

ROLE OF THE MEDIA DURING POLITICAL EVENTS IN  
AUTHORITARIAN, DEMOCRATIZATION AND  
DEMOCRATIC PERIODS IN KOREA

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the role of the media during three different significant events in political transitions in Korea, namely the Kwangju massacre of 1980, the democratic elections of 1987, and the candlelight protests of 2008. This study sought to address this question: **How have roles of the Korean print media changed as Korea transitioned from an authoritarian regime to its democratization period and a democratic regime?**

Applying textual and rhetorical analytic methods to selected articles from five publications, the researcher found that roles of the media showed a transition from a facilitative role categorization, where neither media institutional power nor autonomy is strong, to a monitorial role, where both of those elements show strengths. One thing worthy of notice however, was that as democratization of Korea developed into its current stages, institutional powers of the media seemed to weaken again, which autonomy continuously gained strength. Therefore, in terms of media roles, news articles showed that advocacy and opinionated perspectives could be a new significant factor for media roles in the later stages of democratic development.