



**BRITISH ACADEMY
OF MANAGEMENT**

BAM
CONFERENCE

3RD-5TH SEPTEMBER

ASTON UNIVERSITY BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

This paper is from the BAM2019 Conference Proceedings

About BAM

The British Academy of Management (BAM) is the leading authority on the academic field of management in the UK, supporting and representing the community of scholars and engaging with international peers.

<http://www.bam.ac.uk/>

Cat Union and Other Joke Flags of the South Korean Candlelight Revolution 2016- 2017

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of joke flags in Gwanghwamun Square during the so-called South Korea Candle Light Revolution. I attempt to display how defying identity categorisation helps civic mobilisation by motivating individuals to organise beyond the rhetoric of traditional social membership. This qualitative study of joke flags shows how self-parody and subversion of ideologically polarised activism can achieve inclusivity, diversity and the eros effect, which has been an essential strategy for South Korean social movements.

Keywords:

Inclusivity, Social Movement, Identity Threat, De-categorisation, Eros Effect, Materiality, Spatiality

1. Introduction

This paper examines the use of joke flags during South Korea's Candlelight Revolution from 2016 to 2017, that led to a successful regime change without a single case of violence (see picture 1 in the appendix). Sparked by the political scandal of President Park, 20 thousand participants started the first protest (Choi, 2017). After 23 weekly protests, the accumulated total of 17 million citizens came out on the street asking for the impeachment of the President (Lim, 2017). Analysing its success, I attempt to display how defying identity categorisation can help civic mobilisation and generate the eros effect, "the sudden, unexpected contestation of power" (Katsiaficas, 2013a: 269) by motivating individuals to organise beyond the rhetoric of traditional social membership. This qualitative study of joke flags shows how self-parody and subversion of ideologically polarised activism can achieve inclusivity and diversity, which has been an essential strategy for South Korean social movements. In this paper, I will use the term Korea instead of South Korea from now on.

Insert Picture 1 about here

The possible contributions are three-fold. First, I will introduce the unique history and culture of Korean social movements that suggests that there can be multiple paths to successful non-violent civil resistance. Second, I will address how material artefacts encourage peaceful protest (Kim, 2017a) with a particular focus on the use of joke flags. Lastly, I will discuss how humour and fun have created an "eros effect" (Katsiaficas, 2013a), which turned one of Seoul's public spaces, Gwanghwamun Square, into a space of festival (Lefebvre, 1991).

As Korean social movements have not been a frequently discussed topic in academia (Armstrong, 2006), not to mention in management studies (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015),

it might be necessary to remove some of the biases and misconceptions first. I will start with the historical background of how candlelight became a symbol for the Korean social movement.

2. Background

2.1 Studios Ignorance

In the last four decades, Korean student and labour movements achieved to overcome authoritarian regimes (Cumings, 2005). Although the Arab Spring or the Occupy movement became household names for civil movements (Feigenbaum, McCurdy, & Frenzel, 2013; Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, & Pearce, 2011; Pickerill & Krinsky, 2012), the contemporary uprisings in Korea and East Asia in general are largely ignored and misunderstood by Western-centric scholars (Armstrong, 2006; Katsiaficas, 2012) with a few exceptions, such as Patsiaouras, Veneti, and Green (2018)'s accounts on Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. Katsiaficas (2013a) claims that this ignorance is almost studios, to the point where more recent and widespread historical evidence in the Asian region is receiving fewer interests than the 19th century Paris Commune. Unfortunately, Grimes (2001)'s criticism on the "whiteness" of organisation studies and academia in general, is still applicable today, and the discipline's ignorance makes it hard to introduce a study that is situated in a non-European/American context. Not able to be a part of the global (white) conversation, sharing local experience has a risk of being vernacular, and the unfamiliar local context might not make sense or be considered irrelevant to the existing discourse (Kang, 2009).

Furthermore, there is a so-called "Asian values" rhetoric, that claims that Asians choose economic development over democracy (Park & Shin, 2006; Thompson, 2001). Criticised as reverse Orientalism, this perverted cultural relativism only justifies authoritarian regimes with antiquated interpretations of Confucianism and strengthens the myopia of Western-centric academic discourse (Thompson, 2001). The "Asian values" argument fails to

explain Korea's modern history that has achieved both goals simultaneously with peaceful and innovative tactics of civil disobedience (Lee, 2015).

There are other voices, including the civil activist and later Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who challenged the common perception of Confucianism as an ideology obedient to hierarchy (Armstrong, 2006). Cumings (2005) argued that education is important Confucian value that holds Korean society together, which contributed to the economic development by speeding up achieving high literacy rates. Traditionally, South Korea's strong culture of Confucianism worked as a moral duty for intellectuals to speak honestly against the powerful, even if the consequence would be fatal, and it is still a crucial virtue of modern social movements (Armstrong, 2006). Later in the data analysis, I will show how this traditional value is translated into modern civil society.

2.2 The legacy of Candlelight Protest

As Katsiaficas (2013a) described, modern Korean history is a series of feeling *the eros effect*.. Since the 20th century, Koreans have managed to rise against colonialism, ideological warfare, labour oppression and military dictatorship. The deeply rooted non-violent tactic of the Korean civil society has learned from many historical trials and errors that led to a "remarkable capacity for popular action" (Eperjesi, 2014).¹

The current form of the popular candlelight protest has been refined over many years since the first mass gathering with candlelights was organised in 2002 by internet activists to protest the death of two schoolgirls, who were killed by a 60-ton US military carrier near the

¹ The legacy of the candle light revolution might be traced back as far as 1919's March 1 movement which is recorded as a failed but meaningful non-violent protest against imperial Japan, that later called army and even navy to control the peaceful crowd with brutality. The symbol of this peaceful movement was a 16-year-old school girl Yoo Kwan-soon who died from the aftermaths of torture in Japanese prison. Later, the independent movement became militant and hidden but the March 1 movement is known to inspire other Asian independence movements in China and India. (Source: Cumings, B. 2005. *Korea's place in the sun: A modern history (Updated)*: WW Norton & Company.)

army base (Kang, 2009: 171)². Various political causes brought together the public with candlelights in 2004, 2008 and 2014. Although not all of them were successful and the police adopted their tactics to the changing protest culture to break the crowd and prevent the crowd from marching (e.g. use of the shipping container and car walls), since 2008, candlelight became the standard way of protesting (Kim, 2017a). Then in 2016, the media started to report the political scandal around president Park and her strange relationship with her long-time friend Ms Choi, who actively engaged in various state affairs without any authorisation (Lee, 2018b). When people got the full picture of the scale of corruption, the candlelight protesters were more than ready, after having learned lessons from the past, fully capable to self-organise in a disciplined manner in public spaces (Katsiaficas, 2013a: 63).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 De-categorisation of Identity

The protests in Korea before 2000 were not entirely free of violence. For instance, militant student groups used stones, firebombs and steel pipes, often engaging in close physical combat that led to the deaths of many students (Kim, 2017a). Moreover, the experience of the Korean war still divided the nation with a strong sense of anti-communism (Lee, 2006). The repressive government or employers often legitimised the use of violence against civilians in the name of defence against communism (Armstrong, 2006). The images of violent protesters have been used repeatedly in the media, conflating moderate civil movements with them (Lee, 2013).

In an empirical study of more than 9000 Korean protests, Lee (2013) highlighted that authorities react to not only situational threats, such as goals and sizes of crowds, but also ‘categorical threats’; particular types of social groups could be potential “troublemakers” (p.488). Although the candlelight protesters were peaceful, the conservatives still framed them

² Unequal military jurisdiction between two countries evoked anti-American sentiments of Koreans.

as “anti-government, anti-American, pro-North Korea, or leftist” (Kim, 2017a: 204). To counter the framing, the civil society needed to re-organise their identities. One of the lessons learned from past protests was that “bitter, occasionally violent factionalism” ends up failing to create a strong change after fighting against the authoritarian regime (Eperjesi, 2014: 152). If categorical threats could hinder the success of the movement, then a solution might be to de-categorise identities or to maintain an ambivalent identity. As will be discussed later, the joke flags of mock organisations performed precisely that; removing any social, demographic or ideological markers as much as possible.

3.2 Materiality of Inclusivity

Popular research on the recent social movements, such as the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement, examine how social media has influenced the participation of ordinary citizens (Lee, 2018b). However, Kim and Masaaki (2018) argue that it would be ignorant and arrogant to think that anybody with an internet connection can organise a protest when vertical leadership still exists in the technosphere controlling internet media. Moreover, quantity of information does not mean quality. Interestingly, Lee (2018b)’s research on candlelight protesters shows that the use of social media negatively affects the political knowledge, even in a group with high political interest. Furthermore, Gao (2018)’s account on new media and activism cautions that if activism becomes more about raising awareness and information sharing, the illusion of participation could hinder a physical and spatial organising.

While not attempting to downplay the other technical and institutional factors (Kim, 2017a), the use of physical artefacts during the protest is still an essential element of social movement. For instance, in the case of Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement, the opened yellow umbrellas functioned as practical tools to protect the protesters from police tear gas (Patsiaouras et al., 2018: 82-84). Similarly, the transition from stones and Molotov cocktails to

candlelight must be noted regarding its effect on corporeality and spatiality of the protest (Kim, 2017a). In other words, artefacts afford and constraint the movement of people. For instance, holding a candle deters rapid movements of protest participants, enacting a peaceful demonstration which mobilises more people, including small kids and the elderly. Also, the protest was held in the night for the visual effect of candles which brought people after work. (Kim, 2017a).

Furthermore, material artefacts can reveal hidden stories, emotions and meanings of organising (Betts, Shortt, & Warren, 2013). A million candlelights at night create a strong emotional effect that evokes feelings such as compassion, warmth, and sentimentality (Kim, 2017a). Hong Kong's yellow umbrellas demarcate and differentiate the movement as visual collective identity, evoking "emotional immersion" of individual participants with its aesthetics (Patsiaouras et al., 2018). Self-made joke flags during the Candlelight Revolution also had their own symbolic, corporeal and psychological impact, occupying public space with their visibility due to their sheer size³. However, the joke flags' role in the protest was more than creating a visual identity of the movement. The joke flags have no unified colours or sizes; no common representative aesthetic like Guy Fawkes masks, yellow jackets, candles or umbrellas. Most of all, the joke flags had to have an element of incongruity (Westwood & Rhodes, 2013) as their main rhetorical strategy. I will discuss the materiality of joke flags in details later in the findings.

3.3 Collective Emotion of the People

Although there is increasing interest in social movement literature about the role of emotion in activism (Brown & Pickerill, 2009; Feigenbaum et al., 2013), there is still more room to explore

³ Several tutorials for a DIY flag were posted online. The recommended size is 3-5m for a pole, 1800 cm x1200 cm for a flag. One tutorial notes that if a flag is bigger than this size, the flag will touch protesters' heads. (Source: 집회·시위용 깃발 5 만원에 만드는 법 – How to make a demonstration/protest flag under 50000 Won, around 50 USD, <http://slownews.kr/60469> accessed 13/01/2019)

on emotion of the ordinary people at the popular uprising who don't identify themselves as not long-term activists. For this paper, "the eros effect" might be a more precise concept that can describe ordinary citizen's experiences of intense collective emotion and spontaneity of actions. People under the eros effect feel a sudden emergence of solidarity and massive disapproval to the established system (Katsiaficas, 2013a). Katsiaficas (2013a) uses the term specifically for the case that "ordinary people take history into their own hands (p. 289)".

This collective emotion is critical in bringing participatory actions, and the presence of others does intensify the level of excitement (Sullivan, 2014). In the description of the Gwangju Uprising in Korea, Katsiaficas (2013b) finds it fascinating the way that ordinary people without a central leadership organise spontaneously to rise against the brutality of the authoritarian regime. Needless to say, negative feelings such as collective outrage, often shows the fastest chain reaction. For instance, the tragedy of the Sewol Ferry in April 2014 is remembered as a national trauma for Koreans, and many people organised a candlelight protest on the day of the accident, demanding a proper investigation of the government (Woo, Cho, Shim, Lee, & Song, 2015). People watched the unsuccessful rescue mission on the live TV, while the Sewol Ferry was upturned and descended under the cold sea. It has resulted in 304 deaths, mostly high school students on a school excursion. To this day, no one really knows what president Park did in her bedroom for 7 hours during the day of the accident, except she called a hairdresser and a makeup artist before she showed up in public at 5 pm. By that time, the ship has completely sunk (Lee, 2018a). The Sewol Ferry Disaster became the symbol of corporate corruption and a lack of president Park's responsibility and leadership (Eperjesi, 2014).

The memory of both negative and positive collective emotion is what can sustain a social movement longer, in spite of political pressure (Gruszczynska, 2009). Also, negative emotion alone is not a sustainable option for long term social change, because the constant

expression of anger in the protest might turn off potential participants and bring a burnout to activists (Branagan, 2007). Instead, humour can be used together to transform complex emotions into something more approachable, yet critical and emancipatory (ibid.). Critchley (2007: 18) also states that “humour invites us to become philosophical spectators on our own lives; it is a practically enacted theory that might be said to be one of the conditions for taking up a critical position with respect to what passes for everyday life, producing a change in our situation which can be both liberating and elevating.”

4. Methodology

In this section, I describe the methods of my primary and secondary data collection and analysis from a case study of the Korean Candlelight Revolution 2016- 2017. Although the Candlelight Revolution was a nationwide movement, my research site is limited to Gwanghwamun Square, focusing on its multiple emotional, political and spatial meanings. All the Korean content used for this research is translated by the researcher.

This study is based on participant observation, interview and archival data. The candlelight protest started on the 29 October 2016 and finished on the 29 April 2017, held every Saturday. To collect primary data, I stayed in Seoul for 10 days and participated in the 6th Saturday protest on 3rd of December 2017 in Gwanghwamun. I have fully engaged in the activities, including marching towards the presidential residence, exchanging candles with other protesters, handing out snacks and hot packs to participants while collecting material artefacts including candles, pamphlets and posters. I have used both a conventional camera and 360-degree camera as a form of visual fieldnote. With 360-degrees photography, I tried to capture the 1,7 million protesters in the Gwanghwamun plaza (nationally 2,32 million), which was recorded as the highest participation number in Korean protest history (Kim, 2016b). This number exceeds the population participation rate of 3.5% which Chenoweth, Stephan, and

Stephan (2011) find to be the threshold for peaceful regime change in their study of non-violent conflicts. I revisited the same site on weekdays to record the temporality of space and photographed the individual protesters, camps and artworks. I also share an autoethnographic account to describe the atmosphere of the protest in this paper. My personal experience will be briefly mentioned later in section 5.3.

To understand how joke flags were made, I collected data about the flags from social media (Twitter and Instagram) using hashtags ⁴, and I sampled 23 flags and analysed their rhetorical strategies. The creator of the “Tiger Beetle Research Society” has left a Twitter message about the origin of the flag (see below). This particular flag is known to inspire other joke flags, and their casual manifesto provided useful insights that were later triangulated with analyses from the interviews and participant observation (Kim, 2016a).

Insert Table 1 about here

After data collection, I took an interpretive approach to analyse the meaning of the flags and emotions of participants at the candlelight protest. I started with the context analysis of my fieldnotes and archival data. With emerging themes from the data, I identified three main questions to ask interviewees. When interview data was collected, I ran the second round of coding to compare it to existing theories and prior research.

To examine people’s experiences, I conducted interviews as well. I recruited 15 interviewees using a snowball sampling. I am aware of the risk that my sample is not representative, as a snowball sampling often uses a researcher’s social network (Robinson, 2014). When I requested a referral, I asked for a person from a different social network than

⁴ The translation of each hash tag is in the appendix (Table 2)

mine, so that the demographics of interviewees varies to avoid a sampling bias as much as possible.

I asked them three main questions, how they understand the meaning of (1) the joke flags, (2) candlelight protest and (3) Gwanghwamun Square. Except interviewee 15, none of them has been engaged in any political group previously, and 4 of them couldn't participate in the protest for reasons in the Table 1. The semi-structured interviews were conducted over the phone and via email from December 2018 to January 2019. Each interview lasted 15-30 minutes, and I recorded, transcribed and translated their interviews with permission. The identity of each interviewee is not revealed in this paper. Later the transcription was coded with the aid of Nvivo11. I tried to preserve "the participant's subjective point of view" and displayed relevant quotations, so that their voices are reflected "in their own words" (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006: 82).

Insert Table 2 about here

5. Findings

5.1 New Flags and Old Flags

Although there were many tech-savvy artefacts during the protests, including holograms, games, apps, one-man mobile real-time broadcast, which lowered the cost and barrier of participation (Kim & Masaaki, 2018), media and opinion makers saw self-made joke flags more ground-breaking (Byun, 2017) than other forms of "audience engagement techniques" (Patsiaouras et al., 2018: 79). Hwang (2018) comments that if she needs to describe the candlelight revolution with just one expression, it would be "Tiger Beetle Research Society". Kim (2016a) mentions that he sensed something historical was happening when he saw the waves of meaningless flags in Gwanghwamun square.

“So why Tiger Beetle Research Society? In fact, we cannot even touch the bug. When our group participates in the protest, we try to avoid the old style, and we try a friendlier approach, so we used a ‘floating signifier’ for our identity (+Passive effect: to confuse our enemies) And for no reason whatsoever, the Tiger Beetle Research Society became our name. (@jangpoongyeon 12 Nov 2016)⁵”

From this humble Tweet manifesto, we can learn new tactics of modern protest. Kim and Masaaki (2018) propose that 21st-century-style demonstration emphasises respect to diversity and value of cohabitation, which turns the style of protest to be loose, open, fun, festive, experimental and full of unconventional performance, satire and parody. Similarly, these joke flaggers voluntarily created mock organisation names and logos on the flags to avoid a possible framing of polemic ideological positions. They used a “floating signifier” because they wanted to “confuse our [their] enemies”. Both parties, repressors (e.g. police) and protesters, are expected to behave predictably (Lee, 2013). However, joke flags emphasise that the choice of name had “no reason whatsoever”, denying a possibility of meaningful identity categorisation. By employing a floating signifier, now their flag has, what Ohnuki-Tierney (1994: 61) calls “infinite possibilities for meaning since it is not attached to any meaning or a set of meanings”. The meaninglessness of the flag brings incongruence when one contrasts two conflicting realities (Westwood & Rhodes, 2013), between the seriousness of the political situation and the image of a friendly hobby entomologist.

This situational incongruity was more than effective, instantly inspiring others to create many joke flags. Byun (2017) introduced another origin story, the one behind “Cat Union”, and how a bored university student, Lee (19 years old), parodied the logo of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which is said to be the radical “left wing of social democracy” (Moore, 2007: 189). The flag, made within 30 minutes with a computer, has three

⁵ <https://twitter.com/jangpoongyeon>

cats as a logo, because “cats are cute” (Choi, 2016). Of course, “Cat Union” has nothing to do with KCTU or cats.

The creators of the flags used multiple rhetorical strategies — For instance, some (five flags, 21%) used satire and parody that are related to political and social issues. The popular flag “Altitude Sickness Study Meeting” refers to the insurance record that revealed the purchase of Viagra pills by the President’s office (the president’s spokesperson claimed that the purpose of the purchase was to treat altitude sickness) (Choe, 2016). More than half of the flags (17 flags, 79%) in the sample used a floating signifier as a rhetorical strategy. There were 11 flags such as “Federation of Pan-Sproing” or “Citizen's Coalition for Plant Pot Salvation”, which had no reference to an existing organisation or cultural icons, removing an identity marker altogether. The other six joke flags such as “Korean Confederation of Cat Unions” and “Hamnesty International”, deployed some familiar vocabulary and visual markers of well-known NGOs, and labour unions. Their nature of humour and irony comes from the ‘mention’ of the dominant representation (Scott, 2004: 38), then slightly modify the original image with irrelevant non-human symbols. The gap between the expectation and the final representation makes the flags subversive and critical, yet it does not claim any specific values. The list of the flags is added with the translation and their rhetorical strategies in the Appendix section.

To understand how the public makes sense of these flags, I asked interviewees why they think people brought these meaningless joke flags to the protest. Three interviewees mentioned how for them, flags used to symbolise the ideological division in Korean society. Interviewee 1, who had experienced being labelled as a “commie” due to her upbringing in Gwangju, discussed how the previous government used to frame the civilians during the Gwangju Democratic Movement in 1980 as violent communists. She could not read humour from the joke flags, and the use of a floating signifier seemed nothing but a safety measure to her. The fear of ‘reds’ and anti-communist sentiments are still deeply rooted in the psyche of

many Koreans (Cumings, 2005). Two of the interviewees associated flags with the colour red and a prominent image of the war and violent civil uprisings in the past. Interestingly, none of the joke flags in the sample used red as the background colour.

“For me, these flags are not really about humour, but about fear of being identified... The flag bearers don't want to be in trouble, they just created an escape route. (Interviewee 1)”

“For me, the flags used to have a powerful image, it had to be red!... It's like the division between the North and the South, it's ideological. (Interviewee 2)”

“A flag used to be a symbol of a militant and bloody fight, revolution. Look, the tip of the flag used to be pointy in case you need to execute the oppressor. You get the stain of your enemies' blood on your flag. It's frightening. (Laugh) Literally, it's the blood of either reactionaries or communists. It's the bloody scar of Korean history. (Interviewee 3)”

Except for two interviewees (7, 10), everyone knew about the joke flags. The rest of the interviewees' comments on flags seems to indicate that they understood the intention of the joke flag's creator.

“I felt the protest became a people's festival. The flag did not reflect any specific group or political interest. An individual just brought what she likes... By carrying funny flags you show; no, we are different, far from sheeple that you are talking about, we are here because we want to. Nobody influenced us, no one controlled us, no one paid us. I mean just look at the crowd. There are families with children (Interviewee 5).”

“When you belong to the existing civil society, your identity disappears. The flag represents the attempt to preserve your individual self (Interviewee 8).”

“The joke flags show the change that we have not seen elsewhere, and they prevented any attempt of hate speech against the minority. And we learned that change was far from impossible and it was happening right there. At face value, it was meaningful to see diverse groups of people from every class and stratum took active roles in politics. On the other hand, existing non-political groups finally converted to political ones. And we can see it as a form of protest culture that is

less central and authoritative. It is because we did not have any main leader of the movement (Interviewee 9)."

"First, it was so much fun, and second, this means our society is now really diverse. We can talk about politics and social problems without any hesitation, telling our own stories... The flags show our everyday, how we live, and how we resist and oppose using our own voices. Very vividly (Interviewee 13)."

There were also comments on impression management on social media (Interviewee 2,3,6) and love for humour and satire in Korean literary tradition (Interviewee 2). Most of the interviewees recognised the joke flags as something positive; however, not everyone saw the use of humour in the same light.

"I thought some people overdid it with making the president too much of a caricature... I felt a bit overwhelmed... it was too much. (Interviewee 6)"

Her attitude towards the joke flags might reflect the research result that age is a predictor of one's position to political protest (Lee, 2016). The research showed that only 50% of the people over 60 years old supported the impeachment of Park, compared to 95% in their 30's or 70% on average (Choi, 2017). Interviewee 6 mentioned that she just went to the protest site to see what was going on, not necessarily supporting the cause. She believed that most participants were like her, passive spectators.

In her view, flags should have specific meanings, and she did not like jokes about President Park. Interviewee 6 mentioned that she did not think that candlelight protesters acted voluntarily, and she felt scared by North-Korea sympathisers who might have controlled the crowd from the shadow. Her opinions⁶ are similar to the rhetoric of the right wing pro-Park protesters, mostly consisting people of over 60, who still miss the authoritarian regime from the '60s and '70s which had been led by Park's father (Kim & Masaaki, 2018). For interviewee

⁶ Considering she is over 60 years old, it is possible that her opinions originated from the nationalistic and anti-communist education that she had received from the military regime.

6, President Park and her father are still part of her memory during her formative years. In Lee and Brown (2018)'s explanation, for the elderly Koreans, President Park's father, Park Jung-hee is in spite of his military dictatorship, "the hero who transformed South Korea from a poor country in the 1960s to what it is today" (p. 61). Interviewee 6 mentioned that she felt sympathy for Park, in spite of the corruption charges. Contrasting to the anti-Park group's use of joke flags, the pro-Park group used the Korean national flag, Taegukgi. Their rally was even called "Taegukgi protest". They are known for their violent attitude.⁷

Most interviewees (2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15) were highly critical of the use of the national flag at the pro-Park rally. The interviewees' opinions echo with Eperjesi (2014: 152)'s analysis on Korea's far right-wing group; they agree to "consent to their own oppression by acceding to the neo-liberal common sense or to the resurgent Cold War paranoia offered by right-wing politicians". Their violent tendency and inability to bring diversity seems to anger some of the candlelight protesters for tainting and appropriating the meaning of the national flag, which has been a symbol for democracy and the anti-colonialism movement (Lee & Brown, 2018).

"They are just right-wing nut jobs, but they use the Taegukgi to claim that this is patriotism. The flags are their masks. (Interviewee 4)"

"...people who experienced the war still feel the fear. And when they see the Taegukgi, probably they solidify their emotion... There are as many US flags as there are Taegukgi, sometimes even Israeli flags. I was curious what those flags mean to them. With those flags, they feel I am a genuine patriot. There is America behind me. (Laugh), a part of self-justification (Interviewee 7)?"

"The national flag is often appropriated by nationalism and far-right groups... But it does not mean that the flag represents the country overall or the whole nation literally. The flag here makes the citizens serve the interest of the ruling

⁷ The only casualty during the candle light revolution came from the Taegukgi rally, where one died from an accident that was caused by another protestor who stole a police car. Three protestors died from a heart attack and dyspnoea. Also, the Taegukgi protestors used the flag pole as a weapon, threatening police forces. (Source : Kookmin Ilbo 19/04/2017 <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0011411671>, accessed 12/01/2019)

class, and it covers that fact. While European and American far-right groups consider immigrants as the main enemy to fight, Korea's particular historical circumstance made a strong belief that the North and communism or socialism are enemies (Interviewee 9)."

The research conducted by Hassin, Ferguson, Shidlovski, and Gross (2007) shows that the subliminal exposure to national flags can change political behaviour, not only in the laboratory, but also in real life, and even affect voting. In the case of the Taegukgi rally, the use of the national flag not only primes ideology based on “blood ties”, a common identity of the extreme right (Sullivan, 2014), but also justifies President Park’s strong pro-corporate and anti-communist tendency - which gives the Taegukgi protesters the strong belief that the opposition of Park is unpatriotic and pro-North (Choi, 2017). The presence of US flags and Israeli flags are other factors that baffle interviewees (7,13). One interpretation for this phenomenon is that for some Korean Protestant Christians, strong supporters of the Taegukgi rally, Christianity is an alternative to Confucianism, which they consider to be an inferior tradition, that has brought Japanese occupation to Korea (Kim, 2017b). They unconsciously tried to fill the void of missing colonial identity with something safe and strong, and for some, the US and Israel are the new colonial identity of choice (ibid.). These two foreign flags are the symbol of saviours, and they don’t see any incongruity in their logic, between their claim for patriotism and voluntary colonialism (ibid.). Choi (2017) argues that it’s the myth, not logic that they are after, and their obsession with the good old past might be the result of social isolation and a struggle for recognition. Lee and Brown (2018) point out that the poverty of the elderly people makes them feel invisible, and Taegukgi rally makes them feel like patriots (p. 61). Also, because the Taegukgi rally’s identity is based on “the perceived absence of options”, their predominant symbol represents status and hegemony (Sullivan, 2014: 267)

5.2 The Eros Effect

When the eros effect is in action, people intuitively identify with each other (Katsiaficas, 2013b: 285) and this process might go beyond the usual identity categories of gender, race and culture.

A thick description of the eros effect is introduced as follows:

“One of the highlights of my first few days was a presentation near Seoul National University at a movement bookstore. People stayed for four and a half hours passionately discussing the eros effect, revolutionary movements, and the future of Korea. At one point, when the slide projector jammed, people spontaneously began to sing movement songs until we had fixed the problem (Katsiaficas, 2012: xx)

To explore how the eros effect has manifested, I asked interviewees what they have felt during the candlelight protest. Then I identified the following values and emotions. First, the interviewees expressed a strong sense of moral duty as parents. There were 20 references of children from 5 interviewees (1,3,5,7,15), who mentioned that they have taken or would have taken the children to the protest for education purposes. This collective belief that parents need to bring children in the right place at the right time for education resonated very much with traditional Confucian values (Cumings, 2005). It also reflects Korean parents’ fascination with the moral of Mencius’ mother⁸. According to an old adage, the mother of the famous Confucian scholar Mencius moved three times to find the right place to educate her son (Tseng, 1973). The sight of other parents and children might have given them a sign of approval from the community as seen with interviewee 5.

The interviewees also expressed other strong emotions such as sadness, guilt and anger. The sinking of the Sewol Ferry was mentioned by parents with little children. The interviewees (1,5,7) believe that the 2016 Candlelight Revolution was still about people’s collective mourning of the tragic past and not bringing justice sooner. They expressed that they

⁸ 孟母三遷之教

felt that it was time to take the matter in their own hands. Lastly, all except one (interviewee 6) expressed pride and hope, especially when they see so many diverse crowds at the protests.

“I felt I shouldn't just sit here. It's too shameful. I don't want to raise my children in a country like this...Later we brought our children, ‘this is a historical moment, you kids watch this at least once’. So, one freezing winter night, I took our kids. I explained, ‘you might not know now, but when you grow up, you will remember you are a part of the history-making moment’. I saw that my teenage daughter was getting texts from her school friends who were there with their families (Interviewee 5).”

“If my child were older, I would have brought him out...I felt sorry and guilty... When the protest ended, people were talking about the protest like their personal saga while having a drink together, I felt indebted to them for I couldn't be there with them... one of my friends is a photographer. He took photos of the protest and published the book called ‘what did you do then?’. I thought it was a really great title... and I think it would have been a lesson for my child. I couldn't go, but I bought the book from my friend, so when my son grows up, so I can tell him what happened. (Interviewee 7)”

“I think our kids are the first generation who think they can change even the president. We will see the next generation who are empowered and who know they can bring down the power if they want to. They really think like that ...I am sure that when these kids grow up and can vote, our politics will change to something more progressive and innovative. Imagine how the industry will change when they start to work, the corporate culture will change too... (Interviewee 3)”

This collective sense of community is well explained by the episode below. As Katsiaficas (2013b) proposes that leaderless situations are better in producing the eros effect (p. 286), interviewee 5 talks about how the action of each participant was entirely voluntary including the unexpected kindness of a bus driver. The protesters felt empowerment and support of strangers on a massive scale, literally with million others. This euphoric experience still seems to excite some of the interviewees although it happened almost two years ago. They were eager to talk about their stories with pride and delight.

“I was genuinely proud. Once you are at the protest, the next week you see more people. For example, there is this long-distance bus 9003 from the city of Pankyo

to Seoul which was half empty at first. Then every Saturday right before the evening, I saw more and more people, especially families going to the protest with candles until the bus was completely full. Later, it felt like the bus became our own shuttle bus to the protest. When the traffic was crazy with all the people and the police on the road...but the bus driver let us off at an undesignated stop so that people could go safely and comfortably to the protest. He did that voluntarily. It was our shuttle bus. I felt really supported. I saw how we became one, two and hundreds of thousands. I felt empowered... When all these people came voluntarily and shouted one slogan, I felt like it was one long stroll. It was a really lovely walk (Interviewee 5)."

"I went to the protest. In the beginning, I was wondering how many would come. Can we deliver the message with a little candlelight? But then the participants kept increasing to a million and two million. I felt like now history is changing. I was utterly moved by it. I was so thankful to be on this historic site together. Not only that, I thoroughly enjoyed the diverse cultural performances on the protest sites. It was so much fun (Interviewee 13)."

5.3 Heterotopia between Festival and Oppression

The combination of materiality and the eros effect eventually transform the space of uprising into a heterotopia, where festival and oppression can coexist. The open space can outlive its original purpose, and its vacancy allows 'diversion' and 're-appropriation' of space (Lefebvre, 1991: 167). Interviewee 10 mentioned that Gwanghwamun Square is "an indispensable central space where individuals who might be incomplete when they are alone, can gather and express their opinions". This is a space that can transform. Surrounded by skyscrapers and 14th-century architecture, 10 lanes of roads between the plaza are usually busy with traffic. However, it is also a place for surprises that puncture the routine expectation. During the protest, the roads are occupied by candles and flags, and ordinary people change the commonplace into an extraordinarily festive space. When the popularity of the joke flags peaked, the real KCTU and two joke flaggers, Korean Confederation of Dumping Lovers and Shrimp Dumpling Union, co-hosted "Gibberish Joke Flag Grand Party"⁹ (Choi, 2016). Writing on the joke flaggers, Byun (2017) described the atmosphere of Gwanghwamun Square as following:

⁹ 아무 깃발 대단치

“This winter, Gwanghwamun is a plaza of happiness, anger, sadness and pleasure. Citizens laugh at the quirky phrases of the joke flags, sing with singers on the stage, and get angry at Choi Soon-sil and Park Geun-hye, then cry when they remember the kids who became stars in the sky. Just like that, the citizens of the street share laughter, tears, and warmth.”

Specific places can be an outlet for various emotion (Brown & Pickerill, 2009) and every interviewee expressed that Gwanghwamun had a special meaning to them, even for interviewees who couldn't be at the protest. There were 16 references from seven interviewees (1,2,3,4,5,8,13) who mentioned that Gwanghwamun means fun to them. It's interesting to note that interviewee 5 felt *romantic* when going to the protest with her husband every Saturday.

“I went to Gwanghwamun all the time, often on a date...you know something is going to happen there. It can be a protest or some weird events. I saw some strange political event there a few years ago. It was called ‘politics for deadbeats’. I was like, who the hell are these people? (Interviewee 2)”

“The protest was like a big festival with children and adults. Our families went there too. It was like a trend. Kids loved it (Interviewee 3).”

“Gwanghwamun for me is a big playground (laugh). We gather there when sporting events are happening to support the team. When something important happens, people gather there...For me, Gwanghwamun is a hip place...If I go to Gwanghwamun, there might be a festival or a cultural event... (Interviewee 4)”

“...I felt like going on a date with my husband (laugh). Participating in the protest itself was so much fun. People came up with all these brilliant dances, music, slogans, flags and I felt like we communicated culturally (Interviewee 5).”

Gwanghwamun Square is accessible by many public transportation options and very close to the president's residence and Gyeongbokgung Palace, the 14th-century royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty which is popular for tourists.

Insert Picture 2 about here

On my personal account on the day of the protest, the subway line 5 was completely full. I wondered how many passengers would go to the protest. No one seemed to stand out as an activist type. Then the train stopped at the station, the people in the wagon were heading to the door, and soon the train was nearly empty. The space of protest extended to more than just Gwanghwamun Square. For instance, the city of Seoul published an app with a map of toilets nearby and private businesses and restaurants opened the door for the public's bodily needs during the protests. Although the queue was long, and I had to wait for 20 minutes, I felt as if I was socialising in the high school girls' room with classmates. I chitchatted with strangers and exchanged hot packs with candles. People told me where to get free coffee and snacks, offered by a "housewives' cooking club" (from the fieldnote).

After the protest, people voluntarily cleaned the streets right away, even sorting the garbage for recycling (Kim & Shin, 2016). Interviewee 5 mentioned, that the nearby restaurants and shops offered discounts to protesters, asking to come inside their shops when the weather got cold in the night. The mayor of Seoul, Park Won-soon, a long-time civil activist, ordered the Seoul subway to run longer than usual for the protesters (Park, 2016).

However, Gwanghwamun Square has not always been the site of celebration and solidarity. It has been and can turn into a space for oppression at any time.

"This place is actually always political...You know there used to be the Japanese' Governor-General of Korea in this area. Now it's the US embassy. You think Korea is now independent from imperialism. Damn! (laugh) There is always police, even on a day without a protest (Interviewee 2)."

"...Around Gwanghwamun, there are many embassies and corporate buildings... there used to be a law that states that if you come too close to the embassy, police will come (Interviewee 5)."

This messy political landscape warns us not just to idealise Korean civil society (Eperjesi, 2014) and realise that both oppression and pleasure co-exist in this space. However, the turmoiled history turns out to be not only a burden, but also a gift to Koreans, teaching them what it means to have collective emotion of the "absolute community" (Eperjesi, 2014). The experience of

the eros effect lingers. Gwanghwamun Square is a visible reminder that even if the movement is short-lived, its impact will last longer than we tend to think (Katsiaficas, 2012). The candlelight protesters have succeeded in achieving their initial goal to change a political regime, but they are already self-reflexive about what should come next.

“Gwanghwamun represents an open space for citizen's participation in politics. However, the protest in the plaza does not achieve more than bringing political pressure. The real change comes from the citizen's diverse organising and education, the everyday political activities. And this probably would be the lesson and limitation of the candlelight revolution (Interviewee 8).”

“But it was not all positive. I realised that when there is a broad spectrum of people, it is rather difficult to discuss an agenda in everyday politics, detailed and precise. I learned once again that we still need a democratic institution or organisation. In 2016, candlelight did not have that, so we managed to achieve only impeachment and a regime change, that is little compared to the extensive public support, and we did not achieve a fundamental social change (Interviewee 9).”

Insert Picture 3 about here

6. Conclusions

This paper shows a story of the Korean Candle Light Revolution where joke flags impacted the collective emotion in a protest and became an essential element for public mobilisation. Of course, the local contexts demand different tactics, and joke flags are just one example of them. However, the success of the joke flags can hint at a useful tip for inclusivity in protesting in general. If authorities perceive a specific category of identity more problematic (e.g. labour union, student group), de-categorisation could be one way to avoid unnecessary protest policing and invite people who do not fit into existing categories (Lee, 2013). By using a floating signifier as a main rhetorical strategy, joke flaggers successfully avoided the burden of identity categorisation, hiding their socio-political identities. Also, satire and humour invited

more bystanders into the movement, and the spontaneity and randomness of the flags added the feeling of playfulness. The peaceful and festive nature of the protest explains the noticeable presence of children on the site.

The use of joke flags is of course not the sole source of the eros effect. The open place became transformative, calling a “temporary halt to domination (Lefebvre, 1991: 168)” by its potential for both the imaginary and even the real (p. 267). The boundaries of space move, as new materiality and fluid identity enter space. The surreality of joke flags breaks expectation and denies predictability. The flags of a floating signifier cannot find a better stage than Gwanghwamun Square, because this space itself works like a floating signifier susceptible to different emotions and meanings.

The spatial-temporal occupation of joke flags in Seoul’s Gwanghwamun Square, the beloved public space for many other historic social movements, initiated an enduring emotional appeal for those who remembered Korea’s tragic past, stemming from violent ideology conflicts (Cumings, 2005). In this sense, the joke flags have created a greater community identity beyond ideology and class. Evoked by the materiality of the protest, the collective emotional experience helped to transform Gwanghwamun Square into a space for festivities (Lefebvre, 1991), where eventually people celebrated the well-deserving civic victory while being completely free of violence. (7699 words)

Insert Picture 4 about here

REFERENCES

- Armstrong, C. K. 2006. Introduction. In C. K. Armstrong (Ed.), *Korean society: civil society, democracy and the state*, 2nd ed.: 1-8. London: Routledge.
- Betts, J., Shortt, H., & Warren, S. 2013. Visual workplace identities: Objects, emotion and resistance. In E. Bell, S. Warren, & J. E. Schroeder (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Visual Organization*. Oxon: Routledge
- Branagan, M. 2007. The last laugh: Humour in community activism. *Community Development Journal*, 42(4): 470-481.
- Brown, G. & Pickerill, J. 2009. Space for emotion in the spaces of activism. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2(1): 24-35.
- Byun, J.-k. 2017. <웃기는 깃발 들고 함께 울다 - Cry together holding a funny flag>, *Sisain*.
- Chenoweth, E., Stephan, M. J., & Stephan, M. J. 2011. *Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*: Columbia University Press.
- Choe, S.-H. 2016. Viagra Pills Create New Scandal for South Korea's President, *The New York Times*.
- Choi, H.-y. 2016. <이 사람들 궁금했죠?...아무 깃발 대잔치! [현장] 10 차 촛불집회, 드립력 터지는 깃발 여기 다 모여라 - Were you wondering who these people are? ... Gibberish Joke Flag Mega Party! [On-site], 10th Candlelight Vigil, Come here all the joke flags>, *Pressian*.
- Choi, J.-s. 2017. <'촛불', '태극기', 그리고 5070 세대 공감 - 'Candle', 'Taegukgi', and 5070 generation sympathy>. *민주화운동기념사업회 KDF 리포트 - KDF REPORT : Issue & Review on Democracy*, 11: 1-20.
- Critchley, S. 2007. Humour as practically enacted theory, or, why critics should tell more jokes. *Humour, work and organization*: 17-32.
- Cumings, B. 2005. *Korea's place in the sun: A modern history (Updated)*: WW Norton & Company.
- Eperjesi, J. R. 2014. Book Review : Asia's Unknown Uprisings Volume 1: South Korean Social Movements in the 20th Century. *Korea Journal*(Winter): 147-152.
- Feigenbaum, A., McCurdy, P., & Frenzel, F. 2013. Towards a Method for studying Affect in (micro)Politics: The Campfire Chats Project and the Occupy Movement. *Parallax*, 19(2): 21-37.
- Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E. 2006. Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5(1): 80-92.
- Fotaki, M. & Prasad, A. 2015. Questioning neoliberal capitalism and economic inequality in business schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(4): 556-575.
- Gao, L. 2018. New media and the Egyptian revolution: The ironies of mediated communication, the fetishisation of information and the shrinking of political action. *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, 18: 505-526.
- Grimes, D. 2001. Putting our own house in order: whiteness, change and organization studies. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 14(2): 132-149.
- Gruszczynska, A. 2009. "I was mad about it all, about the ban": Emotional spaces of solidarity in the Poznan March of Equality. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2(1): 44-51.
- Hassin, R. R., Ferguson, M. J., Shidlovski, D., & Gross, T. 2007. Subliminal exposure to national flags affects political thought and behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(50): 19757-19761.
- Hwang, K. 2018. <장수풍뎅이 연구회' 같은 21 세기 데모론 - Demonstration of the 21st century such as Tigerbeetle Society>, *Hankyoreh*.
- Kang, J. 2009. Coming to terms with "unreasonable" global power: The 2002 South Korean Candlelight Vigils. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(2): 171-192.

- Katsiaficas, G. 2012. Asia's unknown uprisings: South Korean social movements in the 20th century, Volume 1: PM Press Oakland, CA.
- Katsiaficas, G. 2013a. Comparing the Paris Commune and the Gwangju Uprising, *South Korean Democracy*: 196-207: Routledge.
- Katsiaficas, G. 2013b. *South Korean democracy: legacy of the gwangju uprising*: Routledge.
- Kim, E.-S. 2017a. The material culture of Korean social movements. *Journal of Material Culture*, 22(2): 194-215.
- Kim, G. 2016a. <[김곡의 푹푹푹] 장수풍뎅이 연구회 - [Kim Gok's Talktalktalk] Tiger Beetle Research Society>, *Hankyoreh*.
- Kim, H.-b. 2016b. <국민도 놀랐다... 민주주의 역사 새로 쓴 6 차 촛불 - ... History of democracy Newly written sixth candles virgil >, *Hankookilbo*.
- Kim, H.-l. & Shin, D.-w. 2016. <[5 차 촛불집회] 촛불집회 청소, 문화로 정착되다- [5th candlelight protest] Candle protest cleaning, became a part of culture>, *Seoul Shinmun*.
- Kim, J.-h. 2017b. <한국의 극우주의를 관통하는 '식민지 백성'의 무의식- Unconsciousness of 'Colonial People' piercing through Korean far right>, *Hankyoreh*.
- Kim, K. & Masaaki, I. 2018. <21 세기 데모론: 변화를 이끄는 유쾌하고 떠들썩한 저항의 미디어, *데모 Demonstrations in the twenty-first century: Media, festival and social change*>.
- Lee, A.-R. 2016. Value Change and Non-Violent Protest in South Korea: An Empirical Analysis. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 43(4): 107-127.
- Lee, C. 2018a. [Newsmaker] Was Park Geun-hye asleep while Sewol ferry was sinking?, *The Korea Herald*.
- Lee, J.-e. 2013. Categorical Threat and Protest Policing: Patterns of Repression Before and After Democratic Transition in South Korea. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 43(3): 475-496.
- Lee, J. & Brown, K. E. 2018. "Make Korea with America Great Again": An Articulation and Assemblage of South Korean Extreme Right Practices. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 11(1): 53-66.
- Lee, N.-h. 2006. The South Korean student movement - Undongkwŏn as a counterpublic sphere. In C. K. Armstrong (Ed.), *Korean society: civil society, democracy and the state*, 2nd ed.: 95-120. London: Routledge.
- Lee, S. 2018b. Connecting social media use with gaps in knowledge and participation in a protest context: the case of candle light vigil in South Korea. *Asian Journal of Communication*: 1-17.
- Lee, Y. 2015. Sky Protest: New Forms of Labour Resistance in Neo-Liberal Korea. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 45(3): 443-464.
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The production of space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lim, J.-y. 2017. <숫자로 보는 촛불집회 - Candlelight protest by numbers>, *Sisain*.
- Lotan, G., Graeff, E., Ananny, M., Gaffney, D., & Pearce, I. 2011. The Arab Spring| the revolutions were tweeted: Information flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. *International journal of communication*, 5: 31.
- Moore, P. 2007. *Globalisation and labour struggle in Asia: a neo-gramscian critique of South Korea's political economy*: IB Tauris.
- Ohnuki-Tierney, E. 1994. The power of absence: Zero signifiers and their transgressions. *L'Homme*: 59-76.
- Park, C.-M. & Shin, D. C. 2006. Do Asian values deter popular support for democracy in South Korea? *Asian survey*, 46(3): 341-361.
- Park, Y.-s. 2016. <송박영신 촛불집회로 지하철 연장운행...새벽 2 시까지 - Extend the subway due to the new year's eve candlelight vigil ... By 2 am>, *Seoul Shinmun*.

- Patsiaouras, G., Veneti, A., & Green, W. 2018. Marketing, art and voices of dissent: Promotional methods of protest art by the 2014 Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. *Marketing Theory*, 18(1): 75-100.
- Pickerill, J. & Krinsky, J. 2012. Why Does Occupy Matter? *Social Movement Studies*, 11(3-4): 279-287.
- Robinson, O. C. 2014. Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 11(1): 25-41.
- Scott, B. 2004. Picturing irony: the subversive power of photography. *Visual Communication*.
- Sullivan, G. B. 2014. Collective pride, happiness and celebratory emotions: Aggregative, network and cultural models. *Collective Emotions: Perspectives from Psychology, Philosophy, and Sociology*: 266-280.
- Thompson, M. R. 2001. Whatever happened to "Asian values"? *Journal of Democracy*, 12(4): 154-165.
- Tseng, W.-S. 1973. The concept of personality in Confucian thought. *Psychiatry*, 36(2): 191-202.
- Westwood, R. & Rhodes, C. 2013. *Humour, work and organization*: Routledge.
- Woo, H., Cho, Y., Shim, E., Lee, K., & Song, G. 2015. Public trauma after the Sewol Ferry disaster: the role of social media in understanding the public mood. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 12(9): 10974-10983.

APPENDIX

Table 1 Description of Joke Flags

Korean name	Translation	Rhetorical Strategy
#□□□□□□	Altitude Sickness Study Meeting	Political Satire
#□□□□□ □□	National Wrinkle Association	Political Satire
#□□□□□□	People Who Come Alone	Self-Parody evoking community feeling
#□□□□□□□	Association of People Who Tweet Too Often	Self-Parody evoking community feeling
#□□□□□□□□□	Union of Low Performing Employees	Self-Parody evoking community feeling
#□□□□□□□□	Tiger Beetle Research Society	Floating Signifier(F/S)
#□□□□□□	Zebra Research Society	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□	Federation of Pan-Miau	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□□□□	Private Sudden Death Museum	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□□□□□□	The Association of National Cabbage Only Diet	Floating Signifier
#□□~	Uh-Oh~	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□□□□□□□□	Planet Union Earth Division Korea Branch	Floating Signifier
#□□□	The Pan Dog Association	Floating Signifier
#□□□	Citizen's Coalition for Plant Pot Salvation	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□□□	Curry Connoisseur Group	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□	Federation of Pan-Sproing	Floating Signifier
#□□□□	Korean Confederation of Dumping Lovers	Floating Signifier
#□□□	DDD	Floating Signifier
#□□□□□□	International Hamnesty	F/S Reference (Ref.) To Amnesty
#□□□ □□ □□□	Bruce Lee Quotes Research Society	F/S Ref. To Internet meme
#□□□□ □□□	Aquarium Sans Frontières	F/S Ref. To Médecins Sans Frontières
#□□□□□□□□□	Annam University Revolver Major	F/S Ref. To the 2016 Korean movie, Asura: The City of Madness.
#□□□□□□	Annam Citizen Federation	F/S Ref. To the 2016 Korean movie, Asura: The City of Madness.
#□□□□	Korean Confederation of Cat Unions	F/S Ref. To the <u>biggest</u> labour union in South Korea

Table 2 Description of Interviewees

#	Age	Gender	Occupation	Participation	If not, why
1	31-40	F	Accountant	N	Abroad
2	31-40	M	IT specialist	N	Abroad
3	41-50	M	Business Professor	Y	
4	31-40	F	Banker	N	A child
5	41-50	F	Homemaker	Y	
6	61-70	F	Insurance saleswoman	Y	
7	31-40	M	IT specialist	N	A child
8	51-60	M	Eco-Farmer	Y	
9	21-30	M	Student	Y	
10	21-30	F	Student	Y	
11	21-30	M	Student	Y	
12	51-60	M	Eco-Farmer	Y	
13	51-60	M	Civil Servant	Y	
14	21-30	F	Student	Y	
15	51-60	M	Activist	Y	

Picture 1 “Gibberish Joke Flag Grand Party” (Source: Instagram @721amberscat, used with a permission)



Picture 2 the US Embassy and Police in Kwanghwamun Square, 12/12/2016



Picture 3 Protest Camps and Candle Art in Kwanghwamun Square, 12/12/2016



Picture 4 Candles in Kwanghwamun Square, 03/12/2016

