheonan case, to place the nature of journalism practices in the Korean Peninsula in a socio-cultural context. Second, I aim to explore why the news was constructed and framed in this way, and what major factors influenced the news frames in terms of international news flow, focusing on the interaction between news agencies and mainstream news institutions. Third, this section examines why foreign correspondents and Korean journalists selected certain news sources, and explores the differences, if any, between news coverage about North Korean issues, particularly the Cheonan, and other news topics. It will be illuminating to explore the reasons they reported the news in this way and to examine what factors influenced each journalist’s news framing. Finally, in a global context, this chapter explores the current geo-political dynamics in the Korean Peninsula by looking at the Cheonan incident as a case study, based on the arguments that the Cheonan reflects the current geo-political power game in this region as well as foreign national interests.

1. News value and news production

As discussed in chapter 3, by former president of the Seoul Foreign Correspondent Club, Yun-Suk, Lim, North Korean news topics are foreign correspondents’ favourite news agenda in terms of their media audiences’ interests and attention. A former Economist Seoul correspondent, Daniel Tudor, said that he is resigning as a correspondent because Western news media disregards ‘real’ Korean news; rather, they are obsessed with North Korean issues (in an interview with Ohmynews on 7 August 201340). North Korean news is a primary news agenda about Korea in international news. This means correspondents would write a news story about a

particular event which happened in the North and send it to the editor in their home country and receive approval for publishing the story. In the case of the Cheonan sinking, it seems that correspondents received a phone call from their home country where their headquarter institutions were stationed. Their editors asked correspondents to cover the news. Correspondents’ bosses/editors in the headquarters of the media institutions in the US read news agency reports and called correspondents and asked them to report about it as quickly as possible.

The sinking of the Cheonan warship happened on a Friday night at around 9pm. That night, foreign correspondents were having drinks in Itaewon, which is an exotic area because many expatriates live there, especially from the Western community. Nearby, is the main US military base but where many foreigners 'hang out'. Itaewon used to be notorious for nightlife and crimes. Indeed, I was told by a Professor at my University that as a young boy it was considered a dangerous place to be, “I was afraid of going through Itaewon when I was a school boy by bus because there are US soldiers and it is dark”. But recently it is blooming with a multicultural vibrancy and becoming a rising exotic place in Seoul. One of my interviewees, a writer and a journalist who has been living in Korea for more than 12 years, reports for UK mainstream media as well as US mainstream TV and newspapers. He was a replacement at that time for Sohn, Ji-ae, a CNN correspondent who became president of the English broadcasting network ‘Arirang.’ He clearly described that night.

Was it Friday night? Actually that night everybody, all the other foreign correspondents, had gone out drinking around here at Itaewon. I said, tonight I don’t feel like coming out with you guys. I want to work on my book. So, I was sitting at home, doing some computer stuff, taking it easy, doing some work but I got a call, it says from Atlanta, saying that they heard there’s a ship sinking in the Yellow sea. What kind of ship. We don’t know all we know is a ship sinking in the sea. Can you look into it and report it in fifteen minutes? There goes my evening. There was a one line report by Yonhap or Reuters, South Korean ship sinking in the yellow sea. Report follows. (Journalist 9).

Another interviewee had similar recollections. Journalist 10, who has been working in Seoul for over four years, also recalled that night. He told me calmly how he found out about the incident for the first time.
It was Friday night. I remember it really well. Having drinks with friends in Seoul. Around midnight or one A.M. I took a Taxi going home. My boss from Paris called me and said there is ship sinking and told me to cover it quickly. They have wires. I wrote a story within half an hour with very little information.

The ways in which correspondents found out about the incident were similar, either a phone call from their boss back in their home country headquarters or the Korean news media. The responses above indicate the two key points. One is that news agencies still play a role as news distributors to the mainstream media outlets. According to Journalist 13, “You certainly keep an eye on what Yonhap and Bloomberg and Reuters are reporting because if anything comes out from there, it’s drawing attention to something new”. Editors saw the news in news agencies and asked correspondents to report about the issue. Thus, the global news agencies still set the news agenda and play a role as the primary definers of international issues.

The other point is that such a short time—fifteen minutes to half an hour — was given to correspondents for reporting. As Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998) discuss, the consequences of decreased time for newsgathering lead to reliance on news agencies and entail increasingly homogeneous news texts. Thus, as shown in the results of news data analysis, the news texts of international mainstream news and the AP news agency were very homogeneous, in contrast to national news in South Korea. However, the interviewees who were Korean, but who work for international news, learned the news about the Cheonan from Korean news media in the first place. The conclusion cannot be drawn that Korean correspondents do not rely on news agencies. However, even if foreign correspondents had Korean staff, Korean journalists closely interacted with Korean news about the Cheonan because it was national news from Korean perspectives and so there were more stories, supporting the ‘proximity’ (de Beer, 2000), which is “the old news editor’s maxim: one home story is worth five foreign” (Schlesinger, 1987:118).

After they heard about the sinking, the first thing correspondents did was to call the Blue House, and experts. Journalist 10 said that he called some professors like
Lankov,41 who knew North Korea very well. Journalist 5 and 6 said that they went back to the office along with Korean staff to cover the story about the warship sinking. As correspondents explained, there was not much information given about the incident but they had to prepare for reporting as soon as possible. First Journalist 9 describes the situation:

Just all I can confirm is, yes, there is a ship sinking at the moment. We have no numbers of survivors. No no no further information. So s*** I’ve got 10 minutes to report based on this one piece of information so we knew where it was. I know about Bakryeongdo close to the NLL, there were fire fights in 1999 and 2002 and it’s a major flash point. I looked out the window, snowing that night. It was March but snowing. So my report was just, yeah, we confirmed from the Presidential office that a South Korean warship is sinking.

Correspondents verified with the Korean government the fact that the Cheonan corvette had sunk, but there was a lack of further information because the cause was unknown. Nevertheless, they had to report on it as quickly as possible. All they knew on the cause was that, as Journalist 6 added, “Initially, the Seoul government did not suggest that North Koreans were to blame”. Journalist 9 said “the cause is unknown. But of course, we can’t rule out North Korea, given where it’s happened.”

It’s snowing so anyone goes into the water tonight, it’s gonna be a very narrow survival window. That was the report and we just updated it every thirty minutes. I was 5 reports up that night with very limited information. What I could do is to give the content. What happened in Bakryeongdo, what happened in 1999? What happened in 2002? What’s the weather like. All the stuff. You can actually give quite a bit the picture cos you’re here. If I was in Tokyo, Hong Kong or Singapore I wouldn’t give that information.

However, the skirmishes that he said he knew in 1999 and 2002 were not in Bakryeong but near Yeonpyeong. In other words, in the first news coverage about the Cheonan, he clearly confused Bakryeong with Yeonpyeong. AP included the

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41 Andrei Nikolaevich Lankov is Russian scholar of Asia and went to Kim Il-sung University in Pyongyang, North Korea. He’s been teaching at Kookmin University in Seoul since 2004. He is a regular columnist for the oldest English-language daily The Korea Times in South Korea. He is one of the most quoted news sources in international news coverage about North Korea. (www.koreatimes.co.kr) (www.wikipedia.org) (www.kookmin.ac.kr)
information about the two skirmishes in much of their news coverage of the Cheonan and all other international mainstream news mentioned it.

2. Media Investigation and Media Routines

Shoemaker and Reese (1991:105-108) contend that journalists as gatekeepers who select news items out of a large number of issues often represent the greatest crusaders, as in the film ‘All the President’s Men” but their standardized and patterned practices, especially television news production, is institutionalized like a news factory. As they maintain, news producers have deadlines that preclude their investigation, and journalists need to reach audiences with diverse backgrounds. Hence, routinized work that can be understandable in terms of the needs of organizations and media routines do not apply only to Seoul correspondents but to media producers in general. However, as reported in major international news, the globe threatening Cheonan incident was one of the most tragic incidents to have happened since the end of the Korean War. Furthermore, breaking news was pouring out every second, headlining ‘tensions between South Korea and North Korea are growing.’ Nevertheless, the production of the ‘tragic incident’ news was organized routinely:

When the incident happened, Bakryeongdo wasn’t like somewhere you can go and actually see to report about it. It is different from those events like a building falling down in Seoul city or demonstrations. If it’s at the demonstration site, you can be an eyewitness, reporting ‘who struck whom.’ However, even those soldiers [he meant those sailors] who survived the warship can’t talk to us independently, you know they are soldiers; those regulation always follow with them, right? And most of them died. I tried to meet and talk with the US officials in Seoul but it has its limitations. Basically, at that time, whatever journalist it might be, we all just wait for what the Korean government reports.

Journalist 11, who has been living in Korea since 1982, confirmed “No reporter was on the Cheonan or Exit or near the incident.” But also, he said that no reporter received any report from the military or a reporting chain, “the captain of the Cheonan would report, they would radio a message to somewhere, I don’t know who and then those messages sort of go off up the radar eventually to the president. So he said that the reporters are only writing a story at the point when the Ministry of Defence or the Blue House issues a formal announcement.”
Journalist 3 confirmed, “I never went to the scene, way out there in the Yellow Sea. Foreign journalists are allowed to go there in Pyeongtaek where rescued sailors were in Pyeongtaek, big navy base.” However, they did not go. Journalist 5 informed me that the Ministry of Defence in South Korea sends video, audio materials and documentation to the office. They are in English so they can use them immediately. As far as I know, Journalist 10 was the only one who went to the site near Bakryeongdo by boat. “I went to Bakryeongdo. Yeah, I went to the place where the Cheonan sank by a boat. A week after the incident. It was arranged by the South Korean government. Nothing there but how far from the coast…That’s our job.” So, this means that as other journalists said, the Korean government did not try to cover anything up.

Journalist 12 said “After the Cheonan and also the Yeonpyeongdo incident I was tick-tocked on Yeonpyeondo. It was a total mess, total chaos about the reporting, which about Cheonan, which happened before I got here, was totally erroneous.” He talked about foreign journalists having to rely on fourth or fifth hand information, which turns out to be wrong. “There is a chain of command for information reporting and I think we’ve seen within the defence apparatus in South Korea that there is wrong information gets fed up, misinformation, misinterpretation; when you have a crisis going on there is a tremendous opportunity for things to be clouded, convoluted, misinterpreted, or sometimes deliberately misinforming so you have to understand when these things happen, this is all possible. I mean it's not just South Korea. It could happen anywhere. We have to rely to a great degree. That's why we monitor; you’re listening to North Korean radio right now”

What would be the reason why correspondents did not conduct any further investigation? Or couldn’t they conduct any more? It took approximately two months before the South Korean government released its final report. What did they do during this period? Where did they get their information? The South Korean government did not seem to block all the investigation from foreign correspondents, considering they allowed and arranged a boat for correspondents together with investigation teams. Journalist 8 said this:

I’ll be very frank with you. You’ve got to remember this. In a place like Korea, it is very difficult. Perhaps Korean correspondents have already told you. It’s
whenever you... particularly anything to do with North Korean issues and a sensitive military issue, I wouldn’t. I don’t think the South Korean government is quite cooperative. They can make it very difficult for us. Governments all over the world, whenever it’s a sensitive issue, dealing with rivals, the way they handle, it is not cooperative, coordinal government. They are not. They only take those (correspondents) to or only show them relevant materials, which they think is conducive, or projecting an argument and their security interests. Any other country would be the same. This would happen in the US or Australia. That’s just the way it is.

He seems to swallow, many times, what he wanted to say but further explained that,

To be honest with you it’s incredibly, incredibly, incredibly (literally he said three times to emphasize) difficult. It was in the middle of the Friday night. The first news we got was there was a meeting. The patrol was gone down. Obviously, there is a way of suspicion. I think it was two months afterward. It took two months for the South Korean government to release their report to the public, the international report. To get information, what sort of information can you get in, you’ve got two months. Of course, the ruling government is spinning.

Journalist 8 stressed how hard it was to get any information from the government. He says absolutely "you’re not going to get any information out of the Defence Ministry." Basically, from his experience, he said that “there are briefings with Presidential advisors or other briefings with Foreign Ministries for journalists. But many of those briefings are just basic background information. They are not official briefings. Government will invariably give you what they perceive as ‘say’ may have occurred. A lot of it is sort of unofficial information which is being delivered”. He covertly said one more time that:

In a place like Korea you're not going to get it. You're just not going to get it. One is because they have closed up to the foreign media. Any military I'm talking about even American military out there, really occasionally speak to the media. Any military, it's going to happen because they close it down. That's the military. That's the government. Obviously Korea is open and a democratic country but anything military they have to close it (Journalist 8)
Journalist 9 questioned “you know it is important to be there to ask a question, the Press conference, the International Joint team reported the conclusion. It was televised live. Funnily enough, there were only two foreign reporters there. Me for CNN and Ashley from Stars and Stripes”. He said that he could not see his colleagues other than Stars and Stripes that morning, which is the American military newspaper. He said “All Ministries of Defence are very bad with the media”. However, they invited Stars and Stripes because it is Americans and they are very nice to Americans. He said that CNN is just a big name so they invited a CNN correspondent. Journalist 10 simply said the “Ministry of National Defence, it’s also extremely protective about information, especially with foreign journalists.” Journalist 11 also agreed with the unfair treatment toward foreign journalists. He criticized:

Foreign correspondents don’t have any, in fact they have a disadvantage because they don’t speak Korean. It is possible in the initial announcement there is some distortion because the military is notorious, I do not mean just Korean military, and any military is notorious to try to control information. For two reasons. One is for intelligence. They don’t like to give their enemy information. The other is for their budget. They don’t like to be criticized or have their budget reduced. They’re very careful. Second thing is journalists get their explanation from different sources by the foreign press here would contact the Americans. Cos the American military might talk to the press about it or if they do they talk in a very official way.

However, Journalist 2 spoke in a way completely opposite to other correspondents:

Only our government has all the resources and data and sources. The government and civil Joint Investigation. Outside specialists had some partial information and they did much speculation and guesses. I don’t think that it’s a good way. The important thing is what are scientific and reliable facts. The information that the government gives is the most important. There are many different sources for news related to North Korea. Most of what North Korean officials, representatives of civilian humanitarian aid, what the North announces (on KCNA-North Korea Central News Agency: heavily controlled by the regime) is propaganda. But, some of them are right. We should catch some facts out of them. You know line by line. You should read them line by line. But the case of the Cheonan warship sinking is military conflicts. Ordinary journalists couldn’t get any information, I mean, for ourselves.
Journalist 2 thinks that it is not unusual that a news story cannot but rely on government sources and information in the case of the Cheonan incident because it is a military conflict. Ironically, he believed that foreign correspondents do not trust the Korean government sources or the final report about the Cheonan. The AP bureau in Pyongyang, the first Western news agency in North Korea, opened on 16 January 2012. Is the Associated Press in Pyongyang, North Korea, helpful? The AP bureau was located inside the KCNA building and heavily censored. The correspondents all said ‘no help’ other than getting more pictures of North Korea. What do journalists do other than quote what the Korean government reports? Journalist 11 also said that American analysts or embassy diplomats and people like them were in a much better position to explain to foreign correspondents what happened. For example, “if you ring the French embassy, you’re a French reporter, you’re not going to get much in terms of the knowledge about it. Then they ring analyst people who understand the context.” Journalist 8 explained what he does for further information:

    What we can do, my colleagues might have told you the same too, I’m sure. You also have to rely on speaking to the diplomats. Diplomats live with various people, including South Korea. Many of us would be speaking to diplomats. Obviously, those diplomats are American. Off the record they would tell you the information but you can’t use the source so you should report disguising them.

Journalist 9 spoke about what he did the next day after the Cheonan sank. He said that he met a senior naval officer, not from Korea, from another country. He asked the Captain he met what could have caused the Cheonan sinking. The captain answered “it’s torpedo”

To sum up, as Journalist 12 said, it was a complete mess. Foreign correspondents answered that they believed the government’s report but they didn’t seem to trust the government and the Korean media in general. In addition, they relied routinely on the diplomats and most of them are US officials.
3. News Sources

The use of news sources is a significant part of framing a news topic. In addition, news sources are taken as the most important index, particularly in political news, to measure the balance of the news coverage by a journalist in terms of international news flow. Hence, the use of news sources can be a tool to assess whether the media plays a role as a watchdog or a propaganda campaigner, relying on officials, based on the propaganda model formulated by Herman and Chomsky (2002). I already provided the percentage and categories of the use of news sources in news texts about the Cheonan incident in each media in the results section of news framing analysis. This part offers a critical examination of the patterns in citing news sources on North Korean issues. News sources can be divided into two different types. One is what news source materials a journalist uses and researches for more information, such as other news organizations or internet sites, in order to make sense of the event. The other one is the people whom a journalist cites or quotes in their news stories. Based on the interview data, the patterns of the use of news sources will be explored in this section.

Foreign correspondents reported that they have an array of people who can be quoted, but actually the number of news sources was quite limited, considering what appears in the news articles about the Cheonan. As discussed above, the experts who know about North Korea are limited and they cannot be more than analysts or observers because North Korea is so closed. In addition, the biases and negative perceptions that a journalist may have toward the Korean government or the military, assuming that they are not going to get anything, hindered further investigation. Moreover, the diplomats or other officials that a journalist contacted asked to be ‘off the record,’ which meant they couldn’t use them officially in the news. Rather, they had to refer them as ‘analysts,’ even if they were diplomats, which meant there were no official ways of citing or quoting them as news sources. The source had to be disguised. Thus, the first type of new source involves obtaining further information on the internet. The other is to find someone who can be quoted for their news stories. Since there were a very limited number of people they, the same news sources, appear in many different news articles over and over again.
As mentioned earlier, new sources can be explained in a twofold way. One is ‘what kind of news sources can correspondents go to for further information?’ More specifically, in the new media era, there are a lot of resources on the internet. Also, it has been discussed that the impact of the Internet and new media technologies on the profession of journalism is significant (Deuze and Bardoei, 2001, Fenton, 2009). In line with previous conversation, it was very rare for correspondents to discover raw, original materials. The conversations about getting information on the Internet turned out to overlap considerably with ‘media routine practices’, ‘routinized work’, which is one of the factors that influence journalistic practices. Foreign correspondents all admitted that much of the work for news story creation is based on web information. From the interviews as well as their news texts, the Yonhapnews was predominantly used for their news stories. Also, there was another Internet news site that all were agreed on, of which they said, “They are good.” It was DailyNK.

DailyNK is online news focusing on topics relating to North Korea. They reported one of the biggest stories out of North Korea in 2009, which was about the North Korean government’s devaluing its currency. They have North Korean refugee stringers in China and North Korea in contact with the Seoul office by cell phone. The New York Times reported that, thanks to the Daily NK and underground stringers, important scoops about North Korea can be found. But “many news proves wrong, although the mainstream Korean media regularly quote their stories. Daily NK and Open Radio each have 15 staff members, some of them defectors, and receive U.S. congressional funding through the National Endowment for Democracy, as well as support from other public and private sources.” (The New York Times, 24 Jan. 2010) The Daily NK says42 “the dynastic succession from Kim II Sung to Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Eun is making a mockery of the democratic and historical progress we all support. Extreme human rights violations and the politics of fear continuously threaten the universal values that mankind has worked so hard to realize.” Journalist 3 uses a few of his open contacts and also Daily NK run by Ha, Tae Kyung and Howard Young43,

43 Young Howard is South Korean radio station founder. He said “It is clearly terrorism and suggest that the attacks were part of an escalation in aggression toward South Korea” He cited a torpedo attack on a South Korean naval ship and the shelling of a South Korean island near disputed waters in 2010 (26 Sept. 2011, 10 Oct. 2011, Barbara Demick, Los Angeles Times).
member of the National Assembly in Pusan. Open Radio, other missionaries, 44 “people know about North Korea. But I don’t have any more contact that anybody else. Other people can talk to them too. All of those are important but of course Korean central news agency. It’s been cut off. KCNA you can’t get it on the internet. Some people forward news about KCNA. Yonhap reports. Defectors. Daily NK, Open Radio for North Korea.”

Journalist 10 said “very few people have direct information.” Jeong, Song Jeong, at the Sejong Institute. It’s one of the best. One of the rare guys. He has some contacts there (North Korea). He’s good. Defectors. NGOs I talk to Daily NK. They have some sources in the country. It’s like a mix.” In addition, Journalist 7 said that “Korean staff did most of the reporting. As I said, I have a lot of respect for Yonhap and also for the JoongAng Daily, which is an excellent paper. I couldn't read the Korean papers but I watched their websites.” Daily NK has a great impact on individual foreign correspondents in terms of providing information about North Korea. Journalist 1 said that he should look at the Korean media. “If you don’t, you’re going to be foolish because I’m here by myself, I should open my ears and eyes to see actually what’s going on here. I should read the news as much as I can. I get some good ideas out of them. But, the important thing is that you should do critical reading. In other words, you should read between the lines and compare to other news coverage to be able to do your own reporting.” He is completely bilingual so he can read Korean news, and when he wants to know or he feels like he has to know what is going on in the country, he tries to read the Korean news as much as possible, while most foreign correspondents cannot do that.

First of all, we get information from different media and then the media give us a sort of interpretation and explanation if you look at where the media get their information from, where they get their interpretation from, you can see the difference, where the differences come from. Journalist 11 said “I get my information mostly from English Korean newspapers – Korea times (Korean English newspaper), Joongang daily (Korean/English newspaper), Korea Herald (Korean English newspaper), International Herald Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times.”

44 Open Radio reports from Seoul, aiming to be voices of change by airing information to counter Pyongyang’s propaganda and by passing messages from friends and relatives to North Koreans (12 April, 2009, John M. Glionna, Los Angeles Times).
Journalist 7 said that “I used to watch the websites of Korean newspapers, also Daily NK, very good and one or two others I can't recall. There's also a whole bunch of N. Korea analysts, mostly US-based, who have useful websites. He also said that a news agency needs official sources so we rely on the Defence Ministry, navy and Joint Chiefs of Staff for a story like this. Yonhap is also a good source, very professional and generally independent in its reporting. And we monitor the North Korean news agency.

Journalist 6 actually used his body language, demonstrating typing on a keyboard. He said that “everything is from the web” He said that “I worked for the Washington bureau for more than five years before coming to Korea. We write a story about North Korea there in Washington. What do we do?” Again he mimed typing as an answer. Likewise, Journalist 9 also admitted that, “frankly speaking, that's true. I do frankly. A lot of news stories, you’re right. In the days of the internet, everybody does it. Ways you’re trying to add values. A lot of stories are from Yonhap. Yonhap has massive resources. Their reporters are everywhere. Very, very fast. They are a wire service so they tend to be very, very, fast with Korean news, so often I would write saying Kim Jung Un was caught in bed with a very young beautiful Korean starlet, according to Yonhap. Then I'll continue.”

We generally expect that correspondents get ‘original’ and ‘offline’ news but as they said, a lot of work is based on what it says on the Internet. This means that whichever site they go to can be a significant, influencing factor. It has been argued that, in lieu of giving a variety of information and opinion, the internet reinforces what you already have in your mind. In other words, the internet tends to polarize attitudes (Sunstein, 2002). The role of Yonhap agency seems to be critical. As correspondents said, Yonhap News receives a lot of information from the ministry and they're very fast, so for correspondents that usually get information through many steps, the fast updated Yonhap news must be a good news source. However, through the interview conversations, it could be surmised that it looks like correspondents have been doing routinized work at some points because, in the case of the Cheonan, they tended to use the same background information from the websites and did not do a field work. Moreover, correspondents in international mainstream media used Yonhap as a
convenient news resource, by quoting them repeatedly throughout the coverage of the Cheonan.

Journalist 8 commented “I know DailyNK. But do I believe everything in the library? Absolutely not. Do I believe reading, some, in the South Korean newspapers or their website? Not necessarily. Absolutely the same applies to anything to do anything to do with North Korea. When it comes to any news reporting on North Korea, anyone who says ‘they know what’s happening in North Korea’ doesn’t know what they’re saying. If someone wants to tell, ‘I know what’s happening in North Korea’, I would say, absolutely, rubbish. No one knows what’s happening in North Korea.”

As for news sources as adding values, what news sources do foreign journalists use in a news story? They say that there is an array of people that they can cite. But in reality, sources cited in the news looked very limited because the variety was very narrow. Additionally, there is not, maybe cannot be, various people from South Korea. As discussed, moreover, a lot of information from officials can be restricted or secretive in terms of capability of citation or quotation.

Journalist 9 explained that American newspapers are more professional than British newspapers in terms of news source citation because there are specific rules for American newspapers for news citations. For example, every news story has more than three news sources. He mentions that British newspapers tend not to cite news sources, making them look like they are the original news source – their ‘exclusive news story’, which isn’t always true. Also, he says that, “There is that element but it’s okay to do that if you cite a source, so as a journalist where you add the value, what you need to do is you call sources, experts, sources who can comment on that and that’s the way you differentiate your stories from other stories.” Journalist 8 said, ‘diplomats’ because they could quote diplomats, whether academic or someone who works in a government-related, Think Tank. I asked about ‘analysts’ that he often uses in his news stories about North Korea as well as news about the Cheonan, who he meant by ‘analysts’. He said, “It could be diplomats and a lot of information.”

People they don’t want to be named. People we would use, many of them are actually directly related to Victor Cha. It (news source) would be various. (You could) tap for information. They can steer you in the right direction. These
people are consulted by the government. US government. You take for instance, what’s my Russian friend’s name, the Russian academic, Andrei Lankov? Classic case. One of US the governments used him as an adviser, Lankov tries to help them. Of course he does. Victor Cha. They were opinionated. Do I just want them to tell me, to parrot what the government tells me or the US government? To use, like our brain, trying to understand, whether or not I agree with their opinion, Lankov is left. Victor is right. I know that. These are the opinions we think. Unless I have evidence, sometimes information coming from very high authority, you can use it but “you can’t identify me.” Often that’s the case. Some might call it leaks - Information which people are fully aware is going out to you.

Journalist 1 answered “US officials” and he said that, “university professors like John Delury? He’s good.” He is a professor at International Relations at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. I asked ‘why is he good?’ He said ‘He’s quick’. According to Journalist 1, “For me, looking at the conflicting news, based on what they reported, I wrote news, confirming what’s evident. For the Cheonan news, news sources were from two major sources. One was the announcement from the channel of the government’s official. The other one is from vast speculative information. Based on what he said, he’s been writing a story by checking what the Korean media says together with what government officials say. Like other interviewees, Andrei Lankov was named by Journalist 10. He said that Lankov makes a good quote. He has a good grasp of the North Korean political system.

No one has the truth. The Defense Ministry is over-protective. Every country. Ministry of National Security Defense, Obviously it’s quite closed up. They want to protect the information. They always say it’s national security. We can’t say. Basically they can’t say anything. It’s a disaster. I’ll use AFP, Reuters. The main story. They launch rocket. KCNA. Go to experts. Yonhap is the basic for us. We add what they say with some more analyses. (Journalist 10)

Journalist 9 listed names that he used as news sources. He said that he had a source, an ‘off the record’ major in the Defence Ministry. John is staff so he quotes him. The Blue House guy (he meant Cho, PR person), he said, “All my other military sources are off the record). “The guy who’s the most quoted, Andrei Lankov, he’s now well known as a North Korea specialist but he’s more politics. He was at Kim Il Sung University. So he really knows Pyongyang well. So Andrei is a good source and the guy who’s called Ki Tae (Kim, Tae-Woo) is a good source. The guy in the Korea
Institute of Defense Analyses\textsuperscript{45} is a good source. I've got guys from Korea University and Yonsei University I can talk to. The guy in Daily NK who was a North Korea defector. Those are the main ones."

As shown above, as well as in the news articles, there were a few experts or specialists who could be quoted. The kinds of news sources that they could go to were mainly US officials, but they referred to them as ‘analysts’ because it had to be ‘off the record’. In addition, other main news sources were academics but again mainly two professors – Andrei Lankov and John Delury, or analysts – mainly US officials and people in institutes on a level with observers. The news media focusing on North Korea is limited as well. It is not full of resources in that area that a journalist can use, because it is difficult to get information from North Korea. Importantly, Yonhap citations in international news media seem to be a ‘basic’ or a convenient device to make a story with their own analysis. From their responses and the interviews, it is difficult to see that Yonhap plays a role as a contra news flow despite its frequent citations in international news. The citation of Yonhap seems to be a conjuncture of media routine practice together with the online English news service, such as Yonhap in English online and DailyNK online news in English, which provide information and resources that correspondents can use and highlights the lack of news sources available. Journalist 10 talked about frustration with news sources when he covers news about North Korea. Because he can’t do any fact checking, which is a very basic thing to do as a journalist before writing, a lot of the time, he cannot write a story about North Korea. There are always many rumours spreading around, or noise, but no facts.

North Korea issue is a dream or a nightmare for a journalist. It’s a dream because it’s a secret country. We don’t know anything, so many crazy things are happening. It’s exciting for a journalist. People want to read about North Korea. They get excited about North Korea. But it’s nightmare because you can’t do fact checking. Very difficult to go there. I’ve been there, but on the day of, like, a rocket launch, you only rely on information coming from the North. What they say, you can’t check and there’s, you know, a lot of propaganda. But on the other hand there are a lot of rumours spreading out over North Korea, sometimes crazy and impressive rumours but the problem is often you can’t

\textsuperscript{45} Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) is an independent civilian research institution funded by the government under a special law to support the policymakers of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) (www.kida.re.kr)
check them. I have this problem and all the Journalists who are covering North Korea, we hear a lot of noise. Some people say there was a coup d'etat against Kim Jung Eun. Someone says that. How can I check? In the case of the Cheonan there was the investigation and there was a report. But it was sometimes challenging to believe because every day there was some leaked information. (Journalist 10)

Consequently, why were the news stories about the Cheonan in international news media almost the same? How does a journalist use the news sources? We discussed the reasons on the factors above. Journalist 16 frankly concluded that, "If you look at most stories, our stories, Times stories, Reuters stories, most of the North Korean stories have a few paragraphs of the news and then lots of background to explain what's going on and the facts aren't changing much. So in a way, writing about North Korea is one of the easiest things to do because there is such limited information". In terms of the use of news sources, he said that "If you pick John Delury to speak to, you would get a different story to if you pick Brian Myer to speak to because they have different viewpoints so when journalists write analysts say to show that North Korea wants to come to the negotiation table, it's prepared to sit down in good faith you know that you've spoken to the left wing analysts. If you see a paragraph that says that analysis showed that North Korea has no interest in dialogue and just want to be treated as a nuclear power on a power of us you know that's probably been spoken by the right wing analysts. Both of the stories are valid. Which one is correct? I don't know. I have my opinion and that's what becomes a story." Journalist 16's comments are the clearest and most transparent description about foreign correspondents' news making practices, and how they use news sources with limited information as well as the difficulties of fact checking, in particular, about North Korean news.

4. BBC News ‘alleged’

There were surprises, thoughts and debates among journalists on how and why the BBC's reports on the Cheonan issue used 'alleged,' when comparing US and UK media. The interview about this was focused on why the BBC might have reported this incident as ‘alleged’ even after the final conclusion by the Korean government together with the Joint International Investigation teams. Some journalists said, 'maybe for a couple of months' or 'they just say it because of their policy'. In short,
they did not know that the *BBC* still uses ‘alleged, allegedly’ all the time in their news about the Cheonan, so they were surprised. They looked like they were trying to think or answer the question of why they wrote that.

Journalist 1 said he was quite surprised that *BBC* wrote ‘allegedly’ in news reports about the Cheonan because he usually perceived the British media as rather more ‘careless’ than the US media, except for *BBC* and the Economist. For him, most of the British media has a tabloid tendency, even if they’re broadsheet newspapers. Even *The Financial Times*, if he compares the equivalent U.S. newspaper, it’s the same. He said that sometimes when he reads some British news and he thinks that, ‘I can never write like that for the American news because the editors would never let it be. He emphasized how stricter the American news is, compared to the British news. Also, he added that British ways of writing a new story can be offensive or somehow condescending in a way. He was also careful in addressing that, “I don’t mean what’s good and what’s bad.” In his opinion, the British news including broadsheet newspapers has a strong tabloid character.

The British media is freewheeling. Their use of words and expressions. I can never write like that. I’m not talking editorials but a reporting piece. The British media don’t know about North Korea. For instance, it was the Telegraph. Probably. They had quite a big photo of Kim Jung Eun in the news, explaining the photo, which was Kim Jung Eun with a Mickey Mouse hat. But it was not Kim Jung Eun. It was Kim Jung Nam (his brother). Moreover, the original photo didn’t have a Mickey Mouse hat. It was made with photo-shop by someone. The reporter who covered the story didn’t check it. They don’t know anything, to a surprising degree. I don’t doubt that BBC reported the incident with speculation as well because they are aware of the cultural and historical background.

Journalist 1 said that, “I always say South Korea says that North Korea attacked...or Seoul says...I never write North Korea attacked the Cheonan.” Journalist 3 said that, “we used to, for a long time, but we don’t say that anymore, but we used to have to say that.”

That’s BBC policy I guess. I mean that’s what they do, they still do that? I didn’t know they still do that. American media and most other media has stopped saying ‘allegedly’. I don’t know when BBC said that. Maybe for a while they didn’t I mean, of course, the first couple of months. (Journalist 3)
In fact, *BBC* consistently used ‘alleged’ in almost all the articles about the Cheonan, even after the final report that North Korea torpedoed it. Journalist 10 supported what the *BBC* did.

*BBC* is right to say ‘allegedly.’ Me, too. Because I saw the torpedo, my opinion I tend to believe that this is a torpedo from North Korea. But I’m not 100 percent sure. It’s so controversial. North Korea says that, South Korea says that. We say allegedly South Korea says that.

Journalist 8 also said that, “I never say that North Korea attacked the Cheonan either. I always say that the Seoul government, South Korea says.” Journalist 5 commented that the news with ‘alleged’ is from the news in the UK not from us, in Seoul. He was surprised as well, saying, ‘it can’t be...’ Journalist 9 admittedly said, “I’m probably slack on it. I mean, to me it seems fairly clear that by process of elimination all it could have been was North Korean’s torpedo, but given that North Korean still vehemently refused to admit it we have to say, ‘it’s alleged’ cos it’s not proven. Or you should say in an article, ‘North Korea continues to deny the attack. *BBC* might have an internal rule that if it’s not proven, they have to say, ‘alleged’. So in this case, as a journalist, you can’t say, ‘there is no doubt.’ That’s true with pretty much every North Korean story.”

Journalist 11 thought that the reason the *BBC* says, ‘alleged’ is because there has been so much criticism of the government report, with experts pointing out contradictions, so the *BBC* itself is not a hundred percent sure, so *BBC* says, ‘alleged’ whereas the Americans are much more confident.

Journalist 2 said that, “I guess, the UK don’t like the United States. At that time, Korean journalists were very competitive. Over 100 media companies. We were struggling to get scoops, very competitively. All the journalists were covering the issue so closely, observing government research. Perhaps *BBC* journalists have never actually seen anything and they only get restricted information. I mean, rather, they can’t see closely the processes of the government investigation, like us. We talk to each other and we ask every day. It was like the investigation the Korean press and the government were implementing the investigation together.” Anonymous Journalist
said, “we’re not much different from US news. The reason that the news journalists write ‘alleged’ in the UK is to be safe because there are a lot of criticisms around the incident.”

Although the government announced the final report, BBC and Reuters reported this in the third person by writing ‘the Korean government said this’ or ‘Seoul says that’ rather than presenting it as their own opinion. As my interviewees said ‘it was controversial’ and there were criticisms.

5. Factors that influence news frames: Internal/External pressures

Among the factors that influence the news frames shaped by journalists, as discussed in the literature review, external factors were individual, media routines, news institutions, extramedia and ideologies. A major internal factor was the news organization that the journalist belongs to; this would be related to a journalist’s autonomy and independence from media institutions. Except for media routines that were discussed above in interview data, a journalist’s autonomy and a journalist’s ideology were very important. Hence, in this following section I address, to what extent journalists are independent from their media institutions and the ways in which a journalist’s ideology affects news frames will be addressed.

At a national level, Journalist 4 emphasized an individual journalist’s independence from a media institution. He said that the Hankyoreh didn’t have a hierarchy system but an equitable, horizontal system, unlike Korea’s three top conservative dailies ‘ChoJoongDong’ which has ‘higher-ups’ and bosses. He added that, “the ownership is important. The Hankyoreh doesn’t have a president. We are run by shareholders. So no need to be aware of what higher ups want. Of course, journalists work for a certain company that shares their ideology. Thus, the company and the journalists who work for them are ideologically the same; ideologically similar companies and journalists work together so news organizations don’t need to pressure journalist.” He also added, “there are what is called ‘Choolip’ journalists from ‘ChoJoongDong’—mainstream right wing newspapers at the Defence Ministry. They are like spokesmen for the Defence Ministry. What do you think the relationship between the Defence
Ministry and those ‘Choolip’ reporters would be? They’re like spokesmen or representatives of the Defence Ministry.” As for the Choolip Kija system, further discussion will be followed in the Korean journalist section later on.

At an international level, most foreign correspondents stressed that they are independent from their news institutes and from the government, compared to the Korean media. It means a different correspondent in the same news institute can have different news framing in their news stories. Most correspondents said that there is no pressure or force or anything. However, the U.S. correspondents added that in the case where a journalist works for the White House or the State Department, possibly he or she might be influenced by them. In this regard, Journalist 6 said, “I’ve worked for more than five years for Washington AP. You know, you can’t write something different from what US officials say.” He simply said that. Journalist 1 who had worked at the AP for more than 10 years as a correspondent said, “When I write about the Cheonan, do I get any influence from the government or my company? Absolutely, no. They (The New York Times) have not that much interest in North Korea.” However, Journalist 10 commented that generally editors trust correspondents who are in the field but if a news topic such as ‘Dokdo’ is controversial then an editor in Paris would change it.

The American news is not so much careful about North Korea. They never sue you over anything when it comes to North Korea. You can write whatever you want. North Korea wouldn’t do anything. No one would sue you over whatever you say about North Korea. No one has any evidence. Usually, the American news is very cautious. Americans love lawsuits. I’m very careful with liability. But you don’t have to worry about anything about North Korea. In the United States, North Korea is a rogue state. News about North Korea is a source of fun, a source of entertainment. It’s a weird country. They have this cultural prejudice. As for the Cheonan, they just easily say, of course, they (North Korea) did it. I don’t know, I’m not sitting in their mind or head. But due to that prejudice, I think they just write whatever they think is right (Journalist 1).

46 It’s the island in Korean territory but Japan named the Korean islands as ‘Takeshima’ and has claimed that they have its ownership. So it’s been disputed for decades. Japan suggested filing the case to the ICI(International Court of Justice) to South Korea in 2012 (Yonhap, 11 August 2012). http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0005752353
Journalist 15 had a similar opinion toward foreign, especially western, journalists by saying that it is no surprise, even if they (Western journalists) don't know that there is a hot line (telephone line) between South Korea and North Korea. It shows that, in general, (Korean) journalists think that foreign journalists don’t have much interest in North and South Korean issues. In particular, from Oriental journalists’ perspectives, both Korean and Japanese journalists thought that North Korean issues are not ‘their (from Western journalists’ views)’ issues but ‘our’ issues.

As discussed, Bourdieu stresses that a writer’s background is important in constructing news. Thus, at the individual level, Shoemaker and Reese (1991, 1996) note a journalist’s ideology influences news construction. In the same vein, Journalist 10 explained the differences between journalists, usually for him ‘what one’s originally from, more ethnic background was the key factor’. He said, “Journalist 1 and Martin Fackler write differently, don’t they? Even if they work for The New York Times. I and Journalist 1 would probably say, “South Korea accused…” in a story about the Cheonan because we tend to believe probably North Korea, but we’re not 100% sure. I wrote, ‘South Korea accuses North Korea for allegedly attacking.’ That’s what I try to do. But, I’m sure Martin, a Bureau chief in Tokyo, is far away. Maybe he has more, a bigger picture. He doesn’t go into. Maybe a guy in New York City would be even worse. He’s gonna exaggerate. You know, in newspapers, in journalism, I noticed the closer you are to the field, the more nuanced you are because life is complex, you know with complexity nothing is black and white. It’s very rare.”

Journalist 10 talked a lot about a journalist’s background, as well as ethnic background. What he said implies hegemonic power between countries, that where a journalist is from plays into journalist practices. That is why, depending on a journalist’s background, news stories about the same topic can be different from each other even in the same media institution. In fact, Journalist 10 was the only one who also mentioned the audience interests.

When the U.S. went to Iraq, all the U.S. media were extremely kind of supporting the Bush administration, even The New York Times completely supporting a lot of bullshit from the government; you know if you look at reports in France, it was all the opposite. All the newspapers were against the war writing, a lot of articles against the US. So it’s depending on the opinions of
your readership. It does influence. You know objectivity doesn’t exist. You have to write something you think is accurate. You don’t know all the things, but at least what you write should be what you think is accurate, it’s close to the truth.

What Journalist 10 emphasized was that a journalist’s ideology with his/her individual background is one of the key factors that influence news making. In addition, he explained that journalists’ perception of audience preferences, external pressure, plays a key role in news making. Journalist 1 commented,

Usually American journalists don’t work by political ideology but they simply don’t know much about it, so they don’t care, so they just write it at face value, being careless. You know America didn’t have that much interest in the Cheonan. It’s not like the Iraq War. So, national interests are not influenced in any way by the Cheonan issue. Well, they might have some kind of prejudices though, as I might have. They think North Korea is bad but they can trust South Korea, like that. It happens to South Koreans, as well. Some people think that way.

As Thussu (1997) argues, there was a distinction in the presentation of friends – South Korea and foes – North Korea already exists as in Israel ‘good guy’ and Iran ‘bad guy’.

Based on the interviews, in covering sensitive issues such as territorial conflicts like Dokdo (island), it seems that a journalist cannot be free from the editorial board. It does not mean that editors force a journalist to say something in the way that they want them to. However, negotiations seem to be proceeding with correspondents in the case of a controversial issue. As Journalist 6 said, correspondents are there on the spot but it seems that they cannot be completely independent from news organizational views and directions as well as government foreign policies (e.g. Washington). In addition, a journalist’s ideology and journalists’ news framing (how they view the issue and make a judgement) is an important factor. As journalists answered, even if journalists’ are from the same news institution, depending on who wrote it, news framing can be different. Therefore, correspondents said that a journalist’s background which influence a journalist’s ideology and news framing is an influential factor in news framing.
6. The disputed area, NLL

The most cited and reported words in the international news about the Cheonan corvette were the NLL. Journalist 11 addresses the very problem of the NLL. He thinks that both the Cheonan and the Yeonpyeong Island incident happened due to the problematic demarcation sea border line. “Those happen because of the NLL issue. The way to resolve or to prevent those happening again with North Korea is to try to solve it, the NLL issue.” In the news that showed the NLL as a serious problem in that area, knowledge about the NLL was no different from what the news stories said— drawn unilaterally by the US and the place of skirmishes in those two years, 1999, 2002. Journalist 11 said that, “dealing with North Korea is a waste of time and it’s counter-productive. North Korean people and the country are part of the broad Korea, the future, unified Korea. The government ruling the country right now is the enemy. It’s enemy. They would kill everybody in South Korea if they had to.”

Actually I think some of the best things that Roh (Roh Moo Hyun, former President) did in Korea, I think it was North Korean policy. I think he started that policy. I think it’s a big mistake for Lee Myung Bak not to follow up on the agreement he had (Roh) on that summit at the end of his term. There were a lot of promising things in there which the incoming government, they just nixed. (Journalist 9).

Journalist 1 also mentioned what Roh tried to do in making a peace zone. “He did persistent engagement, step by step, trying to make an incremental peace zone. That’s the only way. That’s what diplomacy is all about, right?” He explained that the North Korean regime is based on making external tension. That way North Korea grips power. The core ideology, ‘JooChe self-reliance ideology’ is built on extreme national pride, and a sense of crisis. There should always be an external enemy. He said, “If there is no external enemy, you have to create one.” So he thinks that the Northern Limit Line is the best place to do that because it’s a disputed border line. It’s like a hot spot for them. That’s the basic nature of the North Korean regime”.

From Korean perspectives, Journalist 2 was not happy with the NLL disputes. He was very against foreign journalists and he thinks that, “foreign journalists create some disputes around the NLL.” Journalist 17 said that the NLL issue is like the Dokdo
issue with Japan. If you were asked about the issue, even if you don’t have any great knowledge about the island, you have no question. You would answer “of course, it’s our island. The Japanese talk nonsense.” I think the NLL issue is like the Dokdo issue. Korean people would say, “They say the NLL is not territory on land. But the NLL is a South Korean area, even if the concept is slightly different between water and land. There is no clear logic about the line but we live in South Korea and South Koreans are guarding the area, so it’s our land. Foreign correspondents can bring all sorts of materials to argue the area. Japanese people would know possible failures or some problems in ‘Abenomics’ (a portmanteau of Abe and economics, the economic policies advocated by Shinzō Abe, the current Prime Minister of Japan); they have it for economics, they have it for survival (boosting economy). Foreign journalists can bring all the economic logics to criticize ‘Abenomics’ as well.”

However, Journalist 12 spoke up and said, “Daniel Pinkston is American, He is US air force and he was a Korean language intelligence officer. He’s definitely a US patriot and he’s very knowledgeable about North Korea and he’s definitely anti-North Korean but he’ll tell you the NLL, the North Koreans have a point. It was drawn unilaterally by an American military official; North Koreans for many decades de facto agreed to it and then decided one day they won’t going to agree to it anymore, but there’s never been any treaty signed about the NLL. It’s just an arbitrary point in the water that has been respected for many decades and so, obviously, North Korea saw this as a vulnerability from the point of view of the United States and South Korea. So they now tended to use that. I think North Korea desperately wants to be taken seriously, wants to be seen on an equal footing with the United States, the most powerful country in the world.”

Domestically, the NLL issue is huge and has been a hot issue between the Democratic Party and the Saenury Party up to the present day. It is one of the most serious political issues currently being debated. It is about whether the Democratic Party, when Roh was in office, was going to give up the area, yielding it to the North or not. In Korea, the line was not the issue that was discussed after the Cheonan sinking. However, foreign journalists have seen that the NLL is problematic because the controversial line partly caused the sinking. Both nationally and internationally the line is a problem, but it has become a political issue as large as the Dokdo Island conflict
between South Korea and Japan.

7. Attribution of responsibility frame

By the time I interviewed journalists, the conclusion that the Cheonan was sunk by a North Korean torpedo had been officially announced by the Korean government based on the report by the international joint investigation team, and the Yeonpyeong artillery attack by North Korea had already happened. However, among journalists, personal opinions about ‘Who has done it—what caused the sinking of the Cheonan vessel’ were different. As a journalist, they told me why they framed the news in that way. Most of them were very cautious about telling me their opinion about the Cheonan incident because it could also mean that they are suspicious about the Korean government’s conclusion. Indeed, it is telling that those journalists who still had some questions about the veracity of the final report lowered their voices a little bit when they talked about the Korean government and their personal opinion on this. Journalist 2 definitely said that, “I know a journalist at The Hankyoreh Shinmun, the most progressive, radical newspaper who covered the Cheonan. He told me that after the final conclusion was announced, he said, “I believe now.” He explained that The Hankyoreh reporter didn’t believe it was the North at first but after the final report, he said that he believed the results of the government because he observed the processes very closely. For two months, that journalist raised all the questions for the government. But after 20 May, 2010, the official report, he reported that the government’s reports were right. He tried hard to reverse what the government reported but he accepted it after observing the two month’s investigation by the government. He compared foreign journalists to progressive young Korean people who oppose the government reports. He said that they are the same. Korean elites who are over 40 years old, power elites, and conservative people believe the government’s conclusion. Journalist 1 simply answers “Actually, I don’t know the truth. What’s the truth? I still don’t know what happened. I can’t make a conclusion about the incident but can only try to report truly as much as possible as a journalist.”

Journalist 1 pointed out the lack of information in the official conclusion of the probe by the International Joint Investigation team. He said that he found an interesting aspect of the conclusion. First of all, the report was signed by a US general although it was a
joint-statement. In addition, the Joint Investigation Group had two investigation committees. One committee says that they found a torpedo and it says ‘No. 1’ in Korean and it's North Korean-made. They didn’t report any further. However, in the other committee’s report, they concluded that a North Korean submarine fired it by saying, ‘according to our intelligence...’ He also believed that a neutral country that participated in the first committee was missing in the second committee.

They’re not close to North Korea. You know it’s not like China or Russia joint team. The second committee said that according to intelligence...How can you convict with this evidence in a lawful court? (Journalist 1)

The Hankyoreh Shinmun emphasized, and the general public probably considers, Sweden a neutral country, considering the fact that Sweden has an embassy in North Korea. However, the country that was missing in the second investigation was Canada. The international investigation team consisted of the United States, Australia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Originally, Canada joined in the first committee. However, as Journalist 1 said, in the second committee, Canada was not on the list. Journalist 10 also said that he wasn’t sure. He said that, “South Korea says that it was an international investigation. But the countries they picked are Australia, Sweden and Canada. So they’re all like friends, US allies.”

I can tell you one more information. It’s not released anywhere but it can tell you the mind sets of South Korean government. For example, France proposed to help the investigation and South Korea rejected. Sounds like they don’t trust in our France. France is officially like an ally of South Korea and US. You know France is not exactly the line on the U.S. South Korea politely and secretly refused so that’s interesting, you know. AFP is French. But Simon Martin (who covered the Cheonan as correspondent for AFP) is British and writes in English for Seoul. (Journalist 10)

He explained how AFP bureaus work with different languages and different people. “French, English, sometimes Spanish sometimes German also, depending on the country. In Asia, it’s very British. It’s very English speaking. So basically in Seoul. “Even there, there is no French speaking in Seoul. The head of the office in Seoul is British. But the head office in Beijing is French with French flags. Some are French and others are English. So an original news story written in English goes to Hong Kong and there is the regional office there. Then French colleagues will pick a story
and translate into French. That’s how AFP news production works in Asia. Then the copy that goes to AFP from Korea is all originally in English."

It doesn’t mean that South Korea says is not true. I’m just saying that the investigation so called international investigation is not that international. I mean, that doesn’t mean that it’s a bad job. I’m saying that it shows that South Korea picked the one they want. South Korea always go on the international states and say look we have an international investigation. So it’s true. The fact is that yeah it’s international but they are all your friends. That’s why. If it was for example, the UN, it will be more credit because the UN is more credibility more balanced. Russian did their own investigation not part of the team. I’m not an expert but I saw the propeller when I see this, it’s impressive but for me it was too good to be true (Journalist 10).

Journalist 10 said that since then, he had some doubt. So he talked to a French military navy experts who were not in Korea but in Norway. For example, he talked to them and asked them what they thought. They told him that it was a torpedo because they said if you looked at the shape, the way the boat cracked .There was, for them, no question. It’s a torpedo. It cannot be something else. "Maybe it’s a mistake torpedo from…ha-ha…I tell you I don’t have the truth about the Cheonan. I don’t know someone who has the truth. Maybe North Korea has the truth. No one knows the truth. But from everyone I talked to I end up with the conclusion I tend to believe that 80% or 90% this is a North Korean torpedo. But you know…"

Journalist 9 discussed that because running aground is highly unlikely, he believed that it is the North, because after the government statement he asked the Brits, Americans, Canadians and Swedes sitting by his side in the first row ‘do you gentlemen fully endorse everything that has just been said? And they said, ‘yes’. “That’s credible”, he said. "I don’t disbelieve South Korean government but on these kinds of issues, generally western governments are quite credible. But the most critical thing was there was Swedish. On that there were two points. Swedish has a lot of experience in anti-submarine warfare. They've taken the Russians and NATO’s. Sweden was in there. Yes. They were part of the report." He pointed out again neutral nations. Sweden seems to be known as a ‘neutral’ nation. But he said, “I mean Cheonan even to this day is still a mystery. No one’s one hundred percent sure what happened, Yeonpyeong was obvious, I mean a terrorist strike. North Koreans are not denying that. But they’re still denying Cheonan, which is a bit odd, a bit of a mystery.
In the interview, usually, Journalist 9 was very sure about matters that he was talking about and he has many years’ experience as a journalist in South Korea. Also, he has been a columnist for the Chosun Ilbo, one of the top selling Korean newspapers. However, what he explained about the North Korea’s attack on the Cheonan was very confusing. He said that the probability of ‘running aground’ is very low and Sweden, the most independent and neutral country in international affairs, signed onto the conclusion of the Joint International investigation team. But unlike Yeonpyeong, North Korea vehemently denies even until now, so the Cheonan sinking is mystery.

To me, it’s obvious that it was North Korea. I mean I was little bit suspicious but they found the actual missile, all of that, OK. They’re trying so hard. Very obvious from an analyst’s points of view. It’s obvious. I mean it’s not gonna be Taiwan that is gonna torpedo them or the Americans who is gonna torpedo them? If it was a mistake that the Americans torpedoed a Korean ship, that’ll come out. They can’t keep that as a secret. To me it’s obviously North Korean. Running aground? I don’t know but people are trying hard to find another explanation because there is a certain thing, what’s the saying ‘Occam’s razor- also written as Ockham’s razor’. Let me just check with the Wikipedia here’. It’s basically a principle that there is, it’s about a different theories about something you choose the most logical. Obvious. You know for all the other theories, running aground or hitting a mine, it’s that people who don’t trust government (Journalist 11).

He said that in a free environment, journalists are kind of controlled by kind of the rules of credibility. “The source is always important. When the military announces something, you usually believe them unless you have a good reason not to believe them. The military, a company and a government, they may twist the truth or exaggerate a lot but they are kind of authority, if the government announces about the Cheonan, and the investigation shows it was North Korea, if your Korean government support that investigation conclusion, you usually, as a journalist, you would accept that unless there is a very, very, good reason not to, 9.11 no one says ‘alleged’. You are also examining the rules of the game.” It was slightly confusing and contradictory because he said earlier that, “you should trust foreign correspondents and the government, especially military officials who do not give any information to foreign correspondents.” Journalist 3 said that there was no question. Definitely. “Who else?”
Many of us, which is from journalists to a lay public about the Iraq War. And the evidence. Supposedly it was there the Americans should stop Iraq War. Now you are probably getting the point what I’m trying to make here. Because they found propeller in the ocean with number one on it. Does that mean that North Korean attacked Cheonan? I don’t know. I would say, certainly, pretty good evidence. But it’s 100 percent evidence? No. Absolutely not. How can be unless someone actually witnessed it and had a proof of its attack? Let’s say that you could prove it, between you and me. But who said it was fired in error? Who said a rogue general ordered the torpedo to be fired? There are so many questions. (Journalist 8).

Journalist 10 was questioned and said that, “South Korea doesn’t seem to question the Cheonan incident although it still matters to know what happened. We’ll know, maybe we will never know, I don’t know, or we’ll know much later. We’re still looking for answers. It would be amazing if there is some evidence from the North side some sources or some evidence to show the North indeed orchestrated it and how they did that. Maybe one day we’ll find that you know. Maybe when North Korea collapse, we’ll find that you know. We still don’t know how they do it. Even the story is fascinating. I talked to sailors and so on. They told me that if a North Korean submarine went there they took amazing risks because the Yellow Sea is extremely shallow. It’s a very dangerous place to navigate, especially for a submarine, so basically normally submarine just don’t go there and I can tell you that if they did it.”

Journalist 13 criticized how “global media embarrasses it up during the last two months on North Korea because without naming news sources, I think a lot of international TV and the media and network made clear that they didn’t understand the dynamics here. They didn’t understand when North Korea says there is going to be a war tomorrow that’s not actually what it means.” Thus, this study intends to critically reflect the sinking of the Cheonan warship in a geographical, political, social and economic context, focusing on the current international relations, political powers and the foreign policies in the Korean Peninsula together with its peripheral nations. It would be helpful to comprehend the implication of the Cheonan in the Korean Peninsula in fuller aspects within the post-Cold War era. While doing interviews, I noticed cleavage between foreign correspondents by ideological perspectives on

47 North Korea announced it would make the Armistice invalid on 11 March 2013 when the Korea-US Joint annual military drills, which is called ‘Key Resolve’ and threatened the South, criticising the drills (Yonhap, 11 March 2013)
North Korea, Korean government and Korean society. As mentioned above, there were some divisions between foreign journalists and Korean journalists as well, having boundary lines as ‘we’ and ‘they’ and criticizing each other. Thus, in the next section, I show the main views of correspondents of the Korean society and Korean journalists’ practices in socio-cultural contexts.

8. The Korean media system and Korean journalists’ practices

As defined in literature review, news is not a mirror of a reality but social construction (Tuchman, 1997, Allan, 2004). Hence, exploring how journalists shape an issue and what aspects journalists make salient is important. In particular, the ways in which correspondents from South Korea would be important because they work for primary definers, which are global news agencies and news framing influence the public attitudes (Entman, 1993). Thus, it would be helpful to identify the ways in which correspondents view the Korean society and Korean journalists’ practices in socio-cultural-political contexts. Correspondents answered what they have observed by saying the differences between Western journalists and Korean journalists.

Many correspondents found that there are socio-cultural differences between Western journalists and Korean journalists. Journalist 9 says that, “particularly, guys (journalists) from ChoJoongDong – The Chosun Ilbo, the Joongang Ilbo and DongA Ilbo (conservative daily newspapers), they see themselves as members of the establishment, whereas western reporters see themselves as critics of these establishment. There are some reporters, Boris Johnson being a good example, who go into politics. Winston Churchill is a good example”.

If you go to a press conference, it is very interesting. Western reporters would stand up and say ‘Mr. Minister what do you think about A, B, OR C? That’s it. ... Korean reporters would get up and they give 2 or 3 or 4 speeches saying you know minister I think this and I think that da da da da da I think this and then finally they would ask a question at the end.

Considering the Korean culture, I suggested that asking a question of your senior or your boss or higher ups, it could be a way of politely asking a question. So Journalist 9 said, “It might be true. It could be a very indirect way of asking tricky questions. They
just received materials from Defence Ministry. They web search.” Journalist 8 also agreed that, “it’s a very cultural thing that I mentioned earlier. They don’t question authority, they respect authority, and you can see that in the structure of government authority, it is highly respected in Korea. You don’t question government you don’t question security apparatus. Domestic politics. I saw we had news conferences. Korean wouldn’t ask tough questions. Foreign media would ask all those tough questions”. Hence, Journalist 8 said that in the new era, social media is transforming a political media role as shown in an mayoral election and presidential election. He saw that the alternative media in South Korea plays a role in changing Korean society from political perspectives. In the same vein, Journalist 10 also explained that Korean journalists do not confront but ask general questions. Furthermore, Journalist 1 concluded that although Korean journalists have larger staff and better accessibility to news source, compared to correspondents but he added that, “However, their weak point is they are very much confined within their news organization. Compared to the press in the US, news organization has quite a lot of influence on journalists’ practice.”

Journalist 11 also tried to say that Korean reporters are more embedded in their nationalism. He stressed that,

“one thing to bear in mind I think is the Korean press and also the Japanese press in my experience, they care about their national interests. American and British journalists don’t care much about their national interests. Korean reporters are far more likely to be influenced by the government. Even their own ideas are in their national interests than western reporters. In the Cheonan case, to me, the root of this problem is the level of trust in Korean society. That’s what it comes from I think.”

According to Journalist 11, the Korean journalists play a certain role that the government should be doing and the relationship between the Blue House and a journalist is dependent on each other. Journalist 15 says, “he feels that sometimes, Yonhap reports in the administration’s favourite way. I can’t believe sometimes how this sort of news about the Korea conflicts can be reported by the Yonhap, compared to the Kyodo news agency that sometimes criticizes the government. But in Korea, if you’re a reporter for the news agency, that’s a basic.” Foreign correspondents were also very antagonistic toward the Korean journalists for some reason. The Ki Ja Dahn system is a very sensitive issue in the Korean media. The system was first brought up
by several Seoul foreign correspondents who have worked in Korea for many years. For instance, Journalist 12, who has many years of journalist experience in Japan, said that

In Japan there is also a Kija Club system here is Kijadan. So it's sort of similar to pack journalism where all the reporters for major publication. They report the same thing they keep out from the Kijadan the news organization is not part of the media oligarchy. They tend not to be investigative in nature the reporting very much relies on quoting reports of officials with numbers, they are very focused on the numbers rather than contexts. Their reporting is very one-sided. another saying when something involving in Japan and South Korea, they are very much reflecting what their own government is reporting in so much as it is an objective story (Journalist 12).

Comparing South Korea to Japan, Journalist 12 pointed out that there are differences in the structure of media. He said that most Korean media had been under government control for many decades, so the Korean reporting, as far as being independent of the government, started much later than Japan. In fact, Journalist 16 also had journalism experience in Japan as a copy editor. He pointed out that the Kija system creates unhealthy tension because it means that with both the Kija Dahn (Korea) and Kija Club (Japan), there is this kind of very close relationship between journalists and news source and in some sense it is too close.

He observed that, “Journalists are spending most of their time with the news sources and they develop good relations. When they have tough questions and tough stories to write, that can be a problem”. He gave me an example. This case is with the North Korean defectors who are in Laos and were sent back to North Korea. He eagerly explained, "When this story came out last week we were the only people to contact the Laos government to ask what happened and the Laos government said to us that the South Korean side did not make any effort to help the North Korean defectors, so we wrote that. We also wrote what the South Korean side told us, and then Yonhap did not report what the Laos side said they just said South Korea tried to help, tried to retrieve these defectors; and then they wrote an article which criticized us and said the Wall Street Journal wrote something which was untrue.

The problem is they are too close to the... In this case—the Yonhap reporters in the foreign ministry are too close to the foreign ministry and the foreign ministry
may have pressured them. Yonhap is the largest news organization in Korea so they have resources, they have good contacts and they do write a good story. I don't want to say they don't, I'm just saying that in some situations their independence is an issue. It's also an issue because they're partially government funded. That creates some unhealthy tensions (Journalist 16).

Additionally Journalist 16 pointed out the ownership of the media and its influence on journalists’ practices. The close relationship between journalists and news sources can be problematic because it would make reporters challenge the views of news sources. Hence, he added that reporters in a media organisation like the Hankyoreh can ask tough questions because they are independent from extra funds.

In contrast, from a Korean perspective, based on his experience, Journalist 17 said, “the Ki-Ja Dahn system is like a double-edged sword. For journalists, it’s necessary to be part of the system because we can get a rich stock of information and have ‘deep-back’ briefings under an embargo. There are limitations, such as reporters have to follow the time and date when we can or cannot report due to the embargo. In a way, for reporters, having good and close relationships with news sources seem to be our right for more information even if we don't write a report about it right away. For foreign correspondents, because they can’t be part of the system, it would look like a very closed system. Journalist 18 commented on the system by saying that “having a good relationship with news sources is helpful because you can ask questions in private, for example while having a meal together.”

Correspondents noted the Ki-Ja Dahn system and the close relationship between Korean journalists with news sources. In addition, some correspondents pointed out that Korean journalists’ lack in challenges toward the government and news organisations. They conclude that the Ki-Ja Dahn system would hinder Korean journalists’ independence from the government and news organisations and the ownership of a news institute affect journalists’ practices. If reporters are too close toward news sources, correspondents found that it would be very hard to report negative news about them, especially if they are funded by them. As a result, they concluded that Korean journalists do not ask questions to the government although it is a journalist's main role as a watchdog. In addition, correspondents said that Korean journalists’ national interests are very strong. In the correspondents' views, Korean
journalists care about their country very much, compared to western journalists. Hence, they are likely to be influenced by the government. As for the issue of the Ki-Ja Dahm system, however, as Korean journalists answered, on one hand, the system looks like there are reporters who are defending the government and their news organisations in the viewpoints of correspondents who cannot be part of it. However, on the other hand, it is a previleged for selected reporters to be able to obtain information from their close news sources because the purpose of the close relationship with news sources is not necessarily to criticize them but to receive important information or updates on a particular issue from them.

9. North Korean issues in Korean society

Rhee (2011) argue that the Korean mainstream media routinely takes sides with political parties and the incumbent political party influences public service broadcasters. Consequently, he concludes that the Korean media’s ideological cleverage caused a decline in public trust toward the mainstream media. In the same vein, Journalist 1 said that Korean people tend not to trust the government official reports because South Korea went through the military regimes. This section shows correspondents’ views on the Korean conflict in Korean society. Another key theme drawn from correspondents was ideological division of Korean society.

“Whether you believe the final result (of the Cheonan probe) or not is a political issue in South Korea. Some people say, ‘I can’t believe it or it’s a fabrication or distorted and others question why you don’t believe it. In this sense, South Korea has failed for integration (Journalist 15).

Correspondents explained that this society is extremely divided ideologically into a left-wing and a right-wing as they have two opposite ideological news sources in a news story, so they thought that the circulating speculation was also divided by the two opposite ideologies. Hence, according to Journalist 1, the Cheonan incident was the worst case because when it happened, rather than investigating on ‘who’s done it’ a left wing newspaper criticizes the ruling party and the government and a right wing does the same too, to the counterpart. They used it as a political weapon by attacking the counterpart rather than finding out facts. “It’s like an election”, said Journalist 3. He
contends that Korean politics are about regional conflicts, where you are from so people who criticize current government who is from the Kyungsang province, are the Jeolla province. He said that, “It’s unfortunate that regional prejudices dominate scientific findings”. Journalist 1 also explains that,

You’ve probably seen the recent news about the leaflets that the South sends and North Korea said that they would be shelling. If it happens, the conservative would say that it’s time to get tough. Look at what the North does. We should vote for a conservative. Also, a left wing would argue that the Lee administration is damaging peace, making the North reckless and creating tension with North Korea.

Most correspondents mentioned that in the Korean media, conservative and progressive newspapers are every polarised ideologically. In addition, they said that North Korean issues become political agendas. The political side of a North Korean issue, like the Cheonan, seems to show a regional as well as an ideological division in Korean society. Moreover, an ideological division seems to be deeply rooted in the Korean media and Korean politics but also among the Korean public. Journalist 11 commented,

It’s unfortunate. People will assume, ‘do you agree with the government’s report about the Cheonan? You therefore agree with everything else to do with the government. The reason you agree with the government’s report is not because you thought about it but because you’re pro-government. And the same for the opposite. If you disagree with it, the reason is you disagree because you’re anti-government. That can be very true in a lot of cases but it also can be unfair to people who are trying to look objectively. It’s childish.

Therefore, based on the data, the Cheonan sinking has not been treated as an incident itself that had happened and so needed to be looked into it. Rather it was seen as a political issue in South Korea, bringing political divide and ideological contestation in Korean society. According to what the interviewees said, North Korean issues, including the Cheonan, are social and political agendas. The Cheonan implies the Korean public’s trust or mistrust toward a government as Journalist 1 explained,
probably due to Korea’s historical political background. In addition, in terms of politics, the Democratic Party and the ruling party are using the Cheonan case as a political tool for their political purposes. Furthermore, Korea’s never-ending and deeply embedded regional division has been a political issue for a long period of time and therefore has been closely related to the conflicts between the South and the North. In short, North Korean issues have been exploited for a political purpose.

10. Geopolitics, National interests and Foreign Policy

It was noticeable that news texts mentioned how China reacted to the result of the international Joint Investigation team. There were some criticisms of China’s inactive response toward North Korea in national and international news. In particular, the US media included the Obama administration’s condemnation of China’s inactiveness. In a response to my questions, Journalist 18 clearly explained the current situation in the Korean peninsula with a new great power, China. She said that China is using North Korea as a buffer because if North Korea is under the US control, China is going to be neighbouring with the US influence at its border. In short, for the U.S. because China has expanded its influence in East Asia, they try to restrain the Chinese growing expansion in the region. That’s why the U.S. tries to solidify the alliance with Japan and South Korea that is closely related to China in a bond. Thus, the Korean peninsula can be a buffer between the G2. She says that “North Korea knows that North Korean issues are to deal with the US and North Korean brinkmanship means negotiations with the US”.

In the Obama administration’s first term, North Korea was not part of the US Interest because the US was involved in the Iraq War and many other conflicts in the Middle East and they outsourced, hoping that China or South Korea would take care of the North and that the situation would stay as it is. North Korea needed aid. For their economy, they had to negotiate with the US but the US didn’t try to listen. So North Korea raised the tension. (Journalist 18).

In addition to the United States, which was considered to have influential power in the region, most journalists emphasized the important role that China could exert on the region’s stability in relation to North Korean issues. Journalist 3 said that, “wrapped up in a whole thing. China repeatedly said about Cheonan that they want stability. It is
hard for China to be harsh to North Korea. It’s a great deal of aid, fertilizer oil. China is still a big ally of the North. Of course. China is their only ally. Source of arms, oil, food some people think so. Russia getting increasingly close to North Korea. Russian, big interest in North Korea. Russia had a dream about railroad from Busan to North Korea to Europe”.

However, it was also considered that China would not play a role in the Korean conflict that US and South Korea wants. China is a growing threat to Korea because they are more concerned about their own interests.

The Cheonan motivated a turning point. Considerably many people also thought that we should be closer to the U.S. to hold China in check. In other words, the incident gave Korean people a better understanding of the importance of military alliance with the United States. As China becomes a regional power, they like to host a six party talk and make their image or identity. (Journalist 1).

Even in the post-Cold War era and after the fall of the Soviet Union, it looks like the second or new Cold War lies in the Korean Peninsula. The relationship between China, North Korea and South Korea and its ally the United States is an important element in keeping, technically, in a state of a war but, practically, in peace.

South Korea and Japan, I don’t want to say pawns of the US. But they are, you know, regional actors for the US. North Korea could be used in some ways by China against the US as well (Journalist 14).

Coupled with the Chinese ambition, the US President Barack Obama announced they are ‘rebalancing’ power in the Asia Pacific region, what is called pivot to Asia. Journalist 12 explains, “because of Korean history, Korean people feel very vulnerable and very defensive and react very strongly emotionally to things, worried about the survival of Korean culture. Look at Korea’s position geographically. It’s always been vulnerable to China. It’s been caught in between.” He said that Korea’s geographical location and weak economy enabled South Korea’s overthrow by Japan and it might have been worse if it was China.

Korea is like the Balkans in Europe before the First World War, in other words, an area wherein the interests of various great powers meet. It’s always been
that way in the last hundred years because China and Japan at the end of the 19th century were fighting for a control of Korea then you had Japan and Russia fighting for the control of Korea and then had the Japanese war in 1894, Russia and Japanese war in 1905 then obviously the Korean War, which was a war between America and China, then, so you know, this is a historical pattern that is happening and continues to happen. What now is happening (raised tensions between the two Koreas in March, 2013) is that you know China is expanding regional power just the same way imperial Germany was for the First World War and obviously Korea is a sphere of influence for China (Journalist 14)

As Journalist 14 and Journalist 12 also said, “The Korean War was the start of the Cold War. Definitely the Cold War is over that was a Soviet Union versus US ideological conflict. That’s over. It’s a geographical conflict for the future between two powers or two power bases. Obviously, the power base in the East will be led by Beijing. The power in the West will be led by Washington, but Washington, it can project power but it must have a number of strong allies around the world who share common values and in a military conflict all our NATO, are willing to fight alongside.”

These remarks by journalists conclude that North Korean issues such as the Cheonan sinking reflect national interests, national security, foreign policy and geopolitical power. Moreover, the finished Cold War seems to be still alive in this region, the Korean Peninsula. According to them, South Korea is quite vulnerable and China is a rising power so, depending on the powers, South Korean stability can change.

Journalist 13 explicates, “It’s hard to know exactly what the interests (of US and China) are. But it was interesting, North Korea said recently that they think the US is using North Korea as an excuse to move the military asset to the region as part of its pivot to Asia. I think, it’s important to know if you actually look beneath all the talk about the US pivot to Asia, because of all the budget cuts, there is hardly any military assets being moved, but nonetheless, clearly the US and China are both, they want to build the strategic influence in the region and the Korean peninsula is the point where the influence meets”.

The Korean peninsula is divided into two stands between the great super powers. As shown earlier, Korean history has been under powerful countries’ rules. As Journalists
repeatedly said, the Cold War has ended and now it is the post-Cold War era. However, as China’s economic power is on the rise and Beijing is emerging as a superpower. It is not certain that China will eventually supplant the world’s dominant superpower yet. However, the United States keeps China in check and China is balancing its power by promoting cooperation and building trust with the international community. As shown in the international news reports analysis, the news blamed China for not reacting toward North Korea over the Cheonan sinking. In other words, China did not blame North Korea for torpedoing the Cheonan warship and rather blamed the US for escalating tensions. As though the situation were like it was about 60 years ago, it seems China and the United States are confronting each other, following their ideological lines—Democratic and Communist. Hence, the Korean Peninsula is still stuck in between the superpowers’ power struggle. To sum up, the findings show that the implication of the Cheonan issue is that, domestically, the Cheonan has been used for political purposes and internationally, they show the geopolitical dynamic between the great powers in the region. The look of the divided Korean Peninsula seems to show the unfinished Cold-War in the post-Cold War era in the Korean peninsula.

11. Summary

It has been shown how newsgathering, investigating and news sourcing by foreign journalists had been done and what kinds of limitations they had in covering the Cheonan issue, as well as North Korean issues generally. Foreign correspondents said that they are independent from their organizations, and the Korean government did not give them any pressure. However, their responses showed that journalists tended to trust US officials or the third party officials. In addition, to a great extent, news sources that they could use in a news story were somewhat limited when it came to issues such as the Cheonan and North Korea, which is very much closed. Therefore, foreign correspondents said that they turn to mostly US officials or Internet news sites in an English version because they thought there was no other way to get materials for a news story. For more information, they went to websites that were not proven because no one had any original information about North Korea, mainly DailyNK. Thus, it shows that the new media, particularly English versions, have affected correspondents’ media practices. Moreover, most of the foreign journalists
said that they knew that they could not get any information from government officials or the military officials, whilst Journalist 2 said that they are the greatest sources for North Korean news. Also, there is to some degree, antagonism between Western journalists and Korean journalists; they do not see each other as fair competitors or colleagues. Importantly, depending on a journalist’s ideology—what they believe, social universe—a journalist’s background, the news frame on who caused the Cheonan sinking was different based on what they believe and who they talked to. Hence, accordingly, the news frames were shaped differently.

Moreover, some of the journalists seem to be unsure of what caused the incident. That is why some of them said that they didn’t say that, ‘North Korea attacked the Cheonan in their news stories’. They emphasized rather when they wrote that, ‘Seoul government blamed the North or South Korean government accused by North Korea...’ Journalists somehow have to make a decision or make a direction about which way they are going to frame a news topic. However, many correspondents had the biased opinion that they would not get any information even if they investigated even further, so they worked routinely. Consequently, there was a possibility that the public who were exposed to the news could also be suspicious, and question the Cheonan issue because the news media just quoted what the government reported and repeated some factual information about the Korean conflicts and incidents in the past without much investigation.

As Hamilton and Jenner (2004) found in the foreign correspondence landscape, by hiring local foreign correspondents who are able to communicate independently in Korean and read local news, international news media seem to incorporate local views and local sources into their news stories. However, within the same environment, with lack of news sources about North Korea available and only limited news, North Korean issues in South Korea seem to accelerate the media routine practices. In this research, the direct causal effects, the news effects on the audience, have not been shown. However, adopting the theories that we have discussed—news framing and the role of the news media and its impact on society, it can be argued that journalists’ questions might have contributed to the query of why the public—national and international—questioned the final report by the government. Consequently, it is possible that the news with questions has amplified suspicion on the investigation’s
conclusion, because the news media shapes public opinion and public perceptions as discussed in the literature review. Correspondents commented on an ideological division in Korean media as well as society, whilst in many other countries, it is meaningless. As interview data shows, historical background on the current situation in the divided Korean peninsula and political development toward a democratic country has been influenced unfortunate ideological division in Korea. In this chapter, based on the interview materials with Seoul correspondents and Korean journalists, I aimed to address the complexity of current journalism practices, North Korean issues, and the hegemonic power game in the Korean peninsula. In the next chapter, critical analysis of the data will be discussed and I will discuss conclusions and implications of the study.
Chapter 7.
Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter discusses the research findings by addressing the news analysis results, and contemplating the implications of the data collected in interviews with journalists. My overall aim here is to draw a conclusion about the news production processes and the factors that influenced journalists in covering North Korean issues, in particular, the case of the Cheonan corvette sinking. First, I will summarise the results of the national and international news analysis by emphasising the primary news frames. Secondly, dominant news sources for further information and citations that were used in news articles will be addressed, based on the findings. Thirdly, the aim of this section is to analyse the means of the news source citations by explicating the global news flow and discussing the applicability of Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model in this study. Fourthly, based on the results of news framing analysis and the interpretation of the interviews conducted in this study, the core factors that influenced journalists’ news production practices and news frames will be discussed in depth in socio-cultural and political contexts. Finally, the conclusions of this study will be addressed in light of theoretical debates, which I introduced in the literature review. In addition, I highlight some of the limitations of the study as well as offer possible suggestions for future research.

1. Findings

The images and themes that the media creates, constructs associations in the public’s minds (Castells, 2009). In particular, considering the significance of the role of the international news media and its impact on both the public perceptions and foreign policies (Livingston, 1997), it was imperative to examine the ways in which news was constructed and shaped by journalists in the international news media. Additionally, the public’s dependence on international media for news about North Korea is even greater because North Korea is the most reclusive society in the world. This study examined news content relating to the sinking of the Cheonan warship as a case study and explored the key factors that influenced the news frames. For empirical
research, I selected news institutions in South Korea, the US and the UK because traditionally, the US and the UK are the two prime leading players in the global news communication. Specifically, this study focuses on the international news agencies because they are news distributors, particularly in relation to international conflict, and are agenda setters. The AP was used for this study as one of the big three news agencies in a news framing analysis. In addition, I chose the international elite media outlets in the US and the UK that are influential actors in international news flow. For domestic news data, I retrieved news articles from Yonhap, the largest existing news agency, the DongA Ilbo, which is one of the big three mainstream newspapers in South Korea and The Hankyoreh Shinmun, which is a liberal newspaper, in the news data analysis. Samplings from the news archives were taken and a comparative study of news coverage of the Cheonan incident as a case study was conducted to investigate the dominant news frames in the news texts between national and international news outlets, focusing on an examination of the international news flow between the news agencies and mainstream news media. Furthermore, I attempted to test the applicability of the five filters in the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) and analyzed the results.

1-1 News frames in national and international news

In the results of news framing analysis, as the frequency of news articles demonstrated, the number of news stories about the Cheonan in news media outlets in the US, which is South Korea’s key military ally, was twice that of the UK. It would indicate to what degree each news media configured the Cheonan issue as prominent. In other words, it indicates that the US news media made the Cheonan issue more salient, which is one of the important elements in news framing. In addition, the national news media produced a far greater number of news articles rather than the international news media.

In this study, I investigated the dominant news frames embedded in the sampled news data. The words used in each news article were examined thoroughly. The common frames detected in the media by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were employed, in order to identify primary news frames. They were the conflict frame, economic consequences, human interests, and morality frames. The result showed the
differences between national and international news texts. The dominant news frame in international news media was the conflict frame, while the human interests frame was found in national news texts. From Day one, international news mentioned ‘North Korea’ more than five times in each article and included similar background information, which could raise tensions in the Korean peninsula by repeating sensitive issues such as ‘the disputed area NLL’, ‘three bloody skirmishes’ happened in the past between South Korea and North Korea, Korea is ‘in a state of a war since the Korean War’, the day before the incident ‘Pyongyang had threatened unprecedented nuclear strikes against the US.’

According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the conflict frame emphasizes conflict between two opponents aiming to receive the audience’s attention. Thus, the findings of this study concluded that international news made the conflict frame salient during the first week after the Cheonan incident happened, by highlighting the tension between the two Koreas and the previous conflict between South Korea and North Korea. The actual cause of the Cheonan sinking was unknown for approximately two months, until the final conclusion. However, compared to national news, there were far fewer facts and updates but only repeats of the same background information given in international news. It does not mean that national newspapers did not mention any possibility of North Korea’s engagement in the incident at all. For instance, Yonhap did not exclude the possibility completely that the North attacked. In the sampled news data in this research, there was only one line on the first day of the incident mentioning that the defence minister did not exclude the possibility that North Korea is involved. However, on the second day of the incident, Yonhap quoted anonymous military source saying, “there is a possibility of a North Korean torpedo ship because there was a hole penetrated at the rear of the ship” (27 March 2010). However, the national news media did not repeat similar background information about the conflict between the two Koreas, as the international news did. Moreover, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) states that the human interests frame usually comes together with the conflict frame in news texts and arouses emotional attributes and both the conflict frame and human interests frame are to attract the audience attention. Hence, it was concluded that the dominant news frame in national newspapers was the human interests frame because the emotional state of the devastated families who had lost their sons and relatives was prominent in Korea news texts.
What I have learned from identifying the prominent news frames in news texts, was that it would be essential to address that the news frames changed as the investigation developed and the cause of the incident was revealed. The news content for those three designated days—the first day when the incident happened, the day of the interim report and the day that the final conclusion was announced had been updated, in terms of the attributes of responsibility for the cause of the tragic incident. Accordingly, the news frames had been changed. In particular, as the Korean government officially reported the conclusion of the Joint International investigation team that North Korea torpedoed the Cheonan warship, its ramifications had brought global concern. The UN reported the Security Council meetings coverage, entitled “Security Council condemns attack on Republic of Korea naval ship ‘Cheonan,’ stresses need to prevent further attacks, other hostilities in Region” (9 July 2010).

The *BBC* news, especially as reported in London, had been trying to keep its stance as ‘neutral’ or ‘safe,’ as Journalist 5 said, by writing ‘alleged’ every time they wrote a news story about the Cheonan. *The Guardian* also wrote news about the Cheonan using the term ‘allegedly,’ even after the final conclusion, although it had a very similar news content to *AP* prior to the final report. As Journalist 1 says, it is probably not because they know a lot about the conflicts between the two Koreas, but because they have no national interest there, compared to the US. However, the U.S. news media seemed to link the Cheonan and denuclearization, which calls for North Korea’s denuclearization and the six-party talks, following an announcement of economic sanctions on the North. Later, the news media in the US, as well as South Korea, condemned China by mentioning that China was not reacting against the North’s ‘provocation’ and thus creating a growing tension in the relationship between the US and China.

For example, Andrew Jacobs and David E. Sanger wrote in an article in *New York Times*, 29 June 2010 that President Obama accused Beijing of “willful blindness” toward North Korea’s military provocation, ‘the sinking of a South Korean naval ship’. Regarding Mr. Obama’s remarks, the spokesman, Qin Gang contended that, “China is a neighbour of the Korean Peninsula, and on this issue, the Cheonan sinking, our feeling differs from that of a country that lies 8,000 km distant. We feel even more
direct and serious concerns.” After President Obama’s remark, the condemnation of China’s failing to control the North with regard to the incident and North Korea’s provocation was primarily framed in news. In June 2010, it was noticeable that the news media reported as if the two superpowers, China and the US, were confronting each other over this issue. It was like the Cold War frame coming back, not between Russia and the US but between China and the US. On Saturday, during the G20 summit meeting in Toronto, “Mr. Obama announced that the United States would extend by three years, until 2015, an agreement under which American commanders would take control of South Korean forces in the event of a military clash with the North.” It was confirmed that wartime operational control had been agreed to be returned to South Korea from the US in 2012. However, due to the Cheonan, it is necessary to consider postponing the return (The DongA Ilbo, 17 April 2010). Regarding the transfer of operational control of South Korean forces, there had been debates in 2006 about whether it should be the year of 2009 or 2012. However, in 2006, North Korea conducted a second nuclear test and it was agreed to extend three more years, which would make it 2012 (Yonhap, 19 October 2006). Then, due to the Cheonan incident, South Korea and the US reviewed the postponing of the transfer and President Obama agreed to postpone wartime operational control from 17 April 2012 to 1 December 2015 (Yonhap, 24 October 2014).

In the process of news framing analysis, I learned that dominant news frames could change according to the time period they were sampled. In the case of the Cheonan, as the situation developed and, after two months, the attribution of responsibility was revealed, the words and narratives that the news considered salient changed accordingly. For instance, after the final report of the Joint International Investigative team, the actual cause, the North’s attack on the Cheonan, rather than its running aground, affected national and global security that led to extra ROK-US joint military exercises to impose sanctions on North Korea (SBS, 25 May 2010). Furthermore, the Korean government imposed 5.24 trade restrictions between South Korea and North Korea that affected Korean companies in the Kaesung industrial complex situated in North Korea. Thus, according to the policies of the government and updated information, the news frame can be changed accordingly.
1-2 Investigative Journalism

As shown above, news stories about the Cheonan warship were reported in similar ways, particularly in international news outlets. The emphasis on the NLL from Day One, together with the Korean officials’ quote that, ‘there is no evidence that North Korea is involved in this incident’, which was seen in international news, is quite contradictory, because Korean officials try to be cautious but the news stresses the area where a few ‘deadly’ clashes happened between the South and the North. Likewise, with regards to the results, it was seen that the international news reports that were analyzed in this study consisted of the same citations and almost the same content. To sum up, the international news media overemphasized the NLL and lacked further information and investigation. On the contrary, in their dramatized stories claiming that there were ‘escalating tensions,’ and that it was the ‘worst incident since the Korean War,’ there was no further investigation. I would like to emphasize that this study does not intend to generalize this idea, but is based on the news stories and, as Journalist 11 said, “no one went to the place (where the Cheonan sinking happened)”, and the correspondents’ journalistic work was very much routinized. A nearly identical paragraph about the NLL and ‘technically at War’ was repeatedly mentioned in news stories and in many different news outlets. The results would partly imply that investigative journalistic practices were deemed to be inactive. It is not the case to say that the news reports lacked facts, and journalists’ routine work caused the public’s disbelief and attitudes toward the government’s final report based on the international investigative group’s conclusion, because this thesis presents no strong evidence about how the news reports affected the public’s beliefs and attitudes.

However, through news analysis and in-depth interviews conducted with journalists, the findings suggest that news reports on the Cheonan were not constructed in an investigative way, which is strictly based on the facts, but rather constructed with the same background information simply repeated, with a couple of controversial issues highlighted frequently. As Shoemaker and Reece (1991) state, some news texts are almost identical and this would mean journalists’ practices were routinized (Shoemaker and Reece, 1991). Moreover, Bennett said, “Despite some obvious
differences involving the nature of assignments and personal writing styles, American reporters tend to cover news events in remarkably similar ways" (2012:166). In this regard, Bennett (2012) states that a journalist's routinized work contributes to the standardized reporting formats and it cooperates with news sources and daily information. Thus, based on the findings, in line with journalists' routinized work practices, officials, as the most frequently used news source for newsgathering can be an important indicator for the routine work and the discussion that follows.

1-3. News Sources

As emphasized in journalism theories, news sources are a significant index of investigating news frames employed in news texts, as well as in the examination of the international news flow. Sigal (1987) states that news sources are effective tools to frame a news topic and examine international news flow (Thussu, 1998, 2007; Entman, 1991, 1993; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). In particular, this study focused on applying some of the five filters of the Propaganda Model set by Herman and Chomsky (2002). The third filter in particular was sourcing mass media news and I examined what kind of news sources were used in the news stories. I calculated every single news source cited in news texts and classified them into categories. In the news coverage of the Cheonan incident, government officials, including military officials, were dominantly used. Having government officials in news stories adds credibility to the news texts. However, as Herman and Chomsky (2002) note, regular 'important' sources citations can facilitate media routines. Consequently, the practices would influence a particular framework that is formulated.

Finding a new news source is not easy in terms of access. Additionally, it is very difficult to find a news source from the North. Thus, it was worth examining the use of news sources. According to the Propaganda Model, 'experts' are from institutions funded by the government so their opinions are not often dissident views. The findings suggest that the news about the Cheonan was dominated by officials. Herman and Chomsky stated that, "the dominance of official sources is weakened by the existence of highly respectable unofficial sources that give dissident views with great authority (2002:23). In the findings of the use of news sources in the coverage of the Cheonan, the news stories were heavily dependent on government officials, mainly from the
Defence Ministry. This is the same in national and international news. If there was any difference, national news tried to hear more of what the family and relatives talked about. Unofficial news sources would provide dissident views on the issue (2002:23). As for citing news sources, Korean and US officials were frequently cited because the journalists said it was hard to get information from North Korea. Schudson (2011:128) states, “Government sources are not alone in seeking to satisfy the media’s hunger”. Journalists need official sources to write a story. Furthermore, Schudson says that “Among government sources, ‘routine government sources’ matter the most – press releases, public speeches, press conferences, and background briefings for the press” (2011:128).

However, in the divided Korean peninsula, given a situation in which there is no communication between the South and the North, I raise a question of what would be valid news sources other than officials in constructing a news story. With the sole results of the dominant official news sources used, it would be difficult to conclude that the news is delivering the views of the powerful and that media routine is in practice. For instance, on the second day of the Cheonan incident, Newsis, which is the second largest Korean news agency, and is independent from the government in terms of its ownership, reported that the Korean and US Joint Foal Eagle drills were in process in the Yellow Sea. The news said that military officials did not reveal the fact that the Cheonan sinking happened in the middle of the drills at first. The ROK-US Joint navy drills were conducted during 23 March – 27 March 2010 near Baknyeong, joined by the USS Lassen (9155 ton), Curtis Wilbur (8950 ton), Korean Sejongdaewang warship, Choicyoung warship and Yoonyoungha warship (Newsis, 29 March 2010). The Chosun Ilbo, the top conservative newspaper in South Korea, reported Newsis news as it was on the same day. All news sources used in Newsis were military officials, the joint chief of staff, the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC). The dominant news sources were officials only, although the report is highly disputable.

Moreover, based on the news sourcing filter, experts are in the same category with government officials if they are from government funded institutions. Hence, quotes from academic professors as news sources were very limited. Thus, only a few, such as Professor Andrei Lankov and John Delury were frequently quoted in North Korean news in international news media. Additionally, as correspondents said, even if there
were more professors available, it is hard to verify the facts. It would similarly apply to news media citation as news sources. Yonhap was heavily cited in international news. Does it mean that the views of Yonhap would be dominant in international news? As discussed in earlier sections, I concluded that correspondents conveniently cited the Yonhap because the Yonhap in the English version updated the news quickly and they are the largest news media with many staff all over the country, thus correspondents answered that they are very good because they have large resources to use. However, Yonhap does not upload all the news in English, only selected news topics are translated into English online.

As the Wall Street Journal uploads news online, the Korea Realtime, Korean Internet news posts the free readable news in Korean on the website and the Korean media reframe the international news and report about it. This shows that major international news media sets an agenda and the agenda can become the Korean media agenda and it could affect the public agenda. As Journalist 12 and 16 said, Korea is keen on how the outside world looks at them, hence, how the international news reports about Korea are important to them. Thus, government officials sometimes promptly respond to international news media’s critical comments on their policies although criticizing the government’s policies is the basic role of journalists as a watchdogs. In a globalized world, coupled with the new media technologies, the world looks as though it is in the midst of surveillance as they watch each other sitting in the Panopticon architecture, if I may adopt what Foucault (1979) insightfully observed. Alternatively, this would mean that officials and elites see other parts of the world through the media. Consequently, they are likely to depend on the reality that the media construct. Therefore, news framing can affect foreign policy making. However, superpowers are better equipped with satellites and they have major international news agencies, which is an agenda setter (Thussu, 2000). Hence, a country like South Korea should rely on the reports on North Korea’s military movements or their preparation for a nuclear test, as Journalist 12 explained. Therefore, the most powerful country in the world, US military information and communication can be very important, especially, to developing countries.
1-4. The Propaganda Model

The fifth filter in the Propaganda Model is the ideology of anti-communism as a control mechanism. It explicates that the ideology of anti-communism helps the public to mobilize against the enemy, which is North Korea in this case. Given the fall of the Soviet Union, this fifth filter might not be applicable in the post-Cold War era. However, the ideology of anti-communism was still embedded in news coverage of the Cheonan incident by deterring North Korea as an enemy, totalitarian country and communist, nuclear threat in international news, even when the final report was not reported and the actual cause was unknown. In addition, the way that the news framed the incident as an ‘attack’ or ‘South Korean government blame’ differed, depending on who wrote the news. An important point is that about three months after the incident happened, the AP reported news that the South Korea/US joint military drills were proceeding when the Cheonan sank, quoting US officials. Interviewees did not know about the drills, or the report. I would like to emphasize that based on the interviews, correspondents tended to use foreign officials, particularly, US officials, as news sources routinely. However, it is of significance to note that as in the case of the No Gun Ri Civilian massacre committed by US troops in 1950, international news media plays a significant role in investigating facts that are difficult to uncover and openly criticizes public policies, although there might have been ‘fears of flak’ from editors or officials, both at national and international levels.

The Propaganda Model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) is still a useful framework to observe and analyze news content, as the findings of this study showed. For example, the dominant use of officials as news source and anti-communism were identified in news data. However, in the case of the Cheonan warship sinking, due to its incredibly complex circumstances because the Korean Peninsula is in a state of an unfinished war even in the post-Cold War era, it is necessary that some of the filters should be fragmented and the journalist’s ideologies should be considered as an additional filter. In the new media era, writers of a news article are frequently cited as ‘news team’ rather than a journalist who actually wrote the article. In other words, many news about international conflicts such as North Korea are not only correspondents in the region but also from a headquater back home. It implies journalists at home can write
a story well based on what they researched on the Internet. In addition, it has been argued that it is necessary to make a shift from the Cold War to the post-Cold War in journalism theories—the Four Theories, the Normative Theories, comparative media systems and framing theories in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union. However, there seems to still be a Cold War news frame - Democracy versus Communism in the region in news data. Nevertheless, I would like to add that the findings are not to generalize news patterns of the news coverage about North Korea. In addition, as mentioned above, the period of the news data sampled, kinds of news outlets, who wrote the article within the same news media organization and further which branch a journalist is working for in the same media institute are important factors that influenced news frames. This is particularly the case for the Cheonan incident, as interviewees said, the case was much harder to investigate than cases of student demonstrations in the city of Seoul so respondents decided not to cover it in depth because they would not be able to get valuable materials; they used the same information and included disputable issues in their news stories. It would be worth noting that, based on the interviews, news about North Korea can be a threat but one that should be treated as an informative threat rather than a threat to draw the public's attention.

Repeatedly reporting on 'raised tensions' alongside on-going controversial issues could give the wrong idea to the public, (i.e. that war might break out anytime on the Korean peninsula), and affect the Korean economy by causing the KOSDAQ (Korean Securities Dealers Automated Quotations) fluctuations. Moreover, North Korean news can have an influence on policy-making, as Journalist 12 said. In addition, as has happened in the past, there is a possibility that such reporting might cause the public to permanently lose interest in the news. Surprisingly, most correspondents in Seoul agreed that they have never thought that there would be a war, even when North Korea threatened to abandon the armistice in March, 2013; news headlines were dominated by this threat until bombs exploded during the Boston Marathon on 15 April, 2013. However, he added that, “only my family back home is worrying about me.” Thus, correspondents said that, that is why the farther you are from the source, the more you fear. Consequently, North Korean issues which are directly related to Korea's security and peace could be degraded to one of mere manufactured media products.
1-5. The impact of the new media

The Internet had initially seemed to threaten international news agencies due to its lower cost of market-entry, as well as its fast networking power. However, as Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett conclude, global news agencies accommodated it within multimedia successfully (2009:44), the nature of news production, especially North Korean issues seems to have adapted to the technical use of the new media in accordance to their needs. To collect information, foreign correspondents referred to DailyNK, a South Korean online news site. Almost all journalists mentioned that they looked at it and many of them instantly said, “They’re good”. However, as The New York Times reported, “many of their reports are wrong while some news is very original and noble information,” but it does not mean that DailyNK does not include good quality news. My point is that most foreign journalists, in particular, who cannot comprehend Korean tend to understand ‘a reality’ through what the DailyNK reports. Additionally, most correspondents did not know a Korean language even if they have lived in Korea many years. That is why most of the news articles written by foreign correspondents have contributors at the end of the news articles. Usually two or three Korean names appear. They are stringers and they help foreign correspondents with further information, especially with Korean materials, by calling up officials or contacting people in Korea. It was rare for correspondents that I interviewed to speak basic Korean, even after more than five years of living in Korea. Many signs and the social systems are translated into English, and many social and cultural systems even give priority to English speakers. Thus, perhaps, they might not need to learn Korean. One of the major difficulties interviewees said that they faced was the Korean language. Even if they have Korean staff reporters, it is different from writing a story in South Africa or Singapore. Hence, for news gathering, they are likely to go to English language websites.

Yonhap English version has been quickly updated in real time over the last few years, while mainstream newspaper companies have English version news, although only some of their daily news is uploaded. The American blogger of The Marmot’s Hole, a long-running blog, became a translator for Yonhap many years ago. Thus, foreign journalists appreciate it more because many Korean news materials appear in broken
English, while Yonhap translations are now at native English level and other newspapers literally have an English translated version, which is not quite fluent. DailyNK is a similar case; the use of English language gives more value than other sites. As discussed above, as for other journalists in the world, foreign journalists were very much dependent on the materials on the internet. Moreover, an anonymous interviewee said that they get almost everything on the web to write a story about any country in the world and, significantly, he said that, “you can’t write in a different mindset from US officials in Washington”. When he was in Washington, he wrote a story about the Cheonan there, based on the web. It implies that on the one hand, local correspondents might receive more credibility because ‘you are in the region’ of the conflict, even if they rely on the internet, and journalists in their home countries can write about international conflicts by using the internet with stable officials news sources. As journalists answered, news gathering and reporting were dependent upon the internet.

As journalists also mentioned, apart from its ownership, state-owned, Yonhap has the largest news resources, which cannot be compared to any other media within South Korea, somewhat equivalent to Al Jazeera. In terms of the quality of news materials, fast updates and independence from the government, foreign correspondents said that they, Yonhap news, are excellent and that’s why they quote them (heavily). Hence, Yonhap was the most frequently cited media as a news source in international mainstream news such as CNN. Yonhap has limited but excellent English version so non-Korean speakers would benefit from it because only selected news articles are translated into English. Also, it is noticeable that the international news media adopt the news agencies’ news almost as it is, so it looks almost identical as The Guardian’s upload of a news articles, which wrote ‘AP news’ under the title or they incorporate it into their news. However, Yonhap citation in international news stories used to add rather factual information that the Yonhap found out about and what officials said, or to make an argument in the news story. The findings do not demonstrate the contra-news flow in this study or whether the view of Yonhap can compete with Western dominant views. However, in the facet of a news source for international news, it was distinguishable that Yonhap agency plays a leading role. Considering the frequency of the use of the Yonhap footage by international news, the contra-flow can be applied to the relationship between Yonhap and the international news media. However,
empirical studies for the role of a weakening Western monopoly would need to be examined further in the future. Because there is the only KCNA from North Korea, a propagandistic media source in Pyongyang, journalists said that they cannot check facts and cannot get the other side’s (North Korea’s) version of stories; it is a challenge for them. North Korean news can say anything and no one can sue them. At the same time, no one can in fact check. Hence, it would be natural that South Korean news dominates in the Western news media with regard to North Korean issues. The new media had an impact on the changes of news production processes and facilitating interactions between national and international media, to a great extent. Furthermore, it seems to play a significant role in the blurring news agencies and the news media from the perspectives of competitive news distribution because it seems that there is not much difference between journalists in news agencies and in the mainstream media in news gathering and accessing to news sources at national and international levels.

1-6. Factors that influence news frames

The internal factors of journalism determine how journalists and their news institutes frame issues. For national journalists, when a company like The Hankyoreh does not have a hierarchy system, a journalist has full independence. A journalist at the DongA Ilbo said that he informs the Blue House of secretive movements in North Korea from his sources and he is very independent. A journalist has more information and informs officials because it is related to national security. No pressure. As Journalist 4 said, there is no need to apply pressure because journalists’ and their company’s ideologies will be the same. In addition, a KBS journalist answered the question about journalist autonomy, stating “that question should go to the Chinese journalists,” which means that they are not under pressure by media institutions. However, journalists from KBS couldn’t answer many of the interview questions.

For foreign correspondents, there seems to be no pressure from their companies. Rather they feel distant from their home bases after living in South Korea for many years. Editors back home trust what they do because they are the closest to the field, as Journalist 10 said. Correspondents observed that Korean journalists do not criticize the government and raise tough questions. I do not want to conclude that Korean
news media places constraints on journalists based on four interviews with Korean reporters. From my work experience in a Seoul-city owned broadcasting company, journalists as well as the public are very careful with expressing their opinions, in particular, on North Korean issues because it is a sensitive issue that is related to a national security that could remind the Korean public of the North Korea’s invasion on 25 June 1950 and they do not want to be stigmatized as a left wing – pro-North or a right wing. As discussed in this study, ideological division is severe in a society. Thus, the public would benefit from looking neutral in their social life. Hence, correspondents said that it is unfortunate that regional prejudices and the dichotomized division that you are pro/anti government whether you agree with what the government say or not dominates the country.

Boyd-Barrett (1998) acknowledged that globalization and modernization implies that a country enters into a Western hierarchy. In a global era, a developing country like South Korea has to adapt to developed countries’ modernized and globalized system as well as its culture. Korean culture is not so much about debating each other, rather Korean respect their seniors whether they perfectly make sense or not. In Korean culture, how old a person is, is important. That is why Korean people often ask a person’s age when they are introduced. It is not because they are rude or impolite but because they have to change language terms in Korean depending on their age – whether they are older than you or not. Not asking a lady’s age is, in fact, a Westernized culture. Korean people do not want to argue with each other. It might be part of Confucianism. At this stage, what I could say is that it was extremely difficult to talk with Korean journalists about this issue in depth, due to its sensitivity. However, I would like to mention that North Korean issues are too sensitive to be criticized, opinionated and discussed in Korean society. This differs a great deal for Korean journalists, or the Korean public, expressing their opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in terms of 'proximity' and 'news value' because the North’s issues are closely related to Korea's tragic history, the Korean War, which has led to the division of the Korean peninsula.

Through investigation about newsgathering, news sourcing and interviews, foreign journalists said that they were independent from their news organization, to a great extent, while a reporter in a home country can be influenced by their official reports.
Correspondents heavily cited what the Korean news agency, *Yonhap*, reported and conveniently used US officials’, military officials’ and government officials’ reports. Moreover, because of a lack of Korean language skills, English-speaking journalists were dependent on web-based English-language sites to gather further information for their news stories. Additionally, it seemed that correspondents had somewhat focused on getting the global audiences’ attention by highlighting tensions between the two Koreas and making a media agenda because in the past, other than North Korean news, there was not much interest in South Korea by the world although there has been growing interest in the country since the Korean Wave took Korean popular culture global. There are physical limitations and restrictions in accessing news sources in covering North Korean issues. Frequently those news sources cannot be quoted and while they are ‘technically’ experts and analysts, in reality they do not know what is going on in North Korea because it is one of the most reclusive countries in the world; there is no accessibility. Hence, there are always limitations on journalists’ investigation of what has actually happened. Influential factors that restricted journalists’ investigative work were not only a journalist’s inaccessibility to news materials about North Korea, but also correspondents’ weight on US officials in terms of credibility rather than Korean news sources. Correspondents showed that there was no external pressure, such as Korean government force, that affected journalists’ news framing, but there was a significant factor that all journalists addressed as hindering their professional work. There was a ‘cultural difference’—a ‘Korean culture’ that does not confront, and one that is not open with the knowledge-information that they have, as well as Korean journalists’ nationalism.

Overall, foreign correspondents as well as Korean journalists are not influenced by their news organizations. It has been seen that the journalists’ autonomy has been preserved and their independence from editors’ restraints have been alleviated. However, from my interviews with journalists, it seemed that individual ideology is still an influential factor determining their news frame in covering North Korean news, especially in the case of the Cheonan, which was based on suspicions and little evidence. The words and resentment toward North Korea and China in conversations, mocking them, indicated a certain ideological division in their minds. They tended to believe what they wished to believe and trust, not based on factual materials and findings, paradoxically, because it is hard to do fact checking. Consequently, they
used limited news sources for citing their stories based on the unchecked materials. Hence, the most influential factor that determined a journalist’s news framing of the Cheonan was the journalist’s ideology. That is why in the same news institutions, depending on who wrote the story, there was an ideological divide in the news about the Cheonan. As all the interviewees pointed out, Korean journalism has a political divide. Correspondents said that Korean people are divided left or right, black or white, politically and ideologically. Hence, the news sources they go to and the news sources they cite as the most important sources show that there are ideological differences and patterns between individual journalists. However, from the responses of journalists in the interviews I very often noticed that there was hostility between Korean journalists and foreign correspondents. I only met four Korean journalists, but Korean journalists perceive foreign journalists as ‘exaggerating news with limited information,’ ‘they don’t know much about their subject.’ Foreign journalists regard Korean journalists as ‘not doing what a journalist should be doing’, ‘they don’t ask tough questions’ or ‘they want to promote themselves.’ Even more, between correspondents, they were divided into two, distinct groups.

As part of this study I adopted socio-cultural approaches in order to examine the news about the vessel and the factors that influenced news framing, as to why it was reported in this way. In the case of the Cheonan, based on the news data, international news media reported almost identical news stories to the AP news and included repetitive background information. As the interviews show, correspondents did not do field work and their practices were routinized. Correspondents, except for two interviewees, questioned the final conclusion of the investigation. They said that they trust the South Korean government, but they could not just say that the North attacked the Cheonan. However, they did not have any strong evidence to counter this, or give reason as to why they didn’t believe the conclusion. They simply said that they had not witnessed the incident. There was the spent torpedo found by South Korea. They did not try to investigate it but they said they didn’t believe the conclusion. Correspondents said that they wanted the Korean government to open up a little bit more and communicate with them better in terms of providing information but heavily relied on official news sources.
The news about the incident was a stalemate, like the situation in the Korean peninsula. No further investigation and no further information was given. How the incident was treated by the media in this way seemed to have contributed to the growing public questions. Additionally, the issue became a political news agenda for the national and international media. Moreover, the Cheonan issue reflected Chinese foreign policy, showing its continuing ‘neutral’ position as an ally with the North and a close trading partner with South Korea. As we saw in the interviews, journalists found it mysterious, even to this day. In lieu of more information and investigation, international news reported repetitive lines about the NLL and mere descriptions of what officials said, and the UK as a third party kept reporting it as ‘allegedly’. “The Cheonan effects” with the ‘alleged’ cause reflect a lack of investigative journalism practices and the exploitation of politics by the media, in order to attract an international audience. The news media should not exploit Korean conflicts, because the news media influence governmental institutions and foreign policy (Graber, 1997, Bennett, 1994, McCombs and Shaw, 1972, Baum, 2003), nor sets an agenda to set to draw the audience attention and interests because they should be a watchdog.

2. A new Cold war

The rising superpower, China, stands on North Korea’s side and the Russian investigation team blamed the South Korean government for the early final report announcement of the probe by the International Joint Investigation team. North Korea is vehemently denying its involvement. The US is strengthening its military alliance with South Korea and Japan is ready for any missile test by the North. The North Korean issue seems to be re-establishing a new Cold War order in the post-Cold War era. The news reflects a society. Through journalists’ eyes, especially foreign correspondents’ views, current Korean society and the Korean media were explored in a socio-cultural and political context. This study also examined what other factors influenced journalists’ news framing and why they had an impact on the news, especially in the case of the Cheonan incident. Research findings show that despite much speculation, most of the news that foreign correspondents covered or reported was not by investigative work but was dependent on government officials, and a lot of material was based on Korean English-version news websites.
To sum up, this is an investigative study on the international news coverage of the sinking of the Cheonan. Through news articles analysis and in-depth interviews with foreign correspondents, as well as Korean journalists, the detailed news production about the incident from news gathering to reporting was examined. The overall goal of this research was to explore the nature of news production about the conflict between the two Koreas – South Korea and North Korea, in particular, studying the case of the sinking of the Cheonan that brought ceaseless speculation and questions to Korean society as well as on a global scale. Literature on journalism has been developing as global society changes historically, economically and culturally. It has adapted its theories through a post-Cold War era, a neoliberal era, hegemonic power and a new imperialism along with new technologies, in order to generalize or rather produce a universally applicable theory that encompasses the recent news phenomenon in journalism. However, in the case of the Cheonan in the divided peninsula, the situation has not changed according to the different ‘world eras’ (i.e. the post-Cold War, the neoliberal era) so that a paradigm shift does not seem to be applied. Additionally, the findings show that the applicability of the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (2002) was valid to examine the news coverage of the Cheonan issue.

At a national level, factors that influence journalistic practice have been extensively discussed. At an international level, the political economy of international communication has been developed, arguing for the dominance of Western media over developing countries and their shaping of the images of peripheral nations. However, news about the conflicts in the Korean peninsula, which has been divided into the South and North since the Korean War at the end of the Second World War, cannot be examined solely by analyzing news texts nor by interviews with journalists who cover news stories about the South and the North with adoption of those theories. The conflicts in the Korean peninsula involve the United States, Japan, China and Russia, in particular, the power game between China and the US. There have not been two-party talks but six-party talks whenever there are clashes or skirmishes in the Korean peninsula. Whenever issues related to North Korea arise, for global security the resolution is that the UN, US, and Japan blame the North, imposing sanctions and stopping food aid, while China tries to diffuse the situation. It has been discussed how much impact the news has on making social policies and on the
public’s minds and attitudes. Thus, it was crucial to explore the ways in which journalists reported the Cheonan incident.

3. Limitations and Suggestions

There are a few limitations and difficulties that have arisen while doing this research project. I would like to address two major issues here. One was that receiving a response from a journalist for an interview was the most difficult part. I emailed many news sources quoted in the news, such as professors and analysts. They frequently did not reply to me. Moreover, it was extremely difficult to reach Korean journalists for an interview, compared to Seoul correspondents. Except for the reporter at The Hankyoreh, it was extremely difficult to get a response from Korean reporters via email. It is regarded that for Korean journalists, partly due to its sensitivity, it is not an illegal issue but, as mentioned above, the North Korean approach to issues are generally ‘Don’t ask, don’t tell’ because your opinion and criticisms are likely to be dichotomously branded as a progressive or a conservative in Korean society and consequently affect your social life. South Korea is a democratic country with freedom of speech. However, North Korean issues have been dividing the country and the public for several decades. Additionally, some conversations and information were frequently ‘off the record’ in interviews with journalists. Hence, even for foreign journalists, it is still a sensitive issue to talk about openly, because the issue is entangled with both South Korean and US government policy, government officials and news sources.

The second major limitation would be news framing analysis. As mentioned above, the news frames could be changeable as an updated official reports were announced and the Yeonpyung artillery attack by North Korea happened. I could not show the transition of news frames at each time period over a year in this study. On the other hand, there was a positive aspect, however, during the designated period that new data were sampled for this study, the actual cause was unknown and only questions and rumours were spreading with limited information in the news. Hence, it was a good opportunity to explore the nature of manufacturing news and journalism practices under the circumstances with little evidence; how a journalist make a news story and frames news and uses news sources.
Finally, as added in chapter 5, I attempted to test and demonstrate the international news flow by analyzing the news texts that pertain the disputable line that the international news media repeated as background information. It is an initial study that explored and examined the news flow with a comparative news content analysis by tracking the changes of news content at chronological time frames. It cannot be concluded that international news content directly caused changes in the ways in which the national mainstream media portrayed the NLL. However, it would contribute to extending the methodological approaches of future empirical studies for international communications.

As an anonymous journalist told me, news content about the same topic in TV news and radio at the BBC can be different. He informed me that a news producer can provide differently framed news content for a different medium. Therefore, a comparative study of news reporting in different media such as TV, newspaper or radio could be very crucial to understanding different news framing, depending on the news medium. Finally, it is almost imperative to consider the impact of the new media on society and this study has already shown how the internet and digital journalism affected journalists’ news production practices nowadays. The Internet has two faces. In terms of setting an infrastructure, it costs much less and any individual can have access to fairly equal resources for knowledge and anyone can produce their own video and music. However, once the infrastructure of the internet penetration is set up, it will become easier to share the international news at the same time on mobile phones as well as on the internet. As 96.2% of Koreans in their twenties have smartphones (94.2% in their thirties, 81.3% in their forties, 51.3% in their fifties and 85.5% in teens respectively) (Yonhap, 3 July 2014), it is much easier to read the major news agencies and international mainstream news on applications on smartphones in bed, in the subway or anywhere outside, for free and even faster.

The news on apps is short and condensed with video and pictures. By using the stylish and modernized application and reading the news on the application itself, an individual is exposed to, and in the end getting used to, highly developed and fine technology. People are getting used to such high-technology and modernized Western culture from a young age. The advent of the internet seems to be functioning
as an equal distributor but at a macro level, the political economy is likely to continue
or might be accelerated in the new media era. Thus, what would be essential now is to
examine the international news flow in the new media and find out what would make
the global news agencies play the roles in investigative journalism as a news
distributor in covering, particularly, international conflicts by utilizing their resources. In
addition, it was noticeable that there was no citation of the Kyodo, Japanese news
agency and Xinhua, Chinese news agency both in national and international news
data. It would be interesting to examine media discourse in the context of Japanese
and Chinese media because the two countries are a close neighbour to Korea and
would be likely affected by any Korean conflict.

4. Conclusions

I started this research from the perspective of personal curiosity and interest in a
tragedy that was gripping my country—why were 46 sailors killed? Doug Bandow, a
senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to President Ronald
Reagan stated that no one would consider the reason for North Korea sinking the
South Korean ship, Cheonan. He said that it could be retaliation over the naval battle
in 2009 in which a North Korean ship was known to be severely damaged. Or it could
be an unauthorized military action in the North to prevent any more negotiations over
North Korean nuclear weapons. Alternatively, he points out that it could have been
done to attempt to resume the restored economic ties with the Lee Myung Bak
administration, after the reduction of aid (2010:2-3). South Korea’s military alliance
with the US is far more important in this situation. However, with the motive unknown,
the role of the global news agencies as an agenda setter was even more important
because a media agenda can shape foreign policy which could lead to a military
reaction. Traditionally and historically, as in the case of No Gun Ri, news agencies
have been playing a role in investigative journalism, in particular, in international
conflicts all over the world, although there has been criticisms that the big three news
agencies’ wholesale news distribution construct a reality in a homogeneous ‘Western’
view and function as a propagandic campaigner by using officials as dominant news
sources. Nevertheless, the AP repeated the same background information for months
and international mainstream media also practiced a media routine in the case of the
Cheonan. Consequently, this resulted in confusion in international news in the UK and
the US about this issue. What seems certain is that, based on the interviews with journalists, there was an agreement that the problem with the North should be resolved peacefully, by civil talks whether we like the North or not because South Korea does not want to have a war that could spawn another tragedy.

Bandow (2010) argues that the US and South Korea military alliance does not have a purpose now. After over sixty years, South Korea has been dependent on the military alliance with the US but there is a growing voice that the United States should not intervene in the Korean conflict. He maintains that in the end, it seems that the North Korean issue as a threat is ultimately an issue for Korea and its peripheral countries. Therefore, it would be pivotal for South Korea to prepare its own defence and equip itself with strategies for an independent vision, for the sake of its people. Throughout global history, Korea has learned that strengthening military forces will encourage North Korea to further develop nuclear weapons. While the ultimate goal would be to bring peace to the Korean peninsula, a fundamental change in North Korea’s regime might have to come first. As in the survey conducted by The Financial Times, and what is shown above, the younger generation has much less interest in reunification than older generations. What they are interested in is getting a better job in this economic downturn period. However, no one would want a nation to become a battlefield. Enhancing military forces do not prevent the tragic incident or skirmishes completely. It never has. Naval battles and skirmishes have continued even now.

After the joint international investigation concluded that North Korea attacked the Cheonan warship, the Lee Myung-Bak government imposed economic sanctions called the ‘5.24 measures’ on North Korea in retaliation for the sinking. Moreover, in preparation for further retaliation, the South Korean government jointly with the U.S. deployed heavy weapons and built up arms across the border. The reactions such as economic sanctions and building up arms have been South Korea’s best options and small and big clashes between the South and the North have continued. When the Presidents of the United States, the most powerful country in the world officially announced and condemned North Korea as ‘axis of evil’ and ‘belligerent country’, tensions in the Korean peninsula are raising because of North Korea’s unpredictable provocations that might be followed abruptly. Likewise, South Korea’s ‘war control’ has been in the hands of the U.S. The Cheonan incident happened when the ROK-US
annual military drills were ongoing which was reported in June 2010. The superpower U.S. and South Korea’s military drills must have been threats to the North but for a country’s defense and the region’s security, it would be necessary. However, we have seen this chronic routines such as naval battles, military excercises, arms build-ups and economic sanctions for 65 years since the Korean War. In addition, would South Korea see victims of their own people for another 65 years without any solution other than strengthening its military defense?

*The Economist* boldly suggests that there is hope for ‘the world’s most oppressed people.’ It says that since Kim Jung Eun, a ‘modernizer’ has taken over the country, capitalism should be an answer. He might not go as far as Deng Xioping in China, yet the article says that as the West did in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, outsiders, including China, should help North Korea to be exposed to the ‘prosperity and freedoms of the world around them’ (9 February 2013). Former CNNs Senior Asia Correspondent for over 30 years and current Senior Fellow at the U.S.-China Institute at the University of Southern California, Mike Chinoy, explained that, during the last couple of years, there has been a lot of change in North Korea. For example, there is a stone-baked pizza restaurant and most evenings it is hard to get a table. The taste is like one in Hong Kong or in Beijing and it is very interesting to see people with mobile phones taking photos in Pyongyang. Additionally, the ways in which women dress in North Korea are very similar to South Korean women, for example by wearing different kinds of shoes, like high-heels. Visiting a local market was prohibited, but at least now they are open. He saw stalls full of food, fruit, and many cooking utensils from China, Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia. Vendors were selling Nescafe and meat with outrageous prices, but the market was very busy. Moreover, there were academic faculty exchanges between Kim Il Sung University, the University of British Columbia in Canada, and a Swiss education organization. New buildings are being constructed (6 October, 2011). Mike Chinoy’s striking demonstrations of the vibrant and contemporary North Korean scenes show a contrasting facet from the dominant news frames on North Korea that are salient in national and international news because primary news frames on the North was an ‘axis of evil’, a ‘global threat’ and an ‘enemy’ in news narratives in national and international elite news media.

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48 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgS9oZrw_A4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgS9oZrw_A4) (accessed on 11 June, 2013) USC US-China Institute, Mike Chinoy, North Korea: Following the Chinese Road?
Correspondents, especially those who have been in Seoul for many years, seem almost tired by North Korean issues, in terms of the on-going conflicts that never seem to be resolved and that have become a cycle – North Korean brinkmanship, tensions, the six-party talks and nothing resolved, a return to North Korean brinkmanship after a few months, then tensions, the talks and so on. At the time of writing, North Korean issues are in stalemate and North Korean brinkmanship is not creating tensions anymore in this region, but the international news report it as a new and breaking issue. Journalists report on ‘growing tensions’, ‘unprecedented tensions and crisis in the Korean Peninsula but they have never believed that there would be a war of any kind, which is contradictory. Among the factors that influenced a journalist’s framing, an individual journalist’s ideology was one of them. However, ideology is a part of the attributes of a living organism—a human being as a whole. It cannot be explained by several parts that comprise an ideology. In other words, one’s ideology cannot be categorized by their social system background, based on education, race and a media institution that they work for. It is individualistic. Substantial previous studies are concerned with political division and ideological divisions in South Korea. However, among correspondents, there were also ideological divisions especially on North Korean issues. What needs to be focused upon is not the fact that there are ideological divisions but the fact that one is not respecting the other’s dissenting views. Dissent views should coexist and the status that is struggling between different opinions is healthy. One should not have to make the other completely agree with them and become one. We understand different views but there is no need to judge them. Rather, a democratic way of allowing communication would be more needed.

Likewise, regardless of my own background, education, and ethnicity I have tried hard to remain objective and to analyze what I observed and what I heard, thoroughly based on the data that I obtained. I do hope that my research is not regarded as another ideologically biased work in South Korea. Considering Korean history, culture and security, ideological polarization cannot be solely regarded as a hampering element of Korean democracy for now. The division that Korea is the only country that is divided into two in the world and is at war, itself could preclude a fully democratic country. Regarding the Korean conflict, it would be extremely hard to make a conclusion or suggestion about what needs to be done to prevent any more losses in
the Korean peninsula and the Yellow Sea. Nevertheless, given the impact of the news media in the two Koreas' conflicts, the role of the international news media cannot be overemphasized, because the global public is tremendously attentive to its reports and international media agenda could shape government policies and public perception. Western correspondents criticized Korean journalists about their lack of critical views and Korean journalists mentioned that correspondents do not know or have no interests in Korean news. In terms of the role of national and international journalism in South Korea, instead of ignorance, it would be desirable for both national and international journalists to share resources and respect each other’s role.

Finally, I would like to emphasize what would need to be revisited in journalism practices in the globalized and the new media era. Rosenstiel (2009) describe it as the “trust me” era of journalism shifting towards the “show me” era of journalism. Despite the socio-political and cultural complexity, the practices of journalistic ethics, should be appreciated for encouraging more stability and security in the region.

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Appendix

Session 1.

1. Could you briefly describe the first day you covered the Cheonan story? Where did you hear of it happening for the very first time? How did you gather news information?

_The difficulties that a journalist faces in covering news related to North Korea can be an important factor that affects the making of a news story because those obstacles could interfere with investigative news production. Hence, the following question was asked._

2. Are there any difference or difficulties in getting information about North Korea related news as a foreign correspondent? Alternatively, do you have more privilege compared to Korean reporters?

_The choice of news source can be a determining factor in news framing. In addition, the kinds of news sources used has a very close relationship with news credibility. Thus, it is important to know what sources they use and why they use these news sources. Therefore, the following question was asked._

3. What was the most important source to you when you covered news about the Cheonan and about North Korea in general? Considering that North Korea is such a closed country, which is the most important news sources you utilise when you gather information about the two Koreas?

_It has been considered that the Western dominant news agencies — AP, Reuters and AFP influence journalist’s news framing. In order to open up a talk about how a journalist uses and adopts the news agencies’ reports, and to examine what other news organisations influence a journalist’s news framing, the following question was asked._

4. The AP Bureau launched in January in 2012 in Pyongyang. Does it affect your news coverage, at least in such ways as getting photos?
It was important to know what the general perceptions the foreign correspondents had regarding the Korean media in order to explore any differences between Western media and the Korean media in terms of reporting the same issue. In particular, because of the Korean language, foreign journalists seek to find a good site to gather information in their own language, mainly English. Thus, it is essential to know where they get information for their stories, because it will help to know what other news organization’s views might have affected their news framing. The Marmot’s Hole is a long running blog by an American expatriate, Robert Koehler who lives in Seoul. It started receiving more attention in English-speaking expats communities when it was posted in the Korea Times\(^{50}\) in 2004. Since then, among English-speaking expat communities as well as foreign journalists and editors, the blog has been considered as a good, updated news site where all the Korean news media perspectives as well as the Western media are well summarized with a critical but fairly neutral point of views. For a new correspondent or a foreign journalist in an English language news company in Seoul, posts in this blog are their everyday references. If you read his blog, you will find that it is quickly updated and you can see what is going on and what different views are from different news outlets. But because people believed that what he says is absolutely true, sometimes more credible than the usual news media, a few years ago, Koehler put a banner saying ‘The Marmot’s Hole is in no way a fair representation of Korea. It’s just a blog.’\(^{51}\) Thus, the following question was asked.

5. Have you read Korean news articles about the Cheonan issue? If you did, what do you think about their news coverage, compared to yours?

6. Are the Korean newspaper reports important when you write a story? Do you refer to news blogs such as CNN reporter or the Marmot’s Hole?

In order to help know whether foreign journalists are aware of the public’s perceptions about the result of the Cheonan investigation and to hear what their personal opinion is about the outcome and all the processes from the beginning to the final report, the following question was asked.

\(^{50}\) The Korea Times is the oldest of three English-language newspapers in South Korea along with The Korea Herald and Korea JoongAng Daily.

\(^{51}\) 3,693 posts and 53,205 comments were uploaded as of Dec. 2006 since 2003.
7. Government Officials released the final report after the international joint Investigating team concluded the result. Then, why do you think people still question it? Why is it controversial?

At first, a question whether a journalist is aware of the differences between UK news – BBC specific and news in other American news was asked. If they did not know, I asked what they thought about the expression ‘alleged’ in BBC. In addition, in order to lead their answers naturally to talk about the influence of their national interests or foreign policy on the news production, the following question was asked.

8. Do you think that UK and US news reportage is different from each other? Even after the government officials’ final report, BBC always includes ‘alleged’ in the news texts. What do you think about that? Why do you think they write it? Do you get any influence from your news organizations in terms of your country’s national interests or Foreign policy, when you write a story?

In the news about the Cheonan, all the western media called the Northern Limit Line (NLL) a disputed area that, to a great extent, was the cause of naval clashes and skirmishes. Thus, to ask what the problems are around the line, the following question was asked.

9. International news such as the BBC and CNN mentioned that the Northern Limited Line (NLL) is a disputed area although Korean news said the Cheonan incident happened far away from the area. Why do you think many naval battles happen in the area? Why is it a disputed area? What would be the resolution?

Despite of all these problems and difficulties, to discover what a journalist tried to do for investigation, or to hear what he could not do in the Cheonan case, the following question was asked.

10. Do you still think your news story about that issue is the most closest to the truth?

Foreign correspondents are the closet in the field. In addition, in the news about North Korea, China’s role is very often described as an important mediating force.
Furthermore, there is rather strong condemnation on China’s lack of reaction, which appeared in many news articles. Thus, in order to explore what China is supposed to do and what they are specifically not doing, the following question was asked.

11. What is China’s role? Is China still a big ally of the North, especially, after Kim Jung Eun took over the North’s leadership?

The right wings news stories in international news as well as the Korean news, question why South Korea with stronger military strategic force does not defend itself properly, supporting Lee Myung Bak’s hard-line policy. In addition, there is a huge criticism on former President Kim Dae Jung who was implementing a Sunshine Policy, arguing that his lavish food aid and bribe giving for peace in the Korean peninsula was paid back with clashes and death in the Yellow sea. In order to hear a journalist’s opinion about ideal South Korean policy toward North Korea, in terms of preventing further skirmishes and deaths in the disputed area or changing defending strategies, the following question was asked.

12. What policy approach should South Korea take toward the North? A Hardline Policy or a Sunshine policy? Any comment? What is the best way to deal with the North?

According to the survey to the question of “Is unification necessary?” conducted by institute for Peace and Unification studies at Seoul National University in 2011. The results say, in the 1990s, more than 80 percent of South Korean people thought unification was essential but that number has dropped to 56 percent and about 41 percent of those in their 20s feel that way. However, among people in their teens, the figure drops closer to 20 percent. Finally, in order to explore a journalist’s perspectives on looking at Korean society and their way of looking at the divided Korean peninsula, the following question was asked.

13. Is Korean unification necessary?
Session 2.

1. Many foreign journalists came to Korea when recent tensions between the two Koreas were raised in March 2013. Did you also think that there might be a war at that time?

2. What do you think caused the recent tensions? What relationship do you think the Cheonan incident, the Yeonpyeong artillery shelling and the recent tension have?

3. Is there any difference between Kim Jung Il and Kim Jung Eun as leaders in terms of news reporting about the North?

4. Yonhap agency is the most quoted in international news stories. What other Korean news do you see and trust?

5. Could you tell me your views on the nature of geo-political dynamics in terms of the necessity of Korean reunification?

6. Could you comment on North Korean brinkmanship? If they are not going to start a war, what is the goal of North Korean brinkmanship?

The above questions were asked, not necessarily in order. I memorized all the questions and they were in my mind. Hence, depending on an interviewee’s answer to a question, I naturally changed the order to fit the conversational flow.