

# **The Internet and Deliberative Democracy in South Korea**

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**The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.**

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*Ray, Rayna, and Tony*

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## **Abstract**

Over the last decades, deliberative democracy has been paid increasing attention as a complement for representative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a political system based on deliberation among free and equal citizens, and deliberation is considered as a core component of democracy. Deliberation can contribute to democracy in various ways, such as giving attention to the common good and improving opinion quality.

Today, the Internet is creating a new environment of deliberation. The Internet delivers great amounts of political information without any constraints in time and space. It also enables people to engage in easy and free two-way communication at an affordable cost. In addition, the Internet has the potential to liberate people from social hierarchies and power relations that exist off-line.

In the literature, some limitations are recognised with respect to the impact of the Internet on deliberative democracy. While previous studies focus on the established democracies of Western countries, Asian context studies are largely limited. Existing empirical measurements for the deliberation quality focus on specific aspects of deliberation and do not reflect the depth of the theoretical discussions. Little attention is given to the deliberation quality of process and heterogeneous groups.

To overcome the limitations, this study attempts to explore the potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy in the South Korean context by looking at the quality of the online deliberation process. In addition, a comprehensive set of measurements for deliberation quality is developed based on an extensive exploration of literature. Furthermore, the effects of exposure to diversity in opinion on deliberation process are examined by scrutinising the different patterns of online deliberation between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups.



Data are collected from *Nosamo and Hani*, which are the most influential and busiest online bulletin boards during the 2002 Korean Presidential election campaign. The data constitute all of the messages that are posted on the bulletin boards before and after the TV debate between two major candidates. A content analysis is carried out to search for patterns and structures of the messages and then to make inferences on them. In addition, the Chi-square test, the Mann-Whitney U test, and the T-test are employed to evaluate the discrepancy in the deliberation process between the two online bulletin boards.

The results of the analyses reveal that the online discussions in the two bulletin boards do not meet all the requirements of ideal democratic deliberation. The discussions in the two bulletin boards can be described, by and large, as they are ‘opinion-oriented, rational and autonomous’ but ‘lacking in impartiality’. They also can be described, by and large, as they are ‘respectful to others and sincere’ but ‘not very reciprocal and lacking in corrigibility’.

In addition, some discrepancies between the two bulletin boards are found with respect to requirements for deliberation. While, the heterogeneous group (*Hani*) tends more to express opinions, the homogeneous group (*Nosamo*) develops a longer argument, expresses the opinions with more conviction, and shows a higher level of justification. The homogeneous group presents a more topic relevance and a more criticism toward the conservative traditional media and regionalism. However, the homogeneous group lacks impartiality compared to the heterogeneous group. On the other hand, the messages in the homogeneous group are more interactive, corrigible and respectful than the heterogeneous group. However, pros and cons are more prevalent in the heterogeneous group and no difference in perceived deception is found between the two groups.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research background .....	1
1.2 The Internet and deliberative democracy in South Korea.....	4
1.3 Contribution to knowledge.....	6
1.4 Key terms and scope of the study .....	6
1.5 Structure of the thesis.....	11
<b>Chapter 2 Literature review .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Network society .....	14
2.3 Deliberative democracy .....	16
2.3.1 Different models of democracy.....	16
2.3.2 Deliberative democracy model .....	19
2.3.3 Concept of deliberation .....	22
2.3.4 Effect of deliberation.....	25
2.3.5 Quality of deliberation .....	32
2.3.6 Heterogeneity in deliberation.....	42
2.4 The Internet and deliberative democraracy .....	51
2.4.1 An overview of the Internet .....	51
2.4.2 The Internet and democracy.....	54
2.4.3 Potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy.....	58
2.4.4 Empirical studies on online deliberation quality.....	64
2.5 Limitations of the previous studies .....	73
2.6 Conceptual framework of the research .....	75
2.6.1 Approaches of this study.....	75
2.6.2 Conceptual research framework.....	78

<b>Chapter 3 Democracy and the Internet in South Korea .....</b>	<b>79</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	79
3.2 Democracy in South Korea .....	80
3.2.1 New democracy.....	80
3.2.2 Deliberative democracy .....	88
3.3 The Internet and democracy in South Korea.....	94
3.3.1 Internet Penetration .....	94
3.3.2 The Internet and deliberative democracy.....	101
<b>Chapter 4 Methodology .....</b>	<b>108</b>
4.1 Content analysis .....	108
4.1.1 Overview of content analysis .....	108
4.1.2 Unit of analysis .....	110
4.1.3 Approaches of this study.....	113
4.2 Data collection .....	114
4.2.1 Selection of cases .....	114
4.2.2 Process of data filing.....	118
4.3 Measurements .....	121
4.3.1 Introduction.....	121
4.3.2 Measurements for the quality of deliberation process .....	122
4.3.3 Individual dimension of deliberation .....	124
4.3.4 Interpersonal dimension of deliberation .....	136
4.3.5 Refined research framework .....	147
4.4 Data analysis .....	147

<b>Chapter 5 Results and discussions.....</b>	<b>150</b>
5.1 Individual dimension of deliberation .....	150
5.1.1 Opinionation.....	150
5.1.2 Rationality .....	164
5.1.3 Impartiality.....	175
5.1.4 Autonomy.....	192
5.2 Interpersonal dimension of deliberation.....	189
5.2.1 Reciprocity .....	189
5.2.2 Mutual respect.....	197
5.2.3 Sincerity .....	208
5.2.4 Corrigibility.....	214
5.3 Summary .....	220
<b>Chapter 6 Summary and conclusion .....</b>	<b>225</b>
6.1 Summary of the study .....	225
6.2. Contribution to knowledge.....	232
6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future study.....	233
6.4 Conclusion remarks.....	235
<b>References .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>263</b>
Coding scheme .....	263
Sample of messages .....	267



## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Underlying concept of deliberation.....	24
Table 2.2 Positive effects of deliberation .....	29
Table 2.3 Negative effects of deliberation .....	30
Table 2.4 Empirical research on the effects of deliberation.....	32
Table 2.5 Key dimensions of deliberation.....	37
Table 2.6 Criteria for the quality of deliberation process.....	42
Table 2.7 Positive effects of heterogeneity .....	47
Table 2.8 Negative effects of heterogeneity.....	49
Table 2.9 Empirical research on the effects of heterogeneity .....	50
Table 2.10 Three types of democracy in the Internet age .....	57
Table 2.11 Possibilities and limitations of the Internet for deliberative democracy .....	64
Table 2.12 Previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of constructing individual opinion .....	68
Table 2.13 Previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of considering other participants .....	72
Table 2.14 Approach of this study.....	77
Table 3.1 The modern political history of South Korea .....	83
Table 3.2 National information index (NII) and rankings (Top 10).....	95
Table 3.3 Ratio of household with Internet connection .....	95
Table 4.1 Survey of online deliberation studies .....	112
Table 4.2 Nosamo demographics .....	115
Table 4.3 Comparison of activities of two online bulletin boards (Nosamo and Hani).	116
Table 4.4 Sample size.....	118
Table 4.5 Process of nominating and filing a single candidate .....	120
Table 4.6 Definitions of concepts and references .....	126
Table 4.7 Variables for opinionation .....	128
Table 4.8 Variables for rationality.....	131
Table 4.9 Variables for impartiality.....	133
Table 4.10 Variables for autonomy .....	135

Table 4.11 Overview of concepts for assessing the quality of individual deliberation.	135
Table 4.12 Definitions of concepts and references .....	137
Table 4.13 Variables for reciprocity .....	140
Table 4.14 Variables for mutual respect.....	142
Table 4.15 Variables for sincerity.....	143
Table 4.16 Variables for corrigibility .....	146
Table 4.17 Overview of concepts for assessing the quality of interpersonal deliberation .....	146
Table 4.18 Variables for Chi-square test.....	148
Table 4.19 Variables for T-test.....	149
Table 4.20 Variables for Mann-Whitney U test .....	149
Table 5.1 Number of messages analysed for opinionation .....	151
Table 5.2 Number of messages analysed for rationality .....	164
Table 5.3 Number of messages analysed for impartiality .....	176
Table 5.4 Descriptive statistics for evaluation on candidates .....	179
Table 5.5 Descriptive statistics for evaluation on candidates bewteen the two groups	181
Table 5.6 Number of messages analysed for autonomy.....	183
Table 5.7 Number of messages analysed for reciprocity .....	190
Table 5.8 Number of messages analysed for mutal respect .....	198
Table 5.9 Number of messages analysed for sincerity.....	208
Table 5.10 Number of messages analysed for corrigibility.....	214
Table 5.11 Results of analyses on the deliberation quality .....	222
Table 5.12 Results of compariton of the deliberation quality .....	224



## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Types of online deliberation venue.....	9
Figure 1.2 Research process of the study.....	11
Figure 2.1 A system-dynamic model of the political system.....	16
Figure 2.2 Models of democracy .....	17
Figure 2.3 Internet domain survey host count.....	52
Figure 2.4 Types of online deliberation venue.....	54
Figure 2.5 Activities on the Internet.....	57
Figure 2.6 Conceptual research framework .....	78
Figure 3.1 Broadband Internet subscriber.....	96
Figure 3.2 Internet users and Internet usage rate .....	97
Figure 3.3 Number of Internet users in the top three countries .....	98
Figure 3.4 Internet usage by gender.....	98
Figure 3.5 Internet demographics .....	99
Figure 4.1 Flow chart of content analysis process .....	110
Figure 4.2 Results of the poll before unificaion.....	119
Figure 4.3 Results of the poll after showdown .....	120
Figure 4.4 Construction of measurement.....	123
Figure 4.5 Conceptual research framework .....	147
Figure 4.6 Analysis strategy.....	149
Figure 5.1 Message purpose.....	152
Figure 5.2 Comparison of message purposes between the two groups.....	152
Figure 5.3 Comparison of sources of facts between the two groups .....	153
Figure 5.4 Number of words per message .....	156
Figure 5.5 Comparison of number of words per message between the two groups .....	157
Figure 5.6 Opinion strength .....	161
Figure 5.7 Comparison of opinion strength between the two groups .....	161
Figure 5.8 Justification.....	165
Figure 5.9 Comparison of justification between the two groups .....	166
Figure 5.10 Reference to the common good.....	169

Figure 5.11 Comparison of reference to the common good between the two groups...	169
Figure 5.12 Topic relevance .....	172
Figure 5.13 Comparison of topic relevance between the two groups.....	172
Figure 5.14 Attempt to weigh.....	176
Figure 5.15 Comparison of attempt to weigh between the two groups .....	177
Figure 5.16 Opinion homogeneity .....	179
Figure 5.17 Comparison of opinion homogeneity between the two groups .....	180
Figure 5.18 Independence from mass media.....	183
Figure 5.19 Comparison of independence from mass media between the two groups.	184
Figure 5.20 Independence from regionalism .....	186
Figure 5.21 Comparison of independence from regionalism between the two groups.	187
Figure 5.22 Interactivity.....	191
Figure 5.23 Comparison of interactivity between the two groups .....	192
Figure 5.24 Pros and cons .....	194
Figure 5.25 Comparison of pros and cons between the two groups .....	195
Figure 5.26 Message tone .....	199
Figure 5.27 Comparison of message tone between the two groups.....	199
Figure 5.28 Vulgarity use .....	201
Figure 5.29 Comparison of vulgarity use between the two groups.....	202
Figure 5.30 Respect toward counterargument .....	205
Figure 5.31 Comparison of respect toward counterargument between the two groups	206
Figure 5.32 Self-disclosure .....	209
Figure 5.33 Comparison of self-disclosure between the two groups .....	210
Figure 5.34 Perceived deception .....	211
Figure 5.35 Comparison of perceived deception between the two groups .....	212
Figure 5.36 Opinion requesting .....	215
Figure 5.37 Comparison of opinion requesting between the two groups .....	215
Figure 5.38 Opinion change.....	217
Figure 5.39 Comparison of opinion change between the two groups.....	218
Figure 6.1 Conceptual research framework .....	227
Figure 6.2 Construction of measurement.....	229
Figure 6.3 Analysis strategy.....	230

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AOL</b>	America On Line
<b>ARPA</b>	Advanced Research Projects Agency
<b>BBS</b>	Bulletin-Board System (or Service)
<b>DAI</b>	Digital Access Index
<b>DTI</b>	Department of Trade and Industry
<b>EBB</b>	Electronic Bulletin Board
<b>EIU</b>	Economist Intelligence Unit
<b>GNP</b>	Grand National Party
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>IWS</b>	Internet World Statistics
<b>KIJA</b>	Korean Internet Journalist Association
<b>KINA</b>	Korean Internet Newspaper Association
<b>KIPA</b>	Korea IT Industry Promotion Agency
<b>KISC</b>	Korean Internet Safety Committee
<b>KONA</b>	Korean Online Newspaper Association
<b>KRNIC</b>	Korea Network Information Center
<b>MDP</b>	Millennium Democratic Party
<b>MILNET</b>	Military Network
<b>MPD</b>	Minnesota Politics Discuss
<b>NA21</b>	National Alliance 21
<b>NCA</b>	National Computerisation Agency
<b>NCP</b>	Network Control Protocol
<b>NEC</b>	National Election Commission
<b>NIC</b>	National Issues Convention
<b>NIDA</b>	National Internet Development Agency
<b>NII</b>	National Information Index

<b>NSF</b>	National Science Foundation
<b>NWG</b>	Network Working Group
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>SOFA</b>	Status of Forces Agreement
<b>TI</b>	Transparency International
<b>WWW</b>	World Wide Web

## CHAPTER 1 Introduction

This chapter contains an overview of the proposed research. To begin with, the background of the research is discussed to justify the study. Then, an overview of democracy and the Internet in South Korea is offered. The contribution of the research to knowledge is then presented. The scope of the study is defined to guide interpretations of the results. Key terms are defined to clarify how they are used throughout this study. The terms include deliberation, Internet, heterogeneity, and criteria for the quality of the deliberation process. Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

### 1.1 Research background

#### A trend toward deliberative democracy

Representative democracy constitutes the baseline for modern democracies. Over the past decades, however, the principles of representative democracy have been questioned whether they are sufficient to sustain the effectiveness and legitimacy of democracy (Price, 2003). Low turnout in elections and skeptical attitudes of citizens towards politicians, and political parties and institutions indicate a spreading dissatisfaction with the practices of representative democracy.

Deliberative democracy has ever been paid increasing attention by researchers in recent days as a complement for representative democracy (Miller, 1993; Fishkin, 1995; Habermas 1996; Chambers, 2003; Ackerman and Fishkin, 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Porta, 2005; Jackman and Sniderman, 2006). Voltmer and Lalljee (2004), for example, state that deliberative democracy stresses “the role of citizens and their competence in political matters thereby enhancing the quality of existing institutions of representative democracy” (p.4).



Deliberative democracy is a political system based on deliberation among free and equal citizens (Kim et al., 1999), and its notion refers to the need to have a strong public sphere, and a vivid form of public deliberation. When citizens discuss public issues, they are able to develop their own opinions, gain the skills needed to express their opinions, and acquire the potential for understanding, empathy, and the identification of interests common to all. Thus engaged, citizens may facilitate the development of a positive and strong democratic political identity.

### **Potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy**

When a new technology is introduced to public life, there are discussions on the role of the technology in the spreading of democratic values (Barber, 1997; Jankowski and van Selm, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001b). Deliberation is based on a mutual communication between people, and thus any change of communication technology has a potential to change the deliberation practices. In recent days, the Internet has been paid a great deal of attention by researchers as newly evolving means of communication.

The Internet can deliver great amounts of political information without any constraints in time and space and enables people to engage in easy and free two-way communication at an affordable cost. The Internet also can bring a new possibility of the change in that it makes manageable large-scale and many-to-many deliberations. Furthermore, the Internet offers more opportunities to converse with people who have diverse or different views and, thus, makes people encounter new topics and ideas and expand their horizon of views. In addition, the Internet has the potential to liberate people from those social hierarchies and power relations which exist offline.

These possibilities of the Internet have given the deliberative model of democracy a new sense of hope.



### **Limitations of existing studies**

Even though the Internet, as a new means of communication, has a potential to change the practices of deliberation and there has been a large amount of theoretical grounds on the relationship between the Internet and deliberative democracy, the empirical research on the Internet- deliberative democracy link has not been well explored. Although some existing empirical studies tackle the issue, several limitations are recognised.

Firstly, most previous studies have been conducted in the context of the established democracies of western countries with Asian context studies being largely limited. Secondly, most existing empirical measurements for the quality of online deliberation focus on specific aspects of deliberation and do not reflect the depth of theoretical discussions. Thirdly, in dealing with the impact of the Internet on deliberation, previous empirical studies have primarily attempted to measure the quality of deliberation in terms of deliberation outcomes, while much fewer numbers of process-oriented empirical studies have been found. Lastly, few attempts have been made to measure the deliberation quality of the heterogeneous group in an online environment. Furthermore, little attention has been given to a systematic comparison of deliberation quality between homogeneous and heterogeneous online groups.

### **Research questions**

The primary objective of this study is to explore the potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy through examining online deliberation practices. More specifically, this study examines the extent to which online deliberations correspond to the requirements of democratic deliberation in terms of individual and interpersonal dimensions. Additionally, this study investigates the effect of diversity in opinions, arguments and participants by scrutinising the different patterns of online deliberation between homogeneous and heterogeneous forums.

The main research question of this study can be stated as follows:

- 1) *To what extent do online deliberations meet the requirements of democratic deliberation process?*
- 2) *What differences in the process of deliberation exist between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups?*

To answer these questions, messages are drawn from *Nosamo and Hani*, the most influential and busiest online bulletin boards of the 2002 Korean Presidential election campaign.

## **1.2 The Internet and deliberative democracy in South Korea**

South Korea can provide a good example of the relationship between the Internet and democracy in the Asian context in that it is a newly democratised country similar to other Asian countries and has an extensive Internet penetration.

It is in 1987 that South Korea starts the transition from dictatorship to democracy through a strong opposition movement. Since then, South Korea has undergone a rapid process of consolidating the new democracy. Despite the positive accomplishments of political transformation such as institutionalisation of elections, democratic governance, and civil liberty, the new democracy of South Korea has revealed some growing pains (Im, 2004a, Im 2004b, Im 2005).

Continuous revelations of political corruption, scandals, and power struggles over partisan interests have been pointed out to be a chronic disease in South Korean politics. Accordingly, there has been growing scepticism among citizens about the practice of Korean democracy (Chu et al., 2001; Shin and Park, 2003). Consequently, deliberative democracy, in recent years, has been increasingly suggested as a new form of democracy to improve the quality of and to complement the deficiencies of the

representative democracy in South Korea (Park, 2000; Im, 2000, 2004a).

On the other hand, there has been growing expectation that the Internet can strengthen and enrich Korean democracy (Im, 2001; Uhm and Hague, 2001; Meinardus, 2003; Park et al., 2004). The potential for this to occur is quite high in South Korea. South Korea is the most wired nation on earth (Park et al., 2004). According to a report released by the OECD (2005), South Korea is ranked first in the world four years in a row since 2001 in terms of the number of broadband Internet subscribers. Furthermore, the International Telecommunication Union (2004) announces that South Korea has one of the highest rates of Internet usage in the world.

Furthermore, a survey carried out by the National Internet Development Agency of Korea (2005) shows that 47.5 percent of respondents report that they experience more chances to participate in political issues through the Internet. On the other hand, 66.1 percent of respondents report that the Internet enhances a citizen's right to know. In addition, 42.6 percent of total respondents are users of Internet messenger programs, an emerging communication method, a sharp hike from the 2002 record of 27.5 percent. Another survey also reports that nearly 57 percent of respondents reply that they visit politics-related websites and communicate with politicians at least once during the 2000 National Assembly election period (Choi, 2006).

Judging by the quantity of deliberation, it can be said that the Internet has the potential to function as the starting point for deliberative democracy in South Korea. Despite the vigorous online deliberation, however, the quality of online deliberation has been empirically less explored. Developing an understanding of the quality of online deliberation is critical to understand the potential of this medium as a public space for deliberation. The presence of democratic deliberation in this setting is equated with advancing deliberative democratic practices.

Previously, most studies on the deliberative potential of the Internet have focused on the western democracies, which share a long history of representative democracy and free and open debate. In the Asian context, however, there exist not only radically different



histories, but more significantly, different norms, beliefs, and systems underlying political communication (Janssen and Kies, 2004; Park et al., 2005).

### **1.3 Contribution to knowledge**

To overcome the limitations mentioned in the previous section of 1.1, the following approaches are adopted in this study.

Firstly, there is a critical gap in our understanding of how the Internet is likely to affect politics in nations outside of western countries (Kluver, 2005; Kluver and Banerjee, 2005). Therefore, this study explores the democratic potential of the Internet in the South Korean context. Secondly, it is understood that the quality of the deliberation process can be more important for democracy than actual outcomes. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the quality in terms of the deliberation process. Thirdly, this study develops a detailed and comprehensive measurement of the deliberation quality in order to fully explore the quality of online deliberation. Lastly, diverse and conflicting views among participants have been regarded as a critical factor for a better deliberation. Thus, this study investigates the effect of heterogeneity, diversity in opinions, arguments, and participants, by comparing the deliberation quality between heterogeneous and homogeneous groups.

### **1.4 Key terms and scope of the study**

#### **Deliberation**

In the broadest sense deliberation can be understood as careful consideration of an issue or problem. Much deliberation takes place as an intrasubjective process. People think through a problem they are facing by trying to understand its causes and consequences, or they are weighing the pros and cons of alternative choices before making a decision. Goodin (2000) refers to this process as ‘deliberation within’. However, most of the

scholarly discussion conceptualises deliberation as an intersubjective process. In other words, deliberation takes place in a social context where participants engage in a dialogue in order to exchange ideas or to find a solution for a problem they or the community at large are facing.

Furthermore, deliberation is regarded a central element of democracy. Democratic deliberation is a public debate about collective problems and the common good. Indeed, without this kind of public debate democracy would be meaningless and would soon lose its legitimacy. Modern democracies face an enormous degree of diversity – political, cultural and economical – and therefore require an open discourse to facilitate the integration of divergent ideas and interests. This applies even more to new democracies like South Korea which largely lacks a culture of democratic deliberation after public debate has been inhibited under authoritarian rule for many years.

Democratic deliberation can be distinguished between a vertical and a horizontal dimension (Tsagarousianou, 1999; Lebech, 2002; Price, 2003). Vertical deliberation refers to political elites communicating to a large number of citizens in order to justify their policies and to mobilise popular support, for example during election time. Vertical deliberation also involves bottom-up communication allowing “citizens to convey their values, interests and concerns to elites who act on behalf of the collective, and which permit elites to learn from, inform, and persuade their mass constituencies” (Price, 2003, p.3). Thus, the active dialogue between politicians and the citizenry is argued to make the representative system more representative. On the other hand, horizontal deliberation consists of communicative exchange between the citizens, outside of elite political circles. Political discussions amongst citizens can take place in organised settings such as deliberative polls as suggested by Fishkin (1991), or in more informal encounters of everyday life. Even though these informal exchanges might lack expertise and sophistication Habermas (1984, p.127) regards casual conversations as important elements of a democratic public sphere. Recently the Internet has emerged as an important forum where, besides face-to-face encounters, citizens can engage in public debate both with elites and with each other. This study narrows the focus of enquiry to the horizontal dimension of deliberation among citizens that take place through the

Internet.

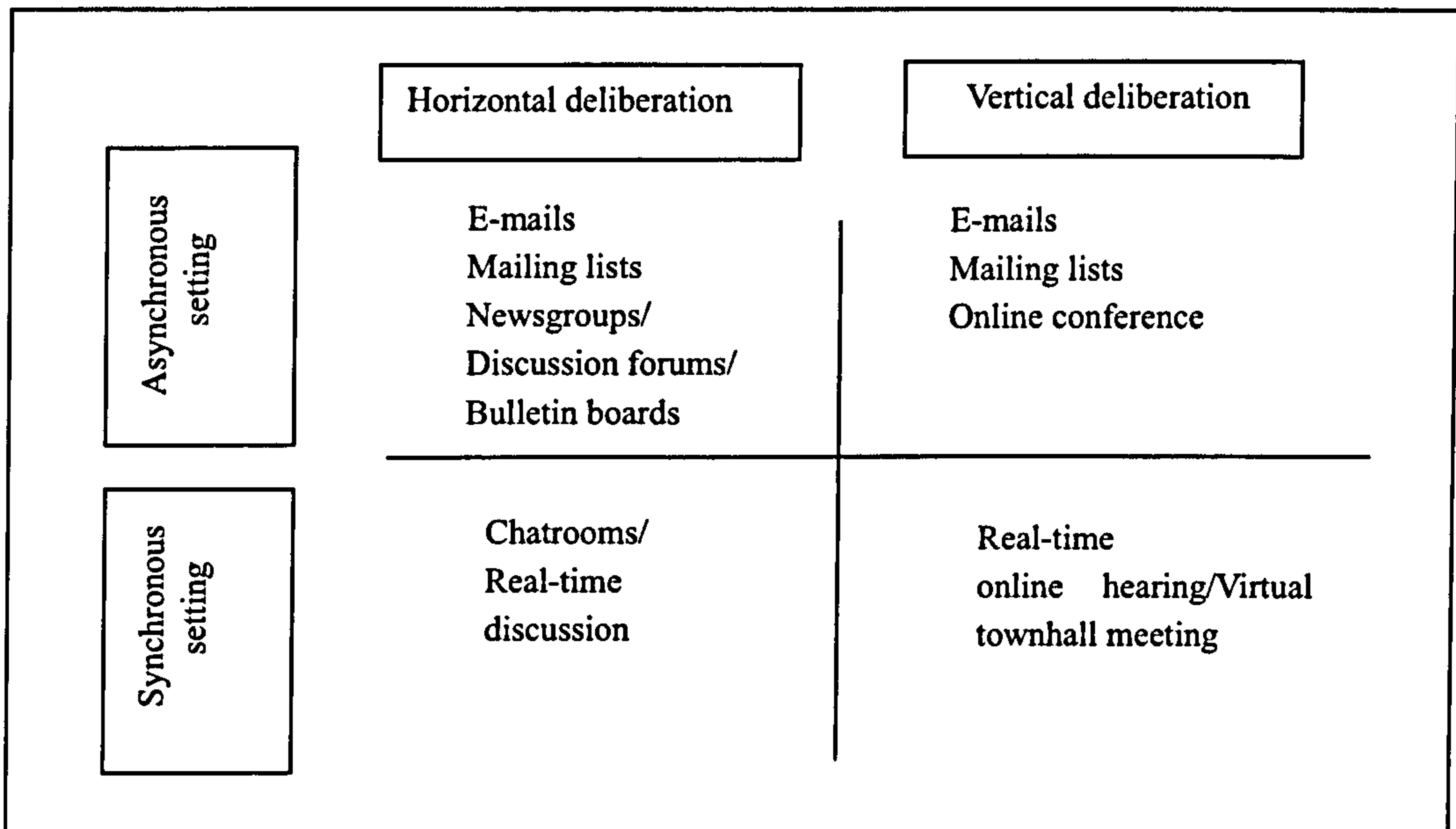
If deliberation is as vital for the health of democracy as widely assumed, then the quality of the public debate is of crucial importance. Political leaders just passing on orders, or citizens exchanging prejudices is certainly not conducive for democracy. A large body of literature is therefore concerned with identifying the quality criteria for democratic deliberation. The present study follows this school of thought. However, while most of this literature is normative in nature, this study attempts to explore the quality of online deliberation empirically.

### **The Internet**

The Internet can be defined as the interconnection of an electronic network that connects decentralised computers into an integral system of information employing the same communication language (Lebech, 2002). The Internet, as the means of communication medium, provides a variety of deliberation venues with slightly different characteristics such as *chat rooms*, *Usenet/email lists*, and *bulletin board systems* (BBS). Usenet/email lists are where messages posted by members are sent out via email. Chat rooms are sometimes referred to as text telephones due to its instantaneous nature. Participants type messages, within an assigned website or 'chat-room', post and reply to messages in a 'free-for-all' atmosphere. Bulletin board systems (BBS) are spaces provided by host websites and designed as 'bulletin boards' where discussions are organised under appropriate topics and headings. Figure 1.1 provides an overview of type of online deliberation venue.



Figure 1.1 Types of online deliberation venue



This study analyses messages posted on bulletin board systems (BBS) due to its advantages over similar online venues. The email system does not allow citizens to review other posts before posting their own views, while the instantaneous ‘free-for-all’ nature of chat-rooms do not allow for contemplation of thoughts and views. The bulletin board system is found to be the more favoured environment for deliberations.

**Heterogeneity**

A variety of definitions on heterogeneity has been given by researchers depending on their specific nature of study. This study defines heterogeneity in terms of the diversity in opinions and arguments, as well as in participants in the deliberation process.

**The deliberation process**

Based on the literature, this study identifies a set of concepts for individual and interpersonal dimensions. The concepts for individual dimension include opinionation, rationality, impartiality, and autonomy. This study defines opinionation as the

expression of the individual view or preference. Rationality is related with having a reason for individual preference. Impartiality means the ability to canvass and weigh different views. Finally, autonomy refers to independence, free from any intrusion and control.

The concepts for interpersonal dimension include reciprocity, mutual respect, sincerity, and corrigibility. This study defines reciprocity as a mutual exchange, a give and take of views and information. Mutual respect means respectfulness toward other participants and their views. Sincerity refers to open and honest attitudes towards others. Corrigibility means reflecting and revising individuals' initial preferences in the light of other's claims and critiques.

### **Scope of the study**

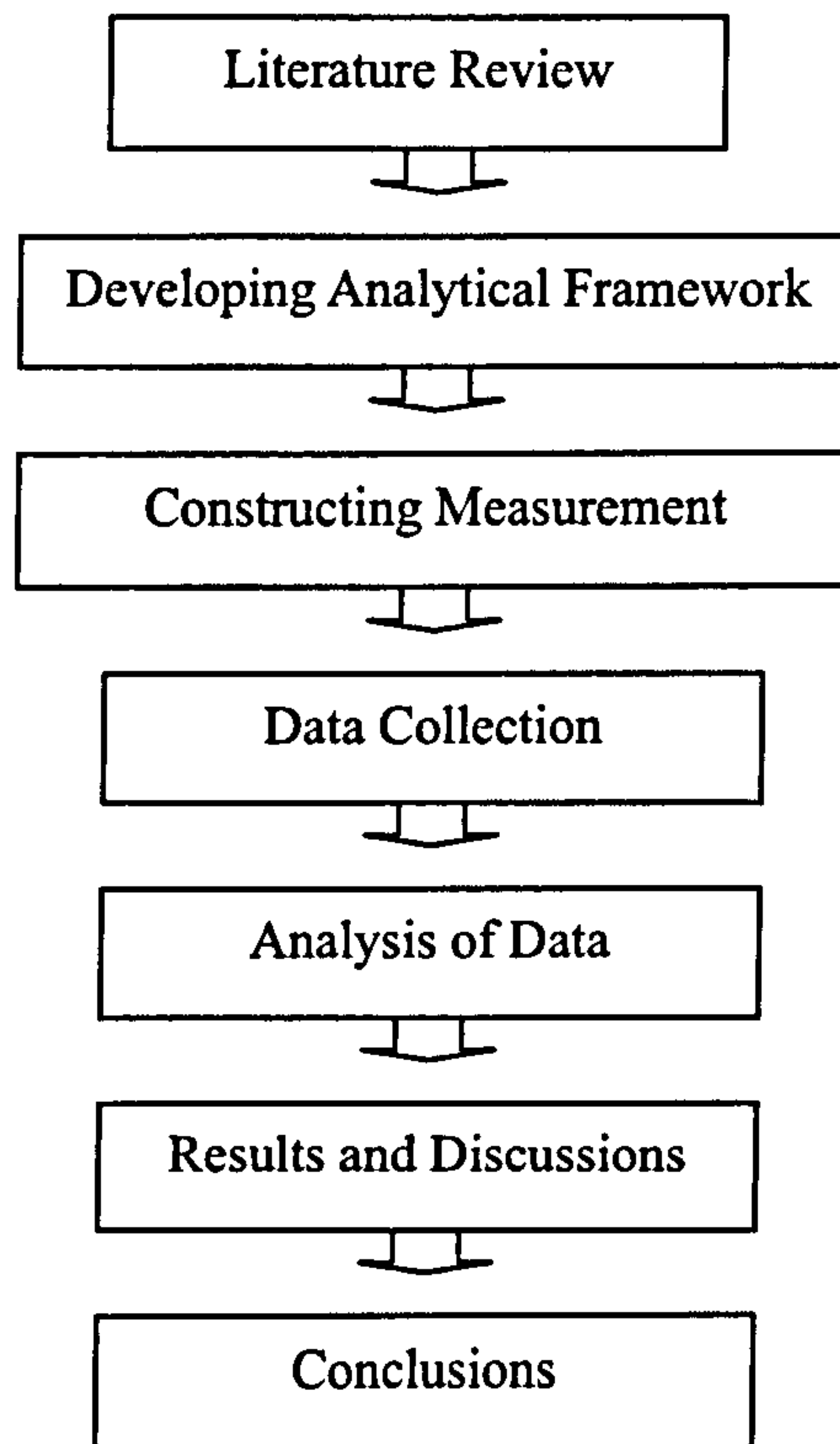
Apart from the definitions of those key terms mentioned in previous sections, the scope of this study is limited by the following circumstances and restrictions.

1. Data are collected from websites during the 2002 Korean Presidential election campaign
2. The study analyses messages before and after the TV debate between major candidates for the time period of 42 hours, from 21 November to 23 November 2002.

### 1.5 Structure of the thesis

Figure 1.2 shows the major steps in the research process of this study.

Figure 1.2 Research process of the study



The structure of the thesis reflects the research process. This study consists of six chapters. The first chapter indicates the introduction of the study with the research background, contributions to knowledge, definition of key terms, scope of the study, and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant and related literature on deliberative democracy and the impact of the Internet on democracy. The discussion is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on deliberative democracy. To begin with, the deliberative democracy model is positioned among various models of democracy. Then, features of deliberation are presented. Various dimensions of deliberation are then followed,



culminating in a discussion of the significance of heterogeneity in the process of deliberation. The second section looks into the potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy. Firstly, an overview of the Internet is highlighted. Then, the impact of the Internet on democracy, with particular respect to deliberation, is discussed. Empirical findings of the impact are then reported.

Chapter Three describes an overview of democracy and the Internet in South Korea. The discussion is divided into three sections. The first section highlights the status of democracy and deliberation in South Korea. To begin with, a brief history of democratisation is presented. Then, some problems of deliberation in South Korea are discussed. The second section introduces the Internet usage of South Korea. The third section describes the link between the Internet and democracy in South Korea.

Chapter Four describes the research methods and procedures used to achieve the objective of the study, which encompasses methods for data collection, measuring variables, and analysis strategy. To begin with, an overview of content analysis is presented. Then, the method for data collection is described. This includes the selection of cases as well as the process of data filing. Then, measurements for the variables in the research framework proposed in Chapter Two are discussed. This chapter then addresses an analysis strategy to analyse the obtained data.

Chapter Five tackles the results of the analyses. The analysis unit is the messages contributed to the two bulletin boards at a specified time period during the 2002 Presidential election campaign. A total of 2,223 messages are analysed. First, the results of the analyses of individual aspects are presented. The results of individual aspects include opinionation, rationality, impartiality and autonomy. Second, the results of the analyses of interpersonal aspects are provided. The results of interpersonal aspects include reciprocity, respect, sincerity and corrigibility. In addition, discussions on the results are prepared.

Chapter Six concludes the study with a summary of the research and implications for future studies. In addition, contributions to knowledge are presented in Chapter six.

## CHAPTER 2 Literature review

Representative democracy constitutes the baseline for modern democracies. However, deliberative democracy has been given attention as a complement for representative democracy in previous decades. Deliberative democracy is a political system based on deliberation among free and equal citizens, and deliberation is considered to be a core component of democracy. Deliberation can contribute to democracy in various ways, such as giving attention to the common good and improving the quality of opinions. As the Internet evolves, there have been debates on how this new media influences the democratic deliberation. The following sections explore literature on deliberative democracy and the impact of the Internet on deliberation.

### 2.1 Introduction

Over the past decades, a question has been grown among the researchers whether the principles of representative democracy are sufficient to sustain the legitimacy and effectiveness of democracy (Offe and Preuss, 1991; Price, 2003). Decreasing voter turnout has been a big problem around the globe (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Gray and Caul, 2000). In addition, citizens are increasingly skeptical of politicians, political parties, and political institutions (Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). These ominous signs point to a spreading dissatisfaction with the institutions and processes of representative democracy.

Deliberative democracy has ever been paid an increasing attention by researchers in recent days as a complement for representative democracy (Miller, 1993; Fishkin, 1995; Habermas 1996; Putman; 2000; Chambers 2003; Ackerman and Fishkin 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Porta, 2005; Jackman and Sniderman, 2006), and deliberation has been considered as a core component of democracy. Deliberation is based on mutual communications among citizens, and then any change of communication technology



may have the potential to change the practice of deliberation.

In recent days, the new communications technologies are creating a new environment of deliberation. In particular, the Internet has a great deal of potential to change the practice of deliberation providing important opportunities for discussion and interaction between citizens (Reingold, 1993; Barber, 1997; Kellner, 1998; Tsagarousianou, 1999; Jankowski and van Selm, 2000; Åström, 2001; Dahlberg, 2001a 2001b; Song et al., 2004; Jeager, 2005). Many studies show that the Internet delivers a great amount of political information without any constraints in time and space, and enables people to engage in easy and free two-way communication at an affordable cost. However, mixed points of views have been made regarding the impact of the Internet on the deliberation.

Some researchers argue that the Internet has a positive impact on deliberation by arguing that the Internet has an ability to facilitate communication among citizens or makes citizens' communication with elected officials easier. On the contrary, other researchers insist that the Internet has no impact or a negative impact on deliberation. They point out that the users of the Internet for political activity are already politically active so has no impact, fragments people into interest groups or enables deplorable forms of political deliberation then creates a negative effect.

## **2.2 Network society**

New communication technologies have a potential to change information flows, information contents and the way people interact, and thus to create a new type of social activities. In line with the rapid growth of the new communication technologies, the Internet in particular, there also has been much expectation among scholars on the impact and potential of the new technologies. For example, Harris (2007) notes that the new technologies stimulate connections between people that can lead to “social transactions – information-sharing, agreements, instrumental support and emotional support” (p.6).

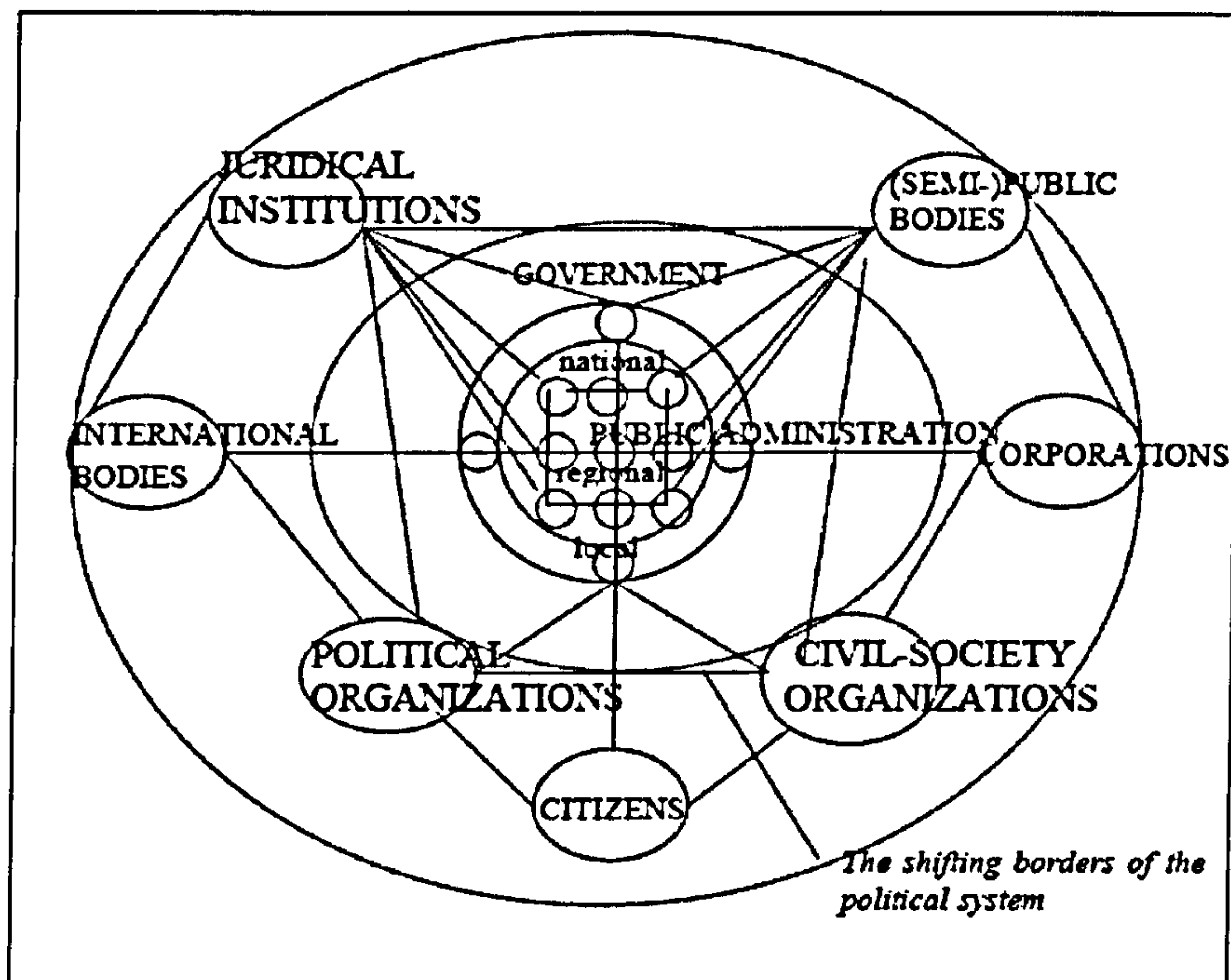


According to Castells (2000), the current society is characterised as a network society in which social activities are organised based on a high level of information exchange and use of information communication technologies. Castells (2004) defines the network society as “a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies” (p.3). He also defines social structure as “the organisational arrangements of humans in relations of production, consumption, reproduction, experience and power expressed in meaningful communication coded by culture” (p.3). In this vein, the network society is fundamentally about human relationships, and the communication technologies increase the range of possibilities for people to connect with others. Therefore, the rise of the network society can be understood as a new paradigm of human behavior in economy, politics, culture and society.

The paradigm in economy includes interdependence among countries as well as globalisation. New values in people's social life and social movements related to individual identity are phenomena of the paradigm in culture and society. On the other hand, political systems are reconstructed in the network society. The network society holds a promise of higher levels of participation and empowerment of citizens (Harris, 2007). Citizens in the network society are able to “create new contacts, retrieve useful political information, distribute and discuss retrieved information with others, and establish contacts with various centers of power that provide them with new channels of access and political interactivity” (Hacker, 2002, p.235)

van Dijk (2003) also argues that the new technologies poster “the creation of a networked political system and a state circumvented by networks of citizens and semi-autonomous or privatized public institutions” (p.2). His system-dynamic model of the political system (Figure 2.1) illustrates that the new technologies make a large contribution to shaping and materialising the relationships and continuous substantial change of the relationships between the actors and institutions.

Figure 2.1: A system-dynamic model of the political system



Source: van Dijk (2000), p.34

In this system institutional politics and public administrations at every level hand over power to other units directly getting into touch with each-other via networks (van Dijk, 2003). Furthermore, individuals, groups and organisations are linking in increasingly direct relations: “Using media networks the individual shapes organisations and societies at large more directly than before by their amplifying speed, reach and multi-functionality” (van Dijk, 2003, p. 10).

## 2.3 Deliberative democracy

### 2.3.1 Different models of democracy

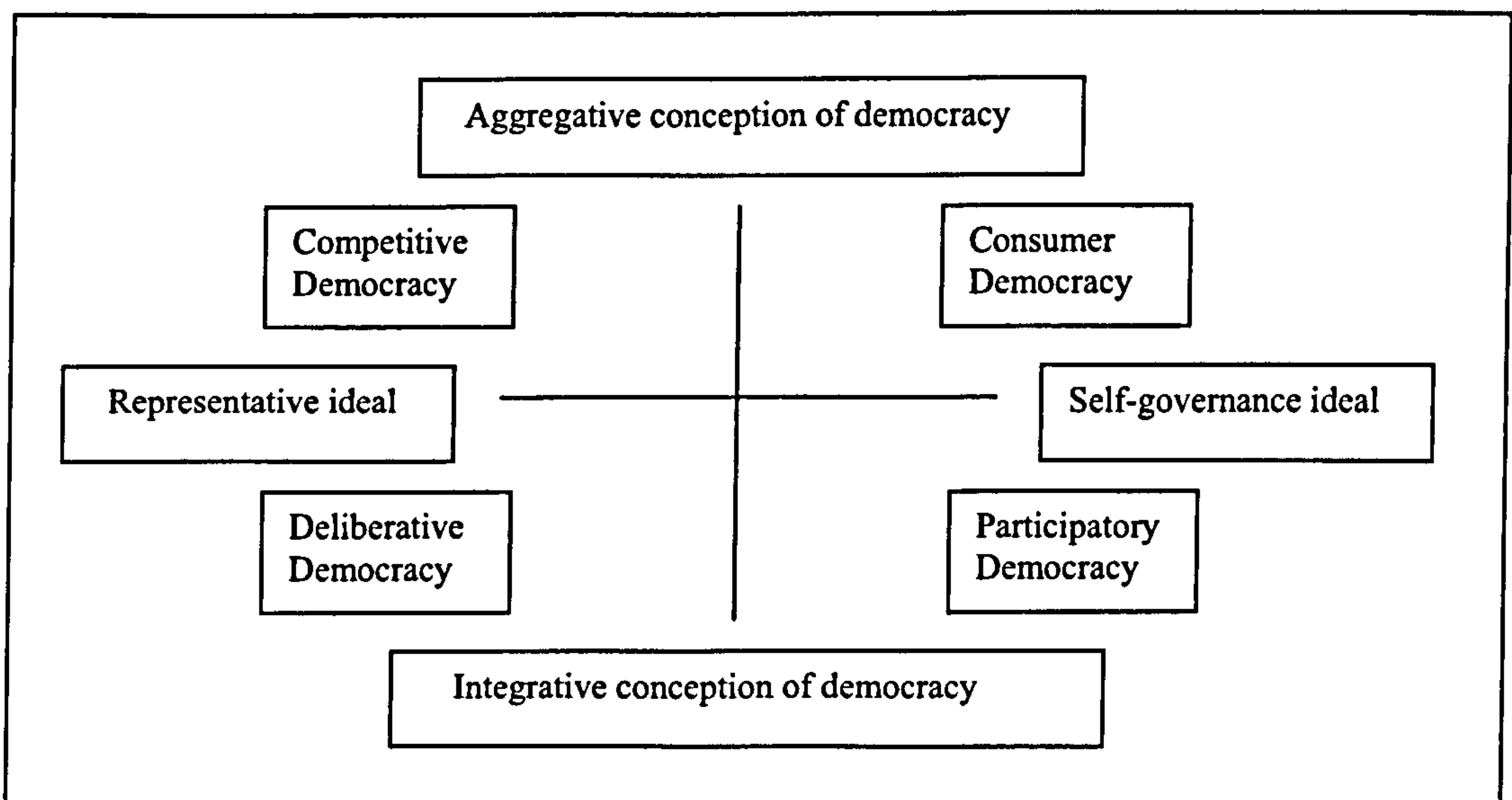
Democracy refers to a political system in which the people own sovereign power and, thus, the people choose their own government. The former US president, Abraham Lincoln’s definition well captures the concept of democracy: “...a government by the

people, of the people and for the people.”

There are different approaches to the study of democracy, and they are based on different perspectives. A common way of characterising different forms of democracy is the ‘democracy model’ (Rose and Sæbø, 2005). Torpe (2004) suggests a typology of democracy model. As shown in Figure 2.1, the typology is defined along two axes. The horizontal axis can be thought of as a scale ranging from a representative democratic ideal to a direct democratic ideal. Selection and control of political leaders by elections are emphasised at the left pole of the axis, while citizens’ ability to self-govern is emphasised toward the right pole of the axis.

According to Torpe (2004), the vertical axis represents the scale ranging from an integrative democracy to an aggregative democracy. The aggregative conception of democracy holds that government should make laws and policies that reflect the median voter. Mansbridge (1980) argues that democracy is mainly a tool used to aggregate individual preferences by voting; it is not a process by which individual preferences are shaped or influenced. The integrative conception, on the opposite pole, is based on an integration of a community of public-minded citizens.

Figure 2.2 Models of democracy



Source: Torpe (2004), p.8



The figure above combines the two axes. Various models of democracy are positioned along the axes into different quadrants. *Competitive democracy* is placed in upper left quadrant representing the representative version of the aggregative view of democracy. In this field, various elites compete for the support of and the chance to represent the general populace (Held, 1994).

According to the self-governing ideal, the aggregative perspective on democracy is idealised in *consumer democracy*. Consumer democracy is based on the aggregative conception where individual citizens have the opportunity to accumulate those public services they are interested in as consumers and thereby influence its contents. This version has more of an affinity toward the individual self-governance ideal than that of the representative ideal.

In the integrative conception of democracy, the individual is considered to be a part of greater community. Opinion formation, deliberation, and decision-making are viewed as collective processes based on the collective rights and duties of the general populace. While both *participatory and deliberative democracies* share the integrative conception, they lie on opposing poles of the representative and self-governance axis. *Participatory democracy* emphasises the active and direct participation of citizens placing it in the lower right quadrant, while *deliberative democracy*, where deliberation, rather than voting, is stressed as the key element to democratic legitimacy, is placed in the lower left quadrant.

In practice, however, no single democratic system is confined to a single theoretical model. The reality is that a democratic system shows traits of varying if not all models of democracy. Most agree that the representative model of democracy dominates governments around the world. It is perceived as the baseline for modern democracies.

However, researchers have been questioning its heightened status with increasing regularity over the past decades. Questions have been raised over whether the principles of representative democracy are sufficient to sustain the legitimacy and effectiveness of democracy. Researchers have pointed to a low voter turnout around the globe (Dalton

and Wattenberg, 2000; Gray and Caul, 2000) coupled with increasing voter skepticism of politicians, political parties, and political institutions (Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). These ominous signs point to a spreading dissatisfaction with the institutions and processes of representative democracy. As a result, deliberative democracy, in recent days, has been gaining an increasing attention by researchers both from communications studies and from the political science field as a complement for representative democracy.

### **2.3.2 Deliberative democracy model**

In this approach, democracy is conceptualised as “a framework of social and institutional conditions facilitating free discussion among equal citizens and the bond between authorisation to exercise public power and such discussion” (Kaposi, 2006, p.10). Although many scholars suggest varying ideas of deliberative democracy from different backgrounds, there is an extensive overlap among the suggestions. That is the idea that deliberative democracy is decision-making by deliberation among equal and free citizens (Cohen, 1997; Elster, 1998, Kim et al., 1999; Waldman, 2001; Wright and Street, 2005; Kaposi, 2006).

Cohen (1997) describes deliberative democracy as “an association whose affairs are governed by the public deliberation of its members” (p.67). Waldman (2001) also defines deliberative democracy as “a system in which decisions are made not by coercion or bargaining among interests but through a discursive process in which citizens collectively consider and debate alternatives” (p.153). In addition, Kim et al. (1999) state that deliberative democracy is “a discursive system where citizens share information about public affairs, talk politics, form opinions, and participate in political processes” (p. 361). Furthermore, Wright and Street (2005) state that deliberative democracy refers to “a specific form of participation: communication through a discussion between individuals about issues which concern them, leading to some form of consensus and collective decision” (p.1).



According to Elster (1998), the idea has two important parts: democratic and the deliberative part. “All agree, I think, that the notion includes collective decision making with the participation of all who will be affected by the decision of their representatives: this is the democratic part. Also, all agree that it includes decision making by means of arguments offered *by* and *to* participants who are committed to the values of rationality and impartiality: this is the deliberative part” (p.8).

The idea of deliberative democracy has been argued for a long time. According to Graham (2002), the work of Pericles in fifth-century BC in ancient Greece lays the foundations of deliberative democracy: “Our public men, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuit of industry, are still fair judges of public matter, for unlike any other nation, we regard the citizens...[as] able to judge proposals even if we cannot originate them; instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all” (Thucydides II.40 in Elster, 1998, p. 1).

In modern society, deliberative democracy has enjoyed a revival over the past couple of decades. Many scholars have increasingly emphasised citizen deliberation as an essential prerequisite for the health of democracy (Barber, 1984; Habermas, 1984; Agre, 1989; Post, 1993; Sanders 1997; Elster, 1998; Hill and Hughes, 1998; Macedo, 1999; Coleman and Gotze 2001). Barber (1984), for example, notes that “there can be no strong democratic legitimacy without ongoing talk” (p.174). Coleman and Gotze (2001) also maintain that healthy democracies are closely related to robust and inclusive deliberation. They argue that “increase in public information and deliberation will produce a stronger and more frequently renewable and reviewable mandate from the people to their chosen representatives” (p.123).

Adding to this, Hill and Hughes (1998) argue that “discourse is at the heart of democracy” (p. 62). Sanders (1997) also notes that both quantity and quality of conversation can be regarded “a standard for the accomplishment of democracy” (p. 347). Furthermore, Post (1993) states that “democracy begins in conversation (p. 171).

Agre (1989) also points out the importance of deliberation in modern society by describing “dialogues as the first obligation of citizenship” (p. 6). In addition, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) emphasise “public discourse and reason as crucial foundations for the viability of modern democracy” (p. 3).

Some researchers have asserted that this strong ‘deliberative turn’ (Dryzek 2000) in modern democracy is largely attributed to the concerns for the health and well being of contemporary representative democracy (Miller, 1993; Fishkin, 1995; Habermas 1996; Putman; 2000; Chambers 2003; Ackerman and Fishkin 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Porta, 2005; Jackman and Sniderman, 2006). Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) argue that deliberative democracy is emerged to “reinvigorate modern democracy by strengthening the active involvement of the citizenry in the process of finding solutions for contested political issues” (p.3).

In addition, Porta (2005) sees deliberative democracy as a response to two related challenges to democratic governance. In modern times, citizens are becoming less interested in politics and, more importantly less willing to participate. This is coupled with a declining capacity of political parties to bridge society and the state, while the commercialisation of the mass media reduces their capacity to act as an arena for debating public decisions. In the meanwhile, actual political power is shifting to institutions which owe less to the actual voters. Globalisation, among other socioeconomic factors, is weakening the accountability of political institutions and their practices. The overall effect is a diminished ability to intervene in the formation of collective identities, thus reducing their capacity to satisfy increasingly fragmented demands.

Price (2003) also claims that deliberative democracy “has emerged in tandem with a multi-faceted critique of contemporary social and political life” (p.4). He states that citizens, in modern society, “rarely muster the interest to follow public issues carefully, much less to sort out its ideas through active discussion and debate” (p.4). Furthermore, under the influence of mass media, citizens are “converted into a body that consumes political views disseminated by elites,” rather than “an autonomous,

deliberating body that discovers its own views through conversation” (p.4).

Many researchers view the decreasing voter turnout and increasing gap between the citizenry and the body politic as an erosion of citizenship. Civic engagement indicators, such as low voter turnout among others, show that a very small number of citizens is actively participating in political processes (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Gray and Caul, 2000; Putnam, 2000).

Jackman and Sniderman (2006) state that the premise of deliberative democracy is that democratic ideal itself should be expanded to discussions between citizens about public affairs, rather than being “confined to traditional forms of political participation—voting, working for a party, participating in a voluntary organisation, and protesting”(p. 272). In this regard, Park (2000) argues that deliberative democracy can be thought of as a ‘communication project’ whose goal is to boost citizens’ free and equal deliberation of public issues and thereby increase the quality of the existing institutions of representative democracy.

### **2.3.3 Concept of deliberation**

It is generally accepted among a broad range of researchers that deliberation is an essential component of democracy (Agre, 1984; Barber, 1984; 1991; Habermas, 1984; Hill and Hughes, 1998; Coleman and Gotze 2001; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004). As a means of political communication, deliberation has received ever increasing attention in recent days and, thus, the term deliberation is widely adopted in many research areas, such as public policy analysis, political philosophy and public opinion, and communication (Gastil, 2000).

While there has been no consensus regarding the definition of deliberation, deliberation can be broadly understood as careful consideration of an issue or problem. In the literature, many researchers provide a variety of definition of deliberation. (Habermas, 1984; Bohman 1996; Poisner, 1996; Fishkin 2000; Waldman, 2001; King, 2003;



McGregor 2004; Choi and Kim, 2005).

In an early attempt to define deliberation, Habermas (1984) acknowledges deliberation as a process to solve problems by inviting and encouraging arguments from all sides in the public sphere. McGregor (2004) frames deliberation as the “act of collective decision making by all who will be affected and the use of procedures that ensure engagement in rational and impartial argument” (p. 91).

In addition, Waldman (2001) describes deliberation as “reasoned discussion among equals about public issues with the goal of ascertaining the best course of action so as to optimize the common good” (p. 156). Similarly, Rawls (1971) defines deliberation as “a process in which the reasoned public with equal voice and positions freely participates in deliberative discussion for a rationally motivated consensus” (In Ryu, 2004, p.6). Furthermore, Choi and Kim (2005) conceptualise deliberation as “a process of freely exchanging reasoned political views with those who have different political views with open mindedness that can result in an understanding of different political views, which can contribute to common good” (p.7). In addition, Poisner (1996) defines deliberation as “a discussion in which participants engage in reasoned discourse about what action serves the common good” (p.56).

Furthermore, Bohman (1996) defines “a joint cooperative activity” (p.27) by which “people can consider alternative viewpoints and new reasons” (p.40). Furthermore, Fishkin (2000) frames deliberation an essential process that filters and refines – one that converts unreflective and impulsive mass preferences into sound and thoughtful public opinions. Similarly, Gutmann and Thompson (1996) contend that deliberation is a continual process by which rational opinion is presented and reciprocated equally. King (2003) conceptualises deliberation as “a process of careful and informed reflection on facts and opinions, generally leading to a judgment on the matter at hand” (p. 3).

On the other hand, other researchers (Dryzek 2001; Thiede 2005) point out characteristics of deliberation which can be distinguished from other communication types. Dryzek (2001) distinguishes deliberation from other types of communication by



arguing that “deliberators are amenable to changing their judgments, preference, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception” (p.1). Thiede (2005) also notes that deliberation can be characterised as “a flow of communication between public opinion and political institutions based on persuasive argument about public issues, implying the citizens’ political power” (p.146).

Table 2.1 summarises the underlying concepts of deliberation identified in the previous studies.

Table 2.1 Underlying concepts of deliberation

Researcher	Underlying Concepts
Rawls (1971)	A process for a rationally motivated consensus
Habermas (1984)	A process to solve social problems
Poisner (1996)	Engagement in reasoned discourse about what action serves the common good
Bohman (1996)	Joint cooperative activity
Gutmann and Thompson (1996)	A process in which rational opinion is presented equally and reciprocally
Poisner (1996)	Engagement in reasoned discourse about what action serves the common good
Fishkin (2000)	Converting unreflective and impulsive mass preferences into sound public opinion
Waldman (2001)	Reasoned discussion among equals about public issues
King (2003)	A process of careful and informed reflection on facts and opinions
McGregor (2004)	Act of collective decision making
Choi and Kim (2005)	A process of freely exchanging reasoned political views in order to obtain common good
Thiede (2005)	A flow of communication based on persuasive argument

Furthermore, deliberation can be classified into two broad dimensions (Tsagarousianou, 1999; Lebech, 2002; Price, 2003): 1) vertical deliberation and 2) horizontal deliberation. In vertical deliberation, large numbers of citizens interact with fewer numbers of elites.

The elite/citizen interactions “allow citizens to convey their values, interests and concerns to elites who act on behalf of the collective, and which permit elites to learn from, inform, and persuade their mass constituencies” (Price, 2003, p.3). On the other hand, horizontal deliberation consists of interactions within and among individual citizens, outside of elite political circles.

Price (2003) argues that today’s democratic society is structured (political parties, interest groups, among others) to reflect organised means of vertical elite/citizen communication. Open governments and the media serve as examples of downward communications, while elections, referenda, and polls serve as examples of upward flows. In the past, active dialogues between politicians and the citizenry are stressed to make the system more representative. Today, more attention is being paid to the benefits of horizontal interaction between citizens. Real democracy is realised only when opportunities for ordinary people to carry on a dialogue, and act on, matters of common interest (Åström, 2001).

#### **2.3.4 Effects of deliberation**

With the growing interest on deliberation, there has been much debate over the possible effect(s) that deliberation can produce in the literature.

##### **Positive effects**

Many scholars have recently anticipated that deliberation produces a range of democratic outcomes. Some researchers argue that deliberation promotes a great feeling of democratic legitimacy (Manin, 1987; Fishkin 1995; Grogan and Gusmano, 2001; Mandelberg, 2002). Mendelberg (2002), for example, argues that the legitimacy of the constitutional order will grow because people have a say in and an understanding of that order. Fishkin (1995) also notes that faith in the democratic process will be enhanced as people who deliberate become empowered and feel that their government truly is of the people. Grogan and Gusmano (2001) share the view arguing that decisions emerging

from an open and inclusive deliberative process should be considered more democratically legitimate than decisions emerging from an aggregative voting process, to wit deliberation is “specifically attuned to principles of inclusion and equality”: “in general, democratic decisions are considered more legitimate if there is agreement that all the relevant voices equally heard” (p.49). In this regard, Manin (1987) argues where democracy’s “source of legitimacy” rests – the “deliberation of all” (p. 351)

In addition, deliberation is valued as a vehicle for the development of the public-spirited way of thinking about social problems (Mansbridge, 1991; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Bohman, 1998; Fearson, 1998; Elster, 1998; Grogan and Gusmano, 2001; Graham, 2002; Mendelberg, 2002). Graham (2002), for example, argues that it is the notion of the common good that makes the deliberative model move beyond all other models in the attempt to capture the ideal of democracy. Deliberation, even at the most superficial level, forces the participant to “consider his or her own interests in light of the common good; most people modify or adjust their views after subjecting them to public scrutiny” (Graham, 2002, p.19).

Grogan and Gusmano (2001) also maintain that through the process of deliberation, citizens may begin to think about their community, or their state or country, and not just their own self-interest. Similarly, Mansbridge (1991) argues that deliberation can serve the common good, where models of democracy based on narrow self interest and negotiation may fail. Elster (1998) adds to this by noting that while voting and/or bargaining alone focus on individual preferences and motives, open deliberation among citizens tends to transform individual preferences into a ‘common will’ based on the common good.

In addition, Bohman (1998) maintains that deliberation may generate altruistic behavior since it encourages citizens to move beyond self-interests and orientate them around the interests of the common good. People in conflict will “set aside their adversarial, win-lose approach and understand that their fate is linked with the fate of the other, that although their social identities conflict they are tied to each other in a common recognition of their interdependence” (Mendelberg, 2002, p.2). Gutmann and Thompson



(1996) also note that deliberation encourages individuals to think about public interest, not just their own interest. Likewise, Fearson (1998) suggests that “the advantage of public discussion is participants might be more disinclined to make or support purely self-interested proposals for fear of appearing selfish. Therefore, even if people want to appear unselfish, consequent efforts to dress up narrowly private interest as the public good may positively affect the outcome” (p.54).

Deliberation is also assumed to enrich democracy by improving opinion quality (Barber, 1984; Manin, 1987; Dryzek; 1990; Fishkin, 1991, 1995, 2000; Bohman, 1996; Chambers, 1996; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Young, 1996; Page, 1996; Park, 2000; Grogan and Gusmano, 2001; Barabas, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Price, 2003; Song et al., 2004). Barber (1984), for example, maintains that citizens engaging in opportunities to discuss and reflect upon public issues are more likely to have highly sophisticated and better informed opinions. Similarly, Song et al. (2004) argue that deliberation makes citizens more enlightened and, thus, better equipped as democratic citizens, is a basic idea in deliberative democracy theory. Adding to this, Young (1996) states that expressing, questioning, and challenging differently situated knowledge “...adds to the social knowledge of all the participants” and that “this greater social objectivity increases their wisdom for arriving at just solutions to collective problems” (p.128). Along similar lines, Fishkin (2000) maintains that horizontal discussion among citizens is vital as it can “convert unreflective and impulsive mass preference into sound or at least more coherent and thoughtful – public opinion” (In Price, 2003, p.4).

According to Manin (1987) the idea of the truth emerging from deliberation is quite common and the western political tradition, from Plato and Aristotle, has produced various versions of it. It is further argued that no single individual is omniscient and, therefore, needs to deliberate with others to complete his knowledge in order to come to a sound and meaningful decision. Similarly, Gambetta (1998) argues that deliberation can create a ‘pool of information’. Through the process of deliberation information, experiences and knowledge are contributed into a collective from which the public can draw from in order to make better and more informed decisions (Graham, 2002). In this vein, Fearson (1998) states that “deliberation allows one person or group to represent to



others how things look from perspectives, situations and vantage points that the others had never considered or thought of” (p. 52).

Moreover, Grogan and Gusmano (2001) claim that innovation is nurtured and problems such as limited knowledge are overcome through deliberation. One example given is when a compromise cannot be reached on a known set of policy alternatives. The discussion process may create an incentive to new solutions. The upshot is that not only is a new solution found, but a greater consensus has been reached over the policy decision. Similarly, Gambetta (1998) maintains that “deliberation may introduce into discussion new solutions to shared problems” (p. 22).

If citizens reach more reflective and sound opinions, they will directly and indirectly affect politics (Habermas 1996; Park, 2000; Barabas, 2002). This is the essence of the argument Barabas (2002) makes when she maintains, “deliberation improves opinion quality, and since public opinion often foreshadows public policy, then deliberation ultimately benefits democracy itself as people make better policy choices” (p.2) Along similar lines, Habermas (1996) states that public opinion is generated through deliberation in the public sphere, and it is transmitted to the state and public policymaking. Thus, “communicative power” can surpass “administrative power.”

Table 2.2 summarises positive effects of deliberation identified in the literature.

Table 2.2 Positive effects of deliberation

Points	Authors
Growth of the legitimacy of the constitutional order	Manin, 1987; Fishkin (1997), Grogan and Gusmano (2001), Mandelberg (2001)
Enhancement of consideration on common good	Mansbridge (1991), Gutmann and Thompson (1996), Bohman (1998), Fearson (1998), Elster (1998), Grogan and Gusmano (2001), Graham (2002), Mendelberg (2002)
Improvement of public opinion quality	Barber (1984), Manin (1987), Dryzek (1990), Fishkin (199, 1995, 2000), Bohman (1996), Chambers (1996), Gutmann and Thompson (1996); Young (1996); Page (1996), Park (2000), Grogan and Gusmano, (2001), Barabas (2002), Price (2003), Song et al. (2004)

### Negative effects

On the other hand, a number of critics express scepticism about the positive role of public deliberation (Mansbridge, 1983; Warren, 1992; Sanders, 1997; Schudson, 1997; Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000; Macoubrie, 2003).

Schudson (1997), for example, argues that casual and spontaneous conversation has little to do with democracy, stating that “nothing in conversation itself suggests democracy” (p. 305). Sanders (1997) also call into question the connection between deliberation and just outcomes: “It isn’t clear, after all, that this wide endorsement has itself emerged through a genuinely deliberative process: democratic theorists are a select group who cannot and do not claim in any way to represent the perspectives of ordinary citizens” (p. 347). Likewise, Price (2003) maintains that although a number of surveys find that deliberation produce desirable outcomes, “it is very difficult to sort out whether discussion is a *causal* factor or merely one of myriad ‘symptoms’ of good citizenship” (p.3).

Furthermore, some critics argue that deliberation might produce undesired effects. Price (2003), for example, claim that despite the widespread belief that public deliberation

improves opinion quality, deliberation can “produce undesired collective outcomes, such as opinion polarisation and shifts of opinion in new and risky directions” (p. 5).

Adding to this, Warren (1996) argues deliberation actually undermines community by disrupting the daily routines of citizens, eroding solidarity and engendering suspicion. Warren (1992) also argues that rather than promote a better citizenry, deliberation would be more likely to exacerbate problems by “exposing injustices” (p. 21). In a similar vein, Mansbridge (1983) suggests that deliberation in certain circumstances may exacerbate conflict. He argues that “collecting a diversity of interests under one deliberative roof is unlikely to produce the civic-mindedness that many deliberative theorists envision or the truth about the common good for which they hope” (In Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000, p, 172).

Furthermore, Macoubrie (2003) argues that “citizens in general may not be as competent to deliberate as experts and those who are more educated, or that inequalities of status, power, and information might actually cause deliberative processes to favor elites, or that widespread deliberation could actually lead to more entrenched conflict or greater polarisation, and the communicative opposite of deliberation, capitulation (p.1)”.

Table 2.3 summarises negative effects of deliberation identified in previous study.

Table 2.3 Negative effects of deliberation

Points	Authors
Opinion polarisation and shifts of opinion in undesirable directions	Price (2003), Warren (1992, 1996)
Increase conflict	Mansbridge (1983), Warren (1992), Bohman and Rehg (1997), Macoubrie (2003)



### **Empirical studies on the effect of deliberation**

On the other hand, a rich body of literature has emerged to test empirically the basic assumptions of the deliberative democracy model. Some empirical works provide the evidence that validates the optimism of deliberation. delli Carpini (1997) reports that participation in deliberative discussions about the role of money in politics enabled citizens to become more knowledgeable about the issue and more trusting of each other, empowering them to actively engage in other forms of civic discussions. Administering the same issues questionnaire to participants before and after their participation in deliberative forums, Fishkin (1995) finds that participation in the forums facilitates individual and collective opinion change and significant learning on the policy issues discussed. Fishkin and Luskin (1999) also report that after participation in the National Issues Convention (NIC), participants show a greater confidence in their political knowledge, judgment, and influence. In addition, participants express a greater trust in politicians and elected officials.

Gastil and Dillard (1999) also empirically support that deliberation has a positive effect on sound opinion formation. In the analysis of seven similar National Issues Forums, they find that after discussions of political issues, participants have more differentiated and integrated views, and exhibit a less attitudinal uncertainty. Kim et al. (1999)'s study also confirm the promise of deliberation. They find that people who actively engage in political conversation more often tend to have more consistent, clearer, and thought-out opinions. Adding to this, Barabas (2002) demonstrates that political deliberation in a deliberative forum as well as in ordinary situations increases knowledge and alters preferences toward Social Security reform options. Cappella et al. (2002) also find that deliberation improves awareness of the reasons behind opposing views.

On the other hand, Denver et al. (1995) report no changes in the attitudes of participants as a result of deliberation in their study on the Granada 500, a British public debate program. Furthermore, Mansbridge (1983) report increased conflict among people attending a New England town meeting is a result of deliberation. Consensual deliberation is suggested to be avoided in the presence of dominating conflicting



interests. Similarly, in their study of two town meetings devoted to education desegregation policies, Mendelberg and Oleske (2000) find that in a meeting on school desegregation, participants suffer increased frustration and anger coupled with intense dissatisfaction as a result of the deliberation.

Table 2.4 summarises previous empirical studies on the effects of deliberation.

Table 2.4 Empirical researches on the effects of deliberation

Author	Results
Denver et al. (1995)	Deliberation has no effect on opinion change
Fishkin (1991, 1995)	Participation in deliberative forums leads to shift of opinion and significant learning
Delli Carpini (1997)	Participation in deliberative discussions improves knowledge about issue and increase trust among participants.
Fishkin and Luskin (1999)	Deliberation increases confidence in political knowledge, judgment, and trust in politicians
Gastil and Dillard (1999)	Discussions of political issues improves schematic integration and differentiation and reduces attitudinal uncertainty
Kim et al. (1999)	Political conversation facilitates opinion consistency, argument quality, consideredness and opinionation
Mansbridge (1999)	Deliberation increases conflict
Barabas (2002)	Participation in a deliberative forum improves knowledge and lead to opinion change
Mendelberg and Oleske (2000)	Public deliberation leads to intense dissatisfaction and anger

### 2.3.5 Quality of deliberation

No agreement has yet been made on whether deliberation should be evaluated in terms of its outcome or its process (Elster, 1998). This may result from the fact that “in many instances the boundaries between the process and outcome of public deliberation have been blurred rather than distinct” (Haas, 1999, p.355). Nonetheless, there can be two broad ways to evaluate the quality of deliberation: (1) one can judge the quality by the process of deliberation or (2) by the outcomes that are eventually attained (Price and

Niejens, 1997).

As highlighted in the previous section 2.2.4, most of the existing literature focuses on outcomes (Fishkin, 1991, 1995; delli Carpini, 1997; Fishkin and Luskin, 1999; Gastil and Dillard, 1999; Kim, Wyatt and Katz, 1999; Cappella et al; Barabas 2002, 2004a); however, little scholarly attention has been given to how deliberation can produce such outcomes (Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000; Page and Shapiro; Ryfe, 2005). In this regard, Barabas (2002) criticises that the previous studies on deliberation “actively seek, occasionally find, and enthusiastically celebrate evidence of changes in aggregate survey frequencies” (p.4).

While outcome is important, many researchers emphasise the process of deliberation itself as an important aspect that needs more attention. Barabas (2002), for example, argues that it is important to pay attention to “the underlying public opinion formation processes at work” (p.4). Price and Niejens (1997) also note that “judging the quality of public opinion is inextricably bound to judging the quality of democratic decision making process” (p.344). According to Habermas (1991), it is neither the decision-making nor the actual decision that legitimises democracy; rather, it is the discursive qualities of deliberation, the process by which decisions are made via reasoning and arguing, which lends legitimacy to democracy. Furthermore, Graham (2002) points out that “the actual point at which decisions are made is not as important for democracy as is the discussion, the political dialogue” (p.18).

Jankowski and van Os (2003) also state that outcomes reached as a result of discussions are not as important as the discussions themselves. For the discussion itself contributes to the quality of political life by probing, identifying and considering alternative solutions for the public good. In pursuing this debate, Mutz (2002) notes, “the contributions to democratic ends that political conversations are supposed to make depend critically on whether such talk reaches the standards necessary to be deemed ‘deliberation,’ ‘discourse,’ or, in Habermas’ (1989) terms, an ‘ideal speech situation’” (p. 111).



### **Dimensions of deliberation process**

While there has been no clear consensus regarding what constitutes democratic deliberation process (Macedo, 1999), a number of researchers contend that democratic deliberation can be understood to have two essential dimensions (Manin, 1987; Price and Niejens, 1997; Kim et al., 1999; Goodin 2000; Park, 2000; Burkhalter et al., 2002; Graham and Witschge, 2003; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Choi and Kim, 2005; Stromer-Galley, 2005): (1) individual dimension and (2) interpersonal dimension. While individual dimension implies the inner process of reflecting and developing one's own view (intrapersonal reflection), interpersonal dimension involves the social process of considering others and their perspectives.

Manin (1987) maintains that the concept of deliberation has both an individual and a collective meaning. In the individual sense, each citizen undergoes the deliberative process alone, arguing and weighing problems and solutions. In the collective sense, the citizen then repeats the process together with other citizens.

Price and Niejens (1997), contending that the quality of public opinion is closely related to the quality of democratic decision making, suggest that the democratic decision making process involves multiple dimensions: social interaction and personal reflection. Furthermore, they propose a series of possible criteria for quality of each dimension. These include the extent of information sought, the extent of discussion and debate, freedom from censorship, control, or social pressure, reciprocity, airing of diverse viewpoints and efficiency.

Similarly, Park (2000) maintains that democratic deliberation has "two interrelated but separate and independent dimensions" (p.4): individuality and civility. Individuality relates to building and developing one's own view. He identifies a range of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural elements of individuality. The cognitive elements include range of opinion, sophistication, consistency, and differentiation. The attitudinal elements are composed of certainty, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-trust, and conviction. The behavioural elements consist of act of speaking, assertiveness, argument, and pro-con



debate. On the other hand, civility relates to one's awareness of others. He also identifies a range of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural aspects of civility. The cognitive elements of civility include range of understanding, sophistication, consideredness, and perspective taking. The attitudinal elements are composed of flexibility, empathy, tolerance, trust in others, and reciprocity. The behavioural elements include act of listening, receptiveness, compromise, and consensus.

delli Carpini et al. (2004) also state that deliberation involves not only exchanges between two or more citizens, but also includes the thought processes of an individual citizen. The former refers to deliberation that "occurs anytime a citizen either actively justifies her views (even to herself) or defends them against a challenge (even from herself)" (In Gunderson, 1995, p. 199). The latter refers to "a cognitive process in which individuals form, alter, or reinforce their opinions as they weigh evidence and arguments from various points of view" (In, Lindeman, 2002, p. 199).

In addition, Goodin (2000) maintains that deliberation has two fundamentally different aspects; internal-reflective aspect and external-collective aspect. The former implies "the weighing reasons for and against any given course of action" (p.81), all that can take place within the head of each individual. Regarding the latter, he notes that "the sort of give and take involved in weighing reasons for and against make deliberation an essentially argumentative, and hence discursive, notion (p.81)". He further states even where deliberation proceeds entirely within a single person's head, such an internal discourse is "inevitably modeled upon, and thus parasitic upon, our interpersonal experiences of discussion and debate" (p.81).

Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) also make a similar argument. They maintain that "a viable democratic process not only requires sound reasoning and the rationality of individual preferences, but also the willingness of the participants to consider others" (p.4). They argue that "Dahl's (1989) theory of polyarchy can be taken as a prominent example to illustrate the importance of both individual sophistication and social attitudes" (p.6). 'Enlightened understanding', as coined by Dahl (pp. 220-224), refers to "the citizens' ability to make choices according to their own interests or good in the light of their

understanding and consideration of relevant alternatives” (Veltmer and Lalljee, 2004, p.6). On the other hand, the term ‘enlightened sympathy’, essential to complement ‘enlightened understanding’, refers to grasping “the desires, wants, needs, and values of other human beings” (Dahl, 1989, p. 181).

In dealing with the question of how political conversation can produce impartial and rational opinions, Kim et al. (1999) argue that sound opinions can be formulated when conversation takes a form of communicative action oriented toward mutual understanding. Furthermore, they note that for sound opinion formation, deliberation should provide people the opportunity to think through their own ideas. After reviewing existing literature, Choi and Kim (2005) also argue that deliberation is composed of two dimensions: the quality of the political discussion itself and the actual act of engaging in political discussions to exchange different views.

Similarly, Graham and Witschge (2003) states deliberation involves not only a social process, interaction between individuals, but it also involves an inner process (psychological), the reflecting, shaping, and constructing. Burkhalter et al. (2002) also point out that public deliberation is a combination of thoughtful problem analysis and an egalitarian process in which participants have equal and fair speaking opportunities. They further stress that participants engage in attentive listening and/or dialogue designed to bridges divergent ways of speaking and understanding.

In her effort to identify the components for normatively ‘good’ deliberations, Stromer-Galley (2005) maintains that not only individual psychology, but the process and product that a group of people create play a great role in deliberation; “although the individual is an important component of the deliberation, it is equally important to recognise that deliberation is a product of social interaction, and is structured and created by a group of people. As such, communication between people is the essential mechanism through which a group of people create a reality” (p.5).

Table 2.5 summarised previous studies on the dimensions of deliberation.



Table 2.5 Key dimensions of deliberation

Authors	Key dimensions
Manin (1987)	Individual and collective dimensions
Price and Niejens (1997)	Social interaction and personal reflection
Burkhalter et al. (2002)	Careful problem analysis and an egalitarian process
Goodin (2000)	Internal-reflective and external-collective aspects
Park (2000)	Individuality and civility
Graham and Witschge (2003)	Inner and social process
Voltmer and Lalljee (2004)	Rationality of individual preferences and willingness to consider others
Choi and Kim (2005)	Quality of the political discussion itself and the actual act of engaging
Stromer-Galley (2005)	Individual psychology and social interaction

### **Criteria for the quality of the deliberation process**

More specifically, many researchers propose a number of criteria for judging the quality of the deliberation process. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) propose six criteria: 1) reciprocity 2) publicity 3) accountability 4) basic liberty 5) basic opportunity and 6) fair opportunity. The first three criteria (reciprocity, publicity and accountability) are viewed as the process of the deliberation by which participants must observe in the conduct of deliberation; the other three criteria (basic liberty, basic opportunity and fair opportunity) are viewed as the key elements of deliberation by which the process of deliberation must presuppose and determine.

Reciprocity is where participants are engaged in conversation with each other and their messages are reflected upon the perspectives of others. Publicity is the process of knowledge becoming public. Accountability refers to the acceptance of criticism. Basic liberty refers to guaranteeing freedoms in order to enhance personal integrity. Basic opportunity is the assurance of adequate levels of basic opportunity goods. Lastly, fair opportunity means a fair chance of securing those opportunity goods.

Based on Habermas' discourse ethics and as well as work of other theorists, Steenbergen, Bächtiger et al. (2003) specify six criteria for quality of deliberation: 1) openness of



participation 2) justification 3) concern for common good 4) respect 5) constructiveness and 6) authenticity. Openness of participation refers to the condition of inclusiveness. There should be equal opportunities for everyone to engage in deliberation. Furthermore, no one should be prevented from expressing individual attitudes, desires, and needs. Justification is related with an argumentative mode. They argue that assertions exchanged by participants “should be introduced and critically assessed through ‘the orderly exchange of information and reasons between parties’” (p.25). Concern for common good is related with consideration of the well-being of others and of the community at large. Respect, which is prerequisite for serious listening, can be identified into three dimensions: respect toward the group, respect for demands under discussion, and respect toward counterarguments, arguments raised by opponents that contradict one’s own conclusion.

Schneider (1997) also identifies four criteria of deliberation quality: 1) equality (2) diversity 3) reciprocity and 4) quality. Equality involves “equal access to speaking opportunities and equal distribution of voice among the speakers” (p.74). Diversity is concerned with the presence of a range of conversational patterns. He suggests that a set of highly diverse patterns of conversation would indicate a freedom of the participants from the constraints imposed by others. Reciprocity is concerned with “the engagement in conversation with each other and reflection upon the perspectives of others” (p.74). He argues reciprocity indicates the extent to which participants are working on identifying their own interests with those of the group, rather than simply engaging bargaining or persuasion. Quality is related with engagement with the topic at hand. He claims that the deliberation requires that the merits of the argument.

Wilhelm (1999) also identifies four core elements of deliberation process: 1) Transaction between providing and seeking information 2) reciprocity 3) opinion homogeneity and 4) rationality. With regard to the transaction between providing and seeking information, he states that “the quantity of postings does not guarantee equal participation or vigorous exchange of opinion. It is important to note how often these postings are aimed at seeking out, acquiring, filtering, and/or exchanging information in order to increase awareness and understanding” (p. 88). Reciprocity is related to

exchanging opinions as well as incorporating and responding to others' view points. Opinion homogeneity is concerned with the tendency of people to form groups with like-minded people. Opinion homogeneity is based on the assumption that for discussions to be deliberative, a range of opinions must be presented. Rationality involves "an expression which is subject to criticism and grounding assessed in light of the internal relations between the semantic content of these expressions, their conditions of validity and the reasons (which could be provided, if necessary) for the truth of statements or for the effectiveness of actions" (Habermas, 1984, p.9). In this regard, Wilhelm states "forum participants can supply reasons in defence of a certain proposition, and, to the extent that they are recognised as reasons, members can orient their actions to inter-subjectively recognised validity claims. In the absence of reasons or inter-subjectively recognised validity claims, it is unlikely that claims will be adjudicated" (p.90).

Drawing from Habermas' theory of rational communication, Dahlberg (2001a) identify a set of conditions for ideal public sphere. He argues that Habermas offers the most systematic critical theory available for democratic deliberation: 1) autonomy 2) exchange and critique of criticisable moral-practical validity claims 3) reflexivity 4) ideal role-taking 5) sincerity and 6) discursive inclusion and equality. Autonomy from state and economic power refers to freedom from "the media of money and administrative power that facilitate the operations of the market and state" (Dahlberg, 2001a, p.3). Exchange and critique of criticisable moral-practical validity claims involves "engaging in reciprocal critique of normative positions that are provided with reasons and thus are criticisable, that is, open to critique rather than dogmatically asserted" (Dahlberg, 2001a, p.3). Reflexivity implies critical examination on "their cultural values, assumptions, and interests, as well as the larger social context" (Dahlberg, 2001a, p.3). More specifically, reflexivity is the process of standing back from, critically reflecting upon, and changing one's position when faced by 'the better argument'. Such a process is necessary in order to transform privately oriented individuals into publicly-oriented citizens.

Ideal role-taking means an awareness and understanding of the other's perspective. This

requires a commitment to an ongoing dialogue with difference perspectives and opinions, yet one in which interlocutors respectfully listen to each other. Sincerity means “a sincere effort to make known all information, including their true intentions, interests, needs, and desires, as relevant to the particular problem under consideration” (Dahlberg, 2001a, p.3). Discursive inclusion and equality implies that “every participant affected by the validity claims under consideration is equally entitled to introduce and question any assertion whatsoever” (Dahlberg, 2001a, p.3). Care must be taken to avoid inequalities outside of discourse which can limit inclusion, such as restricted access (formally or informally) as well as inequalities within discourse, such as unequal opportunities to be heard.

Similarly, Graham and Witschge (2003) specify three key criteria for deliberation quality: (1) rational-critical debate (2) reciprocity (3) reflexivity. Rational-critical debate means participants’ use of reasons and justifications for their claims and critical assessment of validity claims, and commitment to coherence and continuity. Reciprocity indicates interaction between participants for understanding the perspectives of others. Reflexivity is related with rethinking of one’s own claims in light of others’ critiques and claims. Regarding this aspect, they argue that “when challenged with reasoned perspectives or strong critiques, participants must consider what this implies with regard to their own perspectives and use the input of others to reflect upon themselves” (p.178).

Contending that for a deliberative process to succeed, it is important that certain conditions are fulfilled, Jensen (2003a) identifies eight criteria: 1) form 2) dialogue 3) openness 4) tone 5) argumentation 6) reciprocity 7) information and 8) agenda setting. Form is related with whether a message is a real contribution to the debate. Dialogue is concerned with the extent to which messages relate to the overall debate. Openness involves how openly messages reveal identity. Tone is concerned with what kind of tone is used in the posting. Jensen (2003a) suggests a respectful and open-minded tone to ensure equal and fair speaking opportunities for all participants. Argumentation is related with how messages validate arguments. Through rational argumentation, citizens come to a mutual understanding on the overall interests and goals of society. Reciprocity concerns how posters take into account each other’s arguments and views.



The reciprocity implies a foregoing of narrow interests and egoistic motives for the benefit of a higher societal outcome. Information involves a flow of information throughout the debate. Agenda setting is concerned with the connection of debate to the wider political and societal agenda.

Choi and Kim (2005) also identify six concepts as the essential components of deliberation: 1) reciprocity 2) reasoned discourse 3) freedom of expression 4) open mindedness 5) empathy and 6) public interest. Reciprocity involves reciprocal exchange of two opposing ideas (Park, 2002). Reasoned discourse is related with the exchange of reasoned ideas supported by some evidence or justification. They argue that only when participants fully recognise justification of their political views as well as others, can true deliberation take place. Freedom of expression means no constraints on topics or point of views during deliberation. The freedom to introduce new ideas and perspectives to the discussion should be guaranteed (Cohen, 1989). Open mindedness is related with respect for others and their opinions. Empathy means careful reflection of opponents' point of view. Although putting oneself in another person's position is difficult, empathy helps "participants to pay more careful attention to other arguments and understand opposing views even though they do not necessarily agree with their opponents' opinion" (Choi and Kim, 2005, p.7). Public interest is concerned with consideration for the common good. A discussion cannot rise to the level of true deliberation if it reflects only the interests of a select group, nor if the arguments are made at the expense of the common good.

Table 2.6 summarises criteria for the quality of deliberation process identified in previous studies.

Table 2.6 Criteria for the quality of deliberation process

Authors	Criteria
Gutmann and Thompson (1996)	1) Reciprocity 2) Publicity 3) Accountability 4) Basic liberty 5) Basic opportunity 6) Fair opportunity
Schneider (1997)	1) Equality 2) Diversity 3) Reciprocity 4) Quality
Wilhelm (1999)	1) Transaction between providing and seeking information 2) Reciprocity 3) Opinion homogeneity 4) Rationality
Dahlberg (2001a)	1) Autonomy 2) Exchange and critique of criticisable moral-practical validity claims 3) Reflexivity 4) Ideal role-taking 5) Sincerity (6) Discursive inclusion and equality.
Graham and Witschge (2003)	1) Ration-critical debate 2) Reciprocity 3) Reflexivity
Jensen (2003a)	1) Form 2) Dialogue 3) Openness 4) Tone 5) Argumentation 6) Reciprocity 7) Information and 8) Agenda setting.
Steenbergen et al. (2003)	1) Openness of participation 2) Justification 3) Concern for common good 4) Respect 5) Constructiveness and 6) Authenticity
Choi and Kim (2005)	1) Reciprocity 2) Reasoned discourse 3) Freedom of expression 4) Open mindedness 5) Empathy 6) Public interest

### 2.3.6 Heterogeneity in deliberation

As discussed above, many researchers concur that sound opinion can be formed through quality of deliberation. Taking a further step, some theorists pay attention whether the heterogeneity – diversity in opinions and arguments, as well as in participants- influences the quality of deliberation.

#### Positive effects

Some argue that heterogeneity in deliberation is a necessary prerequisite for a fruitful deliberation. (Mill, 1848/1956; Arendt, 1968; Calhoun, 1988; MacKuen, 1990; Fishkin, 1991, 1995; Bohman, 1996; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Warren, 1996; Schudson, 1997; Sunstein, 2001a; Mutz and Martin, 2001; Mutz, 2002; Stromer-Galley, 2002; Price et al. 2002b; Witschge, 2002; Huckfeldt et al. 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004;

Huckfeldt et al., 2005).

McKuen (1990), for example, maintains that through deliberation in a heterogeneous environments, comprised of diverse opinions, public dialogue and deliberative democracy come alive. Similarly, Witschge (2002) argues that both the underlying difference between participants, opinions, and arguments and the underlying disagreement amongst them are fundamental criteria of deliberative democracy: “It is not the fact that people talk about political issues (or the frequency, for that matter) that makes deliberation serviceable for democracy. The virtues of the public sphere, where deliberation takes place, originate from the fact that a group of people with different opinions and different backgrounds engage in a *public* debate to form a public opinion or to come to better decisions” (Witschge, 2002, p.6).

In addition, Mill (1848/1956) states “it is hardly possible to overstate the value ... of placing human beings in contact with other persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar” (p. 594). In a similar line of argument, Price et al.(2002b) maintain that “public conversation must be deliberative, meaning that it airs disagreements, bringing into play a wide range of alternative perspectives and viewpoints” (p. 96) in order for effective self-governance. Such heterogeneity lies “at the core of collective deliberation among citizens in democratic politics” (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, p.65).

Then, why is heterogeneity so essential? Many theorists assert that heterogeneity in deliberation positively affects deliberation quality and, thus, helps people form a better reasoned opinion. Arendt (1968), for example, maintains that encountering dissimilar views is indispensable in forming sound opinions. Price et al. (2002b) contend that challenging certain different perspectives promotes sound consideration and reasoned opinions. Likewise, Mutz and Martin (2001) note that “political attitudes and opinions are formed through social interaction, political discussion, and personal reflection, and that these processes are of a higher quality when people are exposed to dissimilar perspectives” (p.97).



In addition, Huckfeldt et al. (2004) maintain “if political communication among citizens is to be informative and meaningful, individuals must encounter divergent perspectives and viewpoints” (p.65). Choi and Kim (2005) also claim that deliberation in which diverse ideas are exchanged by participants of diverse backgrounds can contribute to more informed and legitimate political decisions.

Regarding the mechanisms underlying heterogeneity, Mill (1859/ 1956) maintains that the experience of contrary viewpoints facilitates people “to change one’s mind and adopt a normatively better viewpoint, and the deeper understanding of one’s own position” (In Mutz and Martin, 2001, p.97). He states “if the opinion is right, [people] are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (p. 21).

Adding to this, MacKuen (1990) argues that deliberation among those who have different views, what he terms a “public dialogue (p. 60)”, provides participants with more opportunity to choose from a broader menu and promotes genuine debate and exchange of ideas. Huckfeldt et al. (2005) also state that “if people fail to encounter contrary viewpoints, their own views are never challenged, they are never forced to reconsider initially held opinions” (p.497). Similarly, Fishkin (1991) maintains that the exposure to contradicting viewpoints is essential in order for alternatives to be contrasted effectively.

Furthermore, Gastil and Dillard (1999) hold that deliberation in a heterogeneous environment “stimulates critical thinking” (p. 5). Similarly, Gutmann and Thompson (1996) argue that opportunities to come in contact with different viewpoints allow citizens to promote their impartiality and to expand the scope and scale of their thoughts. Arendt (1968) shares the view, stating that “by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent. . . . The more people’s standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place,

the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion” (p. 241).

Encountering divergent perspectives is also argued to increase the awareness of the bases for other stances. Benhabib (1992) maintains that exposure to conflicting political views is indispensable for people “to comprehend and to come to appreciate the perspective of others” (p. 140). Manin (1987) also assumes that interactions with others of differing views promote greater awareness of oppositional views because no individual person thinking in isolation can foresee the variety of perspectives through which political issues may be perceived. Thus political deliberation “teaches citizens to see things they had previously overlooked, including the views of others . . .” (p. 351). Price et al. (2002b) also maintain that disagreement “forces more careful consideration by challenging points of view” and “fosters understanding among participants of multiple points of view” (p.96).

In addition, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) maintain that exposure to divergent views encourages participants to consider “the reasons other people have for their beliefs and on the basis of this knowledge develop understanding and esteem for these people even if they disagree with them” (p.8). Along a similar line of argument, Mutz and Mondak (2006) argue that tolerance is “the results of experiences which are characterised by heterogeneity of ideas or direct or vicarious exposure to other ways of life and other ways of defining situations” (In Borhek, 1956, p.89).

Integrating various arguments regarding the assumed benefits of heterogeneity, Mutz (2002) argues that exposure to heterogeneous political views has at least three beneficial effects. Firstly, confronting differences facilitates greater awareness of rationales for one’s own viewpoints. She assumes that this process occurs “either in preparation for defending one’s own positions or as a result of an internal need to rationalise or explain why one’s own views differ from others” (p.113). Secondly, exposure to differing views encourages greater awareness of rationales for oppositional viewpoints. By encountering heterogeneity, people can “think intrapersonally about the reasons that may have led those others to hold such views” (p. 113). Lastly, Mutz (2002) maintains

that the awareness or rationales for one's own and oppositional viewpoints might lead to political tolerance.

Likewise, Song et al. (2004) maintain that the exposure to conflicting viewpoints fosters not only the awareness of reasons for own views, but the awareness of reasons for oppositional views. They explain that the exposure to conflicting viewpoints "informs the population about current issues and promotes reasoning skills by forcing citizens to defend their views in the face of opposition" (p.5). Furthermore, through interacting with other participants with conflicting viewpoints, individuals come to "accommodate criticisms from other sides, to modify their own arguments for a tolerable solution for all, and to understand the commonality underlying seemingly incompatible interests as well as sophisticate their own views" (p.6).

On the other hand, some others argue that deliberation in a homogeneous environment may lead to a group polarisation. Group polarisation appears when members of a group with shared beliefs or some form of shared identity tend to skew to extremes in the process of discussion (Sunstein, 2000, 2001b). Sunstein, (2001b) maintains that an initial common ground is conducive to continued agreements, serving to reinforce and brighten shared viewpoints: "groups of like-minded people, engaged in discussion with one another, will end up thinking the same thing that they did before - but in more extreme form" (Sunstein, 2001b, p.65).

Mutz and Mondak (2006) sound similar alarms stating "if people's horizons narrow through strictly like-minded interactions, polarisation and extremism may result from a lack of understanding of multiple political perspectives" (p.143). Likewise, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) maintain that communication with people who share the same beliefs encourage people to "reinforce existing convictions and perpetuate prejudices against the other side in political conflicts" (p.8). Adding to this, Jaeger (2005) argues "encouraged by the lack of contrary opinions, the members of the group start from a common approach to an issue and are drawn toward a more extreme (polar) position regarding the issue at hand"(p. 706). In such cases where discussions serve only to reinforce shared beliefs will have little benefits in nurturing deliberations on multiple



viewpoints or public arenas. (In Mutz and Martin, 2001)

Table 2.7 summarises positive effects of heterogeneity identified in previous studies.

Table 2.7 Positive effects of heterogeneity

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	Points
Positive effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heterogeneity helps to reconsider initially held opinions (Mill, 1859/1956; Fishkin, 1991; Huckfeldt et al., 2004 )</li><li>• Heterogeneity provides the opportunity to choose from a broader menu. ((Mill, 1859/1956; MacKuen, 1990)</li><li>• Heterogeneity promotes critical thinking (Mill, 1859/1956; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Gastil and Dillard, 1999)</li><li>• Heterogeneity promotes greater awareness of oppositional viewpoints. (Manin, 1987; Benhabib, 1992; Mutz, 2002; Price et al., 202b; Song et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004)</li><li>• Heterogeneity increases mutual respect. (Mutz, 2002; Song et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Song et al., 2004)</li></ul>

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### Negative effects

On the other hand, other scholars call into question the favourable effects of heterogeneity in deliberation (Mansbridge, 1983; Scorza, 1998; Stokes, 1998; Mutz, 2002; Price, 2003; Song et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004). Mutz (2002), for example, argues that although exposure to diverse political views “is obviously tied to a wide range of outcomes that are valued in democratic systems, it would be quite naive to suggest that only good can flow from cross-cutting interactions” (p. 112).

Furthermore, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) argue that heterogeneity may be the source of stress and discomfort for others when confronted with many different and, in some cases, opposing views. As a result, rather than to engage in deliberate the perspectives, people may opt out, choosing instead to avoid challenging arguments and simply dismiss out of hand those opinions not shared by themselves (p.3). Similarly, Song et al. (2004) argue that the psychological mechanism that emerges in heterogeneous

environments makes people hesitate to voice their own opinions and actively listen to others.

Price (2003) suggests that disagreement simply makes people uncomfortable, especially those who are undecided on a particular issue or those who feel that they lack the necessary skills to present and defend their perspectives. There are those who view disagreement not as a constructive and valued feature of citizen deliberation but as a personal attack. This may lead to withdrawal, rather than the hoped for fostering of mutual respect and trust and continued political activity. Huckfeldt et al. (2004) also suggest that disagreement produces psychic-stress, which in turn leads to confusion, ambivalence, and political withdrawal.

Taking a more sceptical stance, some argue that deliberation among those dissenting views is likely to yield the unfavourable outcomes. Mansbridge (1983), for example, claims that “collecting a diversity of interests under one deliberative roof is unlikely to produce the civic-mindedness that many deliberative theorists envision or the truth about the common good for which they hope” (In Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000, p, 172). She concludes that deliberation seem to work deliberation seems to work better among people of relatively homogeneous interests (In Walsh, 2003).

Scorza (1998) also argues that the exposure to differing views could result in “bitter arguments, violence, and / or a hostile and uneasy silence” (In Mutz, 2002, p.112). Similarly, Stokes (1998) argues that discussion may actually worsen conflicts and promote hostility among opposing sides rather than foster mutual recognition or reach a consensus. Furthermore, Cappella et al. (2002) argue that deliberation in formation within heterogeneous groups may produce polarisation and clique formation.

Table 2.8 summarises negative effects of heterogeneity identified in previous studies.

Table 2.8 Negative effects of heterogeneity

	Points
Negative effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heterogeneity causes withdrawal from conversation. (Price, 2003; Song et al., 2004; Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004)</li> <li>• Heterogeneity results in bitter conflict, violence, and hostility (Mansbridge, 1983; Scorza, 1998; Stokes, 1998)</li> <li>• Heterogeneity produces polarisation and clique formation (Cappella, et al. 2002)</li> </ul>

**Empirical study on the effect of heterogeneity**

A number of empirical works support the positive consequences of heterogeneity. Mutz (2002) finds that exposure to dissonant views is positively related to the awareness of opposing views: “exposure to cross-cutting views does not appear to play a significant role in deepening people’s knowledge of their own issue positions, but it does have an important impact by familiarizing them with legitimate rationales for opposing viewpoints” (p. 118). In addition, she suggests that knowledge of opposing views can be related to tolerance.

Price et al. (2002b) investigate whether disagreement in political conversation facilitates providing “reasons people can give in support of their own opinions, as well as reasons they can offer to support opposing points of view” (p.95). They find that exposure to conflicting view points help people to develop their reasoning skills, particularly with respect to why others might disagree.

In addition, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) find that communication across lines of political differences promotes respect for supporter of the opposing party. Song et al. (2004) also find that exposure to conflicting viewpoints has a positive relationship with the awareness of reasons for both of own views and oppositional views. They further find that while awareness of reasons for own views is negatively related to tolerance toward conflicting views, awareness of reasons for conflicting views is positively associated with tolerance toward different views.



On the other hand, Mansbridge (1983) find that deliberation in heterogeneous circumstances exacerbates conflict. Furthermore, Steenbergen et al. (2004) report that there are extreme differences in the quality of deliberation in two different issue contexts: polarised versus non-polarised issues. Polarised issues, where strong disagreements ensued, generated less demands of reasoning and justification and very low levels of respect. In such discussions, there is a greater tendency toward positional politics as opposed to constructive politics. In contrast, non-polarised issues, where there is broad agreement, had quite the opposite effect (In Steiner et al., 2005).

Table 2.9 summarises empirical researches on the effects of heterogeneity

Table 2.9 Empirical researches on the effects of heterogeneity

Authors	Results
Mansbridge (1983)	Deliberation in heterogeneous circumstances exacerbates conflict
Mutz (2002)	Exposure to dissonant views from one's discussion partners is related to a greater awareness of opposing views and tolerance
Price et al. (2002b)	Exposure to disagreement contributes to people's ability to generate reasons, and in particular reasons why other might disagree with their own views
Voltmer and Lalljee (2004)	Communication across lines of political differences promotes respect for supporter of the opposing party
Song et al. (2004)	Exposure to conflicting viewpoints has a positive relationship with the awareness of reasons for both of own views and oppositional views
Steiner et al. (2005)	Debates on polarised issues contains far fewer sophisticated justifications of demands and displayed much lower levels of respect

## **2.4 The Internet and deliberative democracy**

### **2.4.1 An overview of the Internet**

The Internet can be defined as “a system of interconnected computer servers that communicate in the same language, independently of their geographical location or operating system” (Lebech, 2002, p.15). Like other communication techniques, such as telegraph, telephone, radio and satellite, the concept of the Internet can be traced from military purposes. The origin of the Internet dates back to 1969 when the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) at the US Department of Defense designed an experimental network, named ARPANET, in order to ensure immediate and efficient communication in wartime.

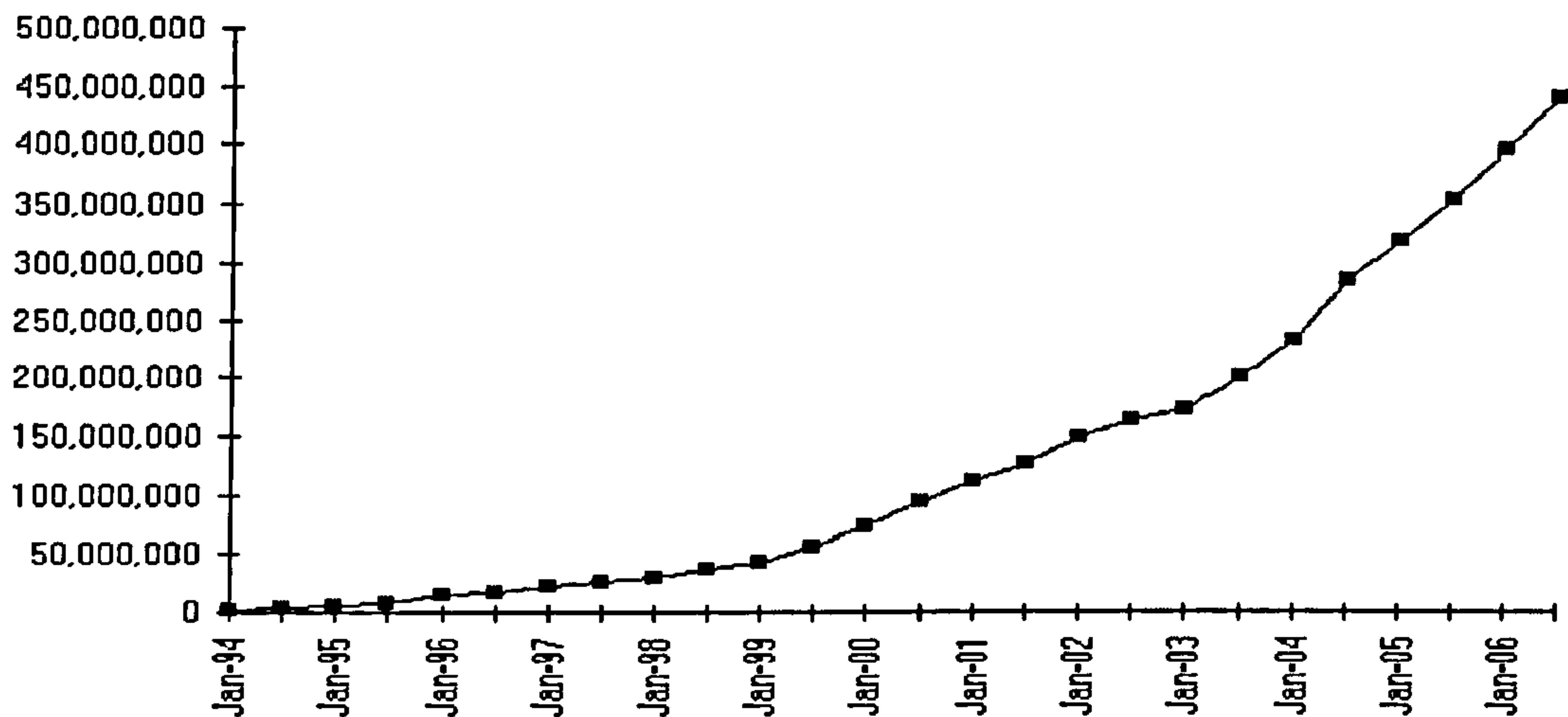
By the 1970's there is a serious traffic on the APRANET. Consequently, the APRANET is divided into two different networks: MILNET for military use, and the previous ARPANET for educational use (Lowe et al, 1996). In 1985, the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the United States builds a backbone network, dubbed NSFNET. The NSFNET provides connectivity between both NSF-funded and non FSF regional networks, eventually becoming the backbone that is known today as the Internet.

In 1989, the advent of the World Wide Web (WWW) makes the Internet even more popular. The WWW's user-friendly graphics and easy-to-use point and click technology beckoned everyone young and old alike to start surfing. As its popularity soars, commercial entities are quick to jump on the bandwagon, eyeing the enormous potential of new emerging markets. Internet startup companies, such as America Online and CompuServ, quickly emerge to great commercial success, with even greater success going to new search engines like Yahoo and Google designed to help users to browse the Web.

Today, the Internet has become a ubiquitous new medium for entertainment, information acquisition, electronic commerce, and interaction between individuals. The usage of the Internet has spread enormously. Figure 2.2 illustrates the growth of global

Internet usage by counting the hosts<sup>1</sup> that are available for responding back to the user surveys.

Figure 2.3 Internet domain survey host count



Source: Internet Software Consortium ([www.isc.org](http://www.isc.org))

According to the Internet World Stats, as of 30 December 2006 there are 1,091,730,861 Internet users in the world. This corresponds to a 16.8 percent penetration rate for the world, based on a total population estimate of 6,499,697,060. Asia boasts the largest number of Internet users with 387 million, while North America, featuring Canada and the United States, has the most penetration, with 70 percent of the population using the Internet. Africa claims the highest growth rate, with 625.8 percent since the year 2000.

In recent days, the Internet provides diverse types of venues for deliberation. Chat room, email list and bulletin board system are most popular types used for online deliberation (Graham, 2002).

The chat room is a virtual online room where Internet users may engage in real time online conversations. Like a telephone where voices are spoken and heard across

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<sup>1</sup> A host is any computer system connected to the Internet by a direct or dial-up connection.



distances, chat room participants may type, speak and hear, and even in some cases view other parties on their computer monitors. Typed messages are sent out to the entire room and are viewed by and replied to by all members in the room simultaneously. As the number of members depends on the parameters set by the room creator, participants are anonymous.

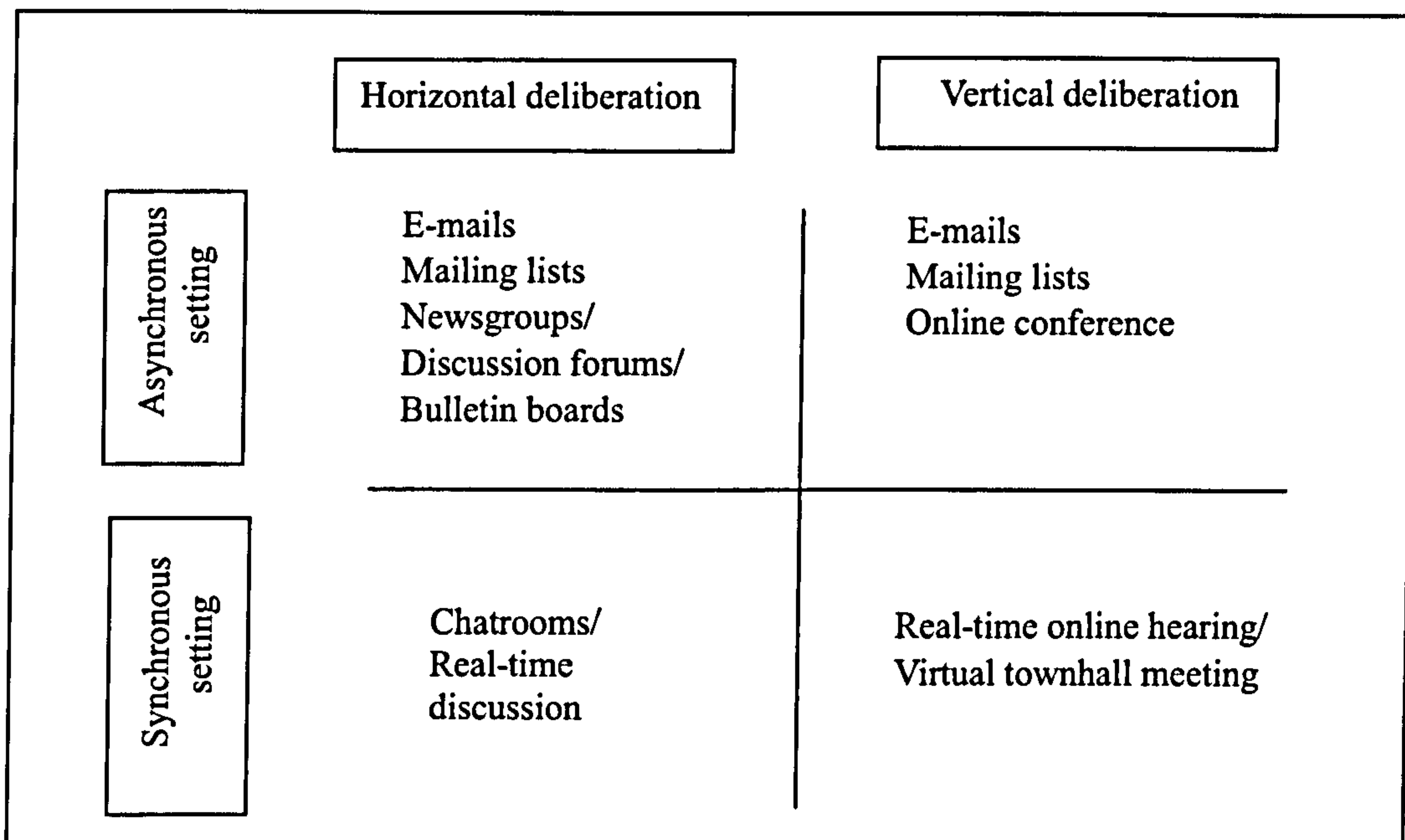
Bulletin boards are also referred to as newsgroups and online forums. Similar to the chat room except for the fact those messages posted and responded to in chat rooms are in real-time whereas bulletin boards are not. Users can come and go as they choose according their own schedules and do not need to be present at the board in order to send a message to it. Bulletin boards are generally set up to build online communities of people who share similar interests.

An email list is a list of people who subscribe to regular newsletters via electronic mail. At the touch of a 'send' button, users can distribute and disseminate a wide variety of information to an unlimited number of people very quickly and efficiently.

Chat room is viewed as a space where participants engage in simple chatting rather than a forum for exchanging thoughts or sharing information, while bulletin board and email list are seen as more appropriate forums for a critical debate.

Figure 2.3 provides an overview of types of online deliberation venue

Figure 2.4 Types of online deliberation venue



Source: Lebech (2002) p. 10

### 2.4.2 The Internet and democracy

When a new technology is introduced to the public, there are usually discussions on how the new technology can be used in order to invigorate the democratic process (Barber, 1997; Jankowski and van Selm, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001b; Jeager, 2005). For example, when television is introduced, its role in enlightening people is highlighted (Kellner, 1990). Radio is envisioned as an instrument for facilitating political mobilisation (Enzenburger, 1970). In addition, the introduction of cable delivery systems spark enthusiasm as a tool to enhance the awareness and engagement of citizens in community action and development (Jankowski, 1988).

In line with the rapid growth of the Internet, there also has been much debate that the new technology is able to enhance the democratic procedures of the political system. Rheingold (1993), for example, states that the Internet “if properly understood and defended by enough citizens, does have democratizing potential in the way that

alphabets and printing presses had democratizing potential” (p. 279). Similarly, Song et al. (2004) claim that for its technological traits facilitating high-speed circulation of large-amount information and unrestricted public communication among citizens, the Internet will complement the weakness of contemporary representative democracy.

It has been widely argued that the Internet can strengthen democracy by supporting three different types of activity (Kellner, 1998; Tsagarousianou, 1999; Åström, 2001; Oates, 2003): 1) obtaining information 2) engaging in deliberation and 3) participating in decision-making.

Some argue that the Internet improves democracy through the dissemination of information. Åström (2001), for example, argues that the Internet strengthens “the core institutions of representative democracy through dissemination of information and transparency” (p.4). The average citizen, it is argued, may lack the information necessary for participation on the political process, and need to be trained in democracy (Oates, 2003). The advent of the Internet could facilitate the process of disseminating information about government and the democratic process via websites, for example, developed by government institutions, political parties, campaigning groups and on-line news services. This promotes transparency and accountability of politicians by allowing public scrutiny of the political process (Norris, 2000 a). The Internet creates a new way to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge and guarantees equal access to information (Barber, 1984). Unlike traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television, the Internet allows one to be an information producer and knowledge sharer (Richardson, 1998). Furthermore, the Internet facilitates politicians to spread information, to justify their policies and gather support (Åström, 2001). It is argued especially important when the media plays a role in causing a crisis in political communication as a result of misrepresentations and/or inappropriate political displays by the media (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995).

Others maintain the Internet enriches democracy by providing incentives for people to participate in deliberation. Rheingold (1999) argues that while more and more public spaces disappear in our societies, the Internet provides an ideal sphere where people can



gather to discuss and exchange their views. Similarly, Barber (1998) states that the Internet “can challenge passivity ... and can facilitate participation in the deliberative processes” (p. 255). In addition, Guedes (2002) claims that the Internet can strengthen democracy by creating a new space for public deliberation through a “decentralised communication system that institutes costless reproduction and instantaneous dissemination” (p.2). Furthermore, Dahlgren (2001) argues that the Internet can be “a space for politically engaged people and may foster the emergence of multiple micro-public spheres” (p.75).

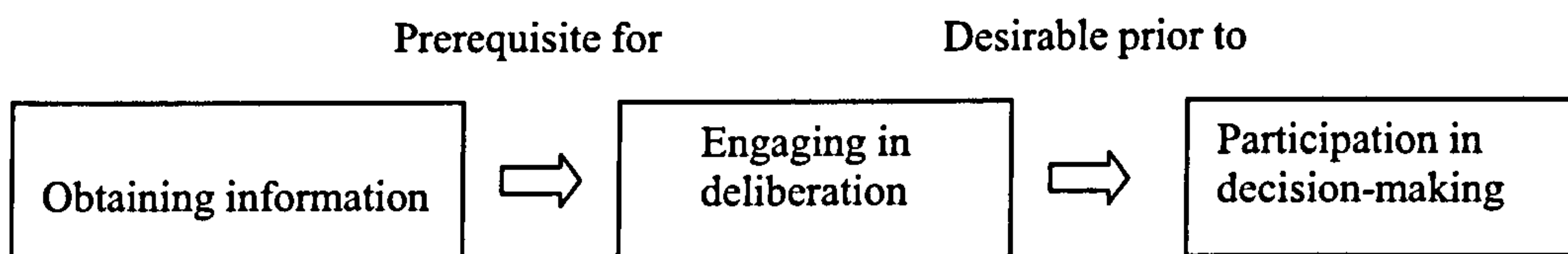
On the other hand, the Internet facilitates both “deliberation (citizen to citizen communication) and hearing (citizen to authorities communication)” (Tsagarousianou, 1999, p.195). In modern democracy, the gap between government and the governed widens mainly due to the increased size and power of the bureaucracy (Oates, 2003). The Internet can help reduce this gap and increase deliberative dialogue between citizens and their representatives. In this regard, Corrado and Firestone (1996) state that through the Internet “citizens and political leaders interact in new and exciting ways” (p.17). Furthermore, the Internet contributes to citizen-to-citizen communication and thus, helps rebuild strong civic associations. As Hauben and Hauben (1996) note, citizens can “do their daily jobs and still participate within their daily schedules in discussions that interest them” (p.243).

Others place emphasis on the Internet as a tool to facilitate citizen’s participating in decision-making. According to Jankowski and van Selm (2000), participating in decision-making has two manifestations: “through involvement in institutionalized channels such as elections and referenda, and through collective actions occurring outside the vested political order” (p.5). The Internet provides citizens with a convenient way of voting such as electronic voting. Åström (2001) argues that the Internet facilitates running public referenda under representative democracy. The function of the Internet enables “a more frequent use of advisory opinion polls, by way of new technology, making sure that the parliament really knows what the people want” (p.5). In this vein, McLean (1989) argues that the Internet has a great potential to bridge the gap between governments and those people they are elected to govern. Through the

Internet governments can become more responsive to the wishes of their constituents, and the people are encouraged to participate more in government and politics. Becker and Slayton (2000) claims that the Internet promotes engaging all those citizens in the policy-making process who are disappointed with representative politics and not attracted to community politics.

On the other hand, Oates (2003) argues that there is a link between the three activities in an ordered and cumulative manner. Obtaining information is a prerequisite for engaging deliberation and such deliberation is desirable prior to participation in the process of decision-making (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.5 Activities on the Internet



Furthermore, according to Åström (2001), these activities are connected to different models of democracy (see Table 2.10). Obtaining information implies an element of representative democracy. More accountable representative democracy can be implemented by sharing information. Deliberation among citizens at large establishes the conditions for deliberative democracy. Furthermore, an active citizen engagement in politics leads to a more direct form of democracy.

Table 2.10 Three types of democracy in the Internet age

	Representative democracy	Deliberative democracy	Direct democracy
Aim	Individual freedom	Autonomy	Sovereignty/equality
Ground for legitimacy	Accountability	Public debate	Principle of majority
Citizens' role	Voter	Opinion former	Decision maker
ICT use focusing	Information	Discussion	Decisions

Source: Åström (2001), p.7



On the other hand, scholars with pessimistic views suggest the Internet will have either a negligible effect or a negative effect on democracy (Hill and Hughes, 1998; Bimber, 1999; Davis, 1999; Margolis and Resnick, 2000; Norris, 2000a; Putnam, 2000; Sunstein, 2001a; Guedes, 2002; Choi and Kim, 2005)

Davis (1999) suggests that the Internet will not revolutionise the way people participate in the political process: “the most common users of Internet political information will be the already politically interested, and those who will use the Internet for political activity will be primarily those who are already politically active” (p. 168). Margolis and Resnick (2000a) also claim that the Internet may lead to a politics as usual. The Internet is nothing more than a new medium in which old patterns of political behaviour of major parties, established interest groups and heavy-weight media are repeated. Similarly, Hill and Hughes (1998) state that “the Internet is not going to radically change politics” (p.182).

Moreover, Putnam (2000) argues that against virtual or mediated forms of political and social communications in favour of traditional face-to-face social networks, citing a lack of face-to-face signals that build social trust. In addition, Norris (2000a) argues that it is quite possible that the Internet could serve to widen the gap in civic affairs between the interested and the non-interested. Guedes (2002) also warns that “cyberspace is in danger of becoming a mere space for commercial purposes and propaganda” (p.2), rather than being a public sphere for citizen political empowerment. In addition, the Internet may create a fragmented environment which encourages partisan cleavages and group polarisation (Bimber, 1998; Choi and Kim, 2005; Sunstein, 2001a)

### **2.4.3 Potential of the Internet for deliberative democracy**

As discussed in previous sections, one of the perspectives concerning the link between the Internet and democracy is closely associated with deliberation or deliberative democracy. In recent years, there has been much debate among researchers whether the Internet can cultivate an optimal environment for democratic deliberation. Some argue



that the Internet can provide new possibilities for deliberative democracy, not only facilitating quantity of deliberation, but also enabling quality of deliberation. On the other hand, others take a sceptical stance arguing that the Internet may undermine deliberation.

### **Possibilities**

Many researchers point out the features of the Internet which may provide new possibilities for deliberative democracy. Those features include 1) low resource constraints, 2) two-way communication, 3) anonymity and (4) heterogeneity.

The Internet enables people to communicate with each other without any restraint in time and space and at an affordable cost. Jaeger (2005) states that “Aristotle (1997) believed that a democratic government could only extend as far as the distance that a person could walk in one day, since active participation by all citizens was essential to democratic governance. The Internet uniquely resolves many of the issues of size and distance limiting participation” (p. 707). Similarly, Janssen and Kies (2004) state that “the absence of geographical and time barriers and the multiplicity of easily accessible online discussion spaces should encourage those people who are normally indifferent to politics (the young, the poor, ethnic minorities etc.) to participate more in online political discussions” (p.3). Witschge (2002) also maintain that the Internet can now eliminate the four problems of “time, size, knowledge, and access” that had made full participation in modern democracies previously difficult, if not impossible (p.9).

The Internet also enables two-way or many-to-many communication. Winkler and Kozeluh (2005) argue that while the old media system is characterised by monological information and communication flows, the Internet enables dialogical communication: “New media dissolve the sender-receiver dichotomy and allow horizontal and reciprocal communication flows among individuals and organised groups (p.21). Furthermore, Coleman and Götze (2001) argue that compared to television in which few speak and many listen, the Internet brings new possibilities in that it “makes manageable large-scale, many-to-many discussion and deliberation” (p.17). Similarly, Klein (2000)

claims that compared to a newspaper which provides only one-to-many communication, the Internet allows for far greater participation in many-to-many communication” (p. 216).

Furthermore, anonymous feature of the Internet is argued to facilitate a genuine democratic deliberation. Stromer-Galley (2002), for example, maintains “an absence of non-verbal cues, which leads to a lowered sense of social presence, and a heightened sense of anonymity (p. 35)” free people from the psychological barriers that otherwise would cause them not to engage in deliberation. Similarly, Witschge (2002) maintain that the anonymous setting of the Internet reduce the fears such as isolation, humiliation, not being liked, and disapproval, which often suggested as main reasons to prevent people from engaging in politics. Gastil (2000) describes this feature as one of the strongest points of the Internet: “if computer-mediated interaction can consistently reduce the independent influence of status, it will have a powerful advantage over face-to-face deliberation” (p.359).

Dahlberg (2001a) also praises the feature by arguing that the blindness of cyber space levels out social hierarchies and power relations, thus allows people to interact as if they are equal (p.15). Janssen and Kies (2004) also claim that “the absence of identity and physical presence should encourage the emergence of debate that is equal, free, plural and sincere” (p.3). Similarly, Rice (1993) argues that by hiding true identities interactions between participants are ensured to be more equal, with less instances of one individual dominating and more cases of lower-status members contributing to discussions. Furthermore, in the anonymous environment, arguments are “assessed by the value of the claims themselves and not the social position of the poster” (Dahlberg 2001a, p.14). In addition, Mutz and Martin (2001) argue that the impersonal nature of mediated communication and the absence of social pressure foster the willingness of individuals to expose themselves to dissonant views.

It is also maintained that the Internet provides people with more opportunities to converse with heterogeneous group of people. For an ideal deliberative democracy, political discussions must occur between participants with varying backgrounds, values



and opinions. However, few people engage in such political conversations offline (Wyatt, Katz and Kim, 2000). Most people, most of the time, discuss political issues within family, friends and people whose political views are similar (Berelson, 1952; Bennet et al., 2000; Wyatt, et al., 2000; Conover et al, 2002; Stromer-Galley, 2002).

The Internet helps surpass interpersonal communication in their ability and connects people and presumably creates “networks of meaning among various groups of citizens” (Keane, 1991, p.145). Page (1996) claims that “the onward rush of electronic communications technology will presumably increase the diversity of available ideas and the speed and ease with which they fly about and compete with each other” (p.124). According to Dahlberg (2001a) cyberspace is not devoid of differences. The make-up of Internet users can come from all walks of life and, thus, may be quite different from those people found in offline political discussions. The Internet has the great potential to provide the space for politically engaged people as well as foster the emergence of myriad micro-spheres (Dahlgren, 2001a)

### **Limitations**

In contrast, other researchers criticise that the Internet as an ideal deliberation space is no more than an illusionary optimism. They identify a number of the limitations of the Internet for deliberative democracy: 1) inequality, 2) anonymity and 3) hindrance of heterogeneity.

Some would argue that most participants of online discussions come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and that the general public would be hard pressed to be found in such forums. Golding (1998), for example, argues that “the digital Athenian democracy that conjured up, among sceptical observers, prompted the reminder that in Athens neither women nor slaves got much of a political look-in. So too with the new cyber-democracy” (p.143). In this regard, Barber (1998) also states that “the irony is that those who might most benefit from the net’s democratic and information potential are least likely either to have access to it, the tools to gain access, or the educational background to take advantage of the tools. Those with access, on the other hand, tend to



be people already empowered in the system by education, income and literacy” (p. 276). Despite the rapid expansion of the Internet, access to the Internet is not distributed equally (Norris 2001; Albrecht, 2006). The reality is that to much of the world, Internet access is a luxury only afforded by the affluent. Poverty, infrastructure and even state censorship prohibit many from voicing their opinions online (Dahlberg, 2001a). Given such exclusions, the Internet can at best support an elite public sphere.

2.

Furthermore, others maintain that the anonymous feature of the Internet, while regarded promising, may work against a genuine democratic deliberation. Anonymity in e-mails, online forums, and other forms of communication online can cause “exaggerated self-presentations, emotionalism, abusive language use, and aggression in general” (Graham, 2002, p.54). Similarly, Yoon (2002) maintains that the anonymous nature of the Internet enables people to make “insulting, inflammatory, irrational and overly-emotional remarks” (p.6). Barber et al. (1997) also contend that the Internet characterised by anonymity, tends to make for a general lack of civility. Jensen (2003) echoes this, stating anonymity can lead to irresponsibility, hate speech and a decline of debate culture.

Besides, the anonymous nature of the Internet can undermine the sincerity of those who deliberate. Perrolle (1991) and Poster (1997) maintain that the nature of anonymity can work negatively in terms of credibility of information and responsibility. Yoon (2002) argues that that anonymity of the Internet enables people to create and change their identities arbitrarily. In such cases it would be difficult to expect solution or compromise obtained through a responsible and rational discussion. Albrecht (2006) also maintains that the absence of social cues “makes some users ‘play’ with their identities” (P. 66). Therefore, it is often claimed that government authorities ought to engage in creating public spaces on the Internet, set up rules and guidelines for the debates (Dahlberg, 2001c, Witschge, 2002).

It is also claimed that the Internet, rather than increase exposure to diverse ideas and promote dialogue between people with divergent opinions, may serve to inhibit exposure to diverse perspectives on important social and political issues. Witschge

(2002), for example, argues that the Internet enables people to find others who share their views with greater ease and frequency; “The ease with which search engines can be used to find like-minded opinions is equal to the ease with which one can use them to find different and disagreeing voices –probably much easier than in the offline life” (p.11). Likewise, Jaeger (2005) states that “the Internet can become a very effective method for avoiding opinions that differ from one’s own, either on a single issue or on a range of issues” (p. 706) In this vein, the Internet “parallels talk shows that are directed at people with certain shared views” (Jaeger, 2005, p.705).

As discussed previously, such deliberation in homogeneous group is argued to promote a group polarisation, where members of a group with shared beliefs or some form of shared identity will tend to gravitate toward a more extreme opinion in the discussion of an issue (Sunstein, 2000, 2001b). The tendency to take an extreme position, Jaeger (2005) argues, may be increased on the Internet due to its anonymity. Sunstein (2001a) also states that “with respect to the Internet and new communications technologies, the implication is that groups of like-minded people, engaged in discussion with one another, will end up thinking the same thing that they did before - but in more extreme forms” (p.65). Dahlberg, (2001b) echoes Sunstein’s warning. He argues that the Internet enables individuals to “seek out groups of like-minded others where member’s ... values and prejudices are reinforced rather than challenged” (p. 18). Adding to this, Van Alstyne and Brynjolfsson (1996) point to the fact that “Internet users can seek out interactions with like-minded individuals who have similar values, and thus become less likely to trust important decisions to people whose values differ from their own” (p. 24).

As a result, such a situation is likely to create real dangers of fostering a social fragmentation (Shapiro; 1999; Barber, 1997; Buchstein, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Sunstein, 2001b; Jaeger, 2005; Bellamy and Raab, 1999). van Alstyne and Brynjolfsson (1996) argue that electronic connectivity causes ‘balkanisation’, which is defined as a proliferation of separate communities or conversations that are not in mutual contact (Levine 2000). Similarly, Bellamy and Raab (1999) state that “there is a real danger that ICTs will not only reflect but amplify the fragmentation of the public sphere,



balkanising politics into multifarious and shifting constituencies” ( p.169).

Table 2.11 summarises possibilities and limitations of the Internet for deliberative democracy identified in previous studies.

Table 2.11 Possibilities and limitations of the Internet for deliberative democracy

Points	
Possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet will lower the barriers of space, time, and cost (Witschge, 2002; Yoon, 2002; Janssen and Kies, 2004; Jaeger, 2005)</li> <li>• The Internet enables two-way and many-to-many communication (Klein, 2000; Coleman and Götze, 2001; Winkler and Kozeluh, 2005)</li> <li>• The Internet with anonymous feature facilitates a genuine democratic deliberation (Rice, 1993; Gastil, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001a; Mutz and Martin, 2001; Stromer-Galley, 2002; Witschge, 2002; Janssen and Kies, 2004)</li> <li>• The Internet offers more opportunities to converse with heterogeneous group of people (Keane, 1991; Page, 1996; Dahlberg, 2001a;)</li> </ul>
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Internet increases inequality (Barber, 1998; Golding, 1998; Dahlberg, 2001a)</li> <li>• The Internet with anonymous feature leads to irresponsibility, hate speech and a decline of debate culture (Perrolle, 1991; Barber, Mattson and Peterson, 1997; Poster, 1997; Graham, 2002; Witschge, 2002; Yoon, 2002; Jensen, 2003b; Albrecht, 2006)</li> <li>• The Internet encourages communication among very like-minded citizens and fosters social fragmentation. (van Alstyne and Brynjolfsson, 1996; Buchstein, 1997; Barber, 1998; Golding, 1998; Bellamy and Raab, 1999; Shapiro, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Sunstein, 2001a, 2001b; Dahlberg, 2001b; Witschge, 2002; Jaeger, 2005)</li> </ul>

#### 2.4.4 Empirical studies on online deliberation quality

Despite much debate concerning the deliberative potential of the Internet, empirical study on this matter has lagged behind the theory. In recent years, a number of studies attempt to explore the deliberative potential through examining the quality of online deliberation practices (Schneider, 1997; Streck, 1998; Gastil, 2000; Jankowski and Van Selm, 2000; Wilhelm, 1999; Coleman et al., 2002; Muhlberger and Shane, 2001; Tanner, 2001; Hagemann, 2002; Papacharissi, 2002; Price and Cappella, 2002; Tsaliki, 2002; Stromer-Galley, 2005).



In previous empirical studies, the quality of online deliberation has been examined based on the criteria for deliberation quality discussed in subsection 2.2.5. The criteria for deliberation quality are operationalised in various ways. The aspects that reflect the process of constructing individual opinion include opinion expression, length of opinion, providing reasons, relevance to topic, opinion homogeneity, and freedom from control. On the other hand the aspects which reflect the process of considering other participants include level of engagement, respectfulness, openness, information request, and opinion change in deliberation.

### **Criteria reflecting the process of expressing opinions**

In terms of opinion expression, Coleman et al. (2002) find in their study on various online discussion groups that the rate of messages that express opinion varies across groups: 44 percent of messages on *Citizenspace* state opinion; 82 percent on the *Home Office* site; 57 percent on the *DTI* site; 66 percent in the *National Assembly for Wales* fora; 48 percent on the *Hansard Society's Flood Forum*; 35 percent on the *Scottish Parliament* forum; and 91 percent on the *Hansard Society* consultation. Yoon's (2002) study reports a high rate of opinion expression: opinion expressions account for 88.2 percent (43.1 percent of opinion, 45.1% of reply) of the total messages on the online forum, arranged by a coalition of about 600 individual civic groups during the 2000 Korean general election campaign. He concludes that participants in online deliberation are more inclined to express their opinion rather than to describe just facts.

In reference to length of opinion, Robinson (2005) reports that the average number of words per post ranges from 120 to 383 in online political talk. In their analysis of UK online forum, Coleman et al. (2002) find that a total of 31,687 words are written in the sample of 400 messages. On average, there are 79.2 words per messages. Furthermore, they find that 30 percent of the messages have 25 words or fewer and around 75 percent of the messages have fewer than 100 words. On the other hand, the BBC Online *EastEnders* forum and *Hansard Society* online consultation on stem cell research have 51.5 words and 345 words per message respectively.

Regarding reason providing, some empirical studies demonstrate a favourable sign to this aspect. Schultz (2000) finds that participants in online newsgroups often reason and justify their validity claims. This result is confirmed by Graham and Witschge (2003) who find that nearly three-quarters of the twenty-five messages contain a reasoned/justified argument(s). They conclude that online deliberation meets the normative condition of reasoned or rational debate. In his content analysis of political Usenet forums, Wilhelm (1999) also finds that three out of four participants in Usenet forums produced justifications and reasons with their validity claims. Messages which provide reasons to justify their statements rate 67.8 percent and 75.6 percent for *political Usenet* and *AOL's Washington connection* respectively. The remainder of the messages presents neither conditions of validity nor reasons for the truth of the statements. The appeals are made largely to personal prejudice, emotion or aesthetic judgment.

Jankowski and van Os (2003) find that more than half (57 %) of the postings to the *Platform* sessions are supported with argumentations. They further observe that 39 percent of the postings to the *Digital Debate* and 40 percent of the postings to the *Digital Consultation Hour* are reasoned. Jensen (2003a) also observes that 90 and 66 percent of the messages on two political discussion groups (*nordpol.dk* and *dk.politik*) justify their claims. Hill and Hughes (1998) also find that over 60% of messages on the political Usenet groups are based on sourced information. They conclude that the exchange of validity claims with reasons is taking place within Internet fora.

On the contrary, some studies show a low level of reasoning. Hagemann (2002) finds that online discussion rests on opinions without justification. In their study on *Citizenspace* on the UK online, Coleman et al. (2002) find that only 14 percent of the messages refer to factual information, such as relevant statistics, a newspaper articles or other secondary source. Yoon (2002) also reports similar results. In his analysis on the online forum, Yoon (2002) finds that only 20.8 percent of the total messages provided some types of proofs for their argument in an attempt to increase the validity of contents. Those proofs are mostly based on personal experience (48.5%), followed by published fact (34.1%), public obligation/ principles (10.1%), and citation of poll (3%). From the



results, Yoon concludes that online deliberation lacks in rationality.

Regarding the degree to which discussion is directly related to the topic, Coleman et al. (2002) find that majority of messages on e-consultation is relevant to the main topic of discussion. Jensen (2003a), in the study on Usenet groups in Denmark, also finds that the vast majority of messages (94.6 percent and 88.7 percent of all messages on nordpol.dk and dk.politik respectively) are related to the topic of discussion, while only between 2 and 4 percent are irrelevant to the debates. From the results, Jensen concludes the majority of messages are a real contribution to the debate.

Regarding the opinion homogeneity, Wilhelm (1999) finds that over 70 percent of messages demonstrate either strong or moderate support for the dominant position on a political topic or candidate. The result implies that individuals tend to gravitate to groups agreeing with their own point of view. He regards homogeneity as an indicator of freedom and diversity. Similarly, Davis (1999) reports that because such political forums are mostly dominated by like-minded participants, the range in diversity and freedom of deliberation is quite narrow. Hill and Hughes (1998) also find that even when the involvement of diverse opinions is expected, such as from political groups, oftentimes they simply meld into ideologically homogeneous 'communities of interest.'

In terms of freedom from control, some studies focus on whether the discursive forums are free from all forms of force of influence. Tanner (2001), for example, observes in her analysis of an online newsgroup forum that administrators practiced board moderating techniques such as shortening texts, censoring abusive language, and correcting major grammar and spelling mistakes, among others. Ó Baoill (2000) also reports that gatekeepers distort the shape of space. On the other hand, Schneider (1997) looks at the presence of a range of conversational patterns by the participants examining freedom. He suggests that "a set of highly diverse patterns of conversation would suggest a freedom of participants to shape their own conversational patterns, free from the constraints imposed by others" (p. 73) He finds that deliberation within the online Usenet forums to be highly diverse, as its size contracted and expanded considerably over time, and the participants included both a consistent, regular group as well as a subset of constantly changing contributors.



Table 2.12 shows the results of previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of constructing individual opinion.

Table 2.12 Previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of constructing individual opinion

Variables	Authors	Results
Opinion expression	Coleman et al. (2002)	Between 35 %and 91%t of messages provide opinions
	Yoon (2002)	88.2% of total messages are individual opinion expression
Opinion length	Robinson (2005)	Number of words per message range from 120 to 383
	Coleman et al. (2002)	Number of words per message range from 51.5 to 345
Providing reasons	Schultz (2000)	Often provide reason for claim
	Graham and Witschge (2003)	About 75% of messages contain reasoned and justified arguments
	Wilhelm (1999)	Thee out of four messages provide reasons (67.8%, 75.6%)
	Jankowski and van Os (2003)	Between 39% and 57% of messages are supported by argumentation
	Jensen (2003a)	Between 66%and 90% of messages justify their claim
	Hill and Hugh (1998)	Over 60% of messages are based on sourced information
	Hagemann (2002)	Discussion rests on opinions without justification
	Yoon (2002)	Only 20.8% of messages provide grounds for claim
	Coleman et al. (2002)	Only 14% of messages refer to factual information
Relevance to topic	Coleman et al. (2002)	Majority of messages stay on topic
	Jensen (2003a)	Between 88.7 % and 94.6 % of messages are related to the topic of discussion
	Graham and Witschge (2003)	Maintains some level of coherence and continuity
	Schneider (1997)	Low level of staying topic

*Continued*

Variables	Authors	Results
Opinion homogeneity	Wilhelm (1999)	Over 70% of messages support for the dominant position
	Davis (1999)	Political forums are mostly dominated by like-minded participants
	Hill and Hugh (1998)	Participants meld into ideologically homogeneous interest
Freedom	Ó Baoill (2000)	Gatekeepers distort the shape of space
	Tanner (2001)	Editors of online groups harm freedom
	Schneider (1996)	Highly diverse conversation implying a high level of freedom

**Criteria reflecting the process of considering other participants**

In terms of the level of engagement, in their analysis of *Citizenspace*, a forum for public deliberation, on UK Online, Coleman et al. (2002) find that 84 percent and 77 percent messages on DTI’s *Beyond Bricks* discussion forum and the *Home Office police reform* forum respectively, reply to and comment on previous messages. Jensen (2003a) also reports a high level of responsiveness. Jensen (2003a) finds that the reply message rate of the two online discussion forums, nordpol.dk and dk.politik, account for 70.3 percent and 83.9 percent respectively while monological contributions account for about or just below 10 percent of total debates. In addition, Yoon (2002) finds that 45.1 percent of messages are for responding to other participants’ statements and views. He concludes that the online forum contains a substantial degree of interactivity.

On the other hand, Graham and Witschge (2003) argue that assessment of the level of reciprocity by looking at message-to-message, participant-to-participant relationships is limited as it only concerns whether participants are reading each other’s claims and are interacting with each other. They measure the level of reciprocity in terms of a web of reciprocity (messages-to-messages, authors-to-authors relationships). They find that the discussion thread under analysis falls quite short of this visualisation. In his analysis of Usenet groups, Wilhelm (1999) finds that fewer than one out of five messages (15.5 percent and 23.1 percent for political Usenet and AOL’s Washington connection respectively) are directed to a previous posting. Wilhelm (1999) suggests that “perhaps

one reason why there are so few responses is that there is no obligation to respond on the part of either latent or active forum participants” (p. 171).

These results are confirmed by Jankowski and Van Os (2003). They find 60 percent of the contributions to the Digital Debate and 44 percent of the contributions to the Platform sessions did not receive at least one reaction. After examining 44 randomly sampled bulletin boards, Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997) also report that more than 60 percent of 4322 messages respond to previous postings.

In terms of the level of respectfulness, some studies report a low level of respect toward others and their viewpoint. In his analysis of Usenet discussion forums, Davis (1999) finds high levels of flaming, in which people post aggressive or derogatory messages. Usenet political discussion “tends to favor the loudest and most aggressive individuals” (Davis, 1999, p.163). The result implies that views are reinforced rather than exchanged. Furthermore, dissenters are ignored, become frustrated, and ultimately give up and leave the discussion group (Davis, 1999). From the results, Davis (1999) concludes that “the promise of Usenet is a hollow one. It turns out that even the Internet’s most democratic corner is not as democratic as it appears” (p.167).

In their analysis of UK Online, Coleman et al. (2002) also find that the messages that contain negative comments (e.g. abusive comments) outweigh positive comments (e.g. praising for someone/something, making positive suggestion). They report that, of the messages coded, 28 percent are positive and 72 percent are negative. Measuring for what they called ‘flaming’, defined as “personal, ad hominem attacks that focus on the individual poster and not the ideas of the message” (p.52), Hill and Hughes (1998) find that 39 percent of Usenet debates and 32 percent of AOL chat can be defined as a flame fest. They conclude that ‘flaming’ is “in fact very noticeable but not entirely consuming within online discursive forums” (p.59). Streck (1998) also concludes that “cyberspace, in other words, on a day to day basis is about as interactive as a shouting match” (p.45).

On the other hand, some studies report a high level of respect. Jensen (2003a) finds that 59.6 and 40.8 percent messages on nordpol.dk and dk.politik respectively fall in the



respect category. In addition, Yoon (2002) finds that one out of five messages (22.2 %) are impolite messages using insulting language towards participants in online discussions. From their research on newsgroups, Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997) also conclude that online confrontations are actually much less than what is assumed by the public at large.

In terms of openness, Jensen (2003a) finds that online deliberation presents a substantial degree of openness; the majority of messages (97 percent and 73 percent messages on nordpol.dk and dk.politik respectively) reveal both or either of their names and e-mail addresses while only 3 and 27 percent remain totally anonymous. On the other hand, Yoon (2002) find that only 8.4 percent of 1,764 messages reveal information regarding one's identity.

In terms of information request, Wilhelm (1999) finds that the majority of messages, 71.2 percent in political newsgroups and 67.3 percent in AOL's Washington connection respectively, are an expression of ideas and opinions provided to a forum, while approximately 30 percent of messages seek out information on a particular topic, 27.9 percent in political newsgroups and 32.5 percent in AOL's Washington connection respectively. He concludes that online political forums facilitates "self-expression and monologue, without in large measure engaging the listening, responsiveness, and dialogue that would promote communicative action" (p.98). In the analysis of Usenet groups in Denmark, Jensen (2003a) also finds that 83 and 91.4 percent of messages coded on nordpol.dk and dk.politik respectively bring new information to the debate, while only 17 and 8.6 percent seek information from others.

In terms of opinion change, Tanner (2001), in her research on newsgroup forum, finds some sign of change in position, resulting from the deliberation: "though some people brought set opinions to the debates, others used the forum to create, modify, and develop opinions" (p. 399). In addition, Aikens (1997) reports that 33 percent of those who responded to his survey of the MPD (Minnesota E-Democracy is a democratic discursive initiative set up to provide a discursive forum for citizens of Minnesota.) affirmed that their views affected by the discussions, some even changing they way

they voted.

On the other hand, Yoon (2002) finds that only 10.1 percent of the messages coded showed any signs of compromise or acceptance of other opinions. He surmises that most participants of online debates do not show any flexibility, that they do not concede from their original positions but rather stick to their views unwaveringly. This finding is further supported by Jankowski and Van Os (2003), also finding no indication of compromise or acceptance of other opinions in the discussions.

Table 2.13 shows the results of previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of considering other participants.

Table 2.13 Previous empirical studies on criteria for the process of considering other participants

Variables	Authors	Results
Degree of engagement	Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997)	More than 60% of messages respond to previous postings
	Wilhelm (1999)	One out of five messages give a direct reply to previous messages
	Coleman et al. (2002)	84% and 77% of messages reply to previous messages
	Yoon (2002)	45.1% of messages response to other messages
	Jensen (2003a)	Rely rate of messages ranges from 70.3 % to 83.9%
	Jankowski and van Os (2003)	Rely rate of messages ranges from 44 to 60%
Respectful attitude	Davis (1999)	Online forums show a high level of flaming
	Jensen (2003a)	Messages showing respectful attitudes range from 40.8% to 59.6%
	Yoon (2002)	One out of five messages are impolite messages towards participants
	Hill and Hugh (1998)	32% and 39% of messages can be defined as flame fest
Openness	Yoon (2002)	8.4% of messages reveal self information
	Jensen (2003a)	Majority of messages (from 73% to 97%) reveal their name and e-mail addresses

*Continued*

Variables	Authors	Results
Information request	Wilhelm (1999)	27.9% and 32.5% of messages seek out information
	Jensen (2003a)	8.6 %and 7% of messages seek information from others
Opinion change	Tanner (2001)	Some sign of change is found
	Yoon (2002)	10.1% of messages show any sign of compromise or accepting others views
	Jankowski and van Os (2003)	No sign of compromise or change is found.

As reviewed, online deliberations produce mixed results: they sometimes meet the expectations of deliberative theorists, while other times falling short. Based on their results, some conclude that the Internet has much potential for contributing to the idealised version of the public sphere. Schneider (1997) for example, states that “even without any clearly identified political activity resulting from the discussions, these associational spaces contribute to the opinion- and will-formation exercise that is the function of the public sphere in a democratic society” (p. 102).

On the other hand, others are pessimistic. From his analysis, Hagemann (2002) concludes that “an ideal public sphere has never existed and is not likely to be built on the Internet. The notion of an informal public sphere and how this contributes to democratic will formation, remains implicit” (p.75). Wilhelm also concludes that online deliberations do not fully satisfy the characteristics of deliberation as described by theorists and practitioners. He argues that the various online political forums are inadequate in providing forums for ‘signaling and thematising’ issues to be processed by the political system. Furthermore, the online forums fails to either cultivate or iterate a public opinion that stems from views which has been deliberated over in a public sphere (p.102).

## 2.5 Limitations of the previous studies

In the preceding sections, the existing literature on the impact of the Internet on



deliberative democracy is reviewed. Through the literature review, it is found that while there has been no shortage of theoretical studies on the Internet in relating to democratic deliberation, the number of empirical studies on online deliberation is still small. In addition, empirical study has lagged behind the theory: while theoretical studies have emerged from the early 1990s, empirical based studies have emerged since the mid 1990s. This may be due to the fact that individuals and commercial business users not allowed access to the Internet until the early 1990s, and thus relatively little attention was paid to the democratic impact of the Internet.

The following limitations are recognised through the literature review with respect to the impact of the Internet on deliberative democracy.

First, most of the previous studies have been conducted in the context of the established democracies of western countries. In the Asian context, however, there are different values, beliefs and mythologies underlying political communication (Kluver, 2005). Therefore, it is needed to give a particular consideration applicable to an Asian democracy such as South Korea. This is because a variety of cultural contexts can be beneficial to gain a wider sense of the way in which the Internet influences the practices of political communications (Kluver, 2005).

Second, most of the existing empirical measurements for the quality of online deliberation focus on specific aspects of deliberation and do not reflect the depth of the theoretical discussions. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive set of indicators that reflect the complexity and richness of theoretical notions.

Third, in dealing with the impact of the Internet on deliberation, previous empirical studies have primarily attempted to measure the quality of deliberation in terms of the outcomes of deliberation, while process-oriented empirical studies have been noticeably limited.

Lastly, heterogeneity in deliberation has been regarded as a critical factor in obtaining the full benefits of deliberation. That is, when people are exposed to dissimilar

perspectives, the deliberation process can be of a higher quality. Although theorists have for some time argued the importance of heterogeneity in deliberation, few studies have been conducted to test the benefits of heterogeneity in public deliberation.

Furthermore, even fewer attempts have been made to measure the effects of heterogeneity in the online environment. The Internet, it is argued, enables the like-minded to find each other, to hear echoes of their own voices, and therefore consequently works against democracy. Despite the increasing fear, systematic comparisons of the deliberation quality between homogeneous and heterogeneous online groups have been largely less explored.

## **2.6 Conceptual framework of the research**

In the preceding sections of this chapter, different approaches to link the Internet to democracy are discussed, such as approaches to democracy, deliberation, the quality of deliberation and deliberation groups. The following paragraphs discuss the approaches adopted in this study among the various approaches. The discussion highlights why specific approaches are more appropriate for this study.

### **2.6.1 Approaches of this study**

#### **Approach to democracy**

In subsection 2.2.1 of this chapter, different approaches to democracy are highlighted. Among them, this study employs the deliberative democracy approach in investigating the link between the Internet and democracy. The essence of democracy is communication, and many theorists (Barber, 1984; Agre, 1989; Huspek and Kendall, 1991; Hill and Hughes, 1998; Habermas, 1984) stressed the link between democracy

and conversational communication. As a mean of political communication, deliberation has received ever increasing attention in recent days, and the notion of deliberative democracy lies in decision making by discussion among free and equal citizens.

On the other hand, the Internet, as the newly evolving means of communication, provides important opportunities for discussion and interaction between citizens, and allows more chances of exchange of information and opinions by providing new forms of communication. Therefore, the link between the Internet and deliberative democracy can be more noticeable than the links between the Internet and other types of democracy in the study of the Internet-democracy link.

### Approach to deliberation

When the impact of the Internet on democratic deliberation is explored, there is a need to consider both (1) vertical elite/citizen interactions, and (2) horizontal communication among citizens. In the vertical communication based on elite/mass interactions, citizens convey their interests, values and concerns to elites who act on behalf of the collective. Thus, vertical deliberation can make the representative system more representative. In horizontal communication, democratic deliberation consists of interactions among citizens. This study narrows the focus to the horizontal deliberation among citizens that take place through the Internet since the primary interest is in the deliberative democracy as complementariness or a substitute for representative democracy.

On the other hand, deliberation can be observed in two broad different groups: the homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group. Many researchers argue that the presence of diverse and conflicting views among participants is a necessary and sufficient condition for democratic deliberation, and heterogeneity in deliberation has been regarded as a critical factor in obtaining the full benefits of deliberation. This study investigates the impact of the Internet on deliberation in both the homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group and, thus, compares the deliberation quality between the two groups.



**Approach to measuring deliberation quality**

As discussed in the section 2.2.5 of this chapter, there are two broad dimensions to evaluate the quality of deliberation: the deliberation outcome and the deliberation process. Deliberation outcome refers to final decisions being attained eventually through deliberation, while deliberation process is the mechanism that leads to such final decisions. Many researchers (Price and Niejens, 1997; Habermas, 1991; Graham, 2002) agree that the process of deliberation is more important for democracy than the deliberation outcome itself. This study tries to evaluate the quality of deliberation in the online environment with the process of deliberation.

On the other hand, many researchers (Manin, 1987; Price and Niejens, 1997; Goodin 2000; Park, 2000; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2003) agree that democratic deliberation can be understood to have two essential dimensions; (1) the individual dimension and (2) the interpersonal dimension. While individual dimension implies the inner process of reflecting and developing one's own view (intrapersonal reflection), interpersonal dimension involves the social process of considering other opinions and their perspectives. This study also adopts the two dimensions of deliberation in the evaluation of deliberation quality.

Table 2.14 summarises different approaches employed in this study.

Table 2.14 Approach of this study

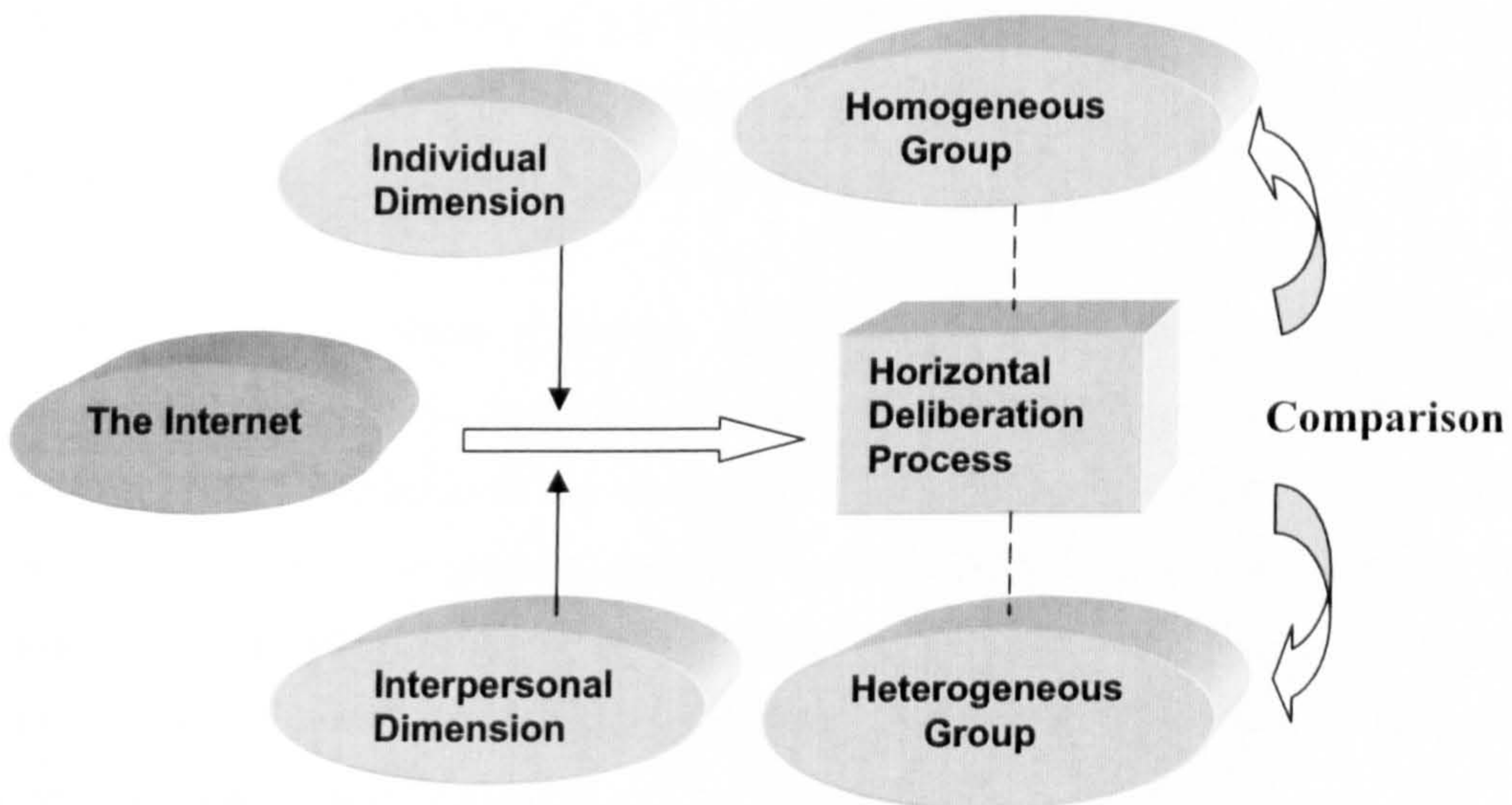
	Approach of this study
Democracy model	Deliberative democracy model
Deliberation	Horizontal approach
Observing group	Both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups
Deliberation quality	Process approach
Deliberation dimension	Individual and interpersonal combined approach

### 2.6.2 Conceptual research framework

Based on the approaches discussed in the previous section, a conceptual research framework is developed as shown in Figure 2.5. The framework implies that the Internet has an impact on the horizontal deliberation process in terms of both individual and interpersonal dimensions. In addition, the framework implies that there might be differences between the two different conversational networks in impact with respect to the two dimensions.

Consequently, through an analysis under this research framework, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions. 1) *To what extent do online deliberations meet the requirements of democratic deliberation process?* 2) *What differences in the process of deliberation exist between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups?*

Figure 2.6 Conceptual research framework





## **CHAPTER 3 Democracy and the Internet in South Korea**

This Chapter provides an overview of democracy and the Internet in South Korea. To begin with, democracy in South Korea is described. Then, the Internet usage in South Korea is highlighted. Finally, public awareness of the Internet as well as the use of the Internet for democracy in South Korea is presented.

### **3.1 Introduction**

Since its founding in 1948, South Korea had been governed by a series of dictators who relied on military backing to maintain their power (Rose et al., 1999). The June 1987 is a turning point of the South Korean political system. Since then, South Korea has undergone a rapid process of transition from the dictatorial system into democracy. Remarkable progresses have been made in the political system such as institutionalisation of electoral competition and firm civilian control over the military. As a result, South Korea is regarded as “the most influential and vigorous new democracy that evolved out of a military dictatorship in the East Asia” (Shin et al., 2003, p.266). Despite the progresses, however, South Korea has been far from the ideal of democracy mainly due to lack of deliberation.

On the other hand, South Korea has been widely regarded as one of the world’s most wired nation with the highest rates of the Internet usage in the world. According to the OECD (2005), South Korea has been ranked first in the world in terms of the number of broadband Internet subscribers since 2001. As of 2004, it ranks second in the world in number of Internet users per 1,000 persons (ITU, 2005). With the rapid expansion of the Internet, how the Internet can contribute to democracy has increasingly become a critical issue in South Korea.



## 3.2 Democracy in South Korea

### 3.2.1 New democracy

#### Military dictatorship

The Korean civilisation and culture dates back over 5,000 years, yet the 20<sup>th</sup> century had been a period of great hardship and difficulty. Japan occupies Korea in 1910 and colonises it for 35 years until 1945. Japan is defeated by the Allied Forces in the end of the World War II, and Korea comes under the administration of the Allied Forces. In the Cairo Conference held on 22 November 1943, it is agreed upon among the Allies that Korea is to receive independence in due course as one unified country. However, the hope of a unified country is evaporated and two separate countries are established as a by-product of the cold war. In 1948, Korea is separated by very different and opposing political ideologies: The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, known as North Korea, and the Republic of Korea, also known as South Korea.

Since its establishment in 1948, South Korea had been governed by “a series of dictators, some civilian and some military; all relied on military backing to maintain their power” (Rose et al., 1999, p.149). The First Republic is led by Rhee Syng Man (1948-1960). He attempts to retain political power for more than fifteen years through such as amendments to the constitution, repression of demonstrations, martial law and other political manoeuvrings. Subsequently, non-violent protests spread throughout the country known as “The April Revolution,” and finally Rhee resigns on 26 April 1960.

The Second Republic, led by Heo Jeong, is an interim government that tries to clean up the mess left by the previous government. During this time, thousands of police officers and government officials deemed corrupt are purged. On 16 May 1961, a group of military leaders led by General Park Chung Hee (1961-1979) takes over the government citing dissatisfaction with cleanup measures and concerns of a collapse into communism due to the current disoriented state as their justification of the *coup d'état*. When the President Park is assassinated in 1979, General Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1987) with co-

conspirator General Roh Tae Woo (1988-1993) takes over the reigns of power during the confusion in another *coup d'état*.

During nearly three decades between 1961 and 1987, military regimes have ruled the country as developmental dictatorships with a rationale of promoting economic development and strengthening national security against communist North Korea (Shin and Park, 2003). With the establishment of the developmental state, these military dictators provide themselves with unprecedented and unlimited powers, both executive as well as legislative. Even the National Assembly is dissolved and martial law is declared when it is deemed personally appropriate (Lim 2002; Shin and Park, 2003).

By invoking the National Security and Anti-Communist laws, the military dictatorships suppress political opposition and curtail freedom of expression and association. They establish security agencies, such as the Korean Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Command, through which they are able to control and censor the news media and keep labor unions and educational institutions under constant surveillance (Moon and Kim 1996; Shin and Park, 2003).

A variety of tactics including intimidation and co-optation is employed by the regimes to control opposition parties, and civic and business organisations. By doing these, the military dictatorships are able to remove all others from the political processes and insulate policy making from the pressures of social and political interest groups (Shin and Park, 2003). In pre-democratic South Korea, policy-making is under the sole control of technocrats and bureaucrats, not elected representatives (Shin et al., 2003).

### **Democratic transition in 1987**

Transition to democracy in South Korea starts in 1987. With the assassination of the President Park in 1979, citizens, workers and students begin to rise against the authoritarian military regimes. In the mid-1980s, militant anti-government organisations are multiplied, and they form a number of civic alliances with a clear political goal to achieve democracy (Han, 2002). The challenge to the regime reaches its peak in 1987

when a large-scale citizens' uprising demands direct presidential elections. The June 1987 Democratisation Movement marks a dramatic turning point, as it leads to the June 29 Special Declaration by Roh Tae Woo.

The June 29 Declaration includes eight points relating to the democratisation of the regime: "1) speedy constitutional revision through agreement between opposition and ruling camps, leading to direct presidential elections before February 1988; 2) revision of laws to guarantee free and fair presidential elections; 3) amnesty for Kim Daejung and restoration of his civil rights, and all political prisoners, except those charged with violent crimes, to be released; 4) guaranteed respect for human rights; 5) a free press, including allowing newspapers to base correspondents in provincial cities, and a withdrawal or revision of the Basic Press Law; 6) the institution of local autonomy, with principles of independence and self-reliance guaranteed for all levels of society; 7) guarantees that political parties could carry out legal activities in an unfettered way, and the fostering of a political climate in which dialogue and compromise prevail; and 8) a nationwide campaign against violent crime and corruption" (Saxer, 2003, p.49).

The Table 3.1 summarises the modern political history of South Korea.



Table 3.1 Modern political history of South Korea

Year	History
1910-45	Japanese occupation
1945-60	Independence, division, Korean War, and the first republic
1960	4.19 (April 19) revolution and overthrow of Rhee Syng Man's dictatorship
1961	5.16 (May 16) military coup d'état and establishment of military regime
1961-79	The first military dictatorship of Park Chung Hee, industrialisation
1979-80	Assassination of Park, subsequent coup, national resistance against military, and Kwangju Peoples' Uprising
1980-87	The second military dictatorship of Chun Doo Hwan
1987	10 June Popular Struggle and direct presidential election
1988-93	The third military dictatorship of Roh Tae Woo as elected president
1991	The three-party merger of one ruling and two opposition parties
1993-98	The first elected civilian government under Kim Young Sam, who had been opposition leader but turned into the leader of ruling party since the three-party merger in 1991
1998- 2002	The first elected opposition government of Kim Dae Jung, 32 Years' opposition leader

Source: Kim (2001), p.12

### **Achievements of the new democracy**

Since its break from decades of dictatorship in 1987, South Korea has undergone a rapid process of consolidating the new democracy. South Korea has made a great progress in its political system such as the institutionalisation of elections and democratic governance and civil liberty.

First of all, South Korea has successfully institutionalised an electoral democracy (Im, 2004a, 2005; Shin and Park, 2003; Shin, 2006). Following its predecessors of established western democracies, free and competitive elections are held regularly at all levels of government. In this regard, Im (2004a) states that if democracy is minimally defined "as a form of government in which "the allocation of political power is decided by a competitive struggle for people's votes, South Korean democracy certainly satisfies this requirement" (p. 184).

Since 1987, South Koreans have elected four presidents in consecutive five-year intervals and five groups of National Assemblymen in four-year intervals. The electoral arena has widened to include local government positions. In 1991, local assemblymen are elected for the first time since Park Chung Hee suspends local elections. In 1995, heads of local governments, such as provincial governors, city mayors and county chiefs, are added to ballots in local elections (Im, 2004a).

Furthermore, South Korea has established itself as a mature electoral democracy by attaining the peaceful turnover of government to an opposition party. In the 1997 presidential election, Kim Dae Jung is elected to the presidency in his fourth bid for power. It is the first peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party candidate for the first time in 50 years of South Korean political history. Im (2004a, 2005) argues that the election of Kim Dae Jung is an historic event which breaks the long held stigma of an Asian democracy ruled by a dominant, corporatist party that tolerated a limited opposition but which never cedes power. With the election of Kim Dae Jung, South Korea becomes the first new democracy in Asia to attain a peaceful turnover of government to an opposition party (Shin, 2006).

According to Shin (2006), the latest presidential election held in 2002 also reflects the commitment of the South Korean people to an electoral democracy. The South Korean people have chosen “a relatively young and progressive candidate for the first time to lead their nation - a nation where decades of conservative authoritarian rule promoted economic development” (p.8).

Secondly, South Korea has successfully established democratic governance (Shin and Park, 2003; Im 2004a, 2004b, 2005). Similar to previous administrations the president serves as the head of state and government, yet unlike the oppressive military regimes, the president's powers are reduced considerably. Specifically, the president's powers regarding emergency decrees and dissolution of the National Assembly had been abolished. Furthermore, the National Assembly's power to oversee the executive branch has been broadened and strengthened. The process of appointing judges has been institutionalised to ensure the independence of the judiciary. The Constitutional Court



has been newly instituted to enforce the principles of the democratic constitution and to ensure the rule of law. The limits of civil liberties and political rights have been extended, and the protection of economic and social rights has been strengthened. Protective measures have also been amended to the constitution to protect political parties from being disbanded by arbitrary governmental action.

Lastly, civil liberties and political right has been expanded. Where once various security agencies used to exert influence in every important decision made by both government and private organisations, virtually controlling the behaviour of private citizens, today democratic institutional reforms have expanded civil liberties and political rights (Shin et al, 2003; Shin, 2006)

A rebirth of freedom of expression and association has emerged with the abolition of the Basic Press Laws and other regulations that suppress public protest and limit the news media. The institutionalisation of free and fair elections for both local and central governments has also expanded the involvement of the general public in electoral politics and policymaking (Im 2004a, 2004b, 2005). People from all walks of life, from farmers and factory workers to businessmen and journalists, women and the elderly to the urban poor and the affluent, have all formed new public interest groups as competing forces against the existing government-controlled representational institutions (Im 2004a). In mid-1990, South Korean society boasts more than six thousand nongovernmental organisations operating free from oppression (Lim, 2000; Kim, 2000). As a result, civic associations and interest groups have become formidable players in a policy-making process which is formerly dominated by bureaucrats and technocrats.

Freedom House's<sup>2</sup> rating, an index of institutional political rights and civil liberties in different societies, also demonstrates the advancement of South Korean democracy. In 1988-1989, under the Roh Tae Woo presidency, the Freedom House gives South Korea an average freedom score of 2.5 (2 on political rights and 3 on civil liberties) on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being a high level and 7 low. In 1993, after the inauguration of

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<sup>2</sup> Freedom House classifies countries as liberal democracies in that they have a Freedom House score of 2.5 or lower on the seven-point scale averaging political rights and civil liberties.



president Kim Young Sam who is the first civilian president in 30 years, the rating is upgraded to 2 on both political rights and civil liberties. The score remains unchanged through the end of Kim Dae Jung presidency. Under the Roh Moo Hyun presidency, Freedom House upgrades its appraisal of South Korean democracy to 1.5 (giving the highest score 1 on political rights but maintaining a 2 on civil liberties). Only three countries in Asia (South Korea, Japan and Taiwan) have attained an average score of less than 2 needed to reach the status of a liberal democracy (Im, 2004a).

### Failures of the new democracy

According to Rose et al. (1999), the transition to a new democracy is challenging at best due to the lingering legacy of the old and now discredited regime. "Its leaders will be steeped in practices of undemocratic rule of amateurs in governing because they were in opposition under the old regime. Civil servants will have been trained to treat the populace as subjects with few civil rights, and some may also use office to secure a corrupt side income. In the short run, there are many reasons to expect a new democracy to fall well short of the standards of an ideal democracy, thus creating a substantial gap between democratic ideals and the practices of the new regime"(p.146)

Consequently, the new democracy of South Korea, despite its achievements, has revealed some limits and problems, such as the failure of representatives and the widening gap between representatives and the represented.

Since the introduction of free elections in 1987, South Korea has produced a succession of presidents whose leadership had fallen well short of the democratic ideal (Rose et al., 1999). Former presidents and their family members have been the focus of a series of allegations involving corruption, graft, and other abuses of political power and positions (Im, 2004a; Shin, 2006). Scandals of collusion abounded between the presidential office and the *chaebol* conglomerates in order to accumulate vast amounts of wealth and line their own pockets (Rose et al., 1999). Im (2004a) argues that compared to Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo who have been charged with amassing 693 billion won and 450 billion won of illegal political corruption, the amount and the scope of corruption under

democratic governments are smaller. Nevertheless, the scandals are fatal blow to the leadership and authority of the democratic government. Besides, the 1997 financial crisis of South Korea, which led to a bailout package by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), reveals the inefficiency and incompetence of the government bureaucracy, as well as the lack of transparency of the political system (Im, 2004a). Transparency International (TI) rates South Korea lower than Italy, the lowest ranked of the European Union, in its 1997 worldwide survey of corruption (Rose et al., 1999 p. 151).

Accordingly, there has been growing distrust of politicians, political parties, and political systems in general (Shin and Park, 2003). According to a survey conducted by Rose et al. (1999), in contrast with an average of rating of 8.4 for an ideal democracy, most South Koreans give their own government a mean rating of 6.2. A staggering 88 percent of the South Korean population views their own government as less than the democratic ideal. 8 percent of the people surveyed view the government as equal to the democratic ideal, while 4 percent view it as higher than the democratic ideal. The numbers are interpreted to mean that most view the system has little better than a mild dictatorship – a long way from establishing a complete democracy.

In addition, Chu et al. (2001) show that more than half of the South Korean population responds negatively when asked if they are satisfied with the way democracy works. This satisfaction rate has steadily declined from 49 percent in 1997 to 45 percent in 1999. Moreover, according to Shin and Park (2003), more than one third of the South Korean population responds that they think that an authoritarian regime might even sometimes be preferable to democracy.

The declining voter turnout rate (vote/registration) also indicates that confidence in politicians has been undermined. According to Kim and Cho (2004), the voter turnout rate in South Korea has been decreasing steadily since 1988. The turnout rate in the Presidential election was 81.9 percent in 1992 and dropped to 80.7 percent in 1997. In the 2002 Presidential election, the lowest voter turnout rate was recorded, accounting for 70.2 percent of the total 34,991,529 eligible voters. The decline of voter turnout rate is more pronounced for National Assembly elections than for Presidential elections. The



turnout rate, 71.9 percent in 1992, dropped to 63.9 percent in 1996 and dropped still further to 57.4 percent in 2000 (Lee et al. 2005). As in many countries, political indifference by the younger generation, especially those in their 20s and 30s, has emerged as a serious problem in South Korea, raising the issue of legitimacy of a representative government.

### **3.2.2 Deliberative democracy**

Deliberative democracy has recently been suggested as a possible solution to the growing dissatisfaction, cynicism and alienation of the current political situation in South Korea (Im, 2000; Park, 2002; Yoon, 2002). Im (2000), for example, stresses the necessity of introducing deliberative democracy as a remedy to those limits and problems and as a tool to improve the quality of the South Korean democracy: “Deliberative democracy provides us new opportunities to improve the representation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and legitimacy of the existing representative democracy” (p.45). Park (2000) also argues that deliberative democracy is required in order to complement the deficiencies of the representative democracy in South Korea. Despite the growing interest in deliberative democracy, however, the feasibility of deliberative democracy in South Korea remains in question (Im, 2000) mainly due to the lack of deliberations.

#### **Lack of deliberation**

Despite the importance of deliberation for healthy democracy, South Korea has long been far behind the ideal of deliberative democracy (Kim, 2001; Park, 1996; Im, 2000). South Korea has long suffered from a lack of deliberation in general. The reasons for the lack of deliberation can be understood in several ways: 1) Confucianism 2) military dictatorship 3) rapid modernisation process 4) mass media and 5) regionalism.

Firstly, Confucianism is argued to be a main reason for the lack of deliberation in South Korea. Confucianism is formally adopted by the *Chosŏn* dynasty (1392-1910) as its



main policy in order to rule the people and to differentiate itself from the previous *Koryŏ* dynasty (918-1392). Confucianism has been a great influence in Korean society and culture and, ultimately, has a profound effect on its politics.

Kim (2001) argues that Confucianism is to blame for the lack of debate culture of South Korean society, as most of the Confucian lessons and regulations regarding speech highlight its negative aspects, stressing avoidance whenever possible. Stressing the virtues of silence, as one can never regret a misspoken word if it is not uttered in the first place, public debate on public matters is frowned upon. Confucius clearly prohibits people from being interested in public affairs unless he (women are excluded from public affairs) is officially in charge of them: “Do not discuss public affairs unless you are in an official position to discharge its duties and responsibilities” (Lunyu in Kim, 2001, p.251). For then one would not need to discuss it with others as politics is for the people, not by the people; it is the task of a small number of benevolent elites who will reliably evaluate the needs of the people.

Furthermore, Confucianism puts more emphasis on ‘doing’ than ‘speaking’: “it is the wise man who knows to reserve the words. Silence is better than words” (Lunyu in Kim, 2001, p.10). Confucianism values traditional vertical relationships and, thus, teaches people not to debate on certain subjects unless their social positions or status are equal. People are taught to respect for one’s superiors or seniors, listening attentively to their words while avoiding the temptation to criticise. Obedience to elders is a virtue. What this means is that debates are considered something to be avoided regardless of the topic. Modesty demands that a superior, or senior, can never be mistaken, especially when addressing a junior person.

*Tongmong sŏji*, one of the basic Confucian textbooks for Korean children, shows how social norms and values are taught to Korean children from an early age (Kim, 2001).

Children ought to always speak in a low voice, in full detail and in a slow manner while subduing their excitement. They should not speak aloud or laugh over silly talk. When they are given instruction by their fathers, elder

brothers, or seniors, they should receive them, with their heads bowed, and they should by no means raise an objection in an imprudent manner.

Even if there is a mistake in the reprimand or scolding by seniors, children should not try to justify themselves against it at once but keep silent for some time, and only later point out in full detail and item by item in a slow tone. Only in this manner can they refrain from disappointing or offending the elders and justify themselves. The same manners should be kept by children when they deal with people who are even slightly older than their friends. When they hear of a mistake by others and even by their bondmen, children should protect them and teach them not to repeat the same mistake without scolding them loudly (*Tongmong sŏji* in Kim, 2001, p.9).

Secondly, military dictatorship is argued to be another reason for the lack of deliberation in Korean society (Kim, 2001). As discussed previously, South Korea had been ruled by oppressive military dictatorships for close to three decades (1961-1987). During the period, political discussions are strictly prohibited, allowing only for praise of current regimes.

The autocratic military government, under the guise of Korean security, established nefarious agencies such as the Department of National Security and Information to quell any popular uprisings (Park, 1996). They hunt down and arrest dissenters and political opponents, branding them North Korean spies bent on the destruction of the South Korea. Such ominous and stifling conditions make public debate quite impossible. Only in private, people are able to talk about politics; activists go underground. Kim (2001) argues military dictatorship to be more coercive and violent than Confucianism in repressing 'free speech' or 'freed expression of opinion'.

Thirdly, the emphasis on rapid economic growth not only represses deliberation but also causes a distortion of the social communication structure. The South Korean economy experiences a rapid industrialisation process under the guidance of government from early 1960s until mid 1980s. Park (1996) argues that the South Korean government-led



industrialisation has resulted in an unequal distribution of wealth and an autocratic monopoly of decision making. In addition, all are justified under the general heading of national economic development which represses the diversity of opinions among people. He also points out that materialism, individualism and mutual distrusts evolved during the rapid industrialising period undermine the sound basis of social communication.

Fourthly, mass media, dominated by political power and capital, is argued to be another reason for the lack of deliberation in South Korea. Mass media is often expected to act as an arena for debating public decisions. For example, Han (1997) argues that mass media is the most important and the most powerful organisation in terms of creating “the discursive arena in which argument is raised in order to articulate the themes and politics worthy of public discussion” (p.79). However, the South Korean mass media has fallen short of expectations in this regard (Han, 1997; Kim, 2001; Choi, 2003; Chang, 2005).

Kim (2001) argues that the South Korean mass media can be used as an explicit example for the discussion of the relationship among the media, democracy and the capitalist market. She states that the South Korean mass media have not been free from the influences of power and money and thus, their positive functions for South Korean society are to be doubted. South Korean media have had a long standing history of collusion with political regimes and their agendas. Their extraordinary subordination to political streams even has its own nomenclature in South Korea: *Kwōnōn yuch'ak*. Since the 1960s, most South Korean media companies have developed into quite profitable enterprises as a result of their close ties to developmental dictatorships. That and the failure of South Korean media to serve the public resulted in a lack of opportunity for the South Korean public to debate current issues through the media (Choi, 2003).

Lastly, regionalism is also cited as one of the major causes for the lack of deliberation in South Korea. Regionalism refers to regional antagonistic rivalries, most notably between the Gyung-sang provinces and the Cholla provinces. This regionalism dates back to 1961 when General Park Chung Hee took over the government through a



military *coup d'etat*. Park hails from the Gyunsang provinces and, subsequently focuses his vision of developing South Korea on his home province at the expense of the Cholla provinces. This trend continues for the next three presidents as they all come from the Gyungsang provinces. Furthermore, regionalism has become one of the main weapons in the arsenal of opportunistic politicians bent on furthering their own political goals (Nam 1989, Lee, 2004; Im, 2004a, 2005). In the absence of other socio-economic cleavages, politicians take full advantage of regional attachments to differentiate themselves and appeal to their supporters.

Regionalism plays a significant role in South Korean politics and in the voting behaviour of the South Korea electorate. Voters cast ballots according to which region they and the candidates hail from. Regarding this unique trend among South Korean voters, Im (2004a) argues that “voters do not support parties and candidates for their policy stances and ideologies, but rather vote out of blind loyalty to the cohorts and favourite sons of the regions in which they live” (p.187).

According to (Lee, 2004) regional voting behaviour first appeared in the 1967 Presidential election and has greatly increased even after the democratic transition in 1987. People with familial ties to the Gyungsang provinces voted for their regional leaders (Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan, Roh Tae Woo, Kim Young Sam and Lee Hoi Chang), while those who originally hail from the Cholla provinces voted for their long-time leader Kim Dae Jung. Kim Dae Jung (Cholla) received an overwhelming majority of votes in the Cholla provinces: 87 percent in 1987, 89 percent in 1992, and 93 percent in 1997; whereas in the Gyungsang provinces he received only 3 percent in 1987, 9 percent in 1992, and 12 percent in 1997. Kim Young Sam (Gyungsang), in contrast, received 3 percent of the Cholla votes in 1987, 5 percent in 1992, while receiving 69 percent of the Gyungsang votes in 1992 (Im 2004).

### **Lack of communicative competence**

The lack of deliberation leads to a lack of communicative competence. Scholars acknowledge that much of the public deliberation that occurs in South Korean society is

not deliberative, consequently failing to generate the true benefits of deliberation.

Kim (2001) argues that South Korean people are not trained well enough to have 'communicative competence' using Habermas's terms. She states that unlike the tradition in the West, South Koreans "hardly debate whatever the topic is. Instead, South Koreans swallow their words, or if they start, it soon develops into a quarrel" (p.8).

Furthermore, Klopf and Park (1992) argue that South Korean people's communication practices can be characterised as being aggressive. Im (2000) also points out citizens' lack of basic democratic skills of communication, such as public speaking, debating, managing disagreements, compromising, organising and chairing meetings. Likewise, Kim and Yoon (2000) argue that "Korean citizens are not familiar with, or trained for, interactive discourse on political issues" (p.130). Therefore, as a necessary result, street demonstrations, rather than public deliberation, are pervasive as a way to solve problems or voice interests (Im, 2000). In this regard, Im (2000) argues that the failure of South Korean democracy can be attributed not only to the representatives, but also to the represented.

### **3.3 The Internet and democracy in South Korea**

#### **3.3.1 Internet Penetration**

##### **National informatisation level**

Informatisation is the process in which each sector of a society is digitised. It accompanies the digitalisation of the production, distribution and utilisation of information (Webster dictionary, 1995). Nowadays, it is largely accepted that the level of informatisation can be a measure of a nation's competitiveness and quality of life. As a result, many nations around world pursue a national strategy for enhancing their levels of informatisation.

According to a recent report published by the National Computerisation Agency (NCA, 2005), South Korea ranks third in the world in terms of the National Information Index (NII), which is calculated using several indicators, such as the number of Internet users and broadband Internet subscribers, mobile phone subscribers, and CATV subscribers. South Korea ranks top 22 in 1997 and advances into top 7 in 2004. In 2005, South Korea's ranking climbs to the third among the world's 10 leading countries in terms of informatisation. In Asia, South Korea as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan possess the highest rankings.

Furthermore, South Korea is ranked fourth on the Digital Access Index (DAI) by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2003, and ranks the fifth in e-Government readiness by the United Nation in 2004. It is also placed the eighteenth in terms of e-Readiness by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2005 (NCA, 2005).



Table 3.2 National information index (NII) and rankings (Top 10)

Country	NII									NII Ranking								
	97	98	99	99	01	02	03	04	05	97	98	99	99	01	02	03	04	05
Sweden	95	96	96	94	91	94	93	96	96	4	4	4	3	5	2	3	1	1
United States	99	99	99	99	99	99	98	95	93	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	2
South Korea	52	55	58	70	78	79	80	89	91	22	22	22	19	14	14	12	7	3
Denmark	92	91	95	94	92	92	91	96	91	5	6	5	4	4	5	4	2	4
Switzerland	88	87	88	89	90	89	99	94	90	8	7	8	8	7	6	1	4	5
Hong Kong	75	80	79	79	80	80	83	83	89	12	12	11	13	13	13	9	11	6
Taiwan	54	60	68	82	84	85	84	79	89	21	20	17	10	10	9	8	15	7
Norway	99	99	97	96	93	92	89	86	89	3	2	2	2	2	4	7	9	8
United Kingdom	74	72	76	79	81	80	78	85	86	13	15	12	12	11	12	14	10	9
Netherlands	86	85	89	92	93	93	89	86	85	9	9	7	5	3	3	6	8	10

Source: NCA (2005)

### **Households with Internet connection**

The NCA (2004) reports that 75.2 percent of households have computers and 91.5 percent of the households with computer have Internet connection in 2003 (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Ratio of households with the Internet connections

	Households with a computer			Households with out a computer
	Number	Internet connection	Non-Internet connection	
Total households	75.2%	68.8%	6.4%	24.8%
Total households with a computer	100%	91.5%	8.5%	-

Source: NCA (2004)

### **Broadband penetration**

South Korea has been widely regarded as the most wired country in the world in terms of broadband penetration in the world (Bhuiyan, 2004). In South Korea, broadband has become the leading method of connecting to the Internet spawning a new version of

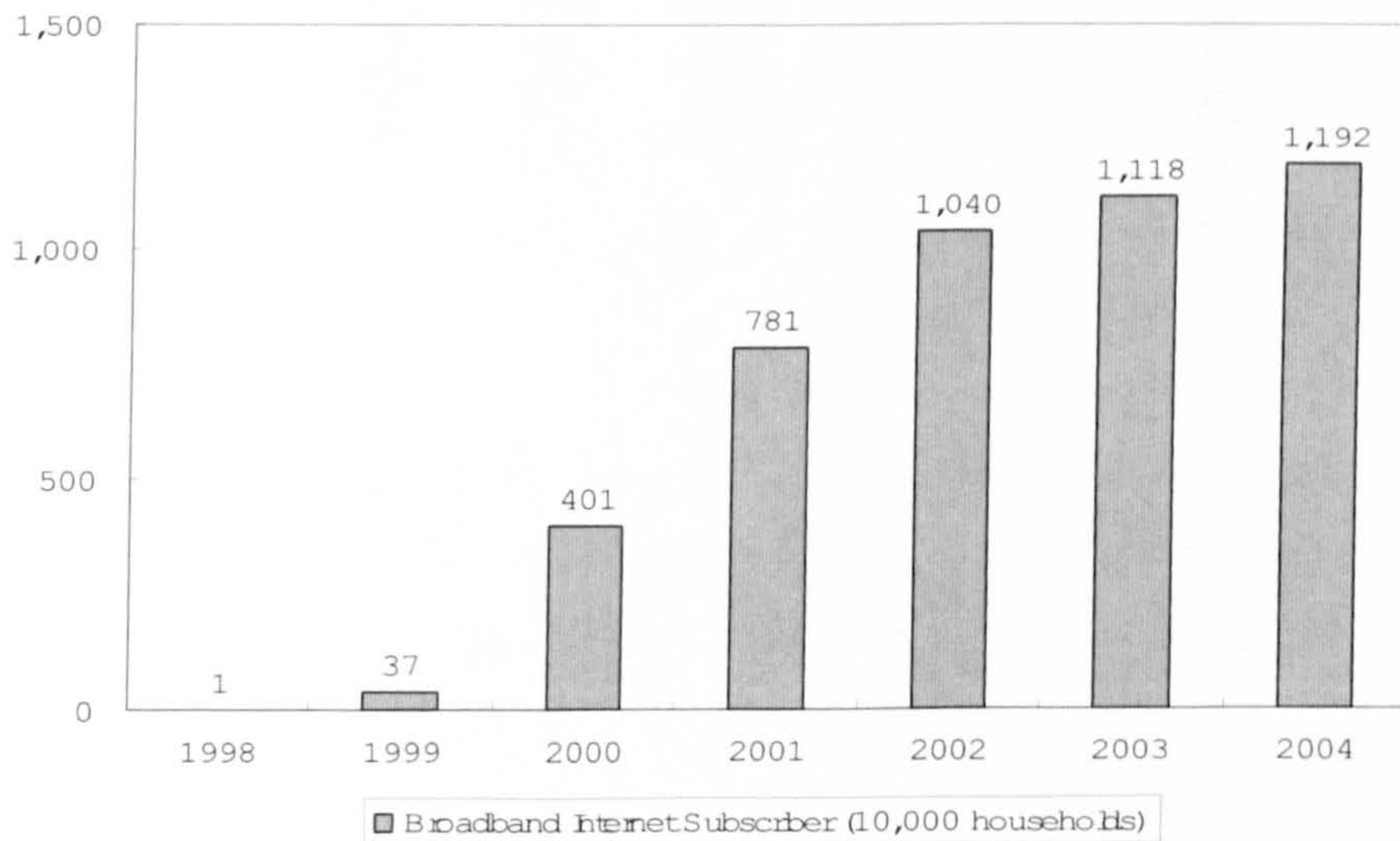


wired lifestyles in politics, business, education and entertainment.

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the number of the broadband Internet subscribers increases rapidly and as of 2004, it reaches 11.92 million (NIDA, 2004). According to a recent OECD report (2005), South Korea is ranked first in the world for four years in a row since 2001 in terms of the number of the broadband Internet subscribers

Broadband connections allow users faster access to the Internet and its services. Armed with ready access to bandwidth needed to support online video and audio content, 73.9 percent of South Korea's Web surfers access streaming video and audio content per month. In contrast, only 29.5 percent of the surfing population in the U.S. access streaming media content (Bhuiyan, 2004).

Figure 3.1 Broadband Internet subscriber



Source: NIDA (2005)

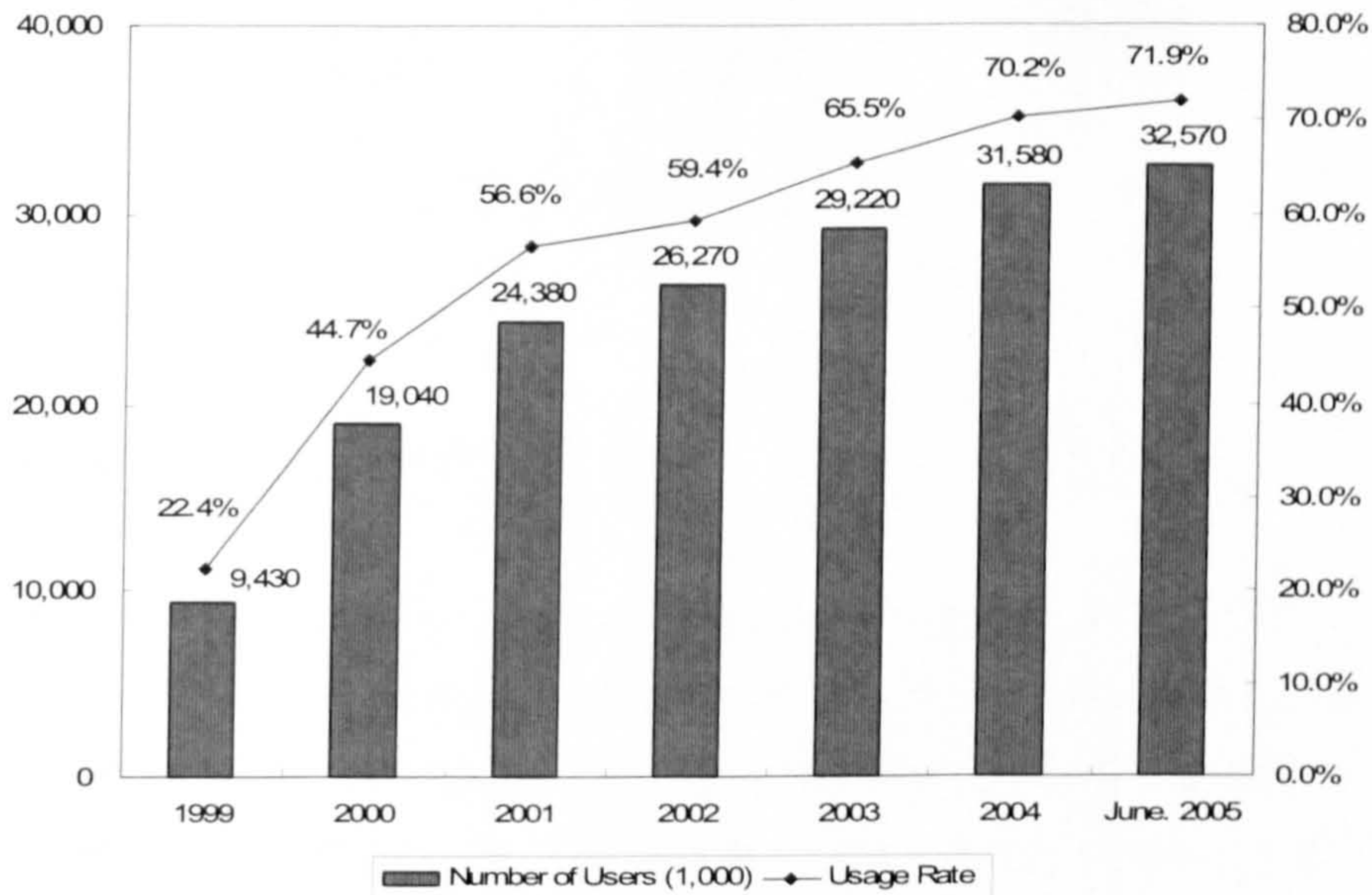
### **Number of Internet users**

The number of Internet users has increased every year in South Korea since its introduction. According to the National Internet Development Agency (NIDA, 2005), the number of Internet users nationwide is estimated to be 19.04 million in 2000, with



the percentage of Internet users reaching 44.7 percent based on users at the age 6 or above. In 2004, more than 30 million South Koreans use the Internet services, accounting for 65.5 percent. As of 2005, the number of Internet users reaches 32.57 million, and the Internet usage rate tops 71.9 percent (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Internet users and Internet usage rate



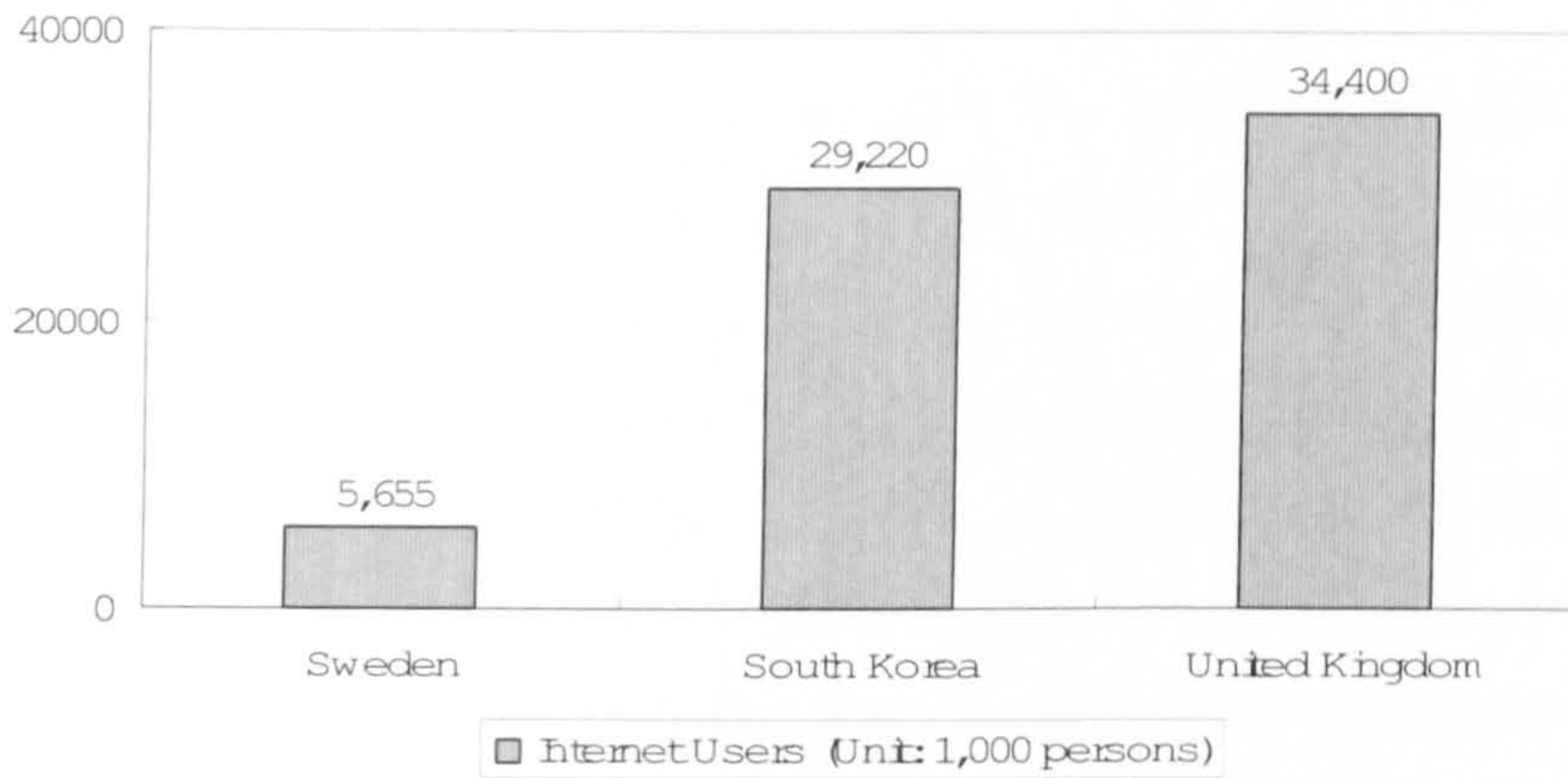
Source: NIDA (2005)

According to a recent report released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2005), South Korea ranks second in the world as of 2004 in the number of users per 1,000 persons. Sweden ranks first, followed by South Korea, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Figure 3.3).

In terms of the average rate of increase in the years spanning 1996 to 2003, China recorded the greatest growth with 142 percent, followed by Romania with 88 percent. South Korea also commands a respectable rate of growth at 68 percent, well above the average growth rate of 37 percent among 50 countries (NCA, 2005).



Figure 3.3 Number of Internet users in the top three countries

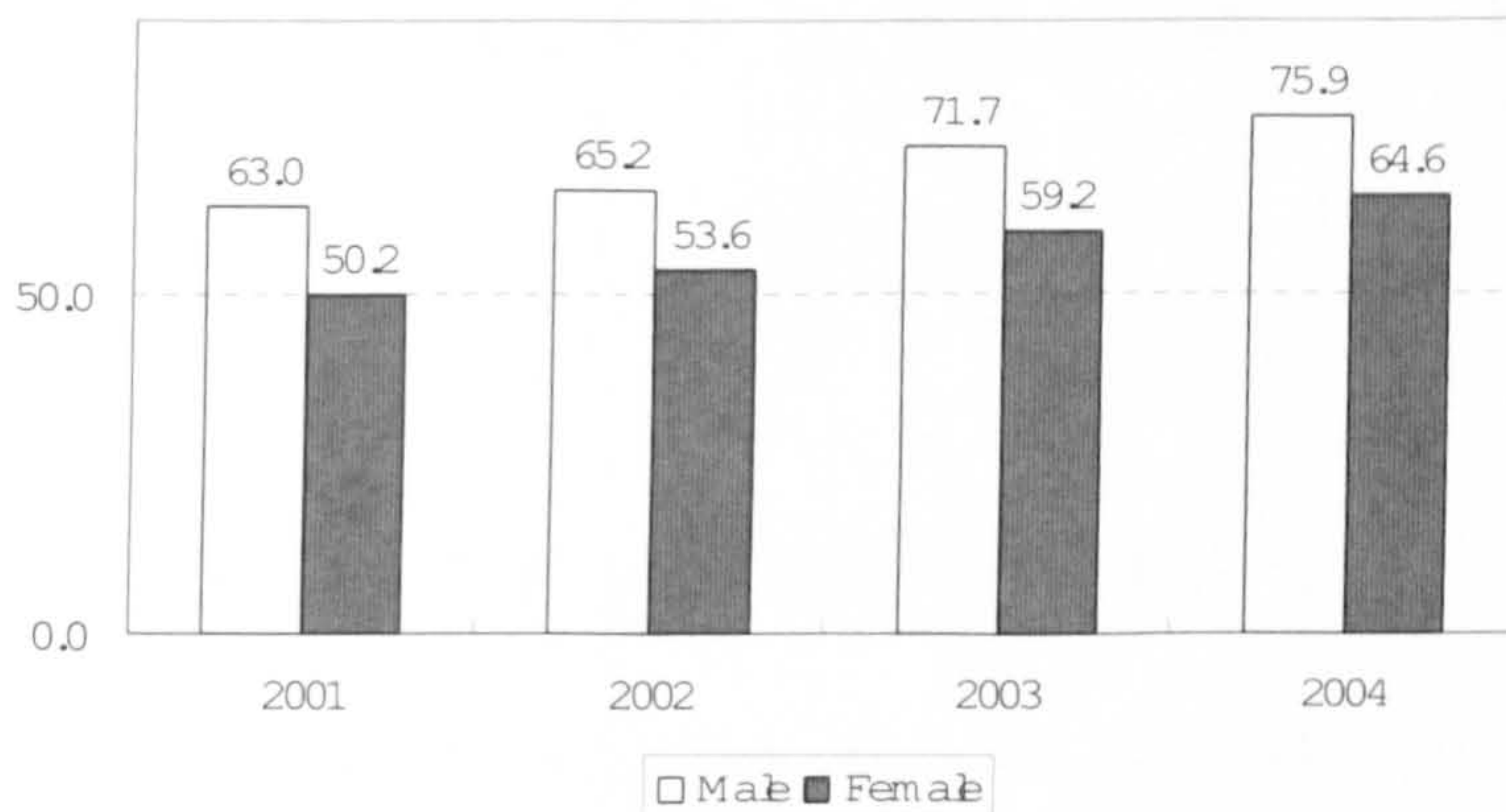


Source: ITU (2005)

### Internet usage by gender

A report published by the Korea Network Information Center (KRNIC, 2005) reveals that 75.9 percent of the male population (17.06 million) and 64.4 percent of the female population (14.52 million) use the Internet in 2004. There is a moderate gender gap in Internet use. Males show an 11.3 percent higher usage rate than that of females, but the difference has decreased to some extent when compared with the previous years.

Figure 3.4 Internet usage by gender



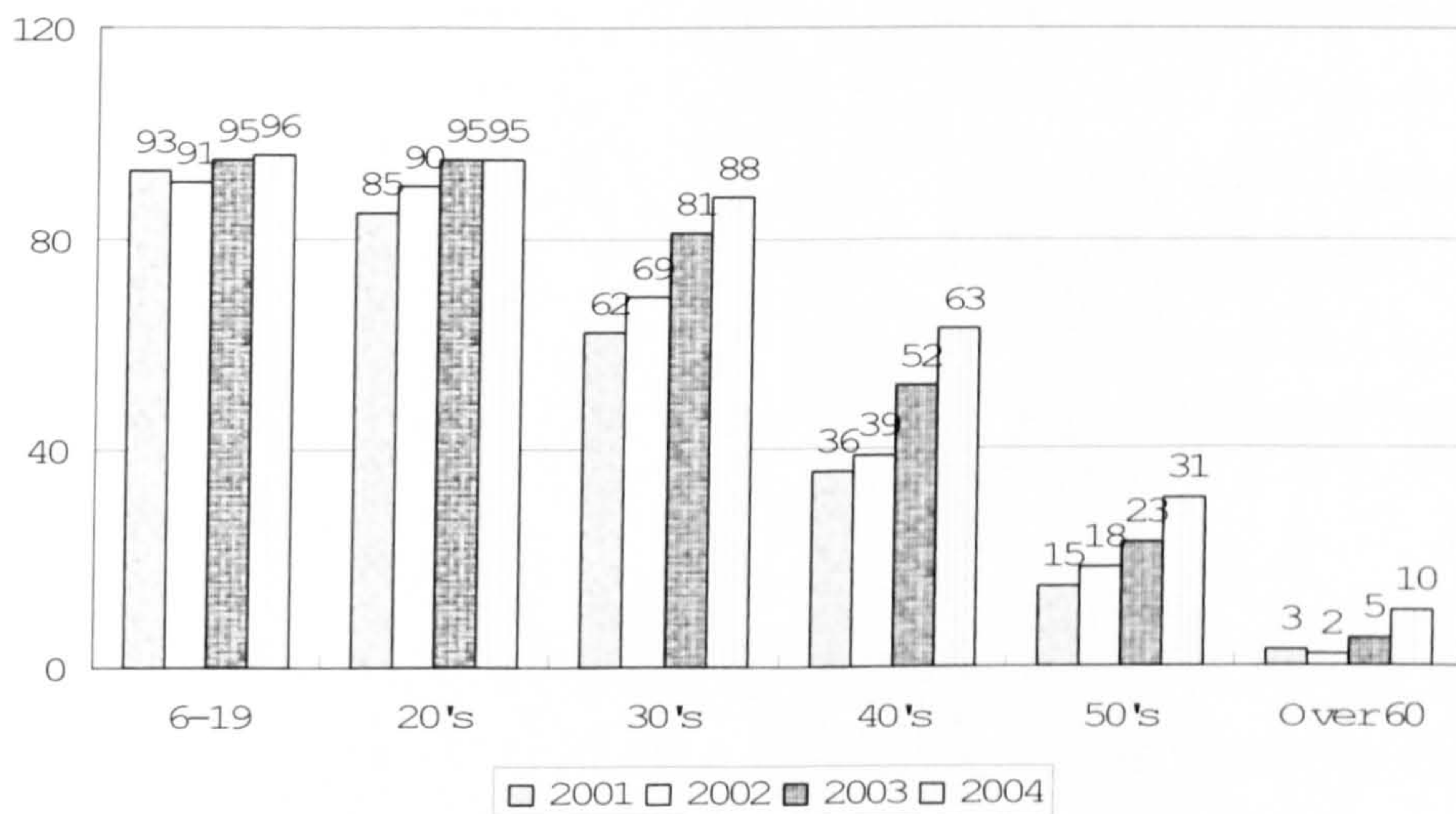
Source: NCA (2004, 2005)



**Internet usage by age**

Demographically, in 2004, the percentage of the Internet users aged 6~19 is the highest with 96.2 percent, followed by those in their twenties with 95.3 percent. Adults in their thirties account for 88.1 percent, followed by those in their forties with 62.5 percent 31.9 percent Internet users are in their fifties and 10.2 percent are over sixty years old. (KRNIC, 2005). The age group from 6 to 19 has the most Internet users compared to other age groups. Young adults in their twenties have the highest rate of Internet usage. There is an age gap with regard Internet use, but the gap decreases with a rapid increase in Internet users who are in their forties and in their fifties, compared with the previous years.

Figure 3.5 Internet demographics



Source: NCA (2004, 2005)

**Factors of the rapid penetration of the Internet**

The rapid penetration of the Internet in South Korea can be explained by several factors, such as the active role of the South Korean government, urban high-rise buildings, high rate of literacy and school enrolment, and the compatibility and ease of keyboard use with the Korean language (Bae, 2004; Bhuiyan, 2004).

In South Korea, governmental policies have been a major factor in the diffusion of the Internet (Bae, 2004). In the name of development and economic competitiveness, the promotion of “enabling technologies” (e.g., broadband, wireless technology, etc.) was the catchphrase of the late 1990s. The South Korean government actively seeks to expand the information superhighway to agricultural and rural communities throughout the country and envisions a high-speed Internet environment without regard to geography or proximity to major urban centres. In its bid to expand information access capabilities to regional residents, the government has also implemented Internet use facilities in post offices and civic offices in mid-sized cities, small agricultural towns, and rural communities.

In addition, in June 2001, 10 agencies, led by the Ministry of Communication, co-founded the “Internet Education for 10 Million Citizens (2000-2002)” program, which targeted information alienated individuals, including housewives and the disabled. As a result of these government efforts to narrow the digital divide, the gap has been greatly narrowed in society with respect to Internet use grouped by region, income, and gender; however, differences still exist between those grouped according to age, occupation, and education. The government, in its continuing efforts to close the digital divide, has prepared legal and systematic measures to ensure a more comprehensive and systematic approach.

Densely populated urban high-rise buildings also have a positive effect in the infrastructure development of the Internet. The high-rise apartment buildings that constitute the major residential mode of South Koreans greatly aids the development and establishment of an Internet infrastructure. According to Bhuiyan (2004), 70 percent of South Korean households live in urban areas, with 45 percent of them living in apartment blocks. This has allowed South Korean telecom companies to offer high-speed Internet services to over 90 percent of South Korean households in just a few years.

A high rate of literacy and school enrolment in South Korea can be another explanation for the rapid penetration of the Internet. South Korea excels in education. Its overall



90% school enrolment rate (primary, secondary and tertiary) is the highest among the Asian countries. South Korea's high rate of literacy and school enrolment are essential prerequisites for the widespread adoption of the Internet. These factors have contributed to the growing impact of internet usage.

Another noted factor that has influenced the diffusion of Internet services in South Korea is the compatibility of the language to PCs (Bae, 2004). The South Korean alphabet, known as Hangeul, uses a pictographic font that is ideally suited to computerisation. Young children can easily use a PC. Hangeul is a phonetic, with one character representing one sound, making it easy to learn. Hangeul is a simple, scientific language, and learning to read and write is fairly easy. With a literacy rate of 97.6 percent, one of the highest rates in the world, and the feasibility of Hangeul on PCs, the South Korean people have readily adapted to Internet technology in record numbers.

### **3.3.2 The Internet and deliberative democracy**

#### **Impact of the Internet on democracy**

With a rapid expansion of the Internet, there has been growing expectation that the Internet will function as a new vehicle for a better democracy in South Korea (Im, 2000, 2004a, 2005; Uhm and Hague, 2001; Yoon, 2002; Feldman, 2003; Meinardus, 2003; Yeom, 2003; Bhuiyan, 2004; Klüber and Banerjee, 2005; Park et al., 2005).

Uhm and Hague (2001), for example, maintain that while the UK, often regarded as the model of parliamentary democracy, displays a more cautious attitude in embracing new technologies, both socially and industrially, South Korea, a newly democratised country, rapidly adopts the Internet for the transformation of its society. Furthermore, the impact of the Internet may be quicker and stronger in South Korea, as "the attachment to traditional political structures and modes of behaviour is less deep-rooted (because the institutions themselves are newer)" (p.30).

Meinardus (2003) also argues that in South Korea, the Internet has long become not only part of the daily routine of most citizens, but also a powerful political weapon, threatening to overthrow the dominance of even the once almighty conventional media. Thus, the democratic potential of the Internet in South Korea is expected to be larger than anywhere else. He further states that South Korea can be used as a model to provide confidence to so-called cyber-optimists.

Furthermore, Choi (2006) maintains that the Internet contributes to South Korean democracy by enabling citizens to engage in sharing, exchanging and, accordingly, reshape their political views with one another. Similarly, Bhuiyan (2004) claims that the Internet can act as virtual Speakers' Corner for free political expression, "usually exercised warily in South Korea by a populace that was under dictatorial control for more than three decades" (p.122). He further maintains that the online chat rooms in South Korea are buzzing with debate. The decentralised online discussion is as influential in South Korea as the mainstream media election coverage in the Western world.

In addition, Han (2002) argues that the Internet helps create new kinds of public spheres and social capital in South Korea. The Internet educates "a new constituency, mostly in its teens and twenties, provides previously unavailable information, and promotes interconnectivity among people" (p.3). The newly created cyber public sphere may provide a remedy for reconnection and political participation. Likewise, Choi et al. (2003) maintain that the Internet facilitates younger generations, in their 20s and 30s who often considered political outsiders, to actively convene and express their thoughts and opinions on political issues through the Internet. Similarly, Song et al. (2004) maintain that the Internet, through a diversity of platforms, enables South Korean people "to exchange ideas, to mobilise the public, and to strengthen social capital" (p.5).

Besides, Im (2004b) claims that the Internet will transform South Korean politics from "big, slow, isolated, closed and exclusionary" to "small, fast, connected, open and inclusive" (p.19). In addition, Yeom (2003) argues that the Internet helps many political actors wrest politics away from traditionally powerful groups. Bhuiyan (2004) also sees



the Internet as a mass medium capable of wider and deeper effects on South Korean society and even affecting the nature of South Korean democracy: "With the world's highest penetration of high-speed and mobile Internet services, South Korea is at the cutting edge of technology, transforming the political system, making it more open and democratic" (p. 116). He states that the Internet brings a majority of the voters into the political process. In particular, the Internet along with broadband connections contributes to the increased participation among young voters.

A number of surveys show that the Internet is envisioned as a powerful tool for the improvement of South Korean democracy among politicians as well as citizens. A survey conducted in 1999 shows that majority parliaments have optimistic ideas about the impact of information technology on future electronic democracy (Lee, 1999). Among 299 parliaments, 28 percent of the 62 respondents strongly perceive that information technology development will increase the chances of contact between politicians and citizens, and 64 percent of them weakly perceive this trend. 25 percent of the respondents strongly agree that citizens will significantly influence the political decision making process. 38 percent of the respondents strongly perceive that the accessibility of the public to government information will be increased. Another survey carried out by Park (2000) shows that more than 70 percent of the South Korean people are optimistic about the potential of the Internet as a new vehicle for the development of South Korean democracy.

On the other hand, others take a sceptical stance. Yeom (2002), for example, expresses concern arguing that "new media technologies, such as the Internet, challenge the South Korean government, the media industry, and the public to rethink conventional notions regarding the correct balance between free expression and the law: Defamation, invasion of privacy, obscenity, access to information, and other related issues take on a heightened urgency as the Internet becomes more accessible to South Korea's citizens" (p.125).



### Deliberative potential of the Internet

According to recent reports, the Internet is transforming South Korean society into a more discursive one, facilitating not only deliberation among citizens (horizontal deliberation), but deliberation between citizens and political elites (vertical deliberation).

A survey carried out by the National Internet Development Agency of Korea (2005) reveals that 47.5 percent of respondents report that they have experienced more opportunities to participate in political issues through the Internet. Furthermore, 66.1 percent of respondents report that the Internet has enhanced a citizen's right to know.

Another survey conducted by *KoreanClick* (2003) show that 42.6 percent of total respondents are users of Internet messenger programs, an emerging communication method, a sharp hike from the 2002 record of 27.5 percent. The use of instant messaging utilities has increased from 27.5 percent of respondents to over 42 percent of respondents in less than a year. Another survey by Kim and Yoon (2002) reveals that nearly 57 percent of respondents report that they frequently visit politics-related websites and communicate with politicians at least once during the election periods. In addition, according to the survey performed by the Korea Internet Corporations Association shows that the Internet is regarded among South Koreans as the liveliest forum for political debates (Choi et al., 2003).

Notably, in 2000, the Internet emerges as a powerful political channel for political deliberation among citizens (Park et al., 2005; Yoon, 2002). During the 2000 Korean National Assembly election campaign, the Movement Coalition, an umbrella organisation of about 600 individual civic groups, set up the website and published a 'blacklist' of 86 unfit candidates with pages of full details of their backgrounds, such as criminal records including tax evasion and draft dodging. The website bypasses mainstream media that have been reluctant to publish what proved to be damaging information on parliamentary candidates (Yoon, 2002).

Explosive numbers of people visits the website to check personal information on

candidates. Furthermore, more than hundreds of people a day post their opinions on its bulletin boards (Choi et al., 2003). Recording 50,000 visitors in five days since its opening, the Internet “made its mark as the most influential public sphere and medium for networking” (Han, 2002, p.12). As a result of this campaign, fifty-eight of the 86 blacklisted candidates, including several leading political figures, loose in the election.

Furthermore, the 2002 Presidential election demonstrates that how “the context of politics or politics itself is changing with people's active use of EBBs” (Song et al. (2004, p. 2). Bhuiyan (2004) states that “in 2002 the wave of cyber electioneering and the active Internet media contributed to ushering in new paradigms for political communications in South Korean history” (p.116).

In 2002, of the three major candidates running for the Presidential campaign (Roh Moo Hyun and Jung Mong Joon, and Lee Hoi Chang), two of the candidates decide to form an alliance (Roh and Jung), consolidating their constituencies to ensure victory. When Jung decides to break the alliance and withdrew his support seven hours before the start of voting, tens of thousands of young voters flood the message boards urging their peers to go to the booths and vote for Roh. As Roh win the election, it seems that Jung’s decision to back out of the agreement at the proverbial last minute is seen in a decidedly negative light among the younger generation of voters.

According to Lee and Choi (2002), from 11:30 p.m. 18<sup>th</sup> December to 3:00 a.m. 19<sup>th</sup> December 2002, three million Internet users visit Naver.com ([www.naver.com](http://www.naver.com)) – five times its daily average. Daum.com’s ([www.daum.net](http://www.daum.net)) server temporarily goes down due to an overload of users trying to access its presidential election website. Furthermore, from 11 am to 1 pm on the day of the election, eighteen million mobile phone calls are recorded. Visitors to the ruling party Web site record 860,855 hits, 200,000 more than the daily average and postings to the bulletin boards on the party web site double. Consequently, the Internet is argued to play a pivotal role for Roh Moo Hun to win the presidency (Han, 2002; The Guardian, 24 February 2003, Choi, 2006).

In addition, the Internet facilitates citizen-to-elite deliberation (vertical deliberation) in South Korea. Through the Internet, the South Korean government offers several types of services, such as *Allim Madang*, *Cyberparty*, and *Yeolring Jeongbu* to hear the public citizen's views on government policy and planning, government activities, as well as topical social issues and to poster the dissemination and accessibility of government information (Lee, 1999).

- *Allim Madang*

Traditionally, information on public policy is disseminated mostly via newspapers, television and radio. This method does not always guarantee efficiency or accuracy. People sometimes miss broadcasts or simply misunderstood them.

In 1995, in line with the new 'open government' policy, the Ministry of Government Administration initiates a new web service designed to provide the public with information on public policies. It gathers and electronically manages information from 47 central government agencies and posts them on their website. Its mandate is to introduce the public to governmental activities and policies as well as collect public opinion and feedback. Services provided are day to day news headlines, data search, public discussion, and policy enquiry, among others. The Ministry of Government Administration continues to encourage the public to express their views and participate in this project.

- *Cyberparty*

Established in 1996 by the National Assembly, this website is designed to serve as a forum for political discussion. *Cyberparty* aims to provide opportunities to both laypeople and experts to freely engage and discuss in the policy making process. Further goals are to provide a support system for new legislation through a public critical review of parliamentary activities and enforce the effectiveness of direct democracy through the adoption of leading information technology. Some of the services provided in this forum deal with information on presidential candidates,



political suggestions, a BBS (open forum on policy and law, electronic meetings, and public opinions), and a newsletter.

- *Yeolrin Jeongbu*

Established in 1996, this online service is once criticised for a lack of experts and late responses to questions resulting in low levels of public participation. *Yeolrin Jeongbu* is originally intended to act as a liaison between the public and the government. Its mandate is to encourage lay people to participate in the decision making process, gather public opinion, and advance the system of information gathering and distribution.

Its contents include a) an accessible public database containing a wide range of public documents where people are able to access information on the economy and the law, b) a “public advice” forum where citizens are able to consult government officials on matters pertaining to a variety of issues, such as social security, housing, legal matters, and taxes among others, and c) a “Dialogue” forum where online users are able to express their political concerns and opinions on selected topics as well as voice suggestions on government activities.

## CHAPTER 4 Methodology

Content analysis is popular in the studies that examine the link between the Internet and deliberation. It provides an excellent tool to analyse various aspects of communication. There are several options for researchers to identify units of text when they carry out content analyses. The choice of options largely depends on the context of study. This study attempts to analyse the messages in the *Hani* and *Nosamo* websites, which the most influential and busiest online bulletin boards during the 2002 Korean presidential election. As discussed in Chapter Two, most of the existing empirical measurements focus on specific aspects of deliberation that do not reflect the depth of theoretical discussion. Therefore, this study attempts to develop a comprehensive set of measurements that would better reflect the range of concepts addressed in the literature. For this, the study not only employs existing measurements, but also complements them with innovative new variables.

### 4.1 Content analysis

#### 4.1.1 Overview of content analysis

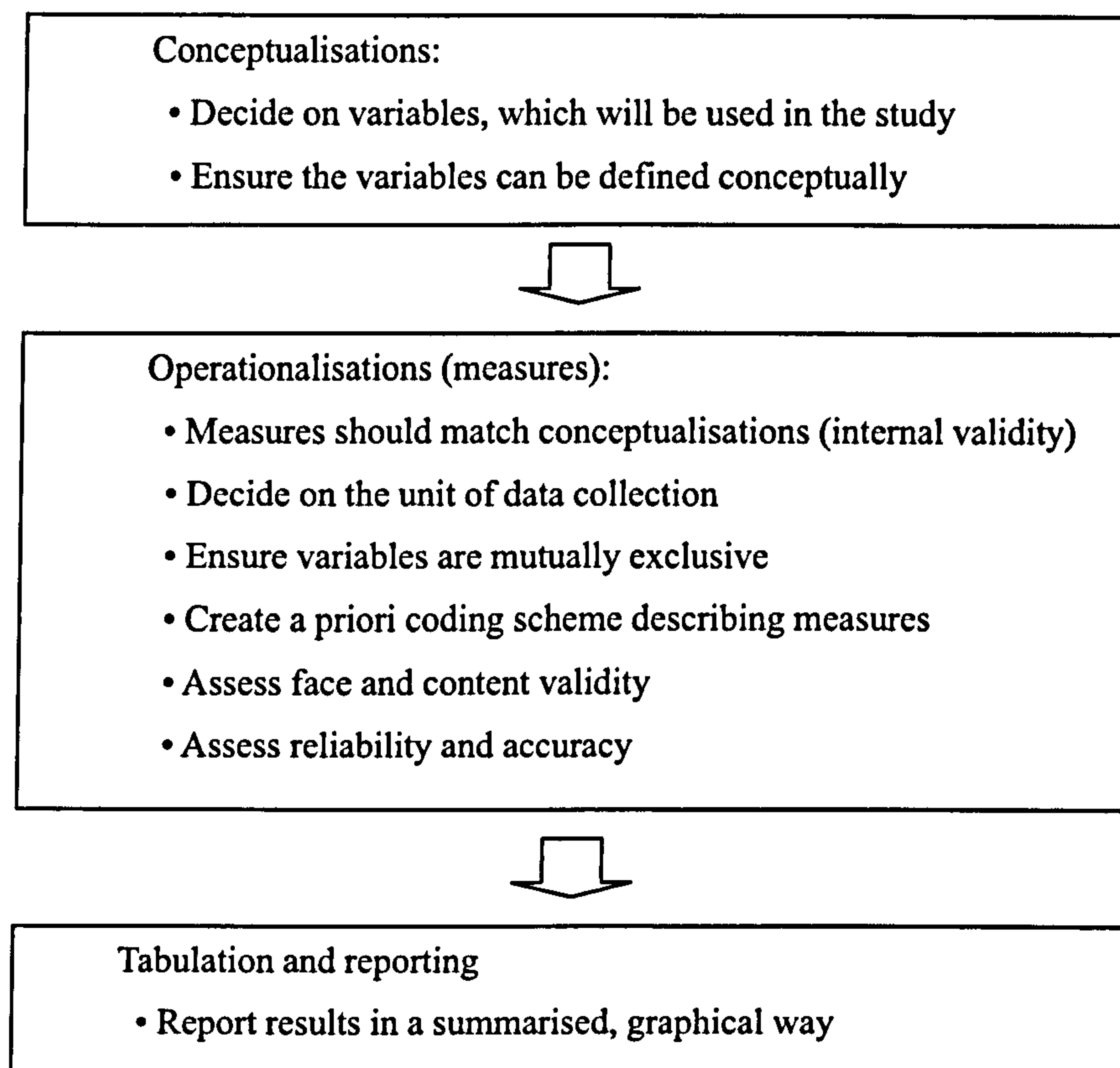
Content analysis is defined as “an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications” (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991, p. 243). According to Hansen et al. (1998), content analysis enables researchers to know something about a text and put them in a wider social context. The analysis makes inferences in a systematic, objective, and qualitative way to observe specific characteristics within a text (Kerlinger, 1973; Stone et al., 1966). Since content analysis can be applied to any piece of recorded communication or writing, it is widely employed to evaluate different types of information such as documents, newspaper articles, books and so on. In particular, with the rapid increase of available text data on websites, content analysis is gaining popularity in the study of websites.

There are two broad approaches to the methodology of content analysis: qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis may be likened to textual analysis in that “it is primarily interpretive in nature, is typically based on an individual’s perspective, and frequently does not employ statistics for data analysis” (Tomasello, 2004, p. 65). Quantitative content analysis is a research method used to make valid and reliable inferences from the data to their context (Krippendorff, 1980). It is the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to specified rules and the statistical analysis of the relationships between those categories (Riffe et al., 1998). However, content analysis is basically quantitative, whereas the qualitative approach merely means interpretive coding of content. Thus, quantitative content analysis contains elements of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

On the other hand, Chung and Tan (2004) propose a process flow chart which can be employed in content analysis. Figure 4.1 shows the flow chart. The first step is conceptualisation. In this step, research variables are decided and conceptualised. The second step is operationalisation. This step includes determination of measures, unit of data collection or analysis, developing coding schemes, and checking validity and reliability. The last step is reporting the results of analysis.



Figure 4.1 Flow chart of the content analysis process



Source: Chung and Tan (2004), p. 874

### 4.1.2 Unit of analysis

According to Winkler and Kozeluh (2005), the quantitative approach is prevalent in content analysis which identifies and counts the occurrence of particular aspects in a text. Conducting a quantitative content analysis involves identifying the unit of the text, for example, a word, a phrase or a statement. According to Weber (1988), content analysis also involves codifying the units into various categories. Thus, identifying the unit of texts is an essential element of content analysis.

Rourke et al. (2001), propose five approaches to identify units of texts: (1) sentence unit, (2) paragraph unit, (3) message unit, (4) thematic unit, and (5) illocutionary unit. In the sentence unit approach, units are delimited by syntactical criteria. For this, messages are

interpreted by coders at first, and then they are transformed into sentences. This approach can secure a reliable identification of texts, but yield an enormous number of cases. The paragraph unit is a kind of larger sentence. It can reduce the number of cases, however, subjectiveness increases.

The message unit approach has advantages of objective identification and a manageable set of cases. It also can secure reliable identification. However, certain messages are not suitable for research variables. In the thematic unit approach, units are delimited by the proper meaning that is extracted from a segment of sentence. Subjective ratings and low reliability are major problems in this approach. Lastly, the illocutionary unit approach describes the speaker's purpose and change of purpose.

On the other hand, Rourke et al. (2000) analyse 19 commonly referenced researches during 1990s and 2000. As shown in Table 4.1, thematic and message unit approaches are most frequently adopted in the researches. However, the choice for a unit of analysis depends on the context of the study and should be given special attention because the choice of unit can affect coding decisions and the outcome of analysis (Cook and Ralston, 2003). Furthermore, Krippendorf (1980) argues that the choice of unit involves considerable compromise between meaningfulness, productivity, efficiency, and reliability.

Table 4.1 Survey of online deliberation studies

Study	Unit of analysis	Variables investigated	Reliability	Research Design
Ahern, Peck, & Laycock (1992)	Message	Interaction, Complexity of response	Percent agreement	Descriptive Experimental
Blanchette (1999)	Thematic	Linguistic variation, Participation, Discussion themes	Not reported	Descriptive Quasi-experimental
Bullen (1998)	Thematic	Participation, Critical thinking	Not reported	Descriptive
Craig et al (2000)	Proposition	Student question type	Percent agreement	Experimental
Fahy et al. (2000)	Sentence	Interaction, Participation, Critical thinking	Percent agreement	Descriptive
Garrison, Anderson, & Archer (2000)	Message	Critical Thinking	Cohen's kappa	Descriptive
Hara, Bonk & Angeli (2000)	Paragraph	Participation, Interaction, Social, cognitive, metacognitive elements	Percent agreement Coder stability	Descriptive
Henri (1991)	Thematic	Participation, Interaction Social, cognitive, metacognitive elements	Not reported	Descriptive
Hillman (1999)	Sentence	Patterns of interaction	Cohen's kappa	Descriptive
Howell-Richarson & Mellar (1996)	Illocutionary act	Participation, Illocutionary properties, Focus (group/task)	Not reported	Descriptive Quasiexperimental
Kanuka & Anderson (1998), Anderson & Kanuka (1997)	Thematic	Collaborative knowledge, Construction	Not reported	Descriptive
Marttunen (1997, 1998)	Message	Levels of argumentation/ counter argumentation	Reliability coefficient	Descriptive Quasiexperimental
McDonald (1998)	Thematic	Participation, Interaction Group development, Social, cognitive, metacognitive elements	Cohen's kappa	Descriptive
Mower (1996)	Message	Interaction, Topics	Percent agreement after discussion	Descriptive
Newman, Webb, & Cochrane (1995)	Thematic	Critical thinking	Percent agreement after discussion	Descriptive
Rourke et al (in press)	Thematic	Social interaction	Percent agreement	Descriptive
Weiss & Morrison (1998)	Thematic and Message	Critical thinking, Understanding/ correcting misunderstandings Emotion	Percent agreement after discussion	Descriptive
Zhu (1997)	Thematic	Interaction, Participation Participant roles, Knowledge construction	Not reported	Descriptive

Source: Rourke et al. (2000), pp.12-13



### 4.1.3 Approaches of this study

In the literature, survey, interview and content analysis approaches have been dominant in tackling issues on deliberation quality. There are both benefits and drawbacks to selecting any particular one. Among them, content analysis is an appropriate methodology for examining deliberativeness of online communication (Wilhelm, 1999), and a great number of studies have attempted to assess the democratic role of online deliberation by utilising quantitative content analysis.

In line with previous studies, this study employs quantitative content analysis for empirical investigation of the quality of online deliberation. On the other hand, this study attempts to analyse messages in online discussions. This is because deliberativeness of online communication is really about the substantive components of the messages and how those messages relate to one another (Wilhelm, 1999). Therefore, focus is placed on what is being 'said', the textual message and how the messages relate to each other.

Content analysis provides an excellent tool to analyse aspects of communication. However, measuring an abstract concept such as deliberation is a challenge to quantitative content analysis because it goes beyond measuring manifest objects of a text to include its latent qualities. The main challenge is how to reduce the complexity of human communication to a brief description (Jensen, 2003a). It is therefore important to make valid and reliable inferences from the data to their context in content analysis. For this, it is critical to apply categories, a systemic assignment of data, close to theoretical features (Jensen, 2003a). This study partly employs existing measurements but they are complemented with innovative new indicators. The indicators are identified based upon the theoretical literature on democratic deliberation.

## 4.2 Data collection

With the rapid development of the Internet, the diverse types of online discussion space are available with slightly different characteristics: Chat rooms, Usenet/email lists and bulletin board systems.

Chat rooms are referred to as text telephony due to its instantaneous nature of communication. Participants enter a 'cyber-room' where they post and read messages instantaneously, much like a telephone conference call but using only text instead the human voice. Usenet/email lists are where participants subscribe to an email list. Messages via email are sent to everyone in the group. Bulletin Board Systems are websites where members can read and respond to other messages or post new messages or topics.

This study selects messages on bulletin board systems for analysis rather than email where citizens are invited to post their opinions without being able to read other participants' contributions, or chat rooms where contributions are expressed in a matter of seconds rather than being formed over a period of time and only accessible during a very short period.

### 4.2.1 Selection of cases

The messages to be analysed came from the bulletin boards of the two most influential and busiest websites during the 2002 Presidential election campaign in South Korea: *Nosamo* and *Hani*. Both websites are organised to discuss the issues related to the 2002 Presidential election. *Nosamo* is a homogeneous group, as it is composed of like-minded people in terms of supporting Roh Moo Hyun. *Hani* is a heterogeneous online group, as it is open to everyone with different political view points.

**Nosamo**

Nosamo, short for 'People who love Roh Moo Hyun' is a website created to support candidate Roh in the 2002 Presidential election campaign. Nosamo is the first online politician fan club in South Korea with almost seventy-thousand voluntary members. The idea of forming a citizen's support group for Roh Moo Hyun started immediately following his loss in the National Assembly election of 13 April 2000. The website was launched on 19 September 2002, shortly before the start of his Presidential election campaign.

During the campaign period, *Nosamo* organised various online and offline events such as selling T-shirts printed with Roh's caricature and distributing piggy banks to raise funds<sup>3</sup>. It also runs its own election message boards where members of Nosamo may communicate with each other almost exclusively. Demographics spanned active Internet users in their 20s, 30s, and 40s.

Nosamo, which is a homogeneous online conversational network composed of like-minded people in terms of supporting Roh, is one of the busiest and most influential political websites during the 2002 Presidential election campaign (Donga-Ilbo, 2002; Korea Times, 2003; Bhuiyan, 2004)

Table 4.2 Nosamo demographics<sup>4</sup>

Age	Number	Proportion
Under 20	1,196	2.7%
20-29	12,991	28.6%
30-39	22,069	48.5%
40-49	8,159	17.6%
Over 50	1,319	2.9%
Total	45,486	100.0%

Source: Kang (2002)

<sup>3</sup> Nosamo manages to raise 7 billion won (\$5.9 million) for the campaign (Korea Times, 2003)

<sup>4</sup> As of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2002



**Hani**

*Hani* is the website of the Hankyoreh newspaper, which is an independent newspaper established in 1988 by journalists. Hani provides not only a wide range of web services relating to the newspaper, but also a wide range of venues where citizens can discuss various political issues affecting South Korea. According to the survey carried out by “The People’s Coalition for Media Reform” and “The People’s Coalition for Fair Media 2002 presidential election” in November 2002, *Hani* is recognised by *netizens* as the “fairest” newspaper (Choi et al., 2003).

These two websites are chosen for several reasons.

Firstly, the bulletin boards of the both websites are similar in their activity. As can be seen in Table 4.3, the bulletin boards of both websites attract a greater number of messages than any other forum. A total of 5,061 messages are contributed between the 21 November and 24 November 2002.

Table 4.3 Comparison of activities of two online bulletin boards (Nosamo and Hani)

Nov.	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	Total
Nosamo	837	875	711	552	2,975
Hani	462	576	629	419	2,086
Total	1,299	1,451	1,340	971	5,061

In addition, both websites are readily accessible to all. Anyone can simply join (or leave) and participate in discussions. There are no restrictions concerning the choice of topics or the number of topics in which a person may wish to participate. All that is needed is a computer, Internet access, and the skills to read and write.

Further, the bulletin boards of both websites are similar in their participating procedures. According to the Korea IT Industry Promotion Agency (KIPA, 2005), the system for participating in online deliberations can be classified in two ways: 1) Real name system,

2) Real name identification. The real name system requires all participants who contribute writings to reveal their real names. On the other hand, the real name identification system requires participants to apply for membership using real names but allows identified members to use a pseudonym or nick name when using bulletin boards or other services.

Different systems may result in different outcomes. This is due to the fact that deliberation quality is affected by the requirement to register, to provide an e-mail address, and to use a password (Janssen and Kies, 2004). Both bulletin boards employ a real name identification system. Participants are required to fill-in a registration form, which asks for their real names, citizenship numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers. Once participants become registered, they are allowed to post messages under online nicknames or pseudonyms. The nickname can be changed at any time when needed.

Moreover, the bulletin boards of both websites operate under similar rules. The rules designed to 'foster robust and lively debate' by safeguarding participants and encouraging them to participate. Rules include:

Participants must avoid:

- Insulting, threatening or abusive language
- Making false claims
- Spamming
- Advertising

Finally, the bulletin boards of both websites are selected for their differences in group composition. *Hani* is a heterogeneous online group, as it is open to everyone with different political view points. *Nosamo* is a homogeneous group, as it is composed of like-minded people in support of Roh Moo Hyun.

### 4.2.2 Process of data filing

All the messages posted on the two online bulletin boards (*Nosamo* and *Hani*) before and after the TV debate (for a time period of 42-hours - from 21 November to 23 November, 2002) between the two major candidates (Roh and Jung) for the nomination and filing of a single candidate, are collected for subsequent analyses.

A total of 2,223 messages – 1,313 messages on *Nosamo* and 910 on *Hani* – are archived within the period. Samples could have been selected to increase the efficiency of the analysis; however, in order to fully assess the flow of the deliberations and to better understand them, all messages contributed for the specific period of time are analysed instead.

Table 4.4 Sample size

Nov.	21 <sup>st</sup> (from 6pm)	22 <sup>nd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup> (by 12pm)	Total
Nosamo	196	875	242	1,313
Hani	119	576	215	910
Total	315	1,451	457	2,223

A particular attention is given to messages over this period as the nomination and filing of a single candidate is one of the biggest issues that trigger the most heated debates throughout the 2002 Presidential election campaign period.

#### Study setting: Nominating and filing of a single candidate

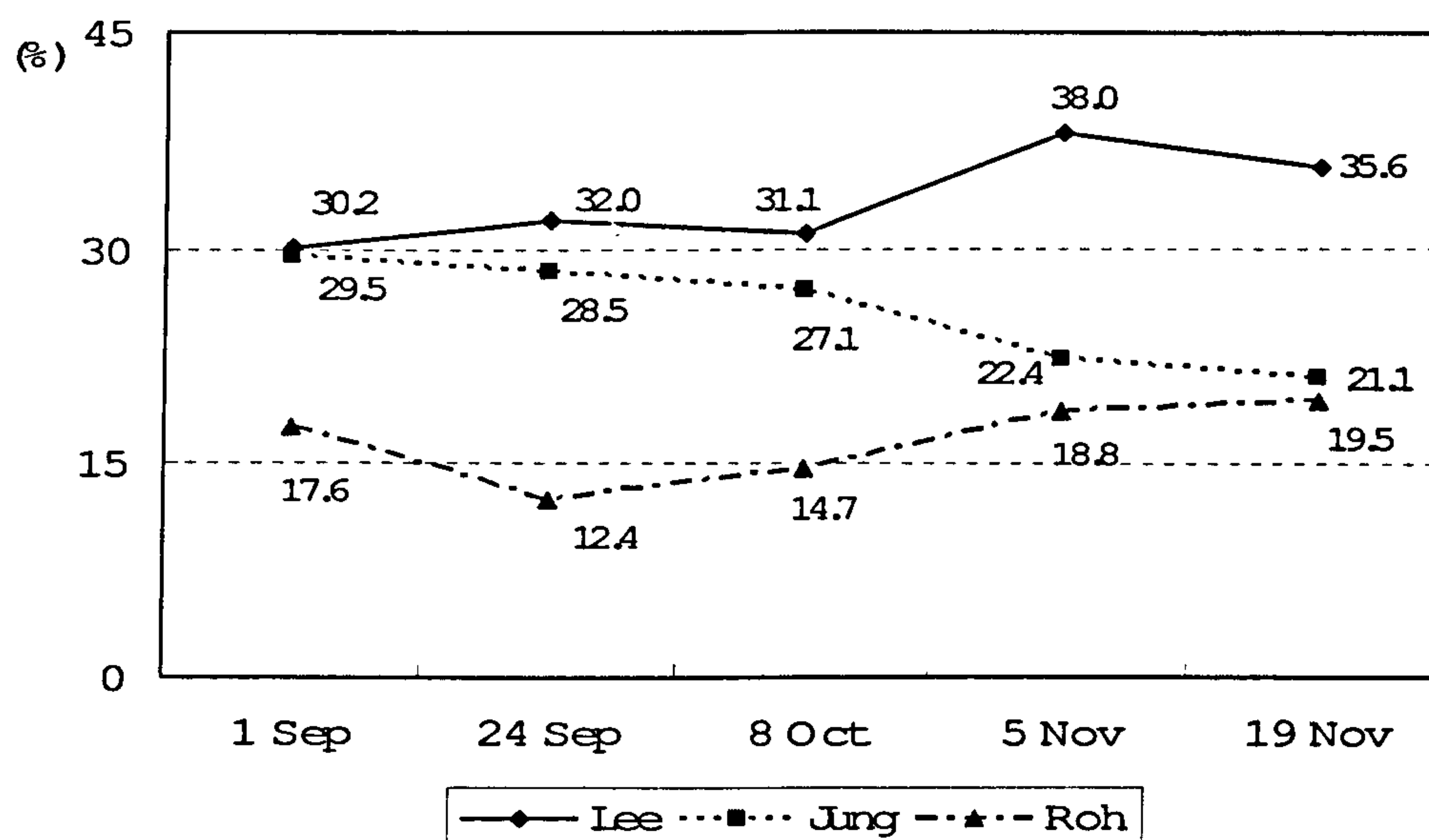
In the middle of November 2002, there are three leading presidential candidates running for the 2002 Presidential election: *Lee* Hoi Chang, running for The Grand National Party (GNP), *Roh* Moo Hyun for The Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), and *Jung* Mong Joon for The National Alliance 21 (NA21).

By mid-November, as the Figure 4.2 shows, *Lee* had been the poll leader. Most people are sure of *Lee*'s winning the December election. However, a few days before the



presidential candidate registration deadline (26 November 2002), *Roh* for MDP and *Jung* for NA21 agree to unify their campaigns to challenge the prominent GNP presidential candidate, *Lee*. They announce united platforms “to seek a political revolution to replace old politics,” and to effect “political reform, inter-Korean relations, the economy and agricultural reform” (Yonhap News Agency, 16 November 2002).

Figure 4.2 Result of the poll before unification



Source: Donga Ilbo (26 December 2002)

On 16 November 2002, *Roh* and *Jung* agree to join forces and decide on a single candidacy contingent on a debate and subsequent referendum. The debate is aired during prime time between 7:00pm and 9:00pm on 22 November. After the debate, the opinion polls conducted for three days (from 23 November to 25 November) by five institutions. In the end, as per the results of the survey, *Roh* is selected as the single candidate by a narrow margin.

Table 4.5 shows the process of nominating and filing of a single candidate.

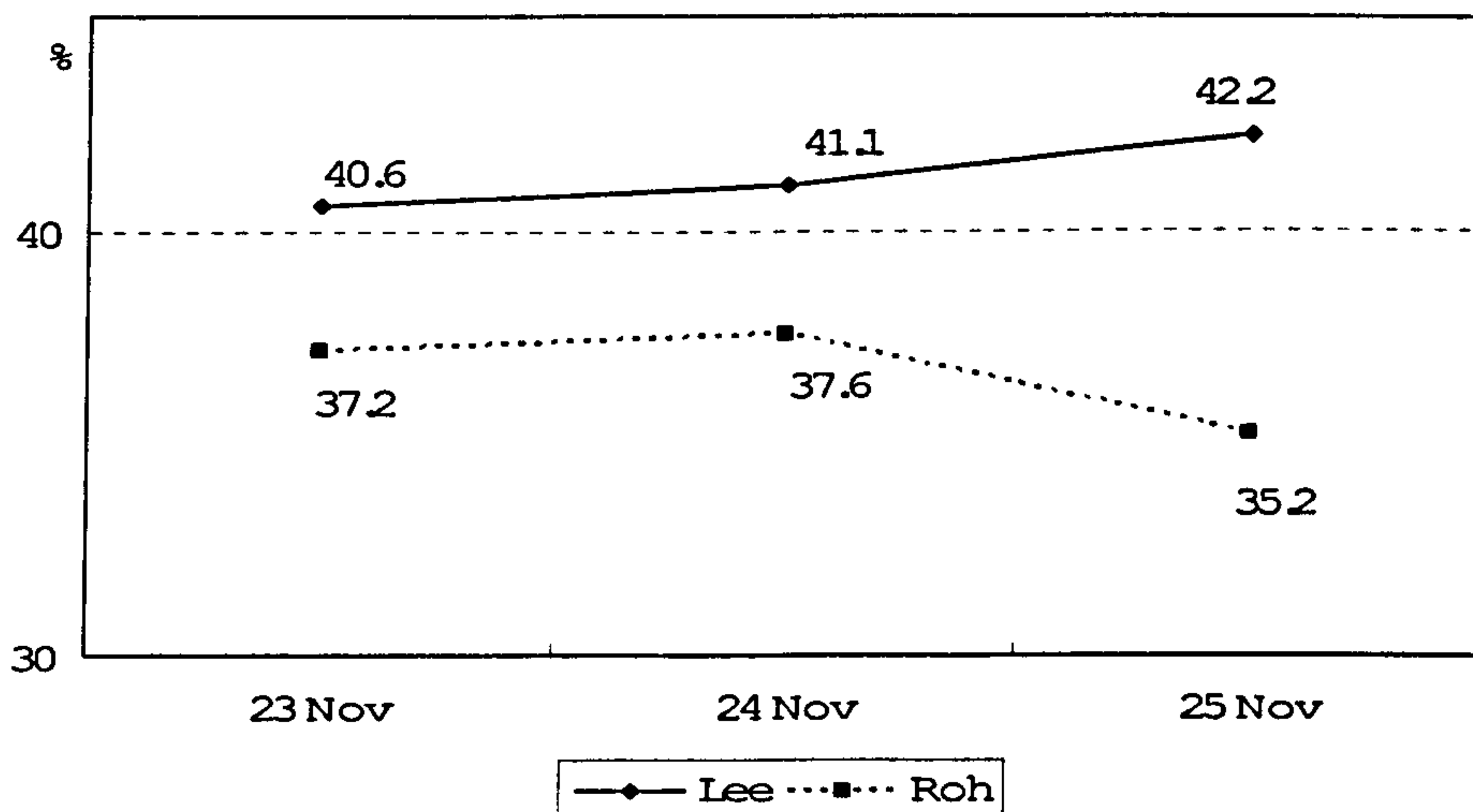
Table 4.5 Process of nominating and filing of a single candidate

Nov.	Process
16 <sup>th</sup>	Negotiations between two camps
22 <sup>nd</sup>	TV debate aired during prime time (7:00-9:00pm)
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Public opinion polls conducted
24 <sup>th</sup>	Public opinion polls conducted.
25 <sup>th</sup>	Public opinion polls conducted.
26 <sup>th</sup>	Result announced. Candidate registration completed.
27 <sup>th</sup>	The official Presidential election campaign started.

After the showdown between the two candidates – *Roh* and *Jung* – *Roh*'s popularity rapidly rose over *Lee*. As Figure 4.3 below shows, support for *Roh* (42.2%) surpassed *Lee* (35.2%), and it enabled *Roh* to win the race against *Lee*.

This showdown between *Roh* and *Jung* turned out to be the major factor for *Roh*'s victory and the most heated online political debates took place over this period of 'the substantial 2002 Presidential election'.

Figure 4.3 Result of the poll after showdown



Source: Donga Ilbo (26 December 2002)

## 4.3 Measurements

### 4.3.1 Introduction

There are at least two primary ways in measuring the quality of deliberation. One is to measure the quality by looking at the deliberation process. The other is to judge the quality by looking at the outcomes that are eventually attained, such as the level of consensus and implementation. Most of the research of deliberation to date either on face-to-face deliberation or on online deliberation has primarily attempted to measure the deliberation quality in terms of outcomes by using survey and interview methods (Fishkin and Luskin, 1999; Gastil and Dillard 1999; Kim et al., 1999; Barabas, 2000; Dryzek and Braithwaite, 2000; Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000), and has paid little attention to the process of deliberation.

The outcomes of deliberation, however, can be dependent upon the process of deliberation. In addition, deliberation outcomes are not as important for democracy as the deliberation process that leads to such outcomes (Graham, 2002). In this vein, this study examines the quality of deliberation by looking at the actual process rather than outcomes.

In order to measure the quality of deliberation process, the central features of democratic deliberation should be identified so that the extent of and the effectiveness of deliberation process can be judged (Burkhalter et al., 2002). Deliberation process reflects two main dimensions: individual dimension and interpersonal dimension (Manin, 1987; Price and Niejens, 1997; Kim et al., 1999; Goodin, 2000; Park, 2000; Graham and Witschge, 2003). While individual dimension of deliberation implies personal reflection and deeper understanding of one's own position (reflection upon their own positions), interpersonal dimension of deliberation is related to social interaction considering others and their perspectives. On the other hand, some studies suggest criteria for the quality of the deliberation process. For example, Gutmann and Thompson (1996) propose reciprocity, publicity, accountability, basic liberty, basic



opportunity and fair opportunity as key criteria for quality of deliberation. Steenbergen et al. (2003) also propose openness of participation, justification, concern for common good, respect, constructiveness and authenticity as the criteria.

Most previous empirical measurements focus on specific aspects of deliberation that do not reflect the depth of theoretical discussion. In addition, little attention has been given to the link between the dimensions and the criteria. This study attempts to develop a comprehensive set of measurements that reflects the range of concepts addressed in the literature. Furthermore, this study tries to relate the criteria to the dimensions for systemic analysis.

A range of concepts are identified, which address each dimension of deliberation based upon the literature on democratic deliberation. In the literature, the concepts are quite lengthy and, thus, it is difficult to cover the concepts in its entirety. Eventually, a total of eight concepts for individual and interpersonal dimensions, which are deemed to be significant, are identified. Furthermore, sets of categories for each concept are identified. The categories are treated as variables and this term is used henceforth. The following section highlights the concepts and variables.

#### **4.3.2 Measurements for the quality of deliberation process**

The primary objective of this study is to explore the quality of the deliberation process in online forums. To achieve the objective, it is essential to select an appropriate method to measure the quality. This is because the selection of measurements is likely to have a significant impact on the conclusions reached, and other measurements would likely produce alternative results.

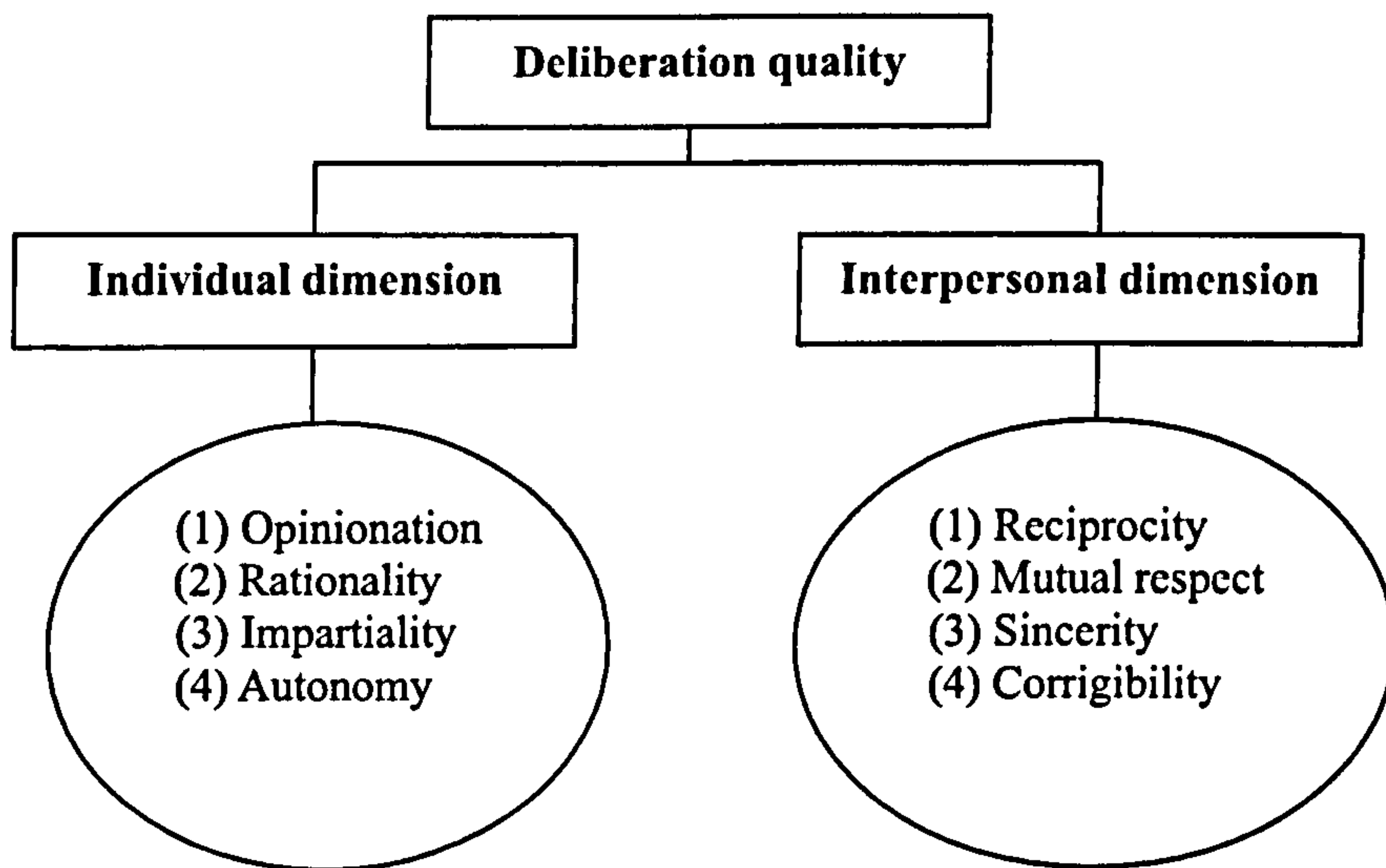
As pointed out in Chapter Two, many researchers contend that democratic deliberation can be understood to have two essential dimensions (Manin, 1987; Price and Niejens, 1997; Kim et al., 1999; Goodin, 2000; Park, 2000; Graham and Witschge, 2003): (1) individual dimension and (2) interpersonal dimension. The researchers assume that both

dimensions contribute the deliberation quality. While the individual dimension implies the inner process of reflecting and developing one’s own view, the interpersonal dimension involves the deliberation process of considering others and their perspectives. In accordance with previous studies, this study attempts to analyse the process of deliberation with the two dimensions.

The individual dimension is constructed with four concepts: (1) Opinionation, (2) Rationality, (3) Impartiality, and (4) Autonomy. Interpersonal dimension also is consisted of four concepts: (1) Reciprocity, (2) Mutual respect, (3) Sincerity, and (4) Corrigibility.

Figure 4.4 shows graphically the construct of the measurement employed in this study.

Figure 4.4 Construction of measurement



In the following sections, each of the concepts is addressed in a detailed manner.

### 4.3.3 Individual dimension of deliberation

Individual dimension refers to deliberation within the individual mind looking for arguments and judging them. Many Researchers (Manin, 1987; Price and Niejens, 1997; Kim et al., 1999; Goodin, 2000; Park, 2000; Graham and Witschge, 2003) imply what can be included in this dimension, however, emphases vary across researchers.

Goodin (2000) argues that the individual dimension “can take place within the head of each individual” (p.81) and “is inevitably modelled upon, and thus parasitic upon, our interpersonal experiences of discussion and debate” (p.81). Park (2000) notes that individual dimension relates to building one’s own view. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) view it as a liberty of expressing one’s own view. According to Lasker (1949), expression of individual opinion enables people to refine and reconsider their views and positions that can remain unformed and mutually contradictory for a long time. Similarly, Kim et al. (1999) argue, at the individual level, conversation “provides people with the opportunity to think through their ‘idea elements’ and reduce cognitive inconsistency, thus enhancing the quality of an individual’s opinions and arguments” (p.363).

However, researchers argue that merely stating an individual opinion does not contribute to sound opinion formation. Hagemann (2002), for example, maintains that “for a deliberation to contribute to democratic practices, discussion should be rational or at least contain rational elements” (p.66). Stromer-Galley (2005) also states that rationality is a prerequisite for building public opinion. In addition, Price and Niejens (1997) note that people’s understanding options, rational evaluation of the options and preferences can be examples of the individual dimension. Similarly, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) imply that sound reasoning and the rationality of individual preferences can be included in the individual dimension. Furthermore, Dahlberg (2001a) claims that in order for sound opinion formation, participants should engage in “reciprocal critique of normative positions that are provided with reasons and thus are criticisable, that is, open to critique rather than dogmatically asserted” (p.2). Similarly, Graham and Witschge (2003) argue that true deliberation requires validity claims accompanied by



reasoned justification. In addition, Bächtiger et al. (2005) state that fruitful discourse requires the justification of assertions and validity claims.

In addition, some researchers emphasise impartial perspectives as the critical element of the individual dimension. Burkhalter et al. (2002) argue that deliberation, at the individual level, needs to take into account a broad range of perspectives on an issue. Rawls (1971) also argues that participants in the deliberation process should have an intra-psychic process of argument weighing. Similarly, Fishkin (1995) argues that for a deliberative process to be complete it must be possible for citizens to weigh up each argument.

On the other hand, independence from control is considered as the element of individual dimension. Park (2000) claims that human beings in modern society should be able to formulate their own views free from “the tyranny of opinion” (Mill, 1859, p.63) and “the despotism of custom” (Mill, 1859, p.66), armed with “mental courage” (Mill, 1859, p.33). Similarly, Price (2003) maintains that the citizenry should act as “an autonomous, deliberating body that discovers its own views through conversation”, rather than a body that just “consumes political views disseminated by elites through the mass media (p.4)” Adding to this, Dahlberg (2001a) states that “discourse must be based on the concerns of citizens as a public rather than driven by the media of money and administrative power that facilitate the operations of market and state” (p.2). Likewise, Janssen and Kies (2004) maintain that deliberation should be driven by communicative rationality, rather than instrumental rationality of the system world.

Based on the arguments, a set of concepts that constitutes the individual dimension is developed: opinionation, rationality, impartiality, and autonomy. Opinionation refers to the expression of the individual view or preference. Rationality is related with having a reason for individual views or preferences. Impartiality means the ability to canvass and weigh different views. Finally, autonomy refers to the independence free from any intrusion and control.

Table 4.6 summarises definitions of the proposed four concepts and reference on which each definition is based.

Table 4.6 Definitions of concepts and references

Concepts	Definition	Reference
Opinionation	Expression of individual views or preferences	Lasker (1949), Goodin (2000), Park (2000), Kim et al. (1999)
Rationality	Having a reason for the opinionation	Price and Niejens (1997), Hagemann (2002), Graham and Witschge (2003), Voltmer and Lalljee (2004), Bächtiger et al. (2005), Stromer-Galley (2005)
Impartiality	Ability to canvass and weigh different views	Rawls (1971), Fishkin (1995), Burkhalter et. al. (2002)
Autonomy	Independence free from any intrusion and control.	Dahlberg (2001a), Park (2000), Price (2003), Jessen and Keis (2004)

#### 4.3.3.1 Opinionation

Opinionation refers to the expression of individual views or preferences and describes how those individual views or preferences are expressed. The nature of deliberation is the exchange of opinions between participants, and, thus, the presence of opinion is the starting point in the process of deliberation. In this sense, it is necessary to check whether a message provides an opinion. In addition, the length of opinion can be thought of as some indication of the depth of discussion (Coleman et al, 2002). Furthermore, certainty of one's personal views and one's ability to present views assertively can be one of the components of individuality (Park, 2000). Therefore, the concept is constructed with three variables: (1) Message purpose, (2) Opinion length and (3) Opinion strength.

### **Message purpose**

This variable aims to measure the primary purposes of messages in the online bulletin boards. Messages are coded into four categories: (1) Opinion, (2) Fact, (3) Suggestion, and (4) Enquiry. A message is coded as 'Opinion' when it states personal position on an issue. For example, a message contains "I think that ..." or "my favourite position in this context..." is coded in this category. A message is coded as 'Fact' when it contains fact without adding individual opinion. Mainly, copied messages from other sources such as newspapers, websites, other messages, etc., are coded in this category.

A message is coded as 'Suggestion' when a message contains an explicit sign to extend the discussion to an external societal agenda. For example, a message contains "Let's gather together in front of City Hall at 6pm tomorrow and ..." or "Please, spread this note to others so that ..." is coded in this category. A message is coded as 'Enquiry' when a message contains at least one sentence of instance of inquiry of opinion, fact and explanation. For example, a message containing "Could you let me know when and how the poll is conducted?" or "Why do you think candidate Jung agreed to unify candidate Roh?" would be coded in this category.

A message can contain the expression of an opinion, a suggestion, and fact simultaneously. Because of these multiple responses, the total count of coded messages outnumbers the total number of messages in the bulletin boards.

### **Opinion length**

This variable is to measure the quantity of opinionation. For this, the number of words in a message is counted. All messages in the bulletin boards are written in Hangul which is the native alphabet used to write the Korean language. In order to count the number of words, all the messages are converted into MS word documents, then the count words function of MS word is applied.



**Opinion strength**

This variable is to investigate the extent to which an individual view or preference is expressed with conviction. Messages are coded on an ordinal scale: (1) Little conviction (category value = 1), (2) Moderate conviction (category value = 2), and (3) Strong conviction (category value = 3). A message is coded as ‘Little conviction’ when it contains “I don’t know if I got this right but... ” or “I am not quite sure about this”. An example of a ‘moderate conviction’ coded message would begin with, “I know...” or “I believe...” A message beginning with “I absolutely believe that...” would be coded as ‘Strong conviction.’

Table 4.7 describes the proposed three variables for opinionation.

Table 4.7 Variables for opinionation

Variable	Type	Coding
Message purpose	Nominal	(1) Opinion, (2) Fact, (3) Suggestion, (4) Enquiry
Opinion length	Ratio	The number of words in message
Opinion strength	Ordinal	(1) Little conviction, (2) Moderate conviction, (3) Strong conviction

**4.3.3.2 Rationality**

The second concept for individual dimension of deliberation is rationality. Several features of rationality are addressed in the literature. First, it is often recognised as having a reason for individual preference. Habermas (1984) argues “an expression satisfies the precondition for rationality if and insofar as it embodies fallible knowledge and therewith has a relation to the objective world (that is, a relation to the facts) and is open to objective judgment” (p. 9). In addition, Dahlberg (2001a) claims that rational-critical debate involves “engaging in reciprocal critique of normative positions that are provided with reasons and thus are criticisable – are open to critique rather than dogmatically asserted” (p.2). Graham and Witschge (2003) also states that rationality

implies reasoned or justified validity claims. Adding to this, Wilhelm (1999) argues that “the rationality of an assertion depends on the reliability of the knowledge embedded in it. Knowledge is reliable to the extent that it can be defended against criticism (p.90).”

Second, opinion can be thought of rational if it is framed in terms of a common good. Trénel (2004), for example, argues that opinions can be thought of as rational if it addresses a common good. Similarly, Spörndli (2003) states that the argumentation within a statement “should be cast in terms of a conception of the common good” (p.11). Furthermore, Steenbergen et al. (2003) maintain that participants in the discourse should consider the common good; “there should be a sense of empathy, other-directedness, or solidarity that allows the participants to consider the well-being of others and of the community at large” (p.26). The perspective of the common good enables participants from diverging interest groups to convince each other (Trénel, 2004) and come to a mutual understanding on the overall interests and goals of society (Jensen, 2003a). Related to this, Graham (2002) claims that “it is at the notion of the common good where the deliberative model moves beyond all other models in the attempt to capture the ideal of democracy (p.18)”. Adding to this, Bohman (1996) also states that in the deliberative process citizens should “justify their decisions and opinions by appealing to common interests or by arguing in terms of reasons that ‘all could accept’ in public debate” (p. 5).

Lastly, deliberation can be thought of as rational if it stays on the main topic of discussion. Topic relevance is often employed to measure the quality of deliberation. Trénel (2004) employs topic-relevance as an indicator of rationality. Schneider (1996, 1997) measures if participants stay with the topic at hand by matching word lists and data in an automatic process. Graham and Watschge (2003) also examine lines of discussion to see whether participants maintain a level of commitment to the issues under discussion.

Based on the arguments, rationality is constructed with three variables: (1) Justification, (2) Reference to the common good and (3) Topic relevance,

### **Justification**

This variable is to capture a message's use of reasoning in support of its claim. In measuring this aspect, previous studies focus on whether or not a message provides reasons to validate the truth of its assertions using dichotomous coding (Hill and Hughes, 1998; Wilhelm, 1999; Graham and Witschge, 2003). Wilhelm (1999), for example, codes messages as VALIDATE if they contain valid reasons. NOVALID is reserved for a message "that presents neither conditions of validity nor reasons for the truth of the statement – instead appeals are made largely to personal prejudice, emotion or aesthetic judgment" (Wilhelm 1999, p.94).

As Graham (2002) notes, however, "it is one thing to give a reason, but it is another to give a supported reason (sourced information) or justification, using evidence" (p.43). Similarly, Walsh (2003) maintains that the reasons given in debate ought to be publicly acceptable reasons.

Thus, with some modification of Jensen's work (2003), messages are coded on an ordinal scale: (1) No reason (category value = 1), (2) Subjective reason (category value = 2), and (3) Objective reason (category value = 3). A message is coded as 'No reason' when it does not provide any reason to support its claim. A message is coded as 'Subjective reason' when the reasons for its claim are based on personal values such as personal prejudice and emotion. A message is coded as 'Objective reason' when the reasons are based on objective information such as newspapers, websites, broadcast news or particular people who are recognised as knowledgeable or authoritative on the subject matter.

The presence of reason for an opinion is justified by looking that the connection between premise and conclusion. Adverb clause connectors such as 'since', 'for', 'so', 'therefore', and 'because' indicate the presence of reasoning. No justification is considered inappropriate form or counter-productive for the debate. Justification based on personal values is considered as a sign of justification, whereas justification based on 'objective' information is considered even better.



**Reference to the common good**

This variable aims to measure the extent to which messages refer to the common good when reasoning. Messages are coded on an ordinal scale: (1) Individual interest (category value = 1), (2) Group interest (category value = 2), and (3) Social interest (category value = 3). A message is coded as ‘Individual interest’ when its claim is explicitly anchored in the participant’s own interest. A message is coded as ‘Group interest’ when its claim is explicitly anchored in the interest of its own group. A message is coded as ‘Social interest’ when its claim is anchored in the interest of all the members of society such as the good for the country, the best for society, or best for the most people.

**Topic relevance**

This variable is to investigate the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards stay on the main theme of discussion. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) On topic and (2) Off topic. A message is coded to be ‘On topic’ when it is consistent with the main theme of debate. The discussion in the two bulletin boards have two main themes: the 2002 Presidential election and the issue of nominating and filing a single candidate. A message is coded as ‘Off topic’ when it is not related to the main themes.

Table 4.8 describes the proposed variables for rationality.

Table 4.8 Variables for rationality

Variable	Type	Coding
Justification	Ordinal	(1) No reason, (2) Subjective reason, (3) Objective reason
Reference to common good	Ordinal	(1) Individual interest, (2) Group interest, (3) Social interest
Topic relevance	Nominal	(1) On topic, (2) Off topic

### 4.3.3.3 Impartiality

The third concept for individual dimension of deliberation is impartiality. The concept describes the ability to canvass and weigh different views. Impartiality is constructed with two variables: (1) Attempt to weigh and (2) Opinion homogeneity.

#### Attempt to weigh

This variable is to investigate the extent to which messages attempt to weigh different viewpoints. The study is conducted in the context of filing single candidate between Roh and Jung. Thus, the focus is put on the extent to which messages attempt weigh the two main candidates.

Messages are coded into three categories: (1) Jung, (2) Roh and (3) Jung & Roh. A message is coded as 'Roh' when a message makes an explicit evaluation on candidate Roh. A message is coded as 'Jung' when the message makes an explicit evaluation on candidate Jung. A message is coded as 'Roh and Jung' when the message makes an explicit evaluation on both of the candidates at the same time.

#### Opinion homogeneity

This variable is to capture the level of opinion homogeneity towards the two candidates (Roh and Jung). A deliberation is recorded as having a large degree of impartiality if positive evaluations and negative evaluations toward candidates are evenly divided, whereas strong homogeneity of opinion is viewed as having a low degree of impartiality. Messages are coded on a five-point scale: (1) Very disrespectful (value = 1), (2) Disrespectful (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Respectful (value = 4), and (5) Very respectful (value = 5).

Table 4.9 describes the proposed two variables for impartiality.

Table 4.9 Variables for impartiality

Variable	Type	Coding
Attempt to weigh	Nominal	(1) Roh, (2) Jung, (3) Roh and Jung
Opinion homogeneity	Interval	(1) Very negative, (2) Negative, (3) Neutral, (4) Positive, (5) Very positive

#### 4.3.3.4 Autonomy

The last concept for individual deliberation is autonomy. This describes the ability to formulate an individual opinion free from any intrusion by power elites and from irrational beliefs or conventions.

In assessing this concept, previous studies mostly focus on the freedom of the forum itself from governmental, political, and commercial forces. Janssen and Kies (2004), for example, approach to this aspect by looking at who organises the forum (e.g. is it government organisation, a company, or an individual citizen?), what the aim of the forum is, and how the forum is organised, among others. Dahlberg (2001c) also focuses on whether cyber-interaction is dominated by commercial activity, private conversation, or individualised forms of politics. These measurements, however, are limited in that they fall short in detecting the extent to which online deliberation itself is free from power and control.

Freedom from mass media can be an indicator of autonomy. Price (2003) stresses that citizen should avoid consuming political views disseminated by mass media, instead they should build their own views through conversation. In addition, traditional media which often characterised by close ties to big businesses and is widely regarded as pro-government (Lewis, 2005). Another indicator of autonomy can be freedom from regionalism in Korean context in that regional sentiment has been frequently exploited in related with political issues and elections.



In this study, autonomy is constructed with two variables: (1) Independence from mass media and (2) Independence from regionalism.

**Independence from mass media**

This variable is to capture the degree to which a message is critical toward traditional mass media. There are several traditional media in South Korea. In particular, Chosun-Ilbo, Dong-a Ilbo and Joongang-Ilbo are recognised as the most influential traditional media. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) Accept and (2) Refute. A message is coded as 'Accept' when it quotes and just restates the view of traditional media. A message is coded as 'Refute' when it contains counterargument and rebuttals against traditional media and their views.

**Independence from regionalism**

This is to investigate the degree to which messages are critical toward the regionalism prevailing in the South Korean society. As discussed in Chapter Three, regionalism has been widely argued to be a main obstacle to the South Korean democracy (Nam, 1989; Shin, 1999; Lee, 2004; Im, 2004a). The regionalism, especially between Cholla and Gyungsang regions, had been encouraged and manipulated by politicians for their own political purposes. The regional sentiment has been the source of irrational belief and convention for a long period of time in South Korea. Thus, any attempt to deflect regional sentiment and to form one's own views on this issue can be interpreted as an indication of autonomy. Messages are coded into two categories: Accept and (2) Oppose. A message is coded as 'Accept' when it contains a statement that reflects the prevailing prejudice. A message is coded as 'Oppose' when it contains counterargument and rebuttals against it.

Table 4.10 describes the proposed two variables for autonomy.

Table 4.10 Variables for autonomy

Variable	Type	Coding
Independence from mass media	Nominal	(1) Accept (2) Refute
Independence from regionalism	Nominal	(1) Accept (2) Oppose

### 4.3.3.5 Summary

Based on the literature, individual dimension is conceptualised using four concepts. Then, variables are developed to measure each concept. Table 4.11 shows the concepts and variables used to assess the quality of deliberation process.

Table 4.11 Overview of concepts used for assessing the quality of individual deliberation

Dimension	Concept	Variable	Type
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Message purpose	Nominal
		Opinion length	Ratio
		Opinion strength	Ordinal
	Rationality	Justification	Ordinal
		Reference to the common good	Ordinal
		Topic relevance	Nominal
	Impartiality	Attempt to weigh	Nominal
		Opinion homogeneity	Interval
	Autonomy	Independence from mass media	Nominal
		Independence from regionalism	Nominal

#### **4.3.4 Interpersonal dimension of deliberation**

Interpersonal dimension refers to deliberation between individuals considering others and their perspectives.

Researchers stress responsiveness as the interpersonal dimension. Bohman (2000) argues that deliberation is based on a give and take of reasons. In addition, Renn (2006) notes that a mutual exchange of arguments is an essential part of deliberation. Furthermore, Price and Niejens (1997) points out that responsiveness of discussion and debate can be used as a criterion for the quality of the deliberation process. Adding to this, Hagemann (2002) states “A deliberation in which participants actually respond to each other has a greater capacity of contributing to a deliberative democracy than a discussion in which the participants only offer information and opinions without any real connection to the other participant” (p.20 ). Similarly, Fishkin (1995) claims that “arguments offered by some participant go unanswered by others... the process is less deliberative because it is incomplete” (p. 41).

Respect toward others and their views is also recognised as a critical element of the interpersonal dimension. Treating others with respect is a fundamental prerequisite for a democratic debate (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996; Macedo, 1999; Jensen, 2003a, 2003b). Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) argue that recognition and orientation towards other people of others can best be captured by the notion of respect. Respect is regarded as a condition for a good exchange of information (Walsh, 2003).

On the other hand, many researchers (Hanbermas, 1981; Dahlberg, 2001; Graham, 2002) stress honesty to other participants as a criterion for deliberation quality. For example, Dahlberg (2001) states that in order to reach a rational judgment, “each participant must make a sincere effort to provide all information relevant to the particular problem under consideration, including information regarding intentions, interests, needs, and desires” (p.623).

Grogan and Gusmano (2001), and Chamber (2003) emphasise openness and flexibility



in preferences in the process of deliberation. Dryzek (2001) points out that amenability to changing individual judgments, preferences, and views during the course of interaction distinguish deliberation from other types of communication.

Based on the literature, a set of concepts for the interpersonal dimension of deliberation is developed: reciprocity, mutual respect, sincerity, and corrigibility. Reciprocity refers to a mutual exchange, a give and take of views and information. Mutual respect is related to being respectful toward other participants and their views. Sincerity refers to open and honest attitudes towards others. Corrigibility means reflecting and revising individuals' initial preferences in the light of other's claims and critiques.

Table 4.12 summarises the definitions of the proposed four concepts and the references on which each definition is based.

Table 4.12 Definitions of concepts and references

Variables	Definition	Reference
Reciprocity	A mutual exchange, a give and take of views and information	Fishkin (1995), Price and Niejens (1997), Bohman (2000), Hagemann (2002), Renn (2006)
Mutual respect	Respectfulness toward other participants and their views.	Macedo (1999), Jensen (2003a), Gutmann and Thompson (1996), Voltmer and Lalljee (2003)
Sincerity	Open and honest attitudes towards others	Habermas (1981), Dahlberg (2001), Graham (2002)
Corrigibility	Reflecting and revising individuals' initial preferences in the light of other's claims and critiques	Dryzek (2001), Grogan and Gusmano (2001), Chamber (2003)

#### 4.3.4.1 Reciprocity

Reciprocity refers to a mutual exchange, a give and take of views and information. Coleman et al. (2002) argues that the level of interaction indicates the extent to which participants are listening to one another. Similarly, “Being responsive, a person is a good listener, is able to make others comfortable in speaking situations, is aware of the needs of others, is helpful, sympathetic, warm and understanding, and is open as a communicator” (Klopf and Park, 1992, p.95). Stromer-Galley (2005) also considers genuine interaction between discussants as one of the essential ingredients for good dialogue. Such reciprocity indicates a first level of understanding (Janssen and Kies, 2004) and is a precondition for challenging claims and reasons (Trénel, 2004). Thus, it is important to note “whether participants are actually engaging each other, or if they are simply engaging in monologues with themselves to an audience that fails to respond” (Stromer-Galley, 2005, p.11).

On the other hand, deliberation can have a high level of reciprocity when responds are not tilted to any unilateral stance of agreement or disagreement. In this vein, presence of pros and cons also can serve as an indicator of the level of reciprocity. As Hagemann (2002) suggests, whether the deliberation “presents true pros and cons, or is merely a ‘get together’ of like-minded people who agree on most of the public issues also can be counted as an indicator for reciprocity” (p. 66).

Reciprocity is constructed with two variables: (1) Interactivity and (2) Pros and Cons.

##### Interactivity

This variable is to measure the degree to which messages are linked to each other. In reference to this aspect, previous research assumes that all the messages are either ‘seeds’ that refer to messages that are starting points of discussion or ‘replies’ that involve messages that respond to other already posted messages (Wilhelm, 1999, Coleman et al. 2002; Yoon, 2002; Graham and Witschge, 2003; Jankowski and van Os, 2003). However, this approach is limited to trace “whether participants are actually

engaging each other, or if they are simply engaging in monologues with themselves” (Stromer-Galley, 2005, p.11).

In keeping with Jensen’s (2003) coding scheme, all the messages posted on the bulletin boards are coded as one of three types: (1) Stand alone, (2) Seed, and (3) Reply. A message is coded as ‘Stand alone’ when it is a starting point of discussion but is never responded to. A message is coded as ‘Seed’ when it is a starting point of discussion and is responded to. A message is coded as ‘Reply’ when it responds to other previously posted messages. Then, the degree of interactivity is checked by comparing the number of ‘Reply’ messages with the number of ‘Seed’ and ‘Stand alone’ messages as previously used by Hagemann (2000) and Jensen (2003a).

### **Pros and cons**

This variable is to measure the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards present pros and cons when they interact with each other. While the interactivity presents a superficial level of reciprocity in that participants are reading each other’s claims and are responding to each other, the presence of pros and cons can demonstrate the genuine level of reciprocity as it concerns the contents of messages. Messages are coded into three categories: (1) Disagree, (2) Neutral, and (3) Agree. A message is coded as ‘Disagree’ when it disagrees with the message previously posted; a message is coded as ‘Neutral’ when it neither agrees nor disagrees with the previous message; and a message is coded as ‘Agree’ when it agrees with the message previously posed. Deliberation can have a high level of reciprocity when messages are not tilted to any unilateral stance of agreement or disagreement.

Table 4.13 describes the proposed two variables for reciprocity.



Table 4.13 Variables for reciprocity

Variable	Type	Coding
Interactivity	Nominal	(1) Stand-alone, (2) seed and (3) reply
Pros and Cons	Nominal	(1) Disagree, (2) Neutral and (3) Agree

#### 4.3.4.2 Mutual respect

Mutual respect is related to being respectful toward other participants and their views. The presence of respect helps establish a social context in which participants are willing to put forth arguments (Fishkin, 1991; Gastil, 1993). Mutual respect encourages participants to put themselves in the position of others (Dahlberg, 2001c). According to Steenbergen et al. (2003), the ideal deliberation involves a readiness of participants to change their views and opinions in light of stronger arguments. It is further argued that this would only be possible if participants can respect and empathise with other participants. In addition, Voltmer and Lalljee (2004) claim that respect “enables people who hold opposing views to continue dialogue even when the differences of interests or convictions cannot be bridged” (p.7). Furthermore, Jensen (2003a) maintains that deliberation can be thought of as respectful if messages are expressed in a decent and respectful tone.

On the other hand, Steiner et al. (2001) argue that discursive participants need to respect the counterargument to their own position: “it can be expected of a discursive actors to include in his /her own argumentation at least one such counterargument without dismissing it immediately” (p.10). Adding to this, Spordli (2003) states that “participants who value other justification can still object to it – their critique simply has to be respectful” (p.11). Such respect toward counterarguments is viewed as an essential element for the weighing of alternatives (Luskin and Fishkin, 2002; Steenbergen et al., 2003; Bächtiger et al., 2005)

Mutual respect is constructed with three variables: (1) Message tone, (2) Vulgarity use

and (3) Respect toward counterarguments.

### **Message tone**

This variable is to measure the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards are respectful toward other participants and (or) their opinions. In previous research, a common way to assess the level of respect is to examine the presence or absence of a specific behaviour. Hill and Hughes (1998) coded for the presence of what they call ‘flaming’, which refers to malicious and insulting comments directed at other participants. These attacks, personal in nature, are made regardless of the merits of an argument (p. 59). Similarly, Jankowski and van Os (2003) coded for the presence of verbal attacks in postings, directed at other participants. However, they are limited in detecting the various levels of respectfulness of messages.

In line with the works of Colemann et al (2002) and Jensen (2003a), messages are coded on a five-point scale: (1) Very disrespectful (value = 1), (2) Disrespectful (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Respectful (value = 4), and (5) Very respectful (value = 5).

### **Vulgarity use**

This variable is to capture the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards use vulgar expressions, slang, etc., during the course of deliberation with other participants. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. A message is coded ‘No’ when it contains no vulgar expressions. A message is coded ‘Yes’ when it contains such characteristics.

### **Respect toward counterargument**

This variable is to investigate the extent to which messages are respectful toward others with different opinions. Messages are coded on a five-point scale: (1) Very disrespectful (value = 1), (2) Disrespectful (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Respectful (value = 4), and (5) Very respectful (value = 5).

Table 4.14 Variables for mutual respect

Variable	Type	Coding
Message tone	Interval	(1) Very disrespectful, (2) Disrespectful, (3) Neutral, (4) Respectful (5) Very respectful
Vulgarity use	Nominal	(1) No (2) Yes
Respect toward counterargument	Interval	(1) Very disrespectful, (2) Disrespectful, (3) Neutral, (4) Respectful (5) Very respectful

#### 4.3.4.3 Sincerity

Sincerity refers to being open and honest towards others. Habermas (1981) refers to this as “authenticity” – an absence of deception in expressing intentions (p.149). Sincerity is crucial for the development of trust among the participants. Trust then becomes a necessary requirement among participants because without it, “a consensus can never be reached and the common good will remain in question” (Graham and Witschge, 2003, p. 5). On the other hand, Jensen (2003a) maintains that attempts to disclose oneself can be interpreted as an being open-minded and sincere toward others.

In previous studies, most of the focus is placed on the level of falsification in order to measure sincerity (Graham, 2002). A wide range of different content and discourse analyses are used to measure for identity falsification, validity of claims, and other forms of textual deception (Dahlberg, 2001a, 2001c; Warnick, 1998; Streck, 1998). The major drawback to such techniques is that it becomes increasingly difficult to check for sincerity in a medium that fosters anonymity. In order to obtain a truer assessment of sincerity, more specific evidence is needed.

Thus, this study employs two variables to describe sincerity: (1) Self-disclosure and (2) Perceived deception.



**Self-disclosure**

This variable is to see the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards attempt to reveal self information. Messages are coded into three categories: (1) E-mail address, (2) Self-information, and (3) Self-emotion. A message is coded as 'Email address' when it provides the author's email address. A message is coded as 'Self-information' when it reveals information about the author. A message is coded as 'Self-emotion' when it states self-emotion. A message can provide an email address, a statement of self-emotion and show self-emotion simultaneously. Because of these multiple responses, the total count of coded messages outnumbered the total number of messages in the bulletin boards.

**Perceived deception**

This variable is to capture the extent to which messages in online bulletin boards report the deception perceived during the course of discussion with others. Janssen and Kies (2004) argue that while such instances of 'perceived deception' can make the communication less deliberative, more cases of 'perceived deception' could be interpreted as an indication of the presence of critical minds who are much better at uncovering deception than in those in other forums. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no report for the perceived deception. A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains statement(s) about the perceived deception.

Table 4.15 describes the proposed two variables for sincerity.

Table 4.15 Variables for sincerity.

Variable	Type	Coding
Self-disclosure	Nominal	(1) Email address, (2) Self-information, (3) Self-emotion
Perceived deception	Nominal	(1) No (2) Yes

#### 4.3.4.4 Corrigibility

Corrigibility involves reflecting and revising of individuals' initial preferences in the light of other's claims and critiques. Such corrigibility can be thought of as a stepping stone to achieving consensus that is argued as a principal goal of deliberation by theorists (Habermas, 1984; Cohen, 1989).

Several features of corrigibility are addressed in the literature. Request for other participants' opinion during the process of deliberation can be thought of as an attempt to re-evaluate and revise participants' initial preferences and "an active form of listening" (Trenel, 2004, p.10).

Changing of individual own opinions when convinced by others is an indicator of corrigibility. Grogan and Gusmano (2001) argue that the notion that individual ideas, values and views will be transformed through the active exchange of ideas is at the heart of deliberative democracy. They state in question form, "what is the purpose of discussion if peoples' preferences are fixed?" (p. 4). A readiness to amend viewpoints and opinions in the face of stronger arguments or new information presented by other participants is an essential part of deliberation Chamber (2003). Dahlberg, (2001a) states that quality of deliberation requires "the process of standing back from, critically reflecting upon, and changing one's position when faced by the better argument" (p. 6). Graham and Witschge (2003) also argues the rethinking of one's own validity claims and arguments in light of another's validity claim and/or argument – reflexivity – as one of the key elements to the process of understanding. Furthermore, Jankowski and van Os (2003) argue that during the course of discussion participants need to "acquaint themselves with the positions of other participants, as well as exercise mutual understanding of their standpoints" (p.5).

In previous research, Tanner (2001) and Katz (1997) use a discourse analysis to detect changes in participants' positions. However, they provided no information on how to proceed other than that they analysed the texts for indications of modifications to participants' original positions. On the other hand, Graham and Witschge (2003)

suggest that the presence of counterarguments and rebuttals can be considered as an indication of reflecting upon an individual's own claims in light of others. However, such an analysis is limited as it just traces whether a participant reads and reflects upon what he or she has read, and it does not show whether participant changes his or her position. A formulation of counterarguments and rebuttals might cause a change or modification in a participant's position but it might well serve only to reinforce their original claim (Janssen and Kies, 2004). In order to measure the evidence of self-critique and position alterations, more specific evidence is needed.

Thus, this study tries to observe corrigibility with two variables: (1) Opinion requesting and (2) Opinion change.

#### **Opinion requesting**

This variable is to investigate the extent to which messages in online deliberation request for other participants' opinions. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no request for other participants' opinion. A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains at least one instance of enquiry of another participant's opinion.

#### **Opinion change**

This variable is to investigate the extent to which messages in online deliberation show any sign of changing and softening (weakening) of individual positions in the course of deliberation with others. Messages are coded into two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no sign of opinion change. A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains any sign of opinion change.

Table 4.16 describes the proposed two variables for corrigibility.



Table 4.16 Variables for corrigibility

Variable	Type	Coding
Opinion requesting	Nominal	(1) No (2) Yes
Opinion change	Nominal	(1) No (2) Yes

#### 4.3.4.5 Summary

Based on the literature, interpersonal dimension is conceptualised by four concepts. Then, the variables are developed to measure each concept. Table 4.17 shows the concepts and variables used to assess the quality of the interpersonal dimension of deliberation.

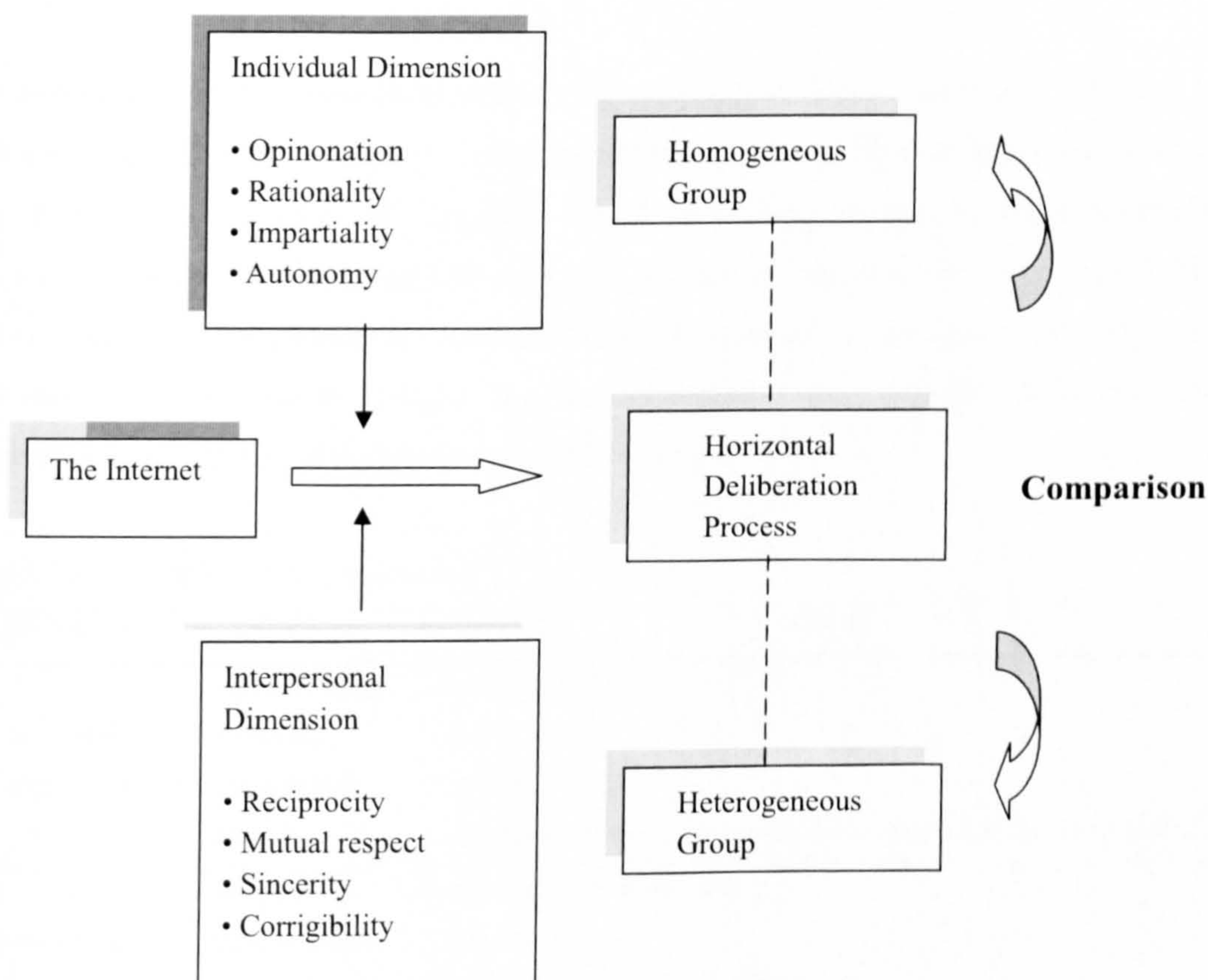
Table 4.17 Overview of concepts used for assessing the quality of interpersonal deliberation

Dimension	Concept	Variable	Type
Interpersonaldimension	Reciprocity	Interactivity	Nominal
		Pros and cons	Nominal
	Mutual respect	Message tone	Interval
		Vulgarity use	Nominal
		Respect toward counterargument	Interval
	Sincerity	Self-disclosure	Nominal
		Perceived deception	Nominal
	Corrigibility	Opinion requesting	Nominal
		Opinion change	Nominal

### 4.3.5 Refined research framework

The conceptual research framework proposed in Chapter Two, is refined as shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Conceptual research framework



### 4.4 Data Analysis

An appropriate analysis strategy can be derived from research objectives. The primary objectives of this study are (1) to investigate the quality of online deliberation and (2) to explore the difference in quality between heterogeneous and homogeneous groups.

To address the first research objective, content analysis is selected as the appropriate method because it is widely employed to evaluate different types of texts such as documents, newspaper articles, books, and online bulletins, among others. Wilhelm (1999) suggests that a content analysis is an appropriate methodology for examining deliberativeness of online communication, as the deliberativeness of online political communication is really about “the substantive components of messages as well as about reciprocity between message posters (p. 163).”

To obtain the second research objective, Chi-square-test, T-test and Mann-Whitney U test are adopted. A Chi-square is a nonparametric test of significance appropriate when the data are in the form of frequency counts occurring in two or more mutually exclusive categories. Thus, the Chi-square is applied to nominal variables (see Table 4.18) to see whether differences exist in the distribution of the frequency or categories between the two online bulletin boards. Differences are considered statistically significant when the significance level is less than 0.05.

Table 4.18 Variables for Chi-square test

Dimension	Concept	Variable
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Message purpose
	Rationality	Topic relevance
	Impartiality	Attempt to weigh
	Autonomy	Independence from mass media, Independence from regionalism
Interpersonal dimension	Reciprocity	Interactivity, Pros and cons
	Mutual respect	Vulgarity use
	Sincerity	Self-disclosure, Perceived deception
	Corrigibility	Opinion requesting, Opinion change

A T-test is applied to continuous variables to examine whether differences exist between the two online bulletin boards. The T-test is a technique used to test the hypothesis that the mean scores of interval-scaled or ratio-scaled variables will be significantly different for two independent groups. Thus, the T-test is applied to interval and ratio variables (see Table 4.19) to see whether differences exist between the two online bulletin boards. Differences are considered statistically significant when the



significance level is less than 0.05.

Table 4.19 Variables for T- test

Dimension	Concept	Variable
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Opinion length
Interpersonal dimension	Mutual respect	Message tone, Respect toward counterargument

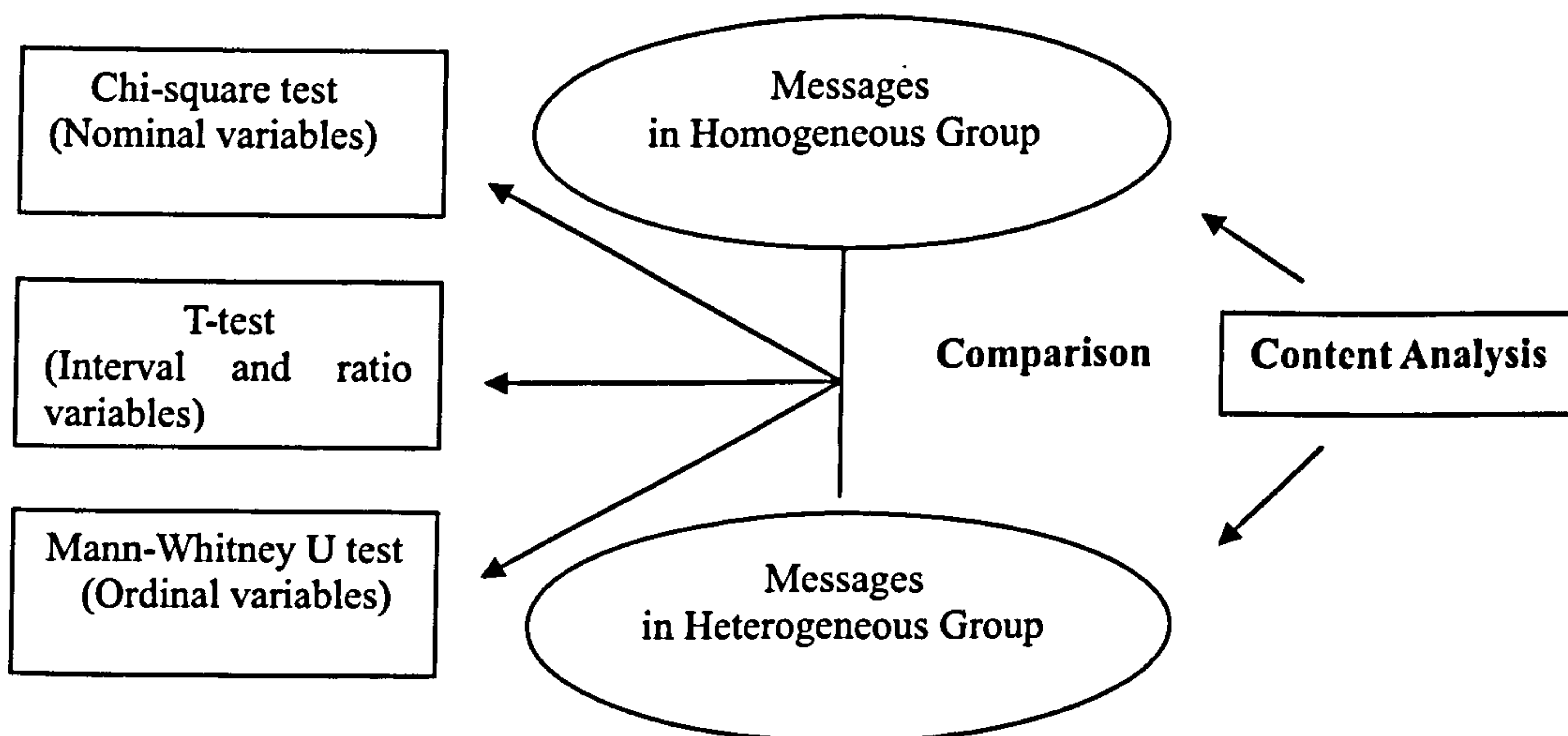
A Mann-Whitney U test is applied to ordinal variables to examine whether differences exist between the two online bulletin boards. The test compares medians rather than means. Thus, the Mann-Whitney U is applied to ordinal variables (see Table 4.19) to see whether differences exist between the two online bulletin boards.

Table 4.20 Variables for Mann-Whitney U test

Dimension	Concept	Variable
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Opinion strength
	Rationality	Justification, Reference to common good

Figure 4.6 illustrates the analysis strategy of this study.

Figure 4.6 Analysis strategy



## CHAPTER 5 Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the results of the analyses. The analysis unit is the messages posted on the two bulletin boards at a specified time period during the 2002 Presidential election. A total of 2,223 messages are analysed. First, the results of the analyses of individual aspects are presented. The results of individual aspects include opinionation, rationality, impartiality and autonomy. Second, the results of the analyses of interpersonal aspects are provided. The results of interpersonal aspects include reciprocity, respect, sincerity and corrigibility.

### 5.1 Individual dimension of deliberation

#### 5.1.1 Opinionation

As a concept for the individual dimension of deliberation, opinionation is defined as the expression of individual views or preferences. This study tries to observe opinionation with three variables: 1) Message purpose, 2) Opinion length, and 3) Opinion strength.

‘Message purpose’ is to identify the purposes of messages posted in the bulletin boards, thus all messages (N = 2,223) posted on the bulletin boards are targeted to be analysed. ‘Opinion length’ is to measure the volume of opinions expressed, and ‘Opinion strength’ is to measure the extent of conviction in expressing opinions. Thus, the two variables are analysed within the messages providing opinions (N = 1,670). Table 5.1 shows the number of messages to be analysed for each variable of opinionation.

Table 5.1 Number of messages analysed for opinionation

Variables	Number of Messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Message purpose	910	1,313	2,223
Opinion length	767	903	1,670
Opinion strength	767	903	1,670

### 5.1.1.1 Message purpose

#### Results of analysis

'Message purpose' is measured using four categories: (1) Opinion, (2) Fact, (3) Suggestion, and (4) Enquiry. The total number of those four categories observed in all messages (N = 2,223) in the bulletin boards amounts to 2,526, which is greater than the total number of messages in the boards because some of the messages belonged to multiple categories. (See Figure 5.1 (A))

Figure 5.1 (B) illustrates graphically the distribution of each category. Providing opinions is the most common purpose for posting messages on the online bulletin boards, constituting 66.1 percent (N = 1,670) of the combined frequencies for all categories. As the second most common purpose, providing facts accounts for 23.2 percent (N = 586) of the frequencies. Suggestions and Enquiries together constitute slightly over 10 percent of the frequencies. 5.5 percent (N = 140) for suggestion and 5.1 percent (N = 130) for enquiry. The results demonstrate that the majority of messages in online bulletin boards are contributed to express individual opinions.



Figure 5.1 Message purpose

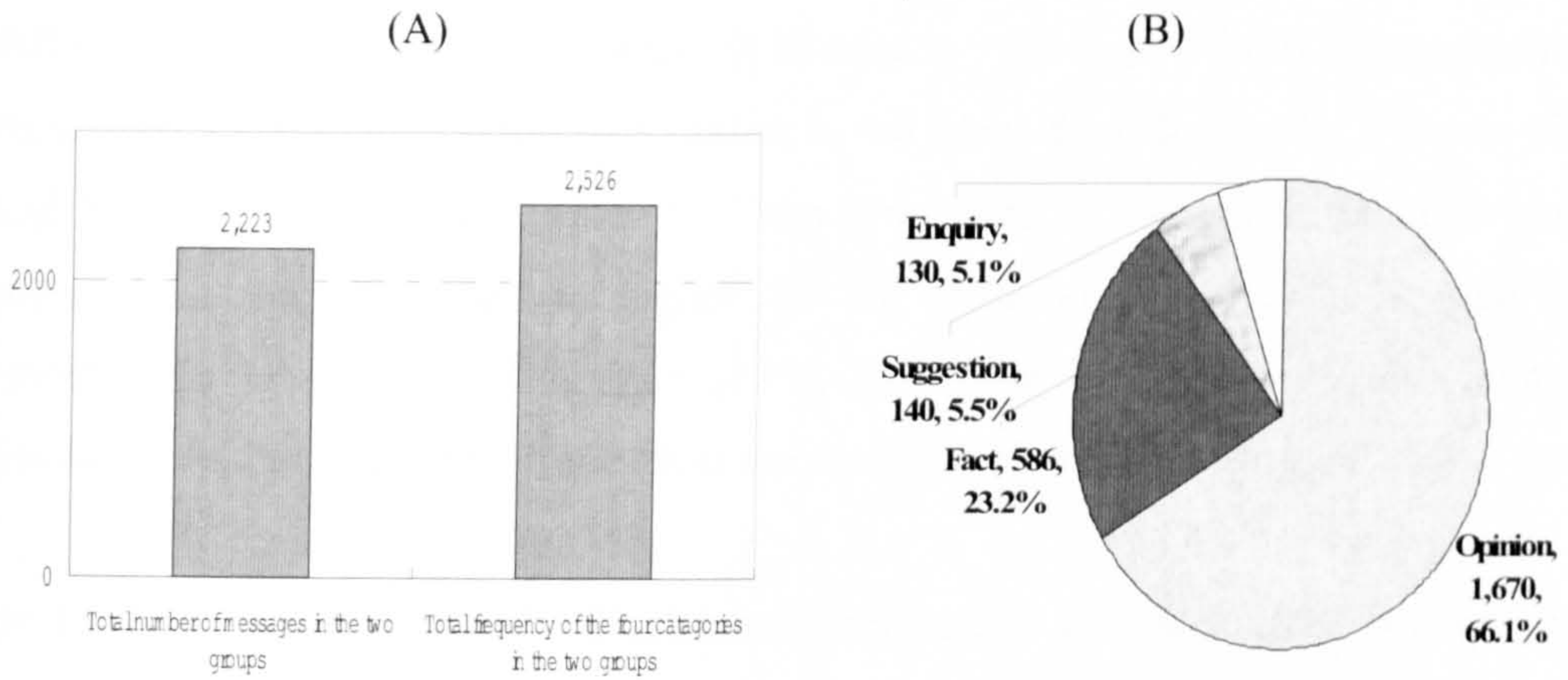
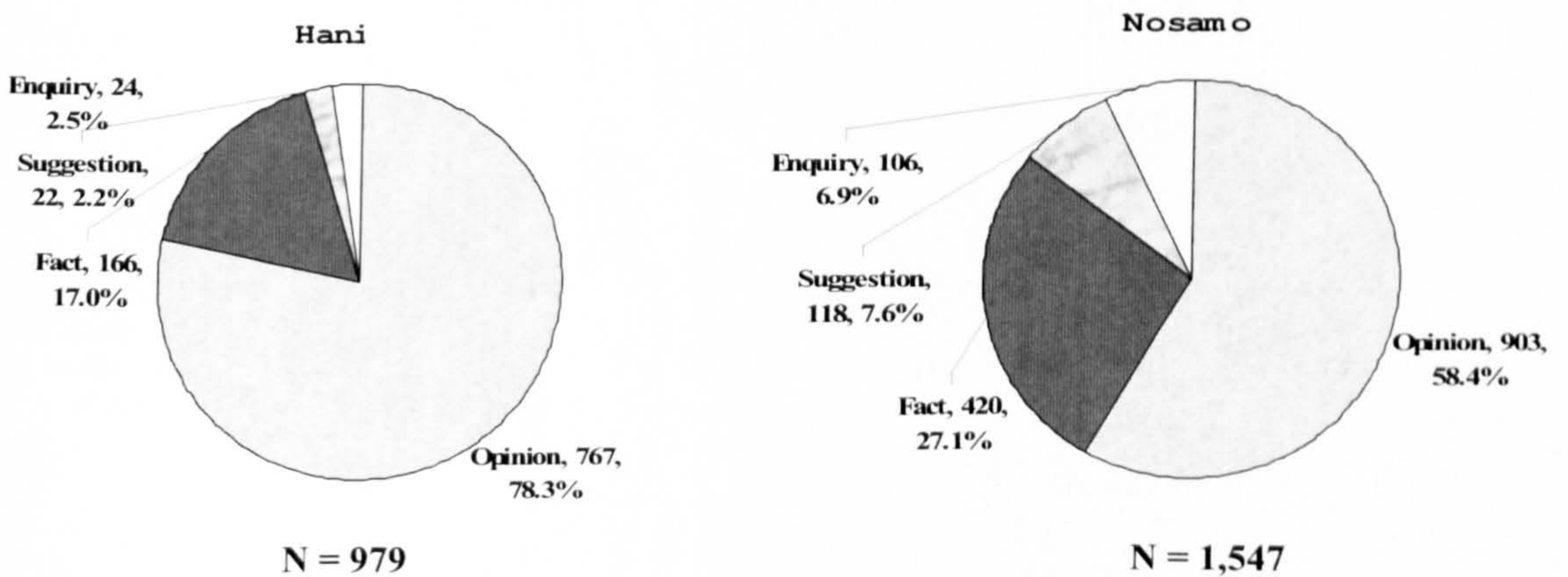


Figure 5.2 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of the four categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, providing opinion is the most common purpose for posting messages (N = 767, 78.3%), followed by providing fact (N = 166, 17%), by enquiry (N = 24, 2.5%), and by suggestion (N = 22, 2.2%). In the *Nosamo*, providing opinion takes the largest proportion (N = 903, 58.4%), followed by providing fact (N = 420, 27.1%), by suggestion (N = 188, 7.6%), and by enquiry (N = 106, 6.9%).

Figure 5.2 Comparison of message purposes between the two groups

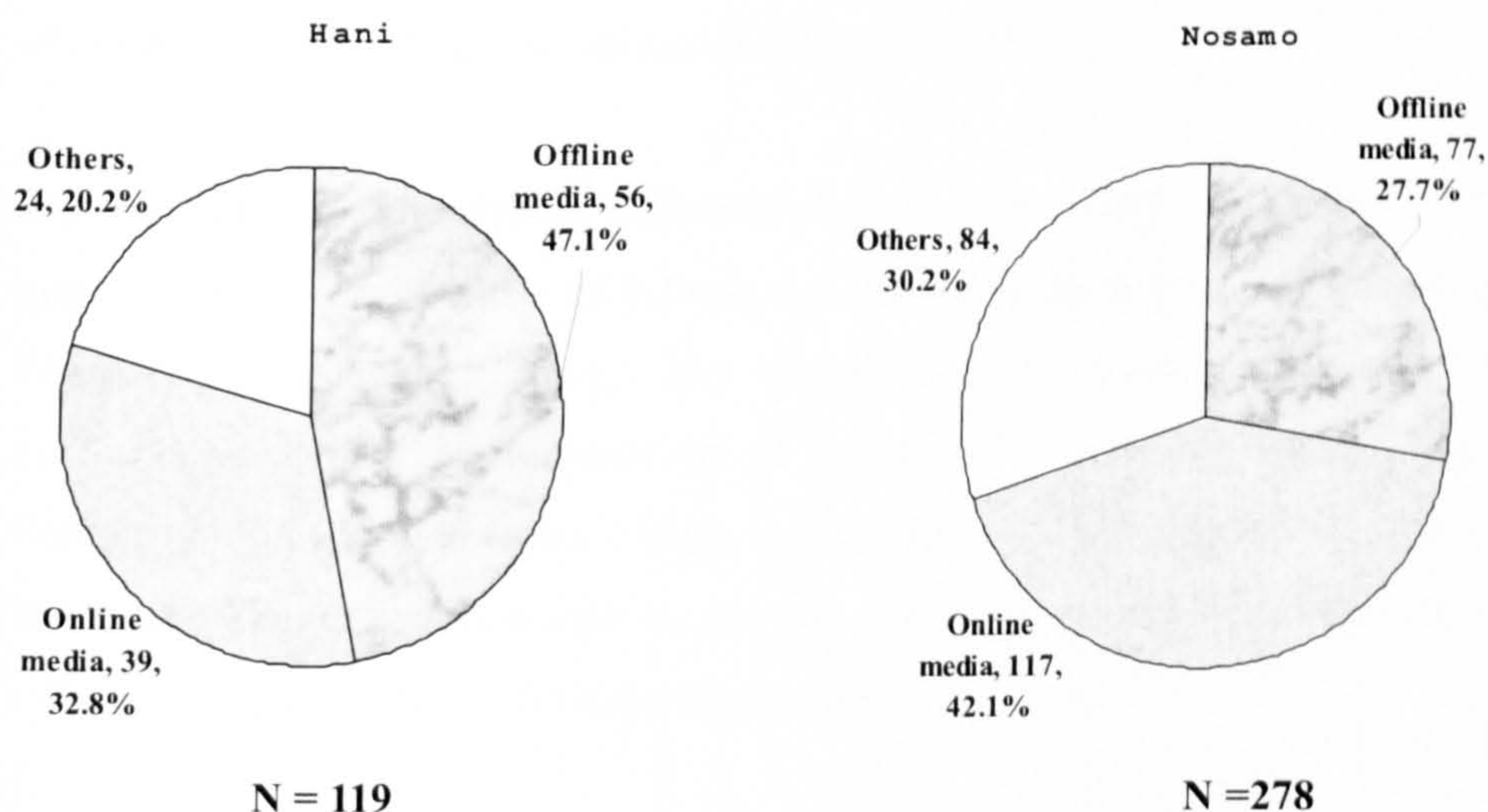




A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the four categories. The results show that there is a statistical difference between the two bulletins (Chi-square = 69.2,  $p = 0.00$ ). The proportion of messages that provide opinions is higher in the *Hani* than that in the *Nosamo* (78.3 % and 58.4 % respectively). In contrast, the proportion of messages that provide facts, suggestions and enquiries is higher in the *Nosamo* (27.1%, 7.6%, and 6.9 % respectively) than those in the *Hani* (17%, 2.2%, and 2.5 % respectively). The results demonstrate that messages in the *Hani* are more active in expressing individual opinions.

On the other hand, Figure 5.3 illustrates a comparison of fact sources between the two groups. Both groups provide a total of 586 facts. Among them, 67.7 percent ( $N = 397$ ) make references to their sources. Those 397 facts rely highly on both online-based and offline-based media as their sources (39.3% and 33.5 respectively). Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 5.3, while facts in the *Nosamo* largely ( $N = 117$ , 42.1%) rely on online-based media, nearly half of the facts in the *Hani* ( $N = 56$ , 47.1%) are cited from offline-based media.

Figure 5.3 Comparison of sources of facts between the two groups





**Discussion**

It is found that the main purpose of the majority of the messages posted is to express individual opinions. The central concept of deliberation is the exchange of different opinions between participants. In this sense, the presence of opinion expression is the starting point in the process of deliberation. The results support the argument that the Internet elevates the right to speak, encourages people to speak, and evokes people to communicate (Streck, 1998; Schulz, 2000), which consequently can create oceans of messages or opinions. Some previous empirical studies are in line with these results. For example, Jensen (2003a) finds that citizens use the online space to test their own opinions rather than to provide factual information. Coleman et al. (2002) also report that messages posted in many online forums in the UK only simply express opinions. Furthermore, Yoon (2002) concludes that participants in online deliberation are more likely to express their opinion rather than describe just fact.

Aside from expressing opinions, providing and generating information is important to improve the quality of deliberation (Jensen, 2003b). It is interesting to see that most of the facts in online deliberation are cited from mass media, both offline-based and online-based<sup>5</sup>. The results indicate that the mass media plays a critical role as a source of information in online discussions (Kim et al. 1999).

Citizens obtain their political information from mass media or other citizens, and the Internet facilitates the flow of information between participants in online discussions. These imply that the Internet can create a new communication or deliberation environment with the combination of individual and mass media intermediation. Furthermore, it is found that the highest proportion of facts is come from online media. The result suggests that online media has emerged as powerful tool for the flow of information and opinions in online discussion.

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<sup>5</sup> Type of mass media can be identified into two main types: Offline-based media and online-based media. Offline-based media refers to existing mass media that expand their arena to the cyber space, while online-based media means newly emerging media that are established and operated solely on online base.



When comparing the two groups, it is found that the messages in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) are more active in expression individual opinions than those in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). On the other hand, messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are more likely to provide suggestions than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group).

Online political discussions is often argued to have no effect on the broader societal life and political decisions (Jones, 1998; Jensen, 2003a). Jensen (2003a) states that the online debates “resemble the coffee houses of the 18<sup>th</sup> century described by Habermas: closed circle for the few well-educated citizens with little or no external effect” (p.42). However, the messages in the *Nosamo* actively try to externalise political issues discussed within online boards and, thus, attempt to recruit outside people to the *Nosamo* or its activities. This may result from the reformative and progressive characteristics of the *Nosamo*.

The case of a US military vehicle accident in 2002 in South Korea provides an example for how online political discussion can recruit outside people to an activity. Two middle school girls are killed by a US military vehicle in June of 2002. When the US soldiers who have driven the vehicle are acquitted by the US martial court, the case evolves into hot issue in the online board of *Ohmynews*, an online newspaper. A citizen’s suggestion of candlelight vigil attract massive and positive responses from outside people and, consequently, many more people join in the event requesting the apology of the US army and the revision of Status of Forces Agreement (SAFA) between Korea and the US.

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that messages in the *Nosamo* are more active in providing facts than those in the *Hani*. The messages which provide fact in the *Nosamo* largely rely on online-based media, such as *Ohmynews*, *Seoprise*, *Politizen* and *Namprise*, which has been supportive of candidate Roh during the 2002 Presidential campaign. The results are in line with the cognitive dissonance theory suggested by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959). According to the theory, people tend to avoid information that does not align with their own beliefs.



**5.1.1.2 Opinion length**

**Results of analysis**

‘Opinion length’ is measured by counting the number of words used within a message. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion message is 1,670. In the messages, there are a total of 115,814 words. This means that the average number of words used in one message is 69.35.

Figure 5.4 shows the distribution of message frequency in relation to the number of words used. Messages with less than 100 words per message are prevalent (N = 1,349), constituting 81 percent of the total messages. The majority is written with less than 20 words per messages (N = 504, 30.2%), followed by the messages containing between 21 and 50 words (N = 477, 28.6%), messages with 51 to 100 words (N = 368, 22%), 101 to 200 words (N = 191, 11.4%), 201 to 400 words (N = 101, p = 6%), and over 401 words (N = 29, 1.7%). The results demonstrate that the majority of the messages in online bulletin boards are expressed in brief statements.

Figure 5.4 Number of words per message

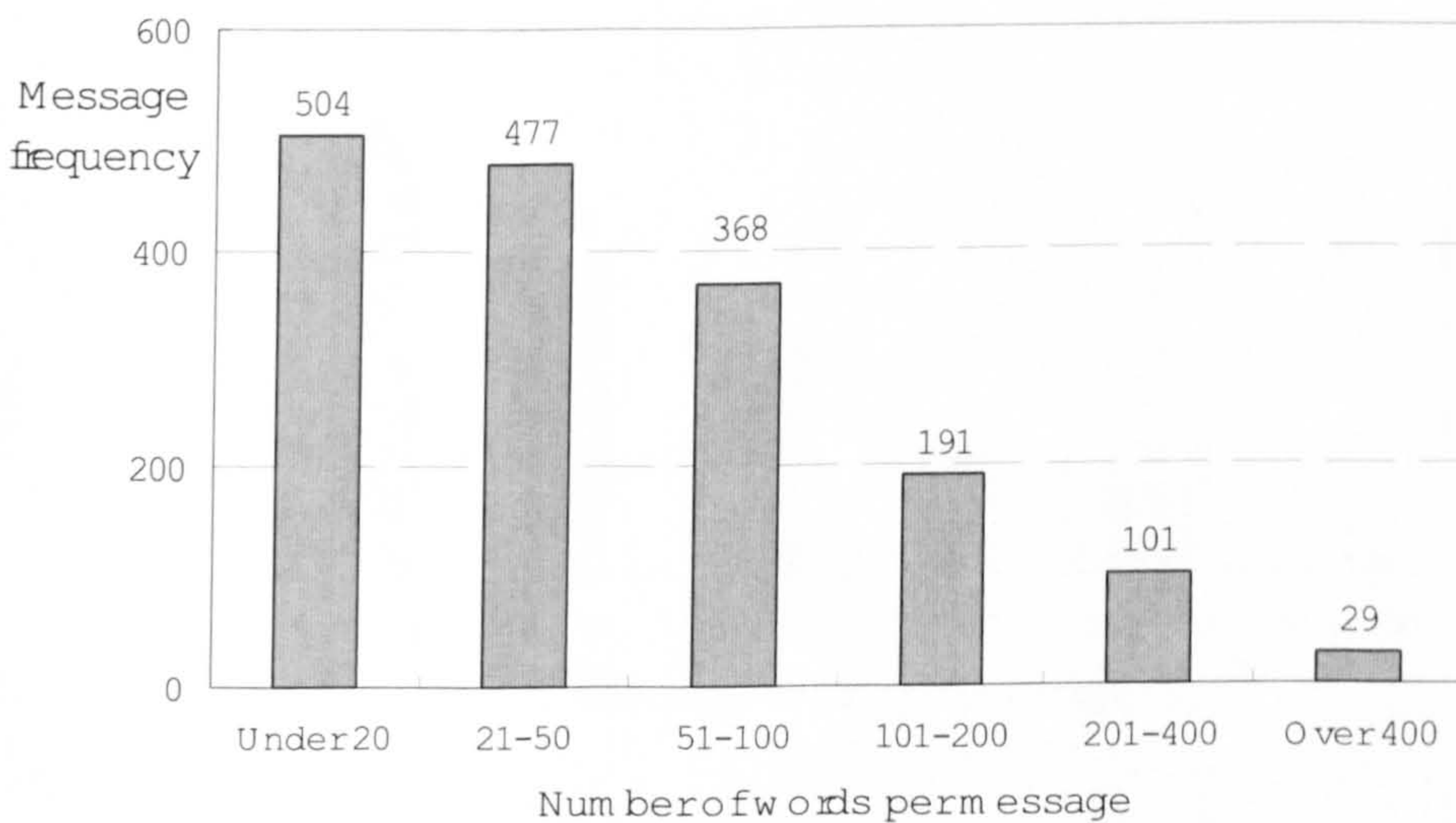
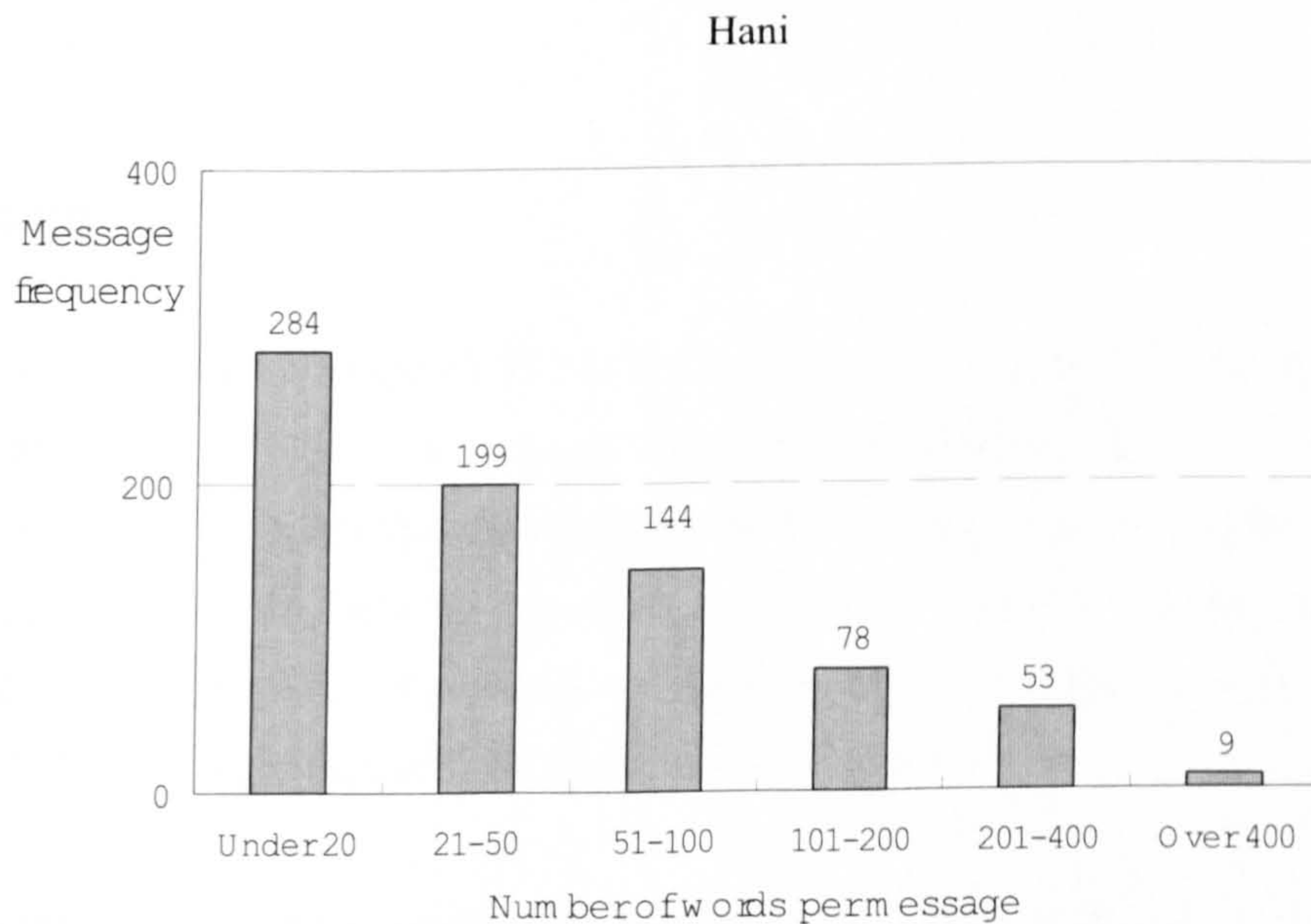




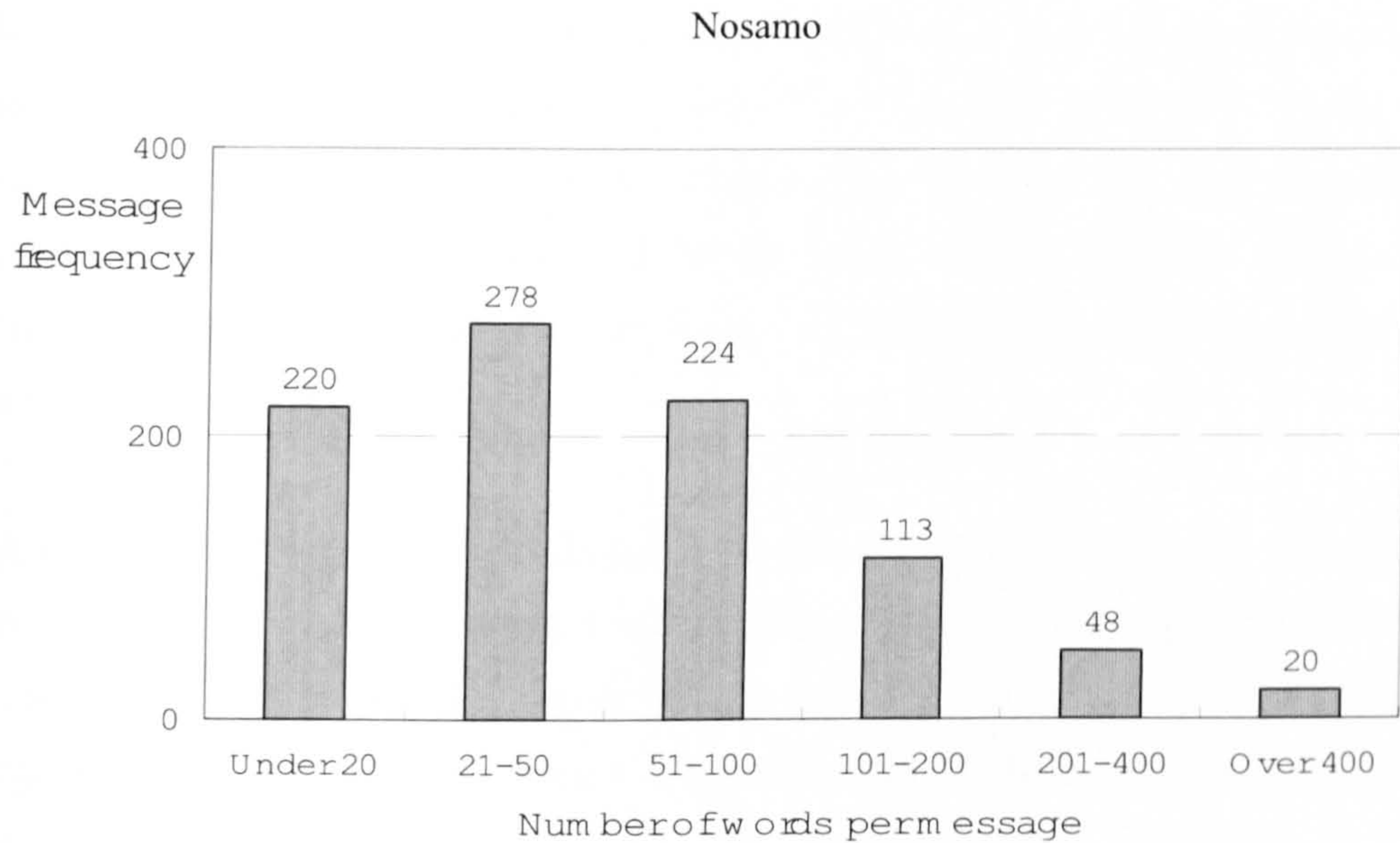
Figure 5.5 compares graphically the distribution of the length of opinion between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, a total of 46,925 words are written in 767 messages to express opinion. On average, there are 61.18 words per message. Messages written with less than 20 words per message takes the highest proportion (N = 284, 37%), followed by messages with 21 to 50 words (N = 199, 25.9%), messages with 51 to 100 words (N = 144, 18.8%), with 101 to 200 words (N = 78, 10.2%), 201 to 400 words (N = 53, p = 6.9%), and messages with over 401 words (N = 9, 1.2%).

In the *Nosamo*, a total of 68,889 words are written in 903 messages to express opinions. On average, there are 76.29 words per message. The message written with 21 to 50 words per message takes the highest proportion (N = 273, 30.8%), followed by messages written with 51 to 100 words (N = 224, 24.8%), message with less than 20 words (N = 220, 24.4%), with 101 to 200 words (N = 113, 12.5%), 201 and 400 words (N = 4.8, p = 5.3%), and messages written with over 401 words (N = 20, 2.2%).

Figure 5.5 Comparison of the number of words per message between the two groups







A T-test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups regarding the average number of words used in the messages. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $t\text{-value} = -3.016$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are more discursive than those in the *Hani*.

### **Discussion**

It is found that on average 69.35 words are used in a message. According to the Korean Literate Library (2006), the average Korean keyboard typing speed is about 300 words per minute. This means that the average time for typing a message in the bulletin boards is about 14 seconds. Generally speaking, typing takes a longer time than face-to-face or phone conversations in expressing an opinion, therefore it can be said that the 69.35 words per message is quite short in expressing an opinion.

Compared to previous studies, the average number of words per message is short. Robinson (2005) reports the average number of words per post ranges from 120 to 383 in online political talk. In their analysis of UK online forum, Coleman et al.(2002) reports that the average number of words per message is 79.2. However, when



comparing the results with previous studies carried out in countries other than Korea, a special attention should be paid to the fact that a shorter number of words do not necessarily mean a shorter opinion expression. This is because the required number of words for an opinion expression may differ across different types of alphabets. For example, 'I love you' expressed with three words in English can be expressed in one word in Korean, 'Saranghae'.

Millard (1997) argues that this phenomenon of short online postings can be explained by restricting resources to which participants can utilise, such as time, bandwidth and money. A low speed Internet access (narrow bandwidth) can discourage long opinion expressions. A narrow bandwidth can necessarily require a longer time and more money to express opinions online.

Another explanation for the short length of messages can be made based on the characteristics of different online forum types. Graham and Witschge (2003) argue that different online forum types produce different outcomes in terms of quality of deliberation. According to Hill and Hughes (1998), chat rooms provide a short line space environments and fast communication spaces, thus leading participants to make snap comments.

However, as previously noted, South Korea has the highest penetration of broadband Internet in the world, and Internet services are provided in an unlimited access basis. In addition, the two bulletin boards provide a space where participants can write texts without space limits and where participants can read others' texts without time constraints. Thus, it may be difficult to explain the short lengths of message due to restricted resources or other characteristics of cyberspace.

Short opinion expressions also can be explained by a lack of communicative competence. Some researchers have noted that it is difficult for Korean society to generate true benefits of deliberation in that it is not trained well enough to have communicative competence (Kim, 2001; Lim, 2000) and that the tendency is toward "swallowing their words" (Klopf and Park, 1992). However, previous empirical studies

in the US (Robinson, 2005) and UK (Coleman et al. 2002) also report that the messages on the bulletins provide short opinion expressions. Thus, it can be concluded that the messages on online bulletins typically provide short opinion expressions.

On the other hand, Coleman et al. (2002) argue that the depth of deliberation can be accounted for by the number of words in the message. However, a large number of words in the message may not necessarily indicate a better process of deliberation. A brief message can contribute to focusing to the main theme of a topic through the elimination of irrelevant factors. In addition, a brief message can give other participants more opportunities to express their opinions. Furthermore, succinct messages between participants can contribute to a sustained argument by helping participants to look at multiple aspects of their positions in an easy way and, thus, can contribute to increasing interactivity.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are longer than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). This may result from that the sharing common ground and same belief enables people to feel comfortable, and thus, make people to develop a longer argument.

### 5.1.1.3 Opinion strength

#### Results of analysis

'Opinion strength' is measured on an ordinal scale rating from 'little' to 'strong': (1) Little conviction (category value = 1), (2) Moderate conviction (category value = 2), and (3) Strong conviction (category value = 3). Among the total opinion message (N = 1,670), messages stated with moderate conviction take the highest proportion (N = 824, 49.3%), followed by messages with strong conviction (N = 761, 45.6%) and messages with little conviction (N = 85, 5.1%). The mean score of opinion strength is 2.4. Figure 5.6 shows graphically the distribution of each category. The results demonstrate that messages in online bulletin boards in general are expressed with confidence.



Figure 5.6 Opinion strength

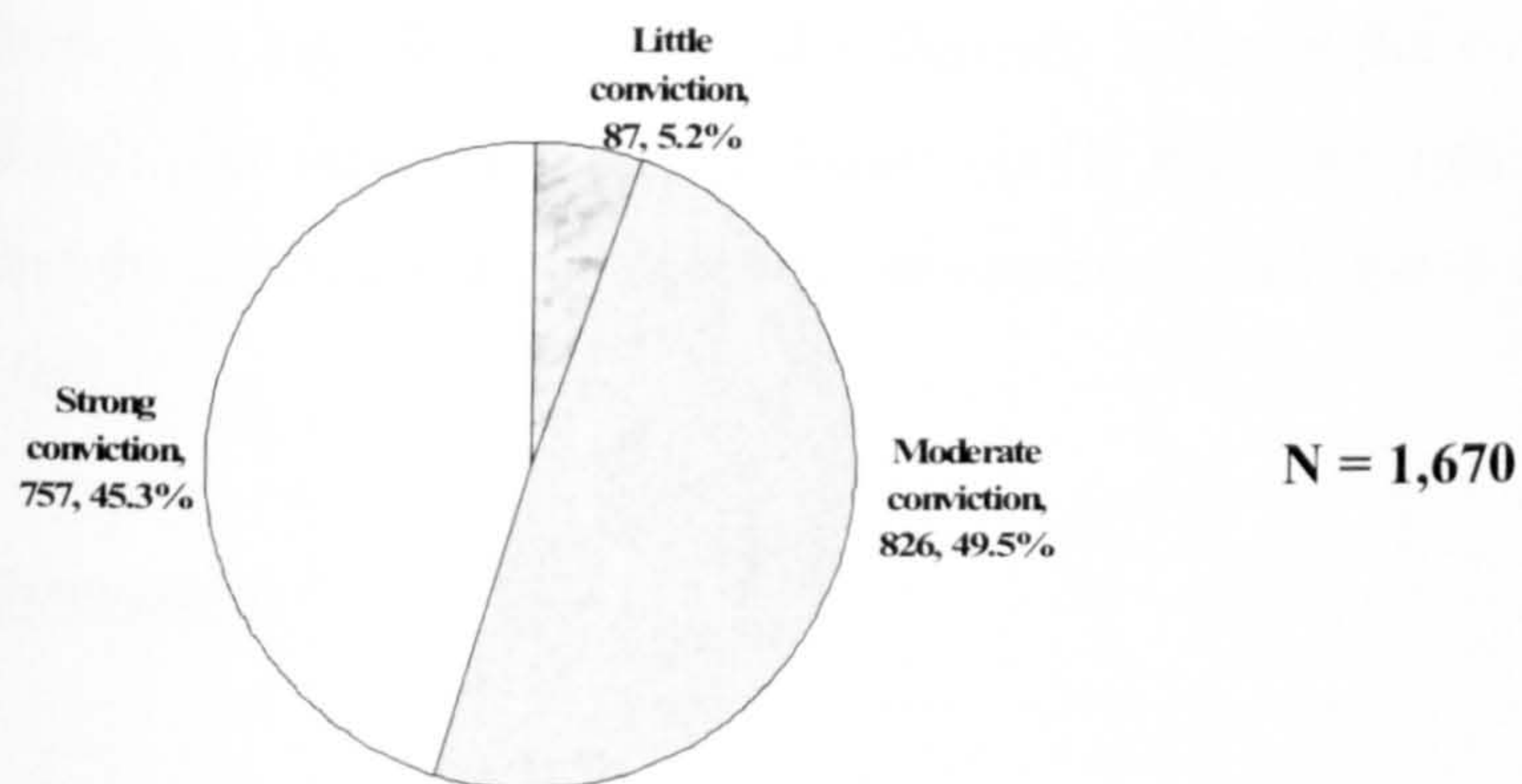
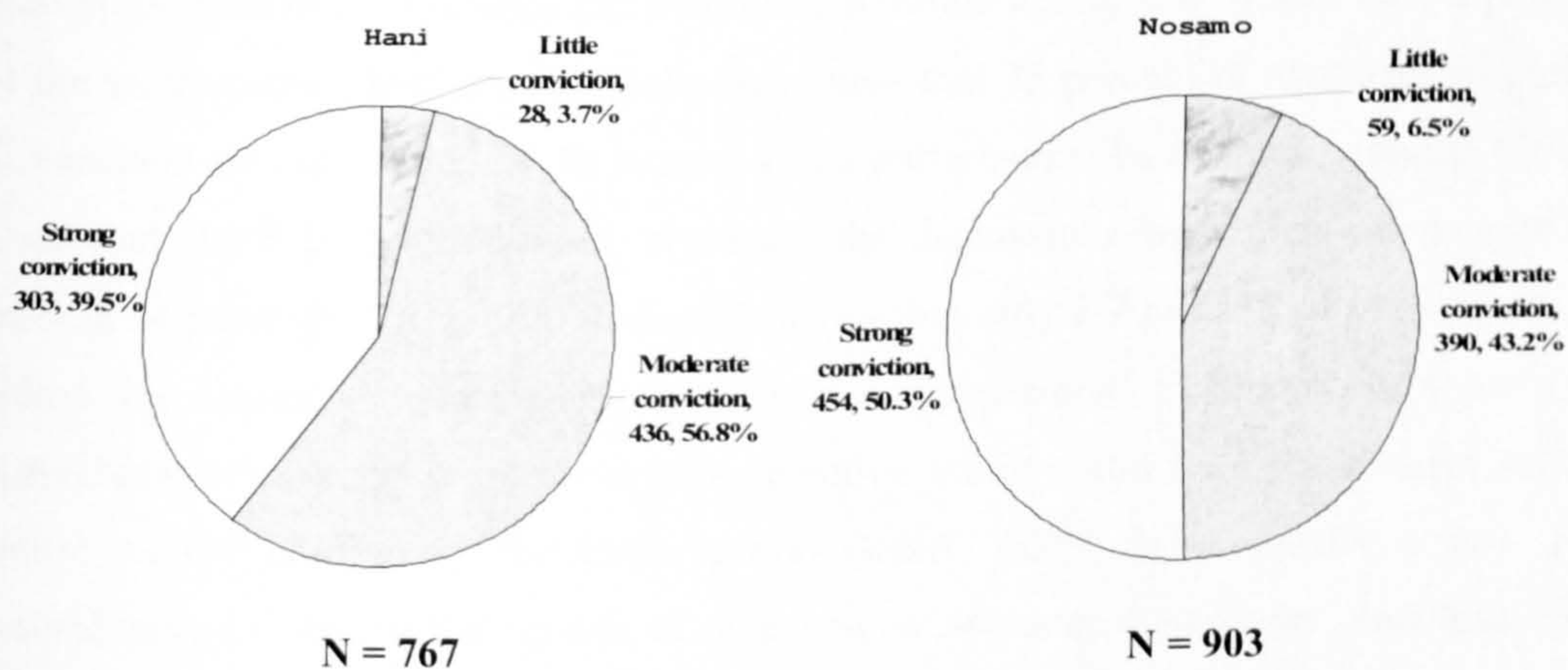


Figure 5.7 illustrates a comparison of opinion strength between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the majority of messages is stated with moderate conviction (N = 436, 56.8%), followed by messages with strong conviction (N = 303, 39.5%) and messages with little conviction (N = 28, 3.7%). In the *Nosamo*, the majority of messages is stated with strong conviction (N = 454, 50.7%), followed by messages with moderate conviction (N = 388, 43%) and messages with little conviction (N = 57, 6.3%).

Figure 5.7 Comparison of opinion strength between the two groups



A Mann-Whitney U test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups regarding the level of opinion strength. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $z = -3.660$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The mean rank for the *Nosamo* (871) is greater than for the *Hani* (794) implying that the messages in the *Nosamo* are expressed with more confidence than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that messages in online bulletin boards in general are expressed with a high level of confidence. There can be two main explanations for such confident expressions of opinion. First, it may result from the characteristics of the Internet. Discussions on the Internet are usually based on a form of anonymity. The anonymity enables participants to feel freer to express themselves due to the lack of social cues and, thus, can make their opinions more confident. In line with this, Davis (1999) argues that political discussions tend to favour aggressive individuals.

Second, dominance of hard core individuals in online discussion also can provide an explanation for the strong expressions of opinion. Many researchers point out that online discussions tend to be dominated by a minority of participants (Schneider, 1997; Schultz, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001c; Kang, 2003). According to Schneider (1997), more than 80 percent of the postings in an online discussion are posted by less than 5 percent of the participants. Dahlberg (2001c) also reports that 75 percent of messages in online discussions are constituted by 10 percent of its participants. In addition, Schultz (2002) finds that 'hard core individuals' dominate the discussions with their overwhelming amount of postings. Kang (2003) also identifies that only 2.7 percent of participants in online discussions actively participate in the discussions. Furthermore, some key individuals often suggest opinions in a selective manner and then show them to the public as the opinion of the entire group (KNA, 2005). This means a few key individuals can control the agenda of discourse reinforcing their views, and thus they are able to make their voices heard more through a confident expression of opinion.



The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are expressed with a stronger conviction than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). Many previous studies (Stokes 1998; Price, 2003; Song et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004) argue that dissimilar or diverse views can put people under stress and create an uncomfortable atmosphere. Therefore, people discussing in a heterogeneous group may hesitate to express their own opinions in a firm tone to avoid challenging communications. On the other hand, people in a homogeneous group can discuss with greater ease because it consists of like-minded people with similar views. In turn, this leads to participants in the homogeneous discussion group expressing their opinions with more confidence and assertion. As such, opinions in the *Nosamo* can be expressed with a higher level of conviction than those in the *Hani*.

#### **5.1.1.4 Summary of the results and discussion**

In the previous subsections of this section, the results of analyses for opinionation are presented. In addition, a discussion on the results is prepared and a preliminary conclusion is attempted. The results of the analyses and discussion can be summarised as follows.

The most common purpose for posting messages is the expression of individual opinions. This may result from the fact that the Internet provides a venue for communication between people. Facts and suggestions are found more frequently in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). It seems that the *Nosamo* reinforces its reformative and progressive stance on policy by actively providing facts and suggestions.

Most of the messages express opinions with a short number of words. Previous studies have tried to explain this phenomenon with resource restrictions, types of online forum and a lack of communicative competence. However, it seems that they are not enough to explain such short comments. The *Nosamo* shows a longer expression of opinion. This may be due to the fact that sharing common ground same belief enables people to feel comfortable.



Most of the messages express opinions with conviction. It seems that anonymity, popular issues, and the existence of key individuals largely contribute to such confident opinions. Messages in the *Nosamo* are more confident in expressing their opinions. This may be due to the fact that homogeneous groups can discuss with greater ease because it consists of like-minded people with similar views.

### 5.1.2 Rationality

Rationality is conceptualised as providing reasons in support of individual opinions and staying on topic. This study tries to observe rationality with three variables: 1) Justification, 2) Reference to the common good and 3) Topic relevance.

‘Justification’ is to captures a message’s use of reason in support of its claim and ‘Topic relevance’ is to investigate the extent to which opinions stay on the main theme of discussion. Thus, the two variables are analysed with opinion providing messages (N = 1,670). ‘Reference to the common good’ is to measure the extent to which opinions refer to the common good when reasoning. This variable is also analysed with opinion providing messages, then those messages that do not refer to any interests in support of their claim are excluded. A total of 629 messages are selected to analyse this variable. Table 5.2 shows the numbers of messages for analysis of rationality.

Table 5.2 Number of messages analysed for rationality

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Justification	767	903	1,670
Reference to the common good	767	903	1,670
(Messages referring to any interests in support of their claim)	(218)	(411)	(629)
Topic relevance	767	903	1,670



### 5.1.2.1 Justification

#### Results of analysis

'Justification' is measured on an ordinal scale: (1) No reason (category value = 1), (2) Subjective reason (category value = 2), and (3) Objective reason (category value = 3). In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion message is 1,670. Among them, 68.5 percent (N = 1,145) of the messages provide reasons in support of individual opinions, while the remainder of the messages (N = 525, 31.4%) asserts their claims without reasons. Among the 1,145 messages, 42.9 percent (N = 717) justify their opinions based on personal prejudices or views (subjective reason), and 25.6 percent (N = 428) support their claims based on reasons that are objectively observable through newspapers, websites, broadcast news, or particular people who are recognised as knowledgeable or authoritative on the subject (objective reason). Figure 5.8 shows the distribution of the three categories of justification. The results demonstrate that the messages in online bulletin boards in general provide reasons, but that the majority of them are based on subjective reasons.

Figure 5.8 Justification

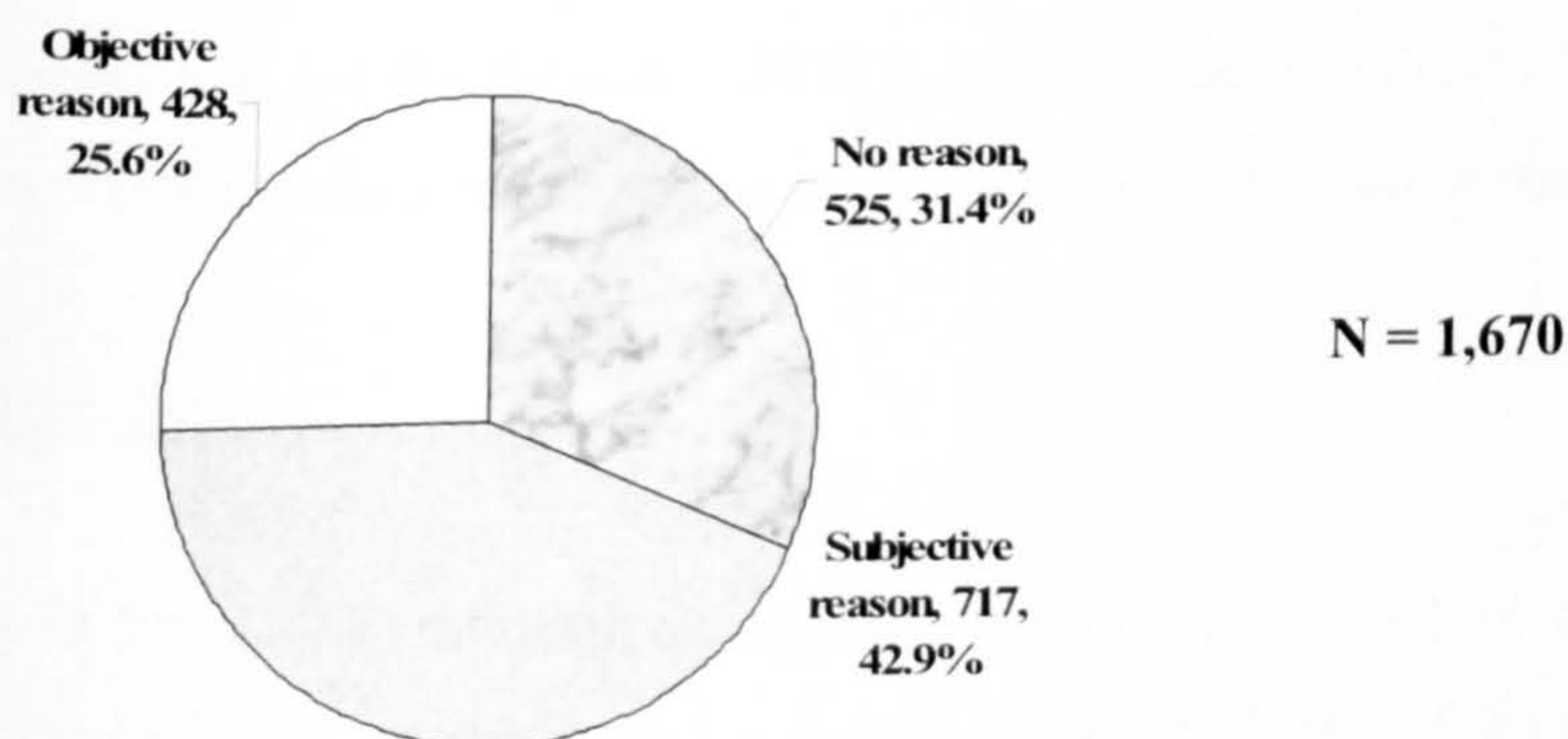
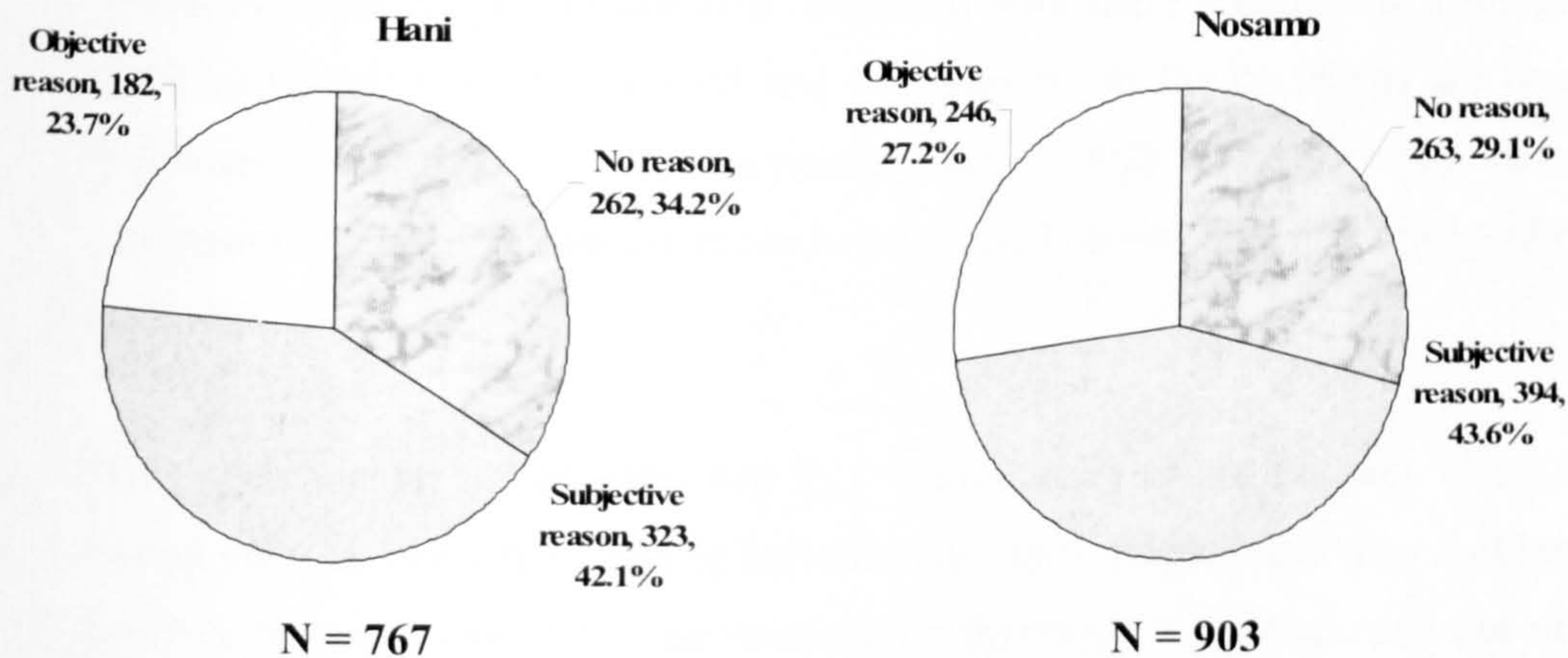


Figure 5.9 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of the three categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the highest proportion of messages are based on subjective reasons (N = 323, 42.1%), followed by no reason (N = 262, 34.2%) and objective reasons (N = 182,



23.7%). In the *Nosamo*, the highest proportion of messages are based on subjective reasons (N = 394, 43.6%), followed by no reason (N = 263, 29.1%), and objective reason (N = 246, 27.2%).

Figure 5.9 Comparison of justification between the two groups



A Mann-Whitney U test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the level of justification. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $z = -2.322$ ,  $p = 0.020$ ). The mean rank for the *Nosamo* (895) is greater than for the *Hani* (808) indicating that the messages in the *Nosamo* present a higher level of justification than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that opinions are expressed with a low level of justification in that they are largely based on subjective reasons. Although 7 out of 10 messages provide reasons, most of the reasons are provided with a subjective basis. Only looking at the aspect of justification, it seems that the discussion in the two bulletin boards as a whole is not deliberative. As Graham (2002) argues, giving a reason is one thing and giving a supported reason is another. According to Habermas (1984), only objective reasons can satisfy the precondition for rationality because subjective reasons can make it difficult



to evaluate their validity. Wilhelm (1999) also argues that those opinions with reasons made largely to personal prejudice, emotion, or aesthetic judgment that cannot be included in the category of reason-supported opinion.

The finding is consistent with the argument that exaggerated self-presentation and emotionalism is prevalent in online discussion (Graham, 2002; Yoon, 2002). Some previous empirical studies are also congruent with these results. For example, Jensen (2003a) reports that 76.9 percent and 61.6 percent of the messages are based on no validation or on his/her own viewpoints. Yoon (2002) also concludes that in online discussion the justifications are made largely based on personal prejudice and emotional judgement.

This phenomenon can be explained by the anonymity of the Internet. The absence of social cue can lower the sense of presence and, thus, participants may feel less need to provide reasons to validate their opinion. Furthermore, a study carried out in 2005 by the Korean National Assembly on '*information society and political reform*' provides another possible explanation for the reason for this lack of justification in the two bulletin boards. According to the study, most political issues in cyberspace are those stimulating personal emotion to attract public attention. For example, the dispute over Dokdo, an island between Korea and Japan, and the incident of two middle school girls killed by a US military vehicle stimulated great nationalistic sentiments, and the discussion of those issues in cyberspace attracted a great deal of attention. The study also suggests that posts in most online bulletin boards of Korea are largely characterised as hasty judgments, jumping to conclusions, and oversimplifying, which in turn often result in the lack of grounds or reasons for arguments.

When comparing the two groups, it is interesting to see that the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) shows a higher level of justification than the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The finds contrast with arguments that diverse and conflicting viewpoints in a heterogeneous group result in a greater awareness of rationales for one's own opinions (Mutz, 2002; Price et al., 2002b; Song et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004).

Competing perspectives and diverse viewpoints in a heterogeneous group, such as the *Hani*, may lead participants to generate irrational and emotional thinking. Conversely, discussion in homogeneous group, such as the *Nosamo*, may allow participants take more careful consideration and reasons in order to attain the goal the group set.

Anonymity also can make people feel free from uncomfortable atmospheres caused by dissimilar viewpoints or opposition, and thus, it may prevent participants in a heterogeneous group from generating reasons which are made in an effort to defend themselves from others.

### 5.1.2.2 Reference to the common good

#### Results of analysis

'Reference to the common good' is measured on an ordinal scale: (1) Individual interest (category value = 1), (2) Group interest (category value = 2), and (3) Social interest (category value = 3). Out of the total opinion messages (N = 1,670), 37.7 percent (N = 629) of the messages refer to any interests in support of their claims. Among them, the highest proportion (N = 477, 75.8%) make reference to social interests, followed by group interests (N = 143, 22.7%), and by individual interests (N = 9, 1.4%). Figure 5.10 (A) illustrates graphically the distribution of the three categories. The results demonstrate that the majority of messages in online bulletin boards make references to the social interest in support of their claims.



Figure 5.10 Reference to the common good

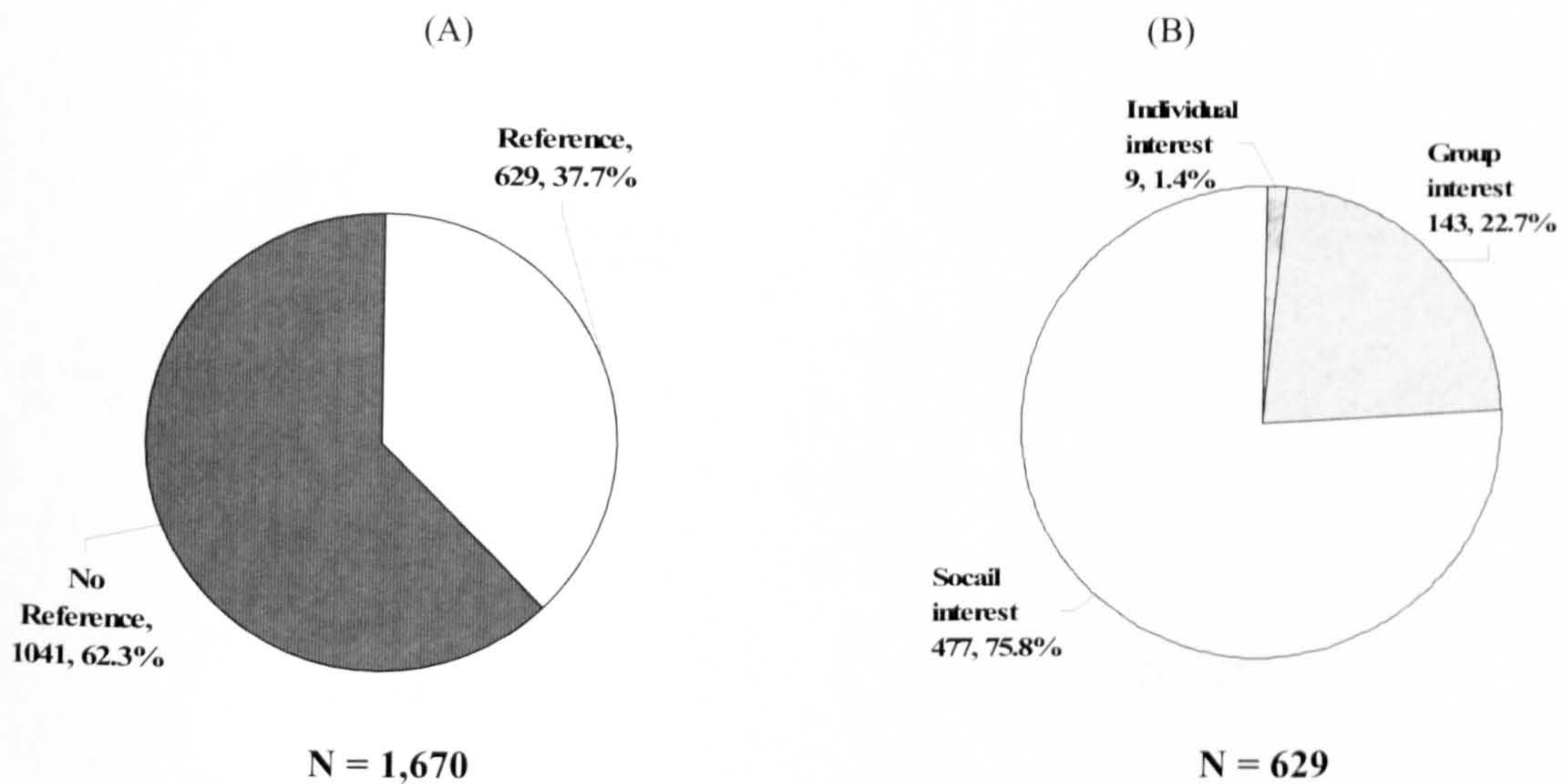
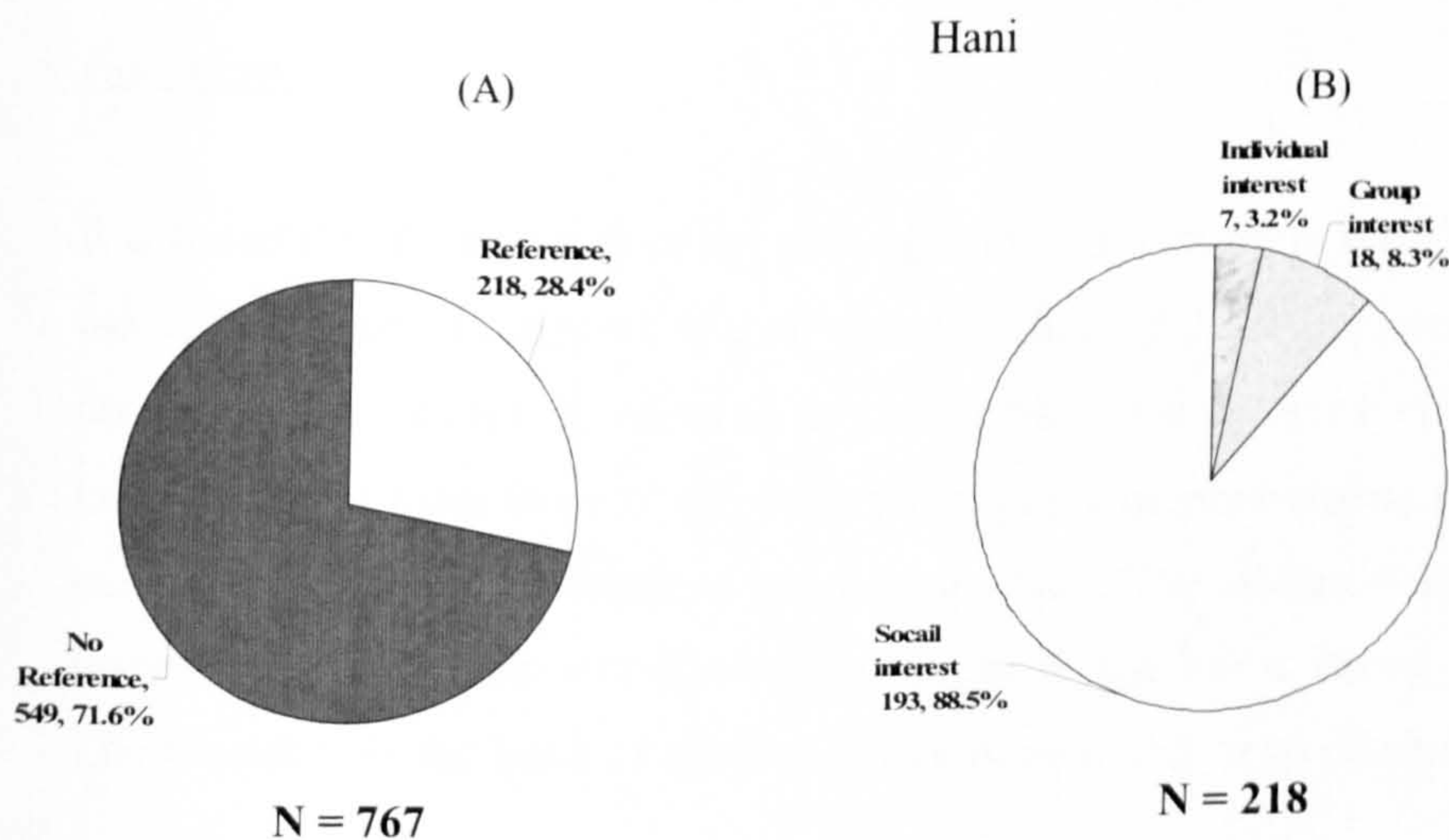
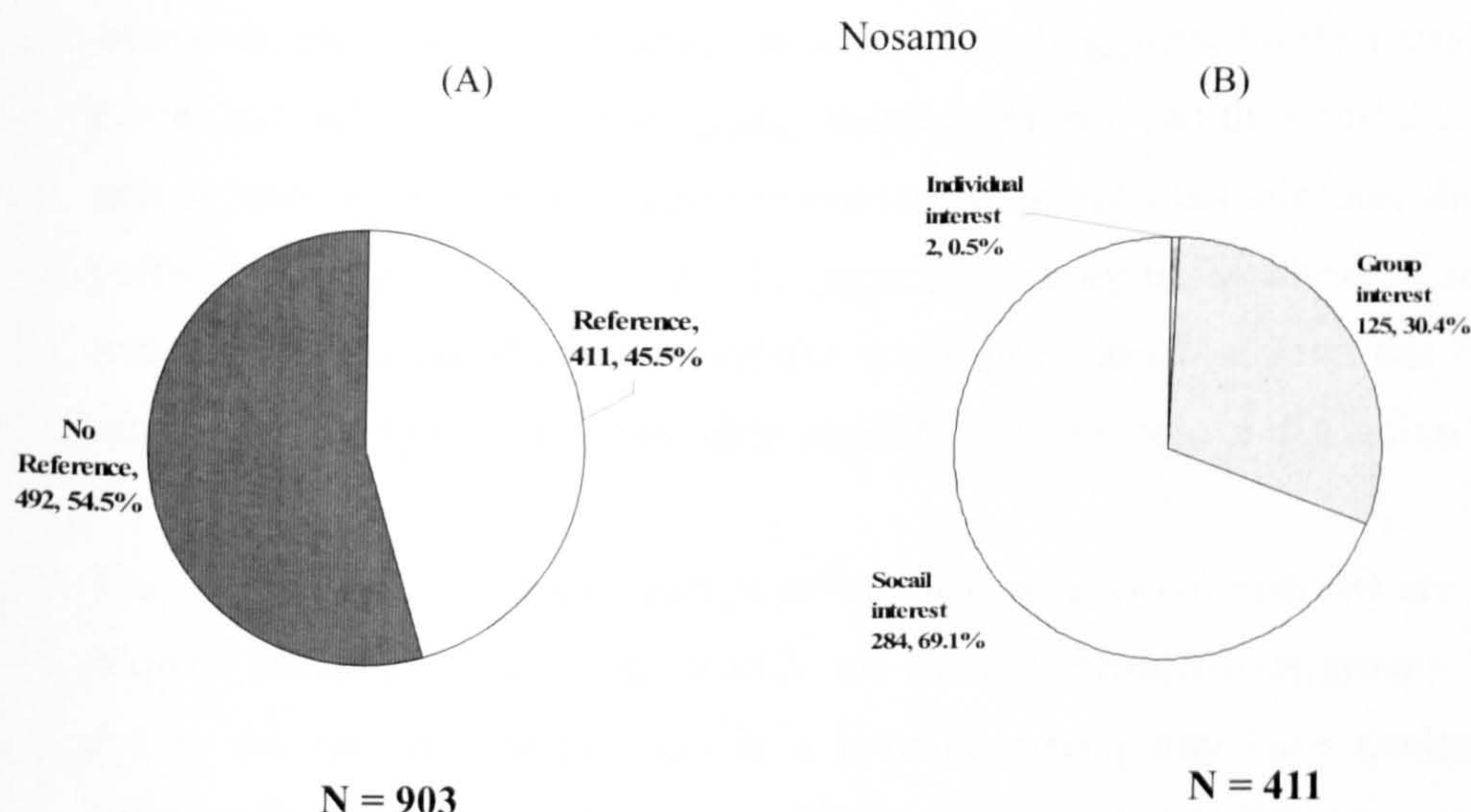


Figure 5.11 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of references to the common good between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the highest proportion (N = 477, 75.8%) make reference to social interests (N = 193, 88.5%), followed by group interests (N = 18, 8.3%), and by individual interests (N = 7, 3.2%). In *Nosamo*, the highest proportion (N = 284, 69.1%) make reference to social interests, followed by group interests (N = 125, 30.4%), and by individual interests (N = 2, 0.5%).

Figure 5.11 Comparison of reference to the common good between the two groups







A Mann-Whitney U test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups. The results show that a statistical difference exists in mean distances ( $z = -6.051$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The results demonstrate that the messages in the *Nosamo* are more focusing on group interest than those in the *Hani*.

A Mann-Whitney U test is carried out carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the reference of the common good. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $z = -6.051$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The mean rank of the *Hani* is 353, compared to 295 in the *Nosamo* implying that the messages in the *Nosamo* address a more common good than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that the majority of the messages in online bulletin boards make references to the social interest in support of their claims. Although, over 60 percent of the messages do not show explicit references to any interests, it seems that their positions are not so much different from those of the other messages. The phenomenon can be explained by the context that the discussions are taking place. The online deliberations take place prior to the 2002 Presidential election. South Korea has a strong presidential system. The president is the head of administrative branch and head of state representing state.



Moreover, the president is usually the top of the ruling party. So the president has great power and influence over every policy making process, and thus citizens, parties, civic groups and interest groups more interested in presidential election than any other political elections. Consequently, the participants may be involved in the discussion with social or national interests and the social or national interests can be used more often in justifying opinions than other interests in the process of discussion.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that more group interests are found in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) than in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). This may be due to the fact that participants in a homogeneous group have similar views and interests; in particular, the *Nosamo* is a homogeneous group of Roh supporters. As noted previously, the presidential election is addressed as a social and national interest among people in South Korea. In addition, the *Nosamo* pursues reformative and progressive attitudes towards the political system. Consequently, this aligns with the interests of the *Nosamo*.

### 5.1.2.3 Topic relevance

#### Results of analysis

'Topic relevance' is measured using two categories: (1) On topic and (2) Off topic. N both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion messages is 1,670. Of the messages, 95.7 percent (N = 1,598) are related to the 2002 Presidential election, and only 4.3 percent (N = 72) are off the topic. Regarding the issue of nominating and filing a single candidate, 70.5 percent (N = 1,178) are found to be relevant to the topic, and 29.5 percent (N = 492) are found to be off the topic. The results are shown graphically in Figure 5.12. The results demonstrate that most of the messages in online bulletin boards are on topic.



Figure 5.12 Topic relevance

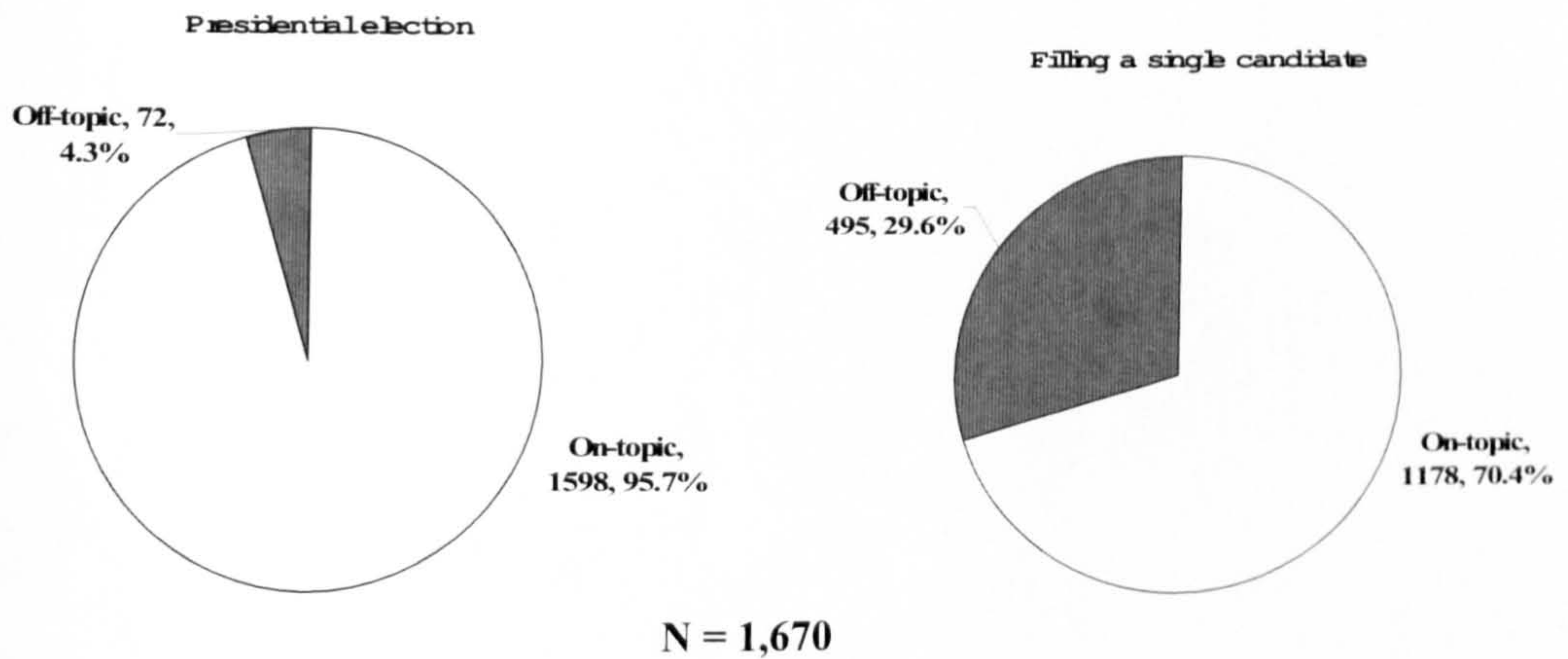
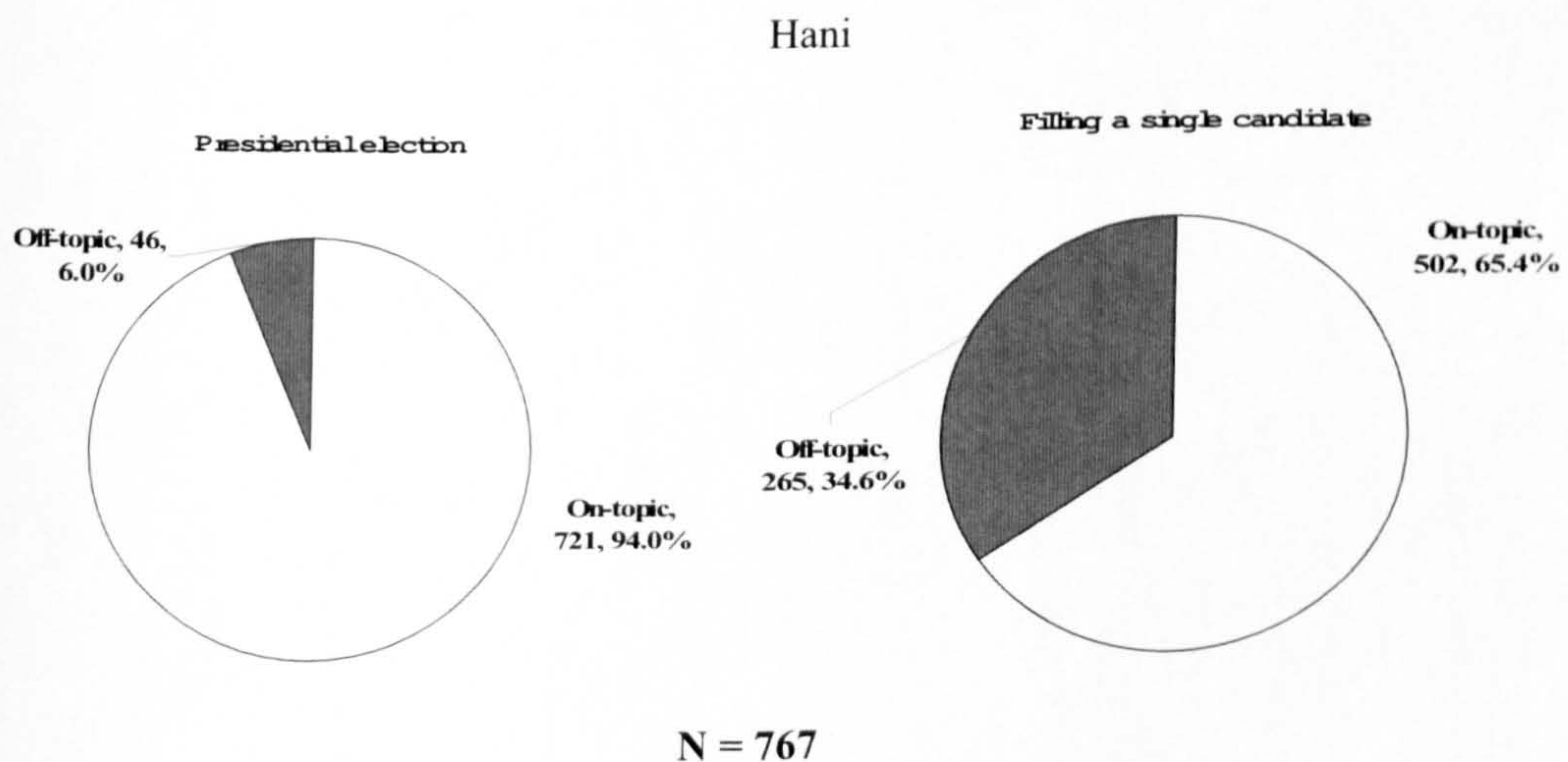


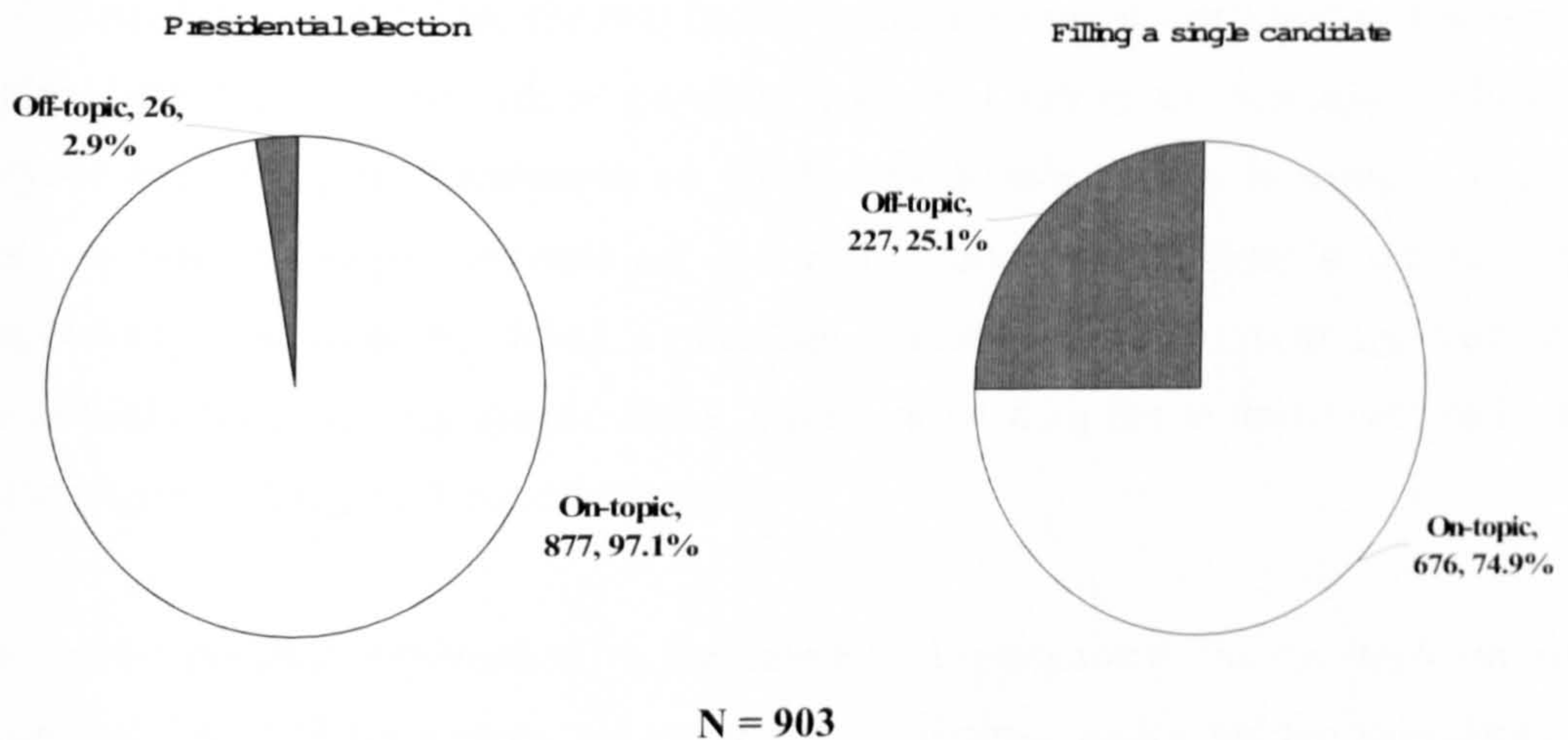
Figure 5.13 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of the two categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of opinion messages is 767. Of these, 94 percent (N = 721) and 65.4 percent (N = 502) are related to the main themes of discussion (the 2002 Presidential election and the nomination and filing of a single candidates respectively), while only 6 percent (N = 46) and 34.6 percent (N = 265) are irrelevant to the topic. In the *Nosamo*, the total number of opinion messages is 903. Of these, 97.1 percent (N = 877) and 74.9 percent (N = 676) are related to the topic, while only 2.9 percent (N = 26) and 25.1 percent (N = 227) are irrelevant.

Figure 5.13 Comparison of topic relevance between the two groups





## Nosamo



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the two categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference in the distribution between the two bulletins (the 2002 Presidential election: Chi-square = 9.774,  $p = 0.002$ ; the nomination and filing of a single candidate: Chi-square = 17.678,  $p = 0.000$ ). The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are more topic relevant than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that the majority of messages in online bulletin boards stay on-topic. The results are consistent with previous studies. Most of the previous empirical studies demonstrate that online discussions mainly are on-topic. (Coleman et al. 2002; Graham and Witschge, 2003; Jensen, 2003a)

There can be two main reasons for such a high level of topic relevance. The first is the existence of a mechanism(s) that prevents off-topic posts in the online discussion. To reduce spam and irrelevant postings, Internet websites often adopt a policy that only subscribers can participate in online debates. In addition, Internet websites employ an operator function in which forums are run by administrators to eliminate spam, flames



and irrelevant postings.

As discussed in Chapter four, the two online bulletin boards investigated in this study employ both functions to reduce possible spam and irrelevant postings. Although everyone can read posted messages on the boards, a subscription is required if one wants to post messages. In addition, the two online bulletin boards are run by independent administrators. When a message contains irrelevant postings such as commercial emails, advertisements, abuse, insults, or even replies to irrelevant postings, the message is deleted by the administrators.

The second possible explanation is the interest of participants in the topic under discussion. The bulletin boards are organised to discuss issues on the presidential election. As previously noted, the presidential election attracts great interest among citizens. In turn, this helps the participants to stay on-topic.

When comparing the two groups, it is found that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are more topic relevant than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). People in a homogeneous group share the same beliefs and goals. In turn, this may lead to participants in the homogeneous discussion group focus on the main theme of discussion.

#### **5.1.2.4 Summary of the results and discussion**

The results of analyses for rationality and discussion on the results can be summarised as follows.

Most opinions are expressed with reasons (objective or subjective reasons), however subjective reasons are prevalent. This indicates a low level of justification in that subjective reasons may make it difficult to evaluate validity. This may be due to hasty judgments and oversimplification in building individual opinions in the Korean context. It seems that diverse and contradicting views between participants in heterogeneous



group does not contribute to generate reasons.

The majority of opinions give explicit references to the social and national interest in support of their claims. This may be because the main topic of discussion attracts nationwide interest. It seems that diverse and contradicting views between participants in heterogeneous group contribute to generate the consideration of the interest of society at large.

Most opinions stick to the main topic during discussion. The topic of the presidential election and the existence of an administrator may largely contribute to participants staying on-topic. It seems that similar views between participants in homogeneous group contribute to a higher level of topic relevance.

### **5.1.3 Impartiality**

Impartiality refers to the ability to canvass and weigh different views. This study tries to observe impartiality with two variables: 1) Attempt to weigh and 2) Opinion homogeneity.

‘Attempt to weigh’ is to measure the extent to which opinions attempt to canvass and weigh the main candidates (Roh and Jung). ‘Opinion homogeneity’ is to capture the level of homogeneity of opinion towards the candidates. Thus, the two variables are analysed with opinion providing messages (N = 1,670), then those messages that do not make evaluations on the candidates (Roh and Jung) are excluded. A total of 838 messages evaluating either or both candidates are selected to be analysed ‘Attempt to weigh’. Among the 838 messages, 674 messages and 488 messages evaluating Roh and Jung, respectively, are selected to measure ‘Opinion homogeneity’. The numbers of messages for analysis of impartiality are shown in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Number of messages analysed for impartiality

Variables	Number of Messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Attempt to weigh	347	491	838
Opinion homogeneity (Evaluating Jung)	248	240	488
(Evaluating Roh)	266	408	674

### 5.1.3.1 Attempt to weigh

#### Results of analysis

'Attempt to weigh' is measured using three categories: (1) Jung, (2) Roh and (3) Jung & Roh. Of the total opinion messages (N = 1,670), 50.2 percent (N = 838) of the messages make an evaluation on either or both candidates. Among them, over 60 percent of the messages (N = 514) make an evaluation on one candidate, 41.8 percent (N = 350) on Roh and 19.6 percent (N = 164) on Jung respectively. On the other hand, 38.7 percent (N = 324) evaluate both candidates. Figure 5.14 graphically depicts the distribution of each category. The results demonstrate that messages in online bulletin boards are not so much active to canvass and weigh the two different main candidates.

Figure 5.14 Attempts to weigh

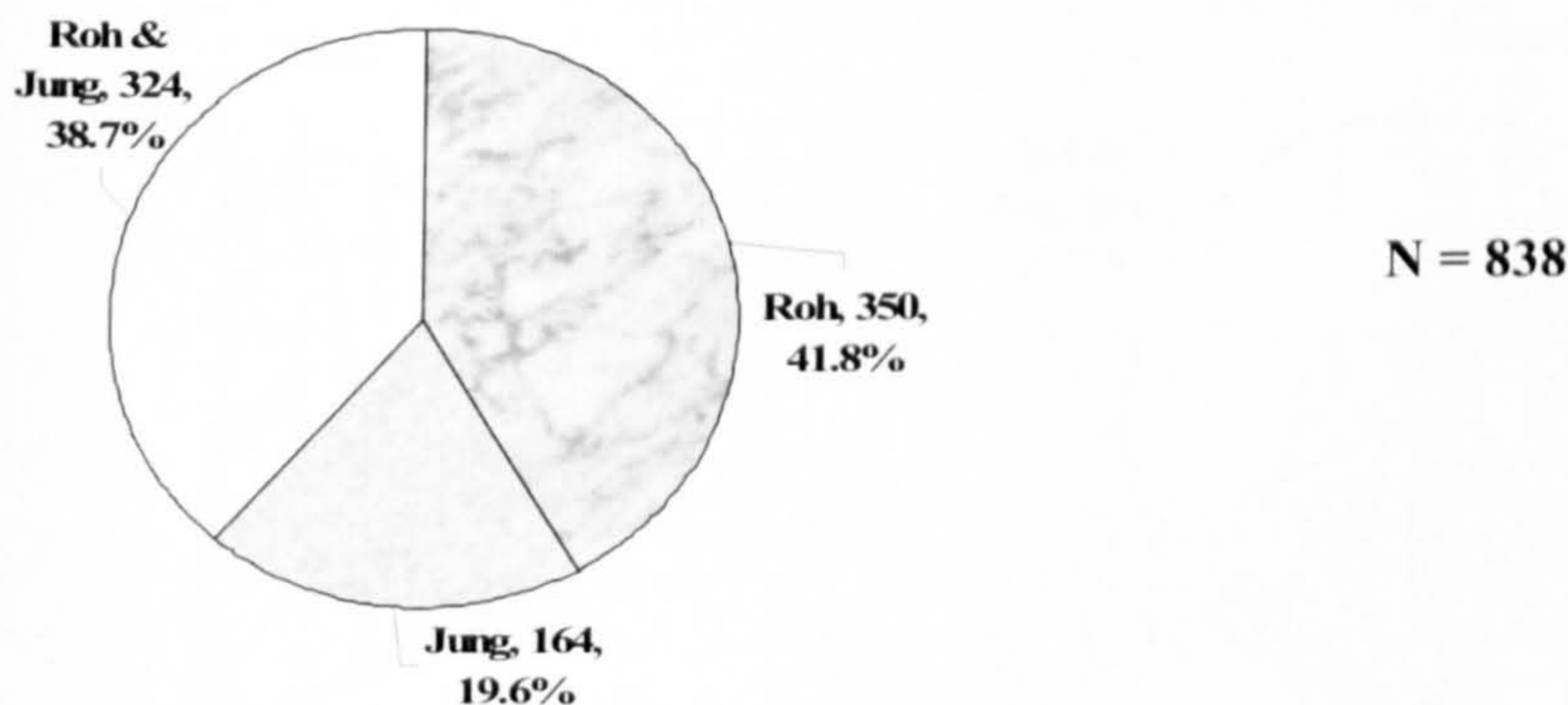
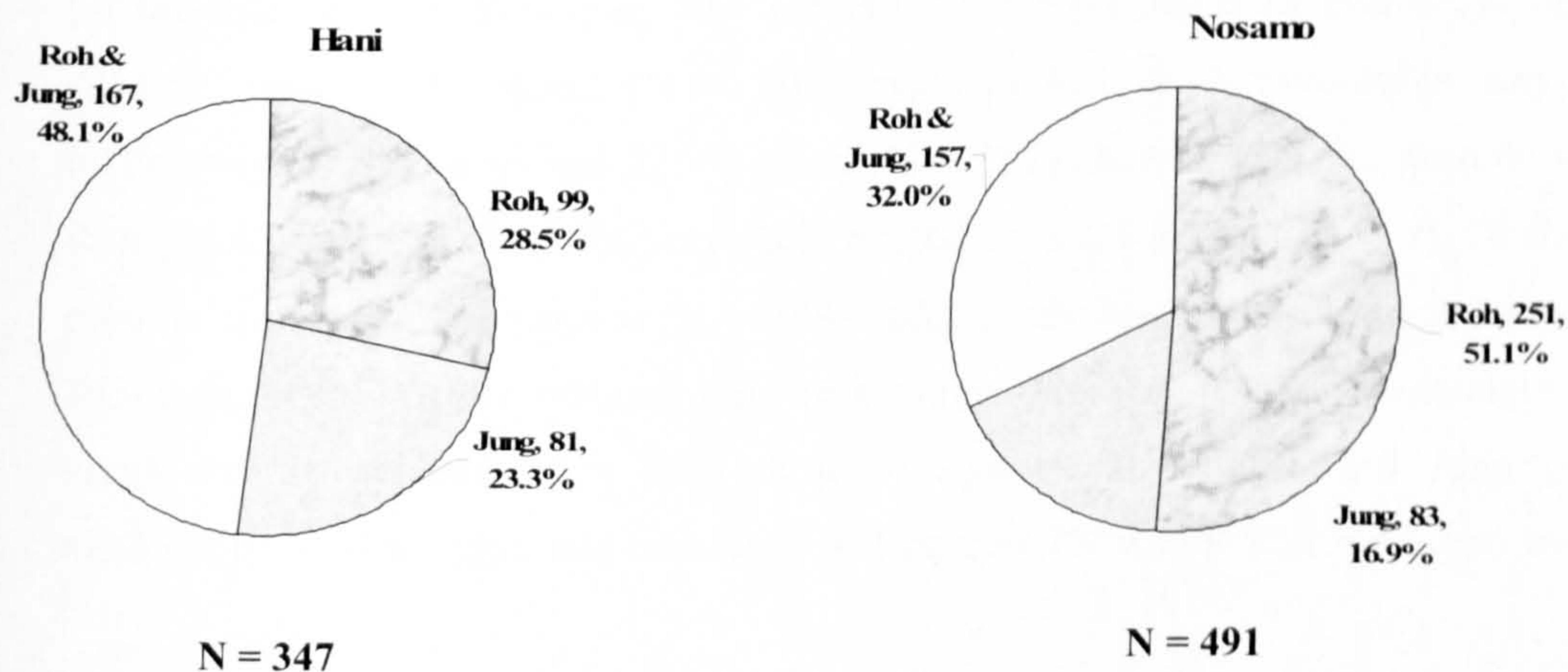




Figure 5.15 graphically compares the distribution of the three categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of messages that make an evaluation on either or both candidates is 347. Among them, over 50 percent (N = 180) of the messages make an evaluation on one candidate, 28.5 percent (N = 99) on Roh and 23.3 percent (N = 81) on Jung respectively, while 48.1 percent (N = 167) of the messages evaluate both candidates. In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages that make an evaluation on either or both candidates is 491. Among them, over 60 percent (N = 334) of the messages make an evaluation on one candidate, 51.1 percent (N = 251) on Roh and 16.9 percent (N = 83) on Jung respectively, while 32 percent (N = 157) of the messages evaluate both candidates.

A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the three categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference in the distribution between the two bulletins (Chi-square = 42.866,  $p = 0.000$ ). There is not so much difference in the proportion of messages that evaluate Jung between the groups; however, there is a significant difference in the proportion of messages that evaluate only Roh and both Jung and Roh between the two groups. The proportion of messages that evaluate both candidates accounts for 48.1 percent (N = 167) in the *Hani*, compared to 32 percent (N = 157) in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that messages in the *Hani* are more active than those in the *Nosamo* in canvassing and weighing the two different main candidates.

Figure 5.15 Comparison of attempts to weigh between the two groups





### Discussion

It is found that messages in online bulletin boards are not so much active to canvass and weigh the two different main candidates. It may be because participants engage in the online deliberation with given preferences on each candidate. Rather than canvass and weigh the competing positions, participants may be more interested in asserting their positions.

Comparison of the two groups reveals that the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) are more active than those in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) in canvassing and weighing the two different main candidates. While the *Hani* consists of unspecified people, the *Nosamo* largely consists of like-minded people that support the candidate, Roh. Therefore, participants in the *Nosamo* may be more inclined to focus on the candidate they support, rather than express their preferences on other candidates.

#### 5.1.3.2 Opinion homogeneity

##### Results of analysis

‘Opinion homogeneity’ is measured on a five-point scale: (1) Very negative (value = 1), (2) Negative (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Positive (value = 4), and (5) Very positive (value = 5). Figure 5.16 graphically depicts the distribution of each category. Of the total opinion messages, 40.4 percent (N = 674) make an evaluation on Roh. Among them, 70.9 percent (N = 208) evaluate Roh in a favourable way (43% moderately, 27.9% very) and 27.8 percent (N = 187) show a negative attitude toward Roh (23.6% moderately, 4.2% very), and neutrality is 1.3 percent (N = 9). Of the total opinion messages, 29.2 percent (N = 488) make an evaluation on Jung. Among them, 36.9 percent (N = 180) evaluate Jung in a favourable way (30.5% moderately, 6.4% very) and 61 percent (N = 298) show a negative attitude toward Jung (42.6% moderately, 18.4% very), and neutrality is 2 percent (N = 10). The messages evaluate



Roh in a favourable way, while showing a negative attitude towards Jung. The tendency is confirmed when looking at the mean scores (Table 5.4).

Figure 5.16 Opinion homogeneity

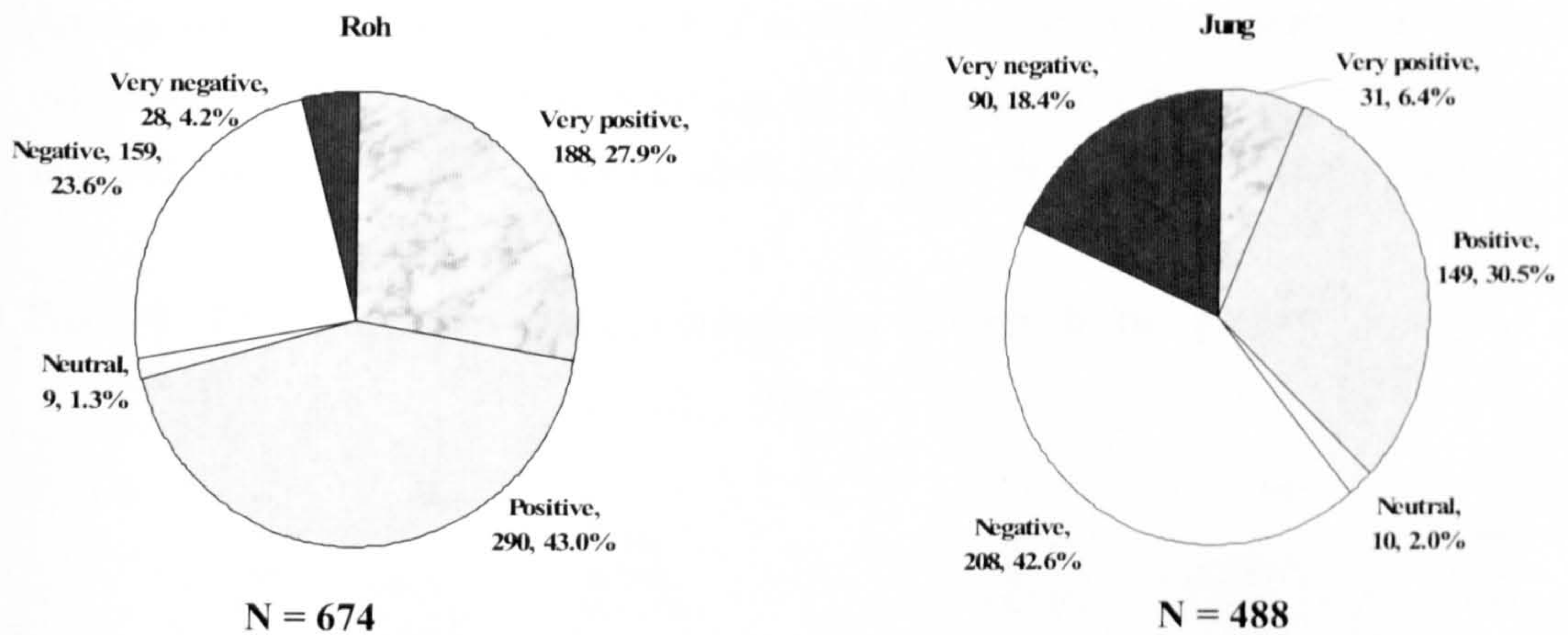


Table 5.4 Descriptive statistics for evaluation on candidates

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Evaluation on Roh	674	1	5	3.67	1.226
Evaluation on Jung	488	1	5	2.64	1.263

Figure 5.17 illustrates a comparison of evaluations on both candidates between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of messages that make an evaluation on Roh is 266. Among them, 57.5 percent (N = 153) evaluate Roh in a favourable way (46.2% moderately, 11.3% very) and 40.6 percent (N = 108) show a negative attitude toward Roh (33.1% moderately, 7.5% very), while 1.9 percent (N = 5) show a neutral position. On the other hand, the total number of messages that make an evaluation on Jung is 248. Among them, 48 percent (N = 119) evaluate Jung in a favourable way (39.5% moderately, 8.5% very), and 49.2 percent (N = 122) show a negative attitude toward Jung (41.9% moderately, 7.3% very), while 2.8 percent (N = 7) take a neutral position.



In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages that make an evaluation on Roh is 408. Among them, 79.6 percent (N = 566) evaluate Roh in a favourable way (40.9% moderately, 38.7% very) and 19.4 percent (N = 79) show a negative attitude toward Roh (17.4% moderately, 2% very), while 1 percent (N = 4) take a neutral position. On the other hand, the total frequency of messages that make an evaluation on Jung is 240. Among them, 25.5 percent (N = 61) evaluate Jung in a favourable way (21.3% moderately, 4.2% very) and 73.3 percent (N = 176) show a negative attitude toward Jung (43.3% moderately, 30% very), while 1.3 percent (N = 3) take a neutral position.

Figure 5.17 Comparison of opinion homogeneity between the two groups

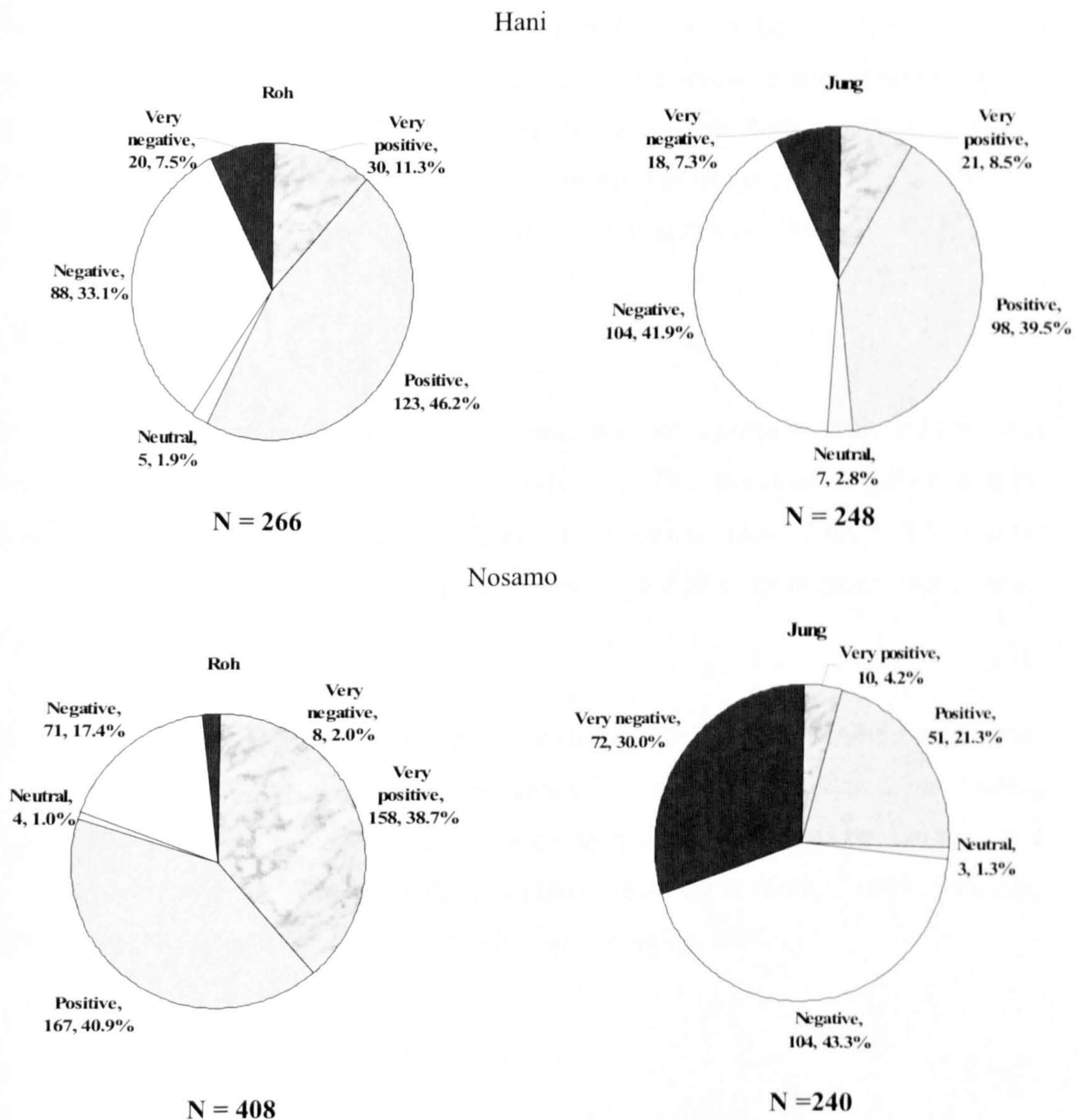




Table 5.5 shows a comparison of descriptive statistics for evaluation on candidates between the *Hani* and the *Nosamo*.

Table 5.5 Descriptive statistics for evaluation on candidates between the two groups

		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hani	Roh	266	1	5	3.21	1.228
	Jung	248	1	5	3.00	1.204
Nosamo	Roh	408	1	5	3.97	1.128
	Jung	240	1	5	2.26	1.214

The evaluation on both candidates is not so much different in the *Hani*. In other words, positive and negative evaluations toward candidates are almost evenly divided implying a high level of impartiality. However, the evaluation on both candidates is quite different in the *Nosamo*. The *Nosamo* group shows a positive evaluation toward Roh, but a negative evaluation toward Jung implying a homogeneous opinion.

### Discussion

It is found that messages in online bulletin boards make a positive evaluation towards Roh, while showing a negative attitude towards Jung. The results are largely due to the fact that the *Nosamo* shows an extremely positive position toward Roh, and a negative position toward Jung. Considering that the *Nosamo* is a Roh support group, these results are not surprising.

However, it is interesting to see that the *Hani* shows a balanced evaluation on the two candidates, while the *Nosamo* show an extreme position on the candidates. The finding is line with the argument that members of a group with shared beliefs tend to gravitate toward a more extreme opinion in the discussion of an issue (Davis, 1999; Sunstein, 2000, 2001b; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Mutz and Mondak, 2006).

### 5.1.3.3 Summary of the results and discussion

The results of analyses for impartiality and discussion on the results can be summarised as follows.

The majority of messages make evaluations on only one candidate implying an unbalance. This is more distinct in the *Nosamo*. This may be because while the *Hani* consists of unspecified people, the *Nosamo* consists of Roh supporters.

The results demonstrate the evaluation on Roh as positive and the evaluation on Jung as negative. The *Hani* shows a balanced evaluation on the two candidates. This may be due to the fact that *Hani* may consist of people who have different preferences for candidates and lack an intention to debate on their preferences.

### 5.1.4 Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the ability of formulating individual opinions free from any intrusion by power elites and from irrational beliefs and conventions. This study assesses autonomy with two variables: 1) Independence from mass media and 2) Independence from regionalism.

‘Independence from mass media’ is to capture the extent to which messages are critical toward traditional mass media and, thus, messages that make reference(s) to traditional media (N = 311) are analysed for autonomy. ‘Independence from regionalism’ is to capture the degree to which messages are critical toward regional sentiment and, thus, messages that make reference to regional sentiment (N = 207) are analysed. The number of messages analysed is shown in Table 5.6



Table 5.6 Number of messages analysed for autonomy

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Independence from mass media	129	182	311
Independence from regionalism	83	124	207

#### 5.1.4.1 Independence from mass media

##### Results of analysis

‘Independence from mass media’ is measured using two categories: (1) Accept and (2) Refute. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion messages is 1,670. Of the messages, 18.6 percent ( $N = 311$ ) of the messages make an explicit reference to traditional mass media. Among them, 67.5 percent ( $N = 210$ ) refute the views of traditional media, while 32.5 percent ( $N = 101$ ) accept the views. The results are shown graphically in Figure 5.18. The results demonstrate that the messages in online bulletin boards in general are critical toward traditional mass media.

Figure 5.18 Independence from mass media

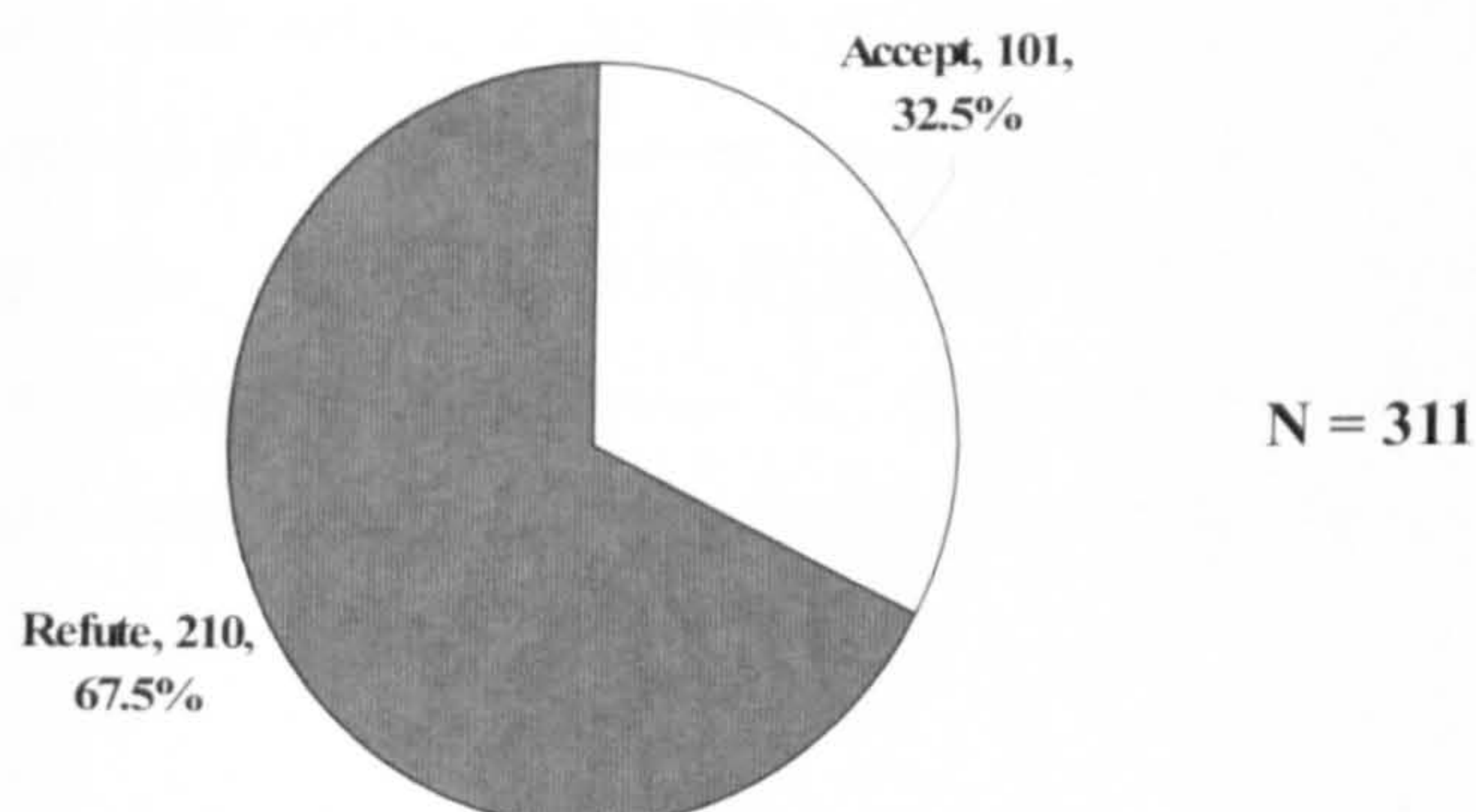
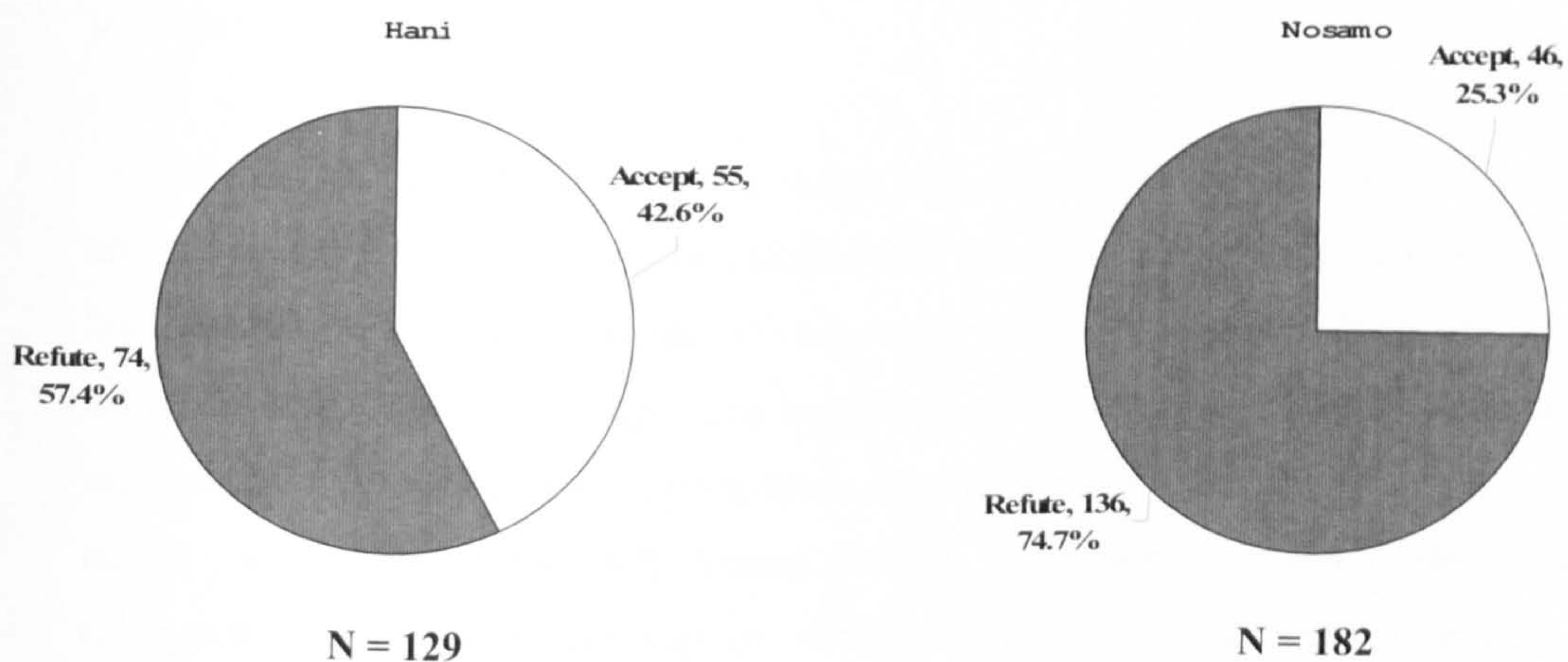


Figure 5.19 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of two categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the



*Hani*, the total number of messages that makes reference to traditional mass media is 129. Among them, 57.4 percent (N = 74) provide a counterargument against the views of traditional media, while 42.6 percent (N = 55) accept the views. In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages that makes reference to traditional mass media is 182. Among them, 74.7 percent (N = 136) provide a counterargument against the views of traditional media, while 25.3 percent (N = 46) accept the views.

Figure 5.19 Comparison of independence from mass media between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the two categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two bulletins (Chi-square = 10.376,  $p = 0.001$ ). The proportion of messages that provide critical views against traditional mass media accounts for 57.4 percent in the *Hani*, compared to 74.7 percent in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that the messages in the *Nosamo* are more critical toward traditional mass media.

### Discussion

The results demonstrate that the majority of messages provide counterarguments against the views of traditional mass media. This indicates that message posters are trying to



discover their own views rather than just consume political views disseminated by elites through the mass media.

There are three major conservative newspapers in Korea: the Chosun Ilbo, the Donga Ilbo, and the Joongang Ilbo. The three conservative newspapers, which command around 75 to 80 percent of the nation's newspaper readership, have had propound effects on the formation of public opinion in South Korea (Shin, 2005). As an example of those effects, people have been found to say that, in Korea, "the power of the three newspapers exceeds any political power" and that "the three newspapers make the president."

Nonetheless, the results show that a major part of the messages in the online bulletin boards is critical toward views or information provided by the newspapers. Before the 2002 presidential election, conservative newspapers had dominated Korean politics for a long period. However, people are becoming more sceptical of politicians who are supported by the conservative newspapers. Furthermore, as the Internet evolves, a large number of people, particularly young people, turn more to online media such as *Ohmynews* as an alternative source of information partly because they are getting disillusioned with the conservative newspapers.

There are two major types of Internet newspapers in South Korea. The first type is an electronic expansion of print media. Major newspaper companies, including the three conservative ones, have their own Internet newspapers, and jointly launched the Korean Online Newspaper Association (KONA) in November 2000. The second type is the independent Internet newspaper opposed to the major newspapers. Independent Internet newspapers launch the Korean Internet Journalist Association (KIJA) in September 2002 and the Korean Internet Newspaper Association (KINA) in October 2002. KIJA has 400 journalists from 50 independent Internet newspapers as members, and KINA has 9 independent Internet newspapers as members.

When comparing the two groups, it is found that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) tend to be more critical toward traditional mass media than those



in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). Lee Hoi Chang, Roh’s opponent, had enjoyed support from conservative newspapers. As a result, the *Nosamo*, which mainly consists of young people and supports *Roh*, seems to take a negative position toward conservative newspapers and their beneficiary.

#### 5.1.4.2 Independence from regionalism

##### Results of analysis

‘Independence from regionalism’ is measured using two categories: (1) Accept and (2) Oppose. Of the total opinion messages, 12.4 percent (N = 207) of the messages make an explicit reference to the issue of regionalism. Among them, 85 percent (N = 176) make a statement opposing regionalism, while 15 percent (N = 31) reflect it. Figure 5.20 illustrates the results. The results demonstrate that the messages in online bulletin boards in general are critical toward regional sentiment.

Figure 5.20 Independence from regionalism

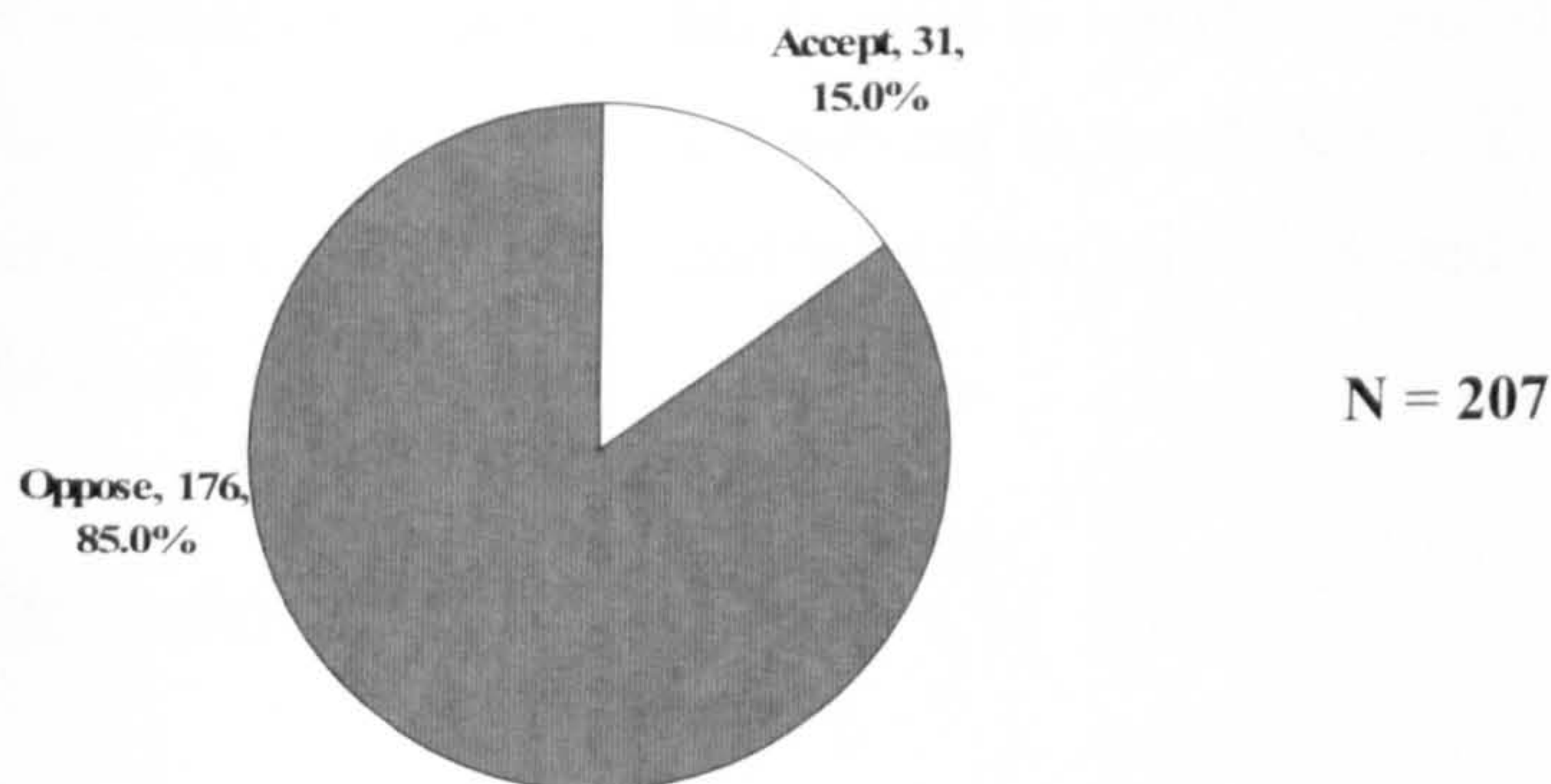
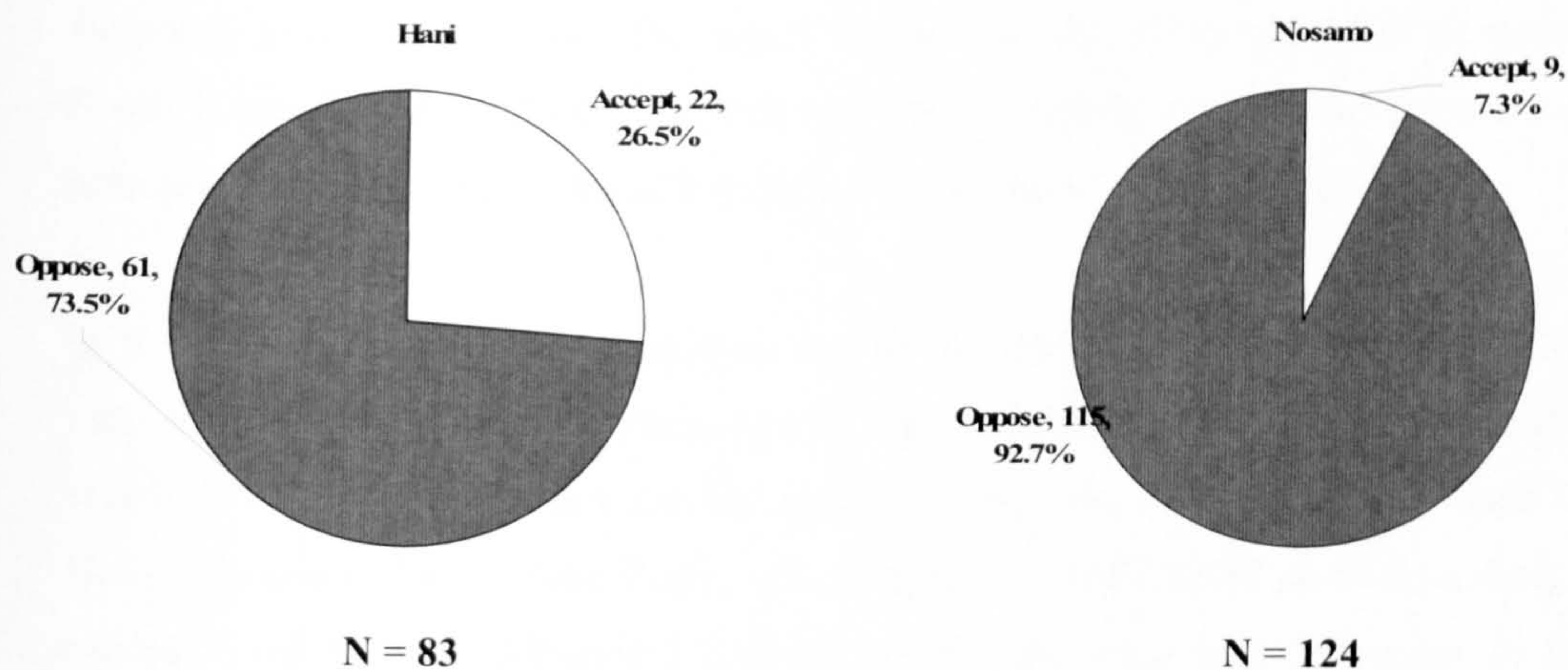


Figure 5.21 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of two categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of messages that makes reference to regionalism is 83. Among them, 73.5 percent (N = 61) make a statement opposing regionalism, while 26.5 percent



(N = 22) reflect it. In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages that makes reference to regionalism is 124. Among them, 92.7 percent (N = 115) make a statement opposing regionalism, while 7.3 percent (N = 9) reflect it.

Figure 5.21 Comparison of independence from regionalism between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the two categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (Chi-square = 14.467,  $p = 0.000$ ). The proportion of messages that attempt to refute regionalism accounts for 73.5 percent in the *Hani*, compared to 92.7 percent in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that the messages in the *Nosamo* tend to be more critical toward regional sentiment than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

The results demonstrate that the majority of messages are critical toward regionalism. As discussed in Chapter 3, in spite of the cultural homogeneity of Korea, regional sentiment has been a critical factor in South Korean politics. Modern regional rivalry between the south-eastern Gyungsang province and south-western Cholla province began in the early 1960s. Regional sentiment has been frequently exploited in related with political issues and elections ever since. Park Chung Hee, who held the presidency



from 1962 to 1979, skewed economic development toward the Gyung-sang provinces to sustain his leadership during his presidency. This uneven regional development continued to succeeding presidents who also from the Gyung-sang provinces. This resulted in unequal economic development and distribution of incomes, in turn promoting region-based political activities.

Regional sentiment has been the major obstacle to the development of democracy in South Korea because citizens did not support candidates or political parties for their policies; instead, they gave blind loyalty to region-based candidates or parties.

In the 2002 Presidential election, two out of the three major candidates are affiliated with region-based political parties. Lee is the candidate for the Grand National Party, which receives support from the Gyung-sang provinces. Roh is the candidate for the New Millennium Democratic Party, which represents the Cholla provinces. Jung is the candidate for National Alliance 21, which is not based on a specific region. In light of this, it is interesting to see that discussions are free from regional sentiment.

There can be several explanations for the absence of regionalism. First is the change of political culture. The 2002 Presidential election is regarded as a turning point for Korean politics. Ideological and generational issues start to play a greater role in politics than regionalism. In turn, this results in the diminishment of regional sentiment. Regional sentiment is a sensitive issue and often causes conflicts between peoples of different areas.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) tend to be more critical regional sentiment than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). Roh is the candidate for the New Millennium Democratic Party which represents the Cholla provinces, but he himself hails from the rival Gyung-sang provinces. Furthermore, as a reformist, Roh has been struggling against stifling political conventions such as regionalism. As a result, the *Nosamo*, which supports *Roh*, seems to take a negative position toward regional sentiment.



### 5.1.4.3 Summary of the results and discussion

In the subsections of section 5.1.4, the results of analyses for autonomy are highlighted and a discussion on the results is prepared. The results and discussion can be summarised as follows.

The majority of the messages provide counterarguments against those views disseminated by traditional mass media. This may be due to the fact that Internet users, particularly young people, are sceptical of the conservative newspapers. The *Nosamo* provides more counterarguments than the *Hani*. It seems safe to conclude that the *Nosamo's* view toward conservative newspapers is indeed negative.

Most of the messages refute the regionalism prevalent in Korean society. This may be due to a change of political culture and sensitivity of the issues. It seems that the reformative political line leads the *Nosamo* to a more negative attitude toward regionalism.

## 5.2 Interpersonal dimension of deliberation

### 5.2.1 Reciprocity

As a concept for the interpersonal dimension, reciprocity is defined as a mutual exchange, a give and take of views and information. This attempts to describe how participants actually respond to each other. This study tries to observe reciprocity with two variables: 1) Interactivity and 2) Pros and cons.

'Interactivity' is to measure the degree to which messages are linked to each other, and the link is investigated between all the messages provided in the boards (N = 2,223). 'Pros and cons' is to measure the extent to which messages present pros and cons when they exchange their opinions with each other. Thus, all the messages provided in the boards (N = 2,223) are examined and then those messages contributed to express their

opinions toward previously posted messages are selected for further analysis (N = 642). Table 5.7 shows the number of messages analysed for reciprocity.

Table 5.7 Number of messages analysed for reciprocity

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Interactivity	910	1,313	2,223
Pros and cons	910	1,313	2,223
(Messages including Pros and cons)	(225)	(417)	(642)

### 5.2.1.1 Interactivity

#### Results of analysis

'Interactivity' is measured using three categories: (1) Stand alone, (2) Seed, and (3) Reply. The total number of messages on bulletin boards is 2,223. Messages that initiate discussion, but which are never responded to maintain the highest proportion (Stand alone, N = 1,053, 47.4%), followed by messages that respond to other messages (Reply, N = 745, 33.5%), finishing with messages that initiate discussion and which are followed by a response (Seed, N = 425, 19.1%). While 52.6 percent of the messages are engaged in an exchange of discussion (Seed and Reply), 47.4 percent of the messages are monological (Stand alone). The average number of replies per message is 1.75. Figure 5.22 illustrates the distribution of each category. The results demonstrate that about half of messages stand alone without any interaction with others, implying low level of reciprocity.



Figure 5.22 Interactivity

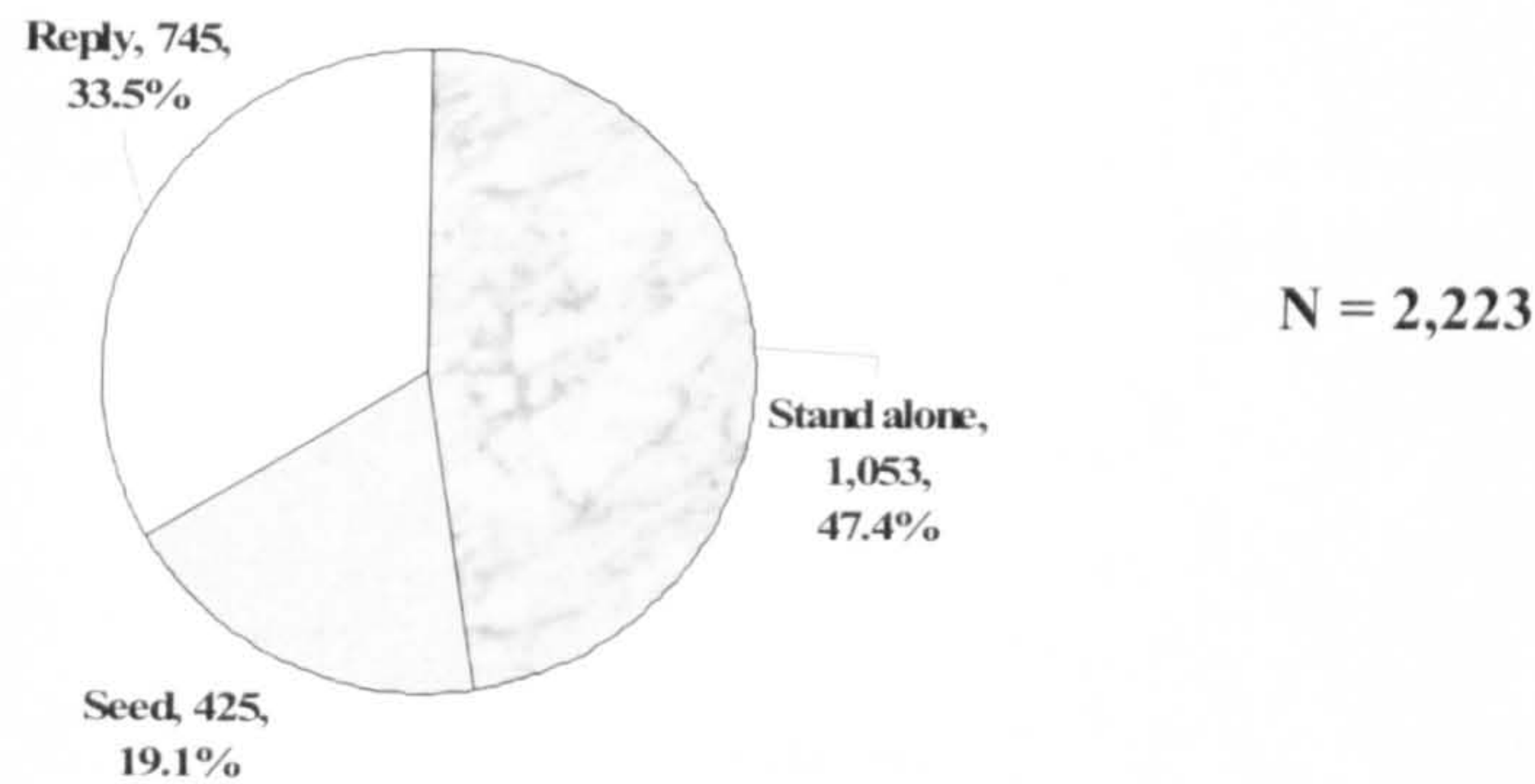
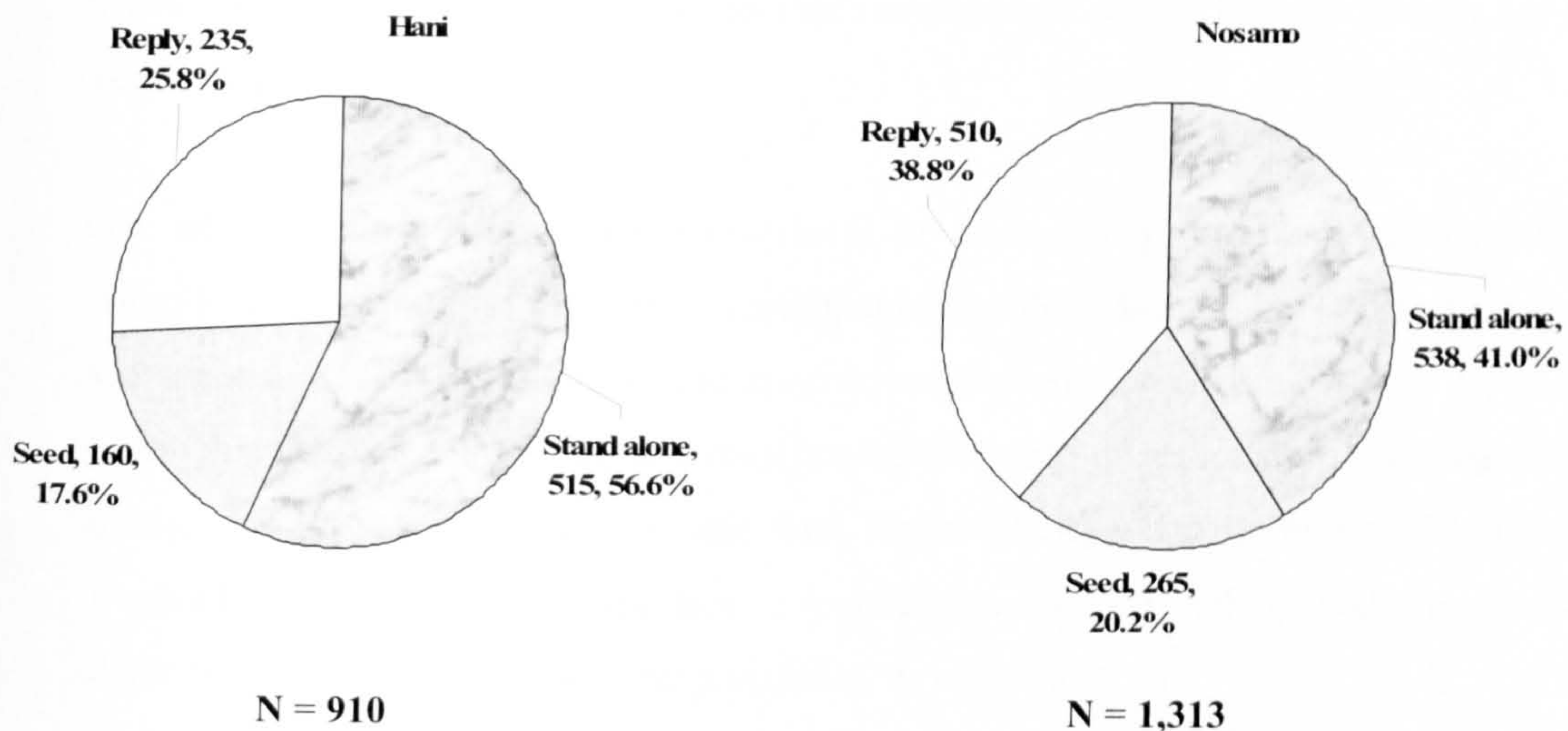


Figure 5.23 graphically illustrates a comparison of the distribution of the three categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of messages is 910. Messages that initiate discussion, but which are never responded to maintain the highest proportion (Stand alone,  $N = 515$ , 56.6%), followed by messages that respond to other messages (Reply,  $N = 235$ , 25.8%), finishing with messages that initiate discussion and are followed by a response (Seed,  $N = 160$ , 17.6%). While 43.4 percent of the messages are engaged in an exchange of discussion (Seed and Reply), 56.6 percent of the messages are monological (Stand alone). The average number of replies per seed is 1.47.

In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages on bulletin boards is 1,313. Messages that initiate discussion, but which are never responded to maintain the highest proportion (Stand alone,  $N = 538$ , 41%), followed by messages that respond to other messages (Reply,  $N = 510$ , 38.8%), and finishing with messages that initiate discussion and followed by response (Seed,  $N = 265$ , 20.2%). While 69 percent of messages are engaged in exchange of discussion (Seed and Reply), 41 percent of messages are monological (Stand alone). The average number of replies per seed is 1.92.



Figure 5.23 Comparison of interactivity between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the three categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (Chi-square = 56.761,  $p = 0.000$ ). The proportion of messages that constitute interaction accounts for 43.4 percent ( $N = 395$ ) in the *Hani*, compared to 59 percent ( $N = 775$ ) in the *Nosamo*. The results suggest that messages in the *Nosamo* tend to be more interactive than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

Previous empirical studies have produced mixed results of interactivity in online debates. Some empirical studies report a low level of interactivity. According to Wilhelm (1999), from 15.5 percent to 23.1 percent of messages in online discussion groups represent a direct reply to the previous postings. In addition, Jankowski and Sudweeks (1997) report that 388 messages out of 4,322 messages are interactive accounting for less 10 percent level of interactivity. On the other hand, others report a favourable sign to this aspect. Yoon (2002) finds that 45.1 percent of messages are for responding to other participants' statements and views. In addition, Jensen (2003a) reports that only about 10 percent of the debates are monological messages, and from 70.3 percent to 83.9 percent of messages represent a direct reply to the previous



postings. Furthermore, Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997) also report that more than 60 percent of 4,322 messages respond to previous postings. Comparing the results of previous studies, it can be concluded that messages in online bulletin boards are not very interactive.

One of the main reasons for the low level of interactivity may be that there is no obligation to respond on the part of participants in online discussions (Wilhelm, 1999). Messages are often not addressed to specific respondents in the anonymous setting of online discussions, and participants may not feel the need or responsibility to respond to anonymous addressee. This is in line with Heim (1994) when he argues that people involved in online discussions lack a connection to each other, and thus online discussions weaken the sense of responsibility to respond.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) tend to be more interactive than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The findings contrast with the argument that discussion among people who have different backgrounds or views provides more opportunity to exchange of ideas (MacKuen, 1990; Choi and Kim, 2005). Diverse opinions or contradicting views in a heterogeneous group such as the *Hani*, can cause conflicts between participants and thus make people refrain from responding in order to avoid challenging communications (Price, 2003; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Huckfeldt et al. , 2004; Song et al., 2004). Conversely, a homogeneous group, such as the *Nosamo*, can share similar opinions or beliefs and, thus, members in the group may feel freer to express themselves and exchange their opinions with greater ease. As such, the communication in a homogeneous group can be more interactive than that in a heterogeneous group.

#### 5.2.1.2 Pros and cons

##### Results of analysis

‘Pros and cons’ is measured using three categories: (1) Disagree, (2) Neutral, and (3)



Agree. Of the total messages on both online bulletin boards, 28.9 percent ( $N = 642$ ) of the messages present their opinions toward messages made by other participants. Among them, 41.1 percent ( $N = 264$ ) of the messages are contributed to disagree with other messages and 55.8 percent ( $N = 358$ ) are made to agree, with neutral stances making up 3.1 percent ( $N = 20$ ). Figure 5.24 graphically shows the distribution of each category. The results demonstrate that the expression of disagreement and agreement tends to be evenly divided, rather than be tilted to any one stance, implying high level of pro and con debates.

Figure 5.24 Pros and cons

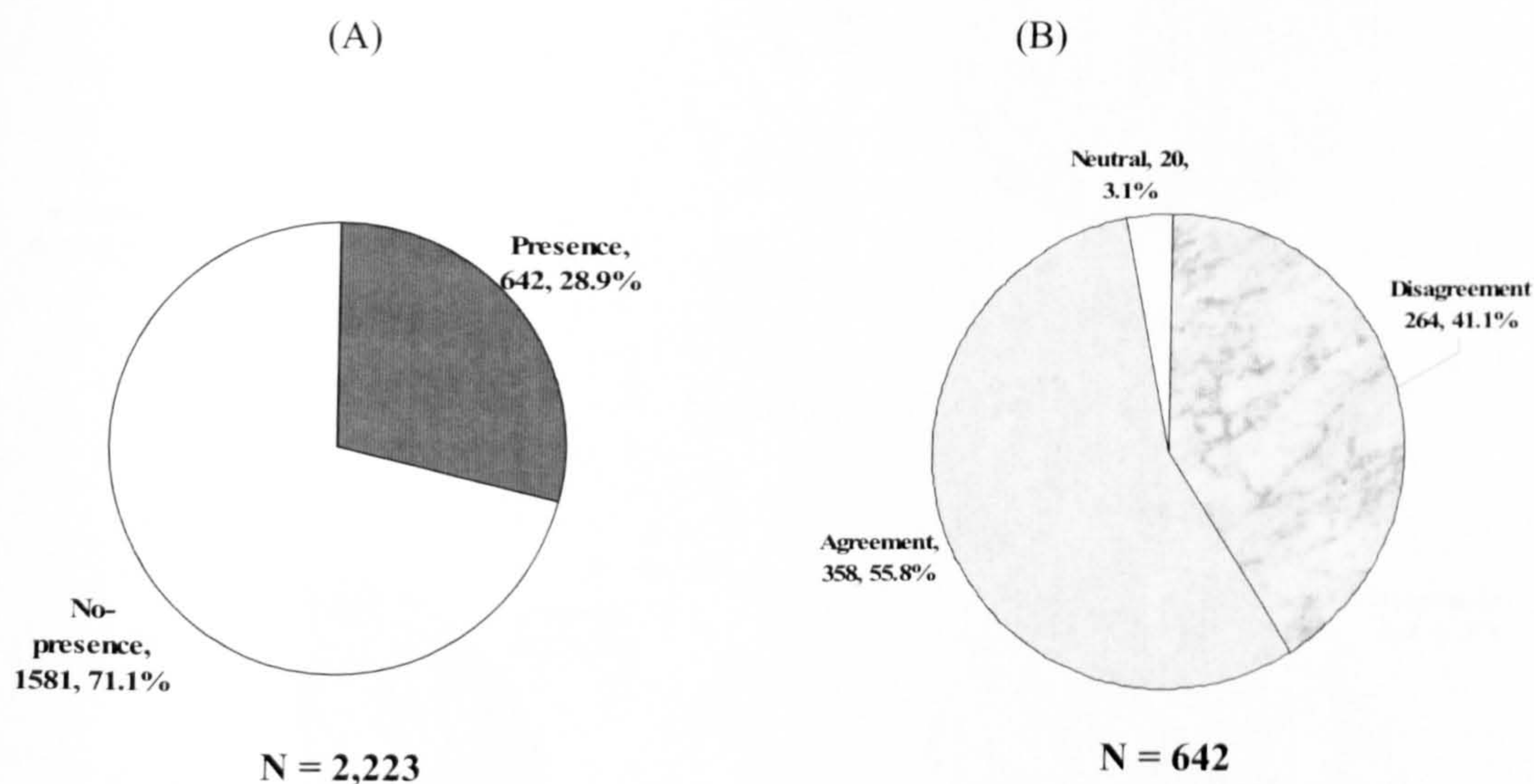
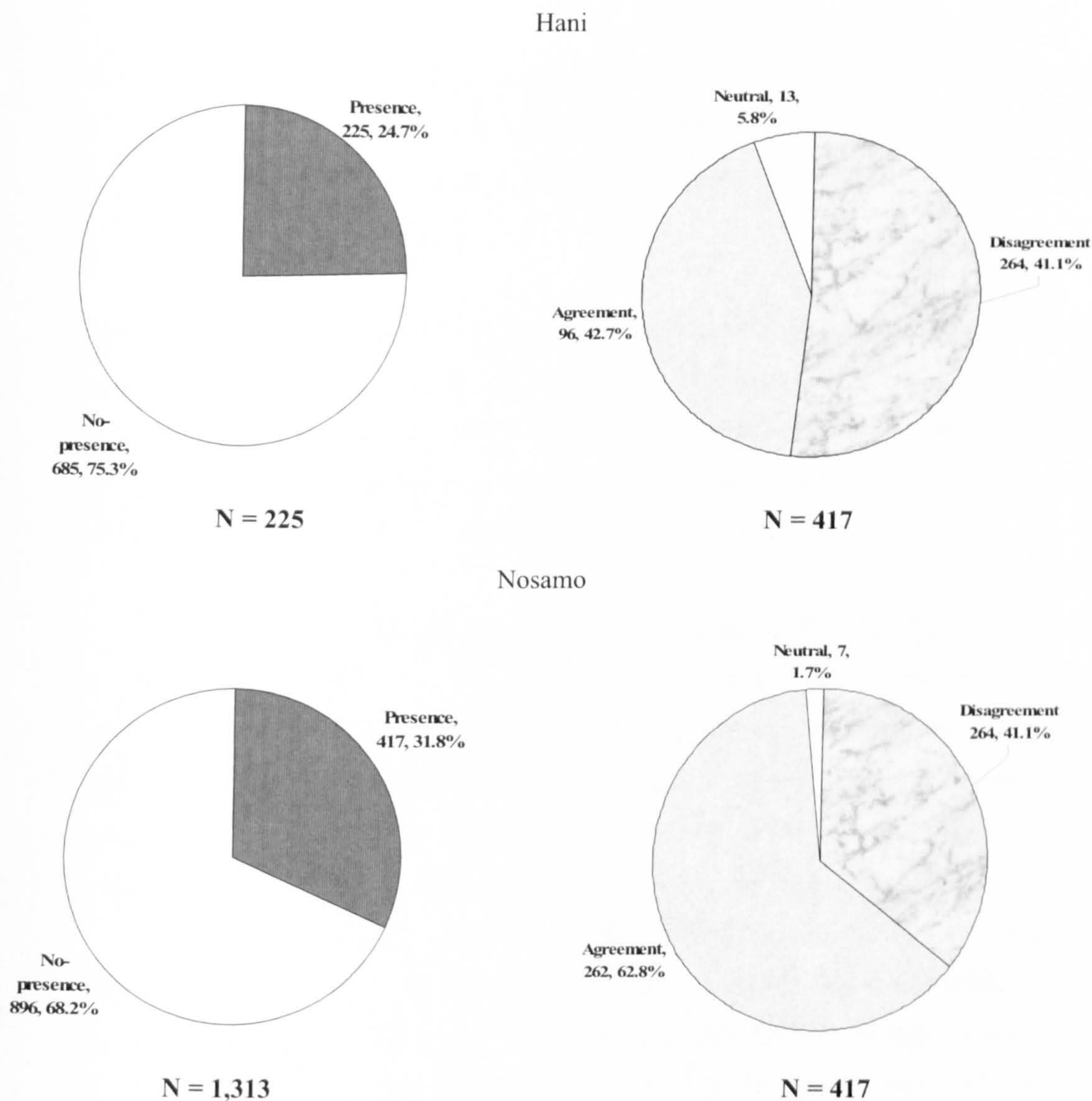


Figure 5.25 graphically shows a comparison of the distribution of the three categories between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total frequency of messages presenting their opinion toward messages made by other participants is 225 constituting 24.7 percent of total message. Among them, 51.6 percent of the messages ( $N = 116$ ) are written to disagree with other messages and 42.7 percent ( $N = 96$ ) are made to agree, with 5.8 percent ( $N = 13$ ) taking a neutral stance. In the *Nosamo*, the total frequency is 417 constituting 31.8 percent of total message. Among them, 35.5 percent ( $N = 148$ ) are written to disagree with other messages and 62.8 percent ( $N = 262$ ) made to agree, with 1.7 percent ( $N = 7$ ) taking a



neutral stance.

Figure 5.25 Comparison of pros and cons between the two groups



The Chi-square test is performed to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the three categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (Chi-square = 27.709,  $p = 0.000$ ). While the proportion of disagreement and agreement are evenly divided in the *Hani* (51.6% and 42.7% respectively). the proportion of agreement outweighs

disagreement in the *Nosamo* (35.5% and 62.8% respectively). The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are more active in giving and taking pro and con debates.

### Discussion

It is found that the majority of messages presenting their opinions toward previously posted messages involve the expression of disagreement and agreement and the expression tends to be evenly divided, rather than be tilted to any one stance, implying high level of pro and con debate.

The phenomenon also can be explained by the importance of the theme under discussion. The online discussions are about the presidential election. As discussed previously, the presidential election is most important political event in South Korea in which president has great influence over every policy making process. In turn, this may facilitate people more vigorously engage in pro and con debate.

When comparing the two groups, it is found that messages in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) tend to be more active in giving and taking pro and con debates than those in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). The findings contrast with the argument that discussion among people who have different backgrounds or views provides more opportunity to exchange of ideas (MacKuen, 1990; Choi and Kim, 2005). Diverse opinions or contradicting views in a heterogeneous group such as the *Hani*, can cause conflicts between participants and thus make people refrain from responding in order to avoid challenging communications (Price, 2003; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004; Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Song et al., 2004). Conversely, a homogeneous group, such as the *Nosamo*, can share similar opinions or beliefs and, thus, members in the group may feel freer to express themselves and exchange their opinions with greater ease. As such, the communication in a homogeneous group can be more interactive than that in a heterogeneous group.

Agreement can be regarded as an indicator of empathy with others' views and disagreement can be thought of as an indicator of critical thinking. However, the



*Nosamo* largely contributes to the expression of agreements. This implies that participants in the *Nosamo*, a homogeneous group, empathise with each other more rather than be critical toward others.

It is interesting to see that the level of agreement is linked with the level of interactivity. As noted in subsection 5.2.1.1, the *Nosamo* is higher in the level of interactivity than the *Hani*. Also, the *Nosamo* is higher in the expression of agreements than the *Hani*. These results are congruent with Rafaeli and Sudweeks's (1997) argument that interactivity is highly related with expressions of agreement.

### **5.2.1.3 Summary of the results and discussion**

About half of the messages stand alone without any interaction with others. This may result from the fact that participants do not feel the need or the responsibility to respond to others in online discussions. It seems that similar views between participants in homogeneous group contribute to a higher level of interactivity.

Most reply messages are involved in pro and con debates. The *Nosamo* (homogeneous group) largely expresses pros, while the *Hani* (heterogeneous group) expresses pros and cons evenly. It also seems that diverse and contradicting views between participants in heterogeneous group contribute to a higher level of pro and con debate.

### **5.2.2 Mutual respect**

Mutual respect refers to being respectful toward other participants and their views. This study tries to observe mutual respect with three variables: 1) Message tone, 2) Vulgarity use, and 3) Respect toward counterargument.

'Message tone' aims to measure the extent to which opinions are expressed in a decent and respectful manner. 'Vulgarity use' is to capture the extent to which messages use

vulgar expressions during the course of opinion exchange with other participants. The essence of the interpersonal dimension is the mutual exchange of opinions (Renn, 2006), therefore, the analysis for these variables is carried out within the messages that contain expressions of opinion (N = 1,670). 'Respect toward counterargument' is to measure the extent to which messages are respectful toward others with different opinions. Among the opinion messages, 642 messages are made to respond to other messages. Among the 642 messages, only 264 messages are contributed to disagree with other's message. Thus, those 264 messages are analysed to measure this variable. Table 5.8 shows the number of messages for analysis of mutual respect.

Table 5.8 Number of messages analysed for mutual respect

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Message tone	767	903	1,670
Vulgarity use	767	903	1,670
Respect toward counterargument	116	148	264

### 5.2.2.1 Message tone

#### Results of analysis

'Message tone' is measured on a five-point scale: (1) Very disrespectful (value = 1), (2) Disrespectful (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Respectful (value = 4), and (5) Very respectful (value = 5). Figure 5.26 illustrates graphically the distribution of each category. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion messages is 1, 670. Among them, 41.4 percent (N = 690) are respectful toward other participants and their opinions (30.7% moderately, 10.7% very) and 16.3 percent (N = 273) are disrespectful (11.1% moderately, 5.2% very), with 42.3 percent (N = 707) being neutral. Respectful attitudes outweigh disrespectful attitudes. This tendency is confirmed when looking at the mean score of 3.24. The results demonstrate that in general the messages in online bulletin boards are expressed in a respectful manner.



Figure 5.26 Message tone

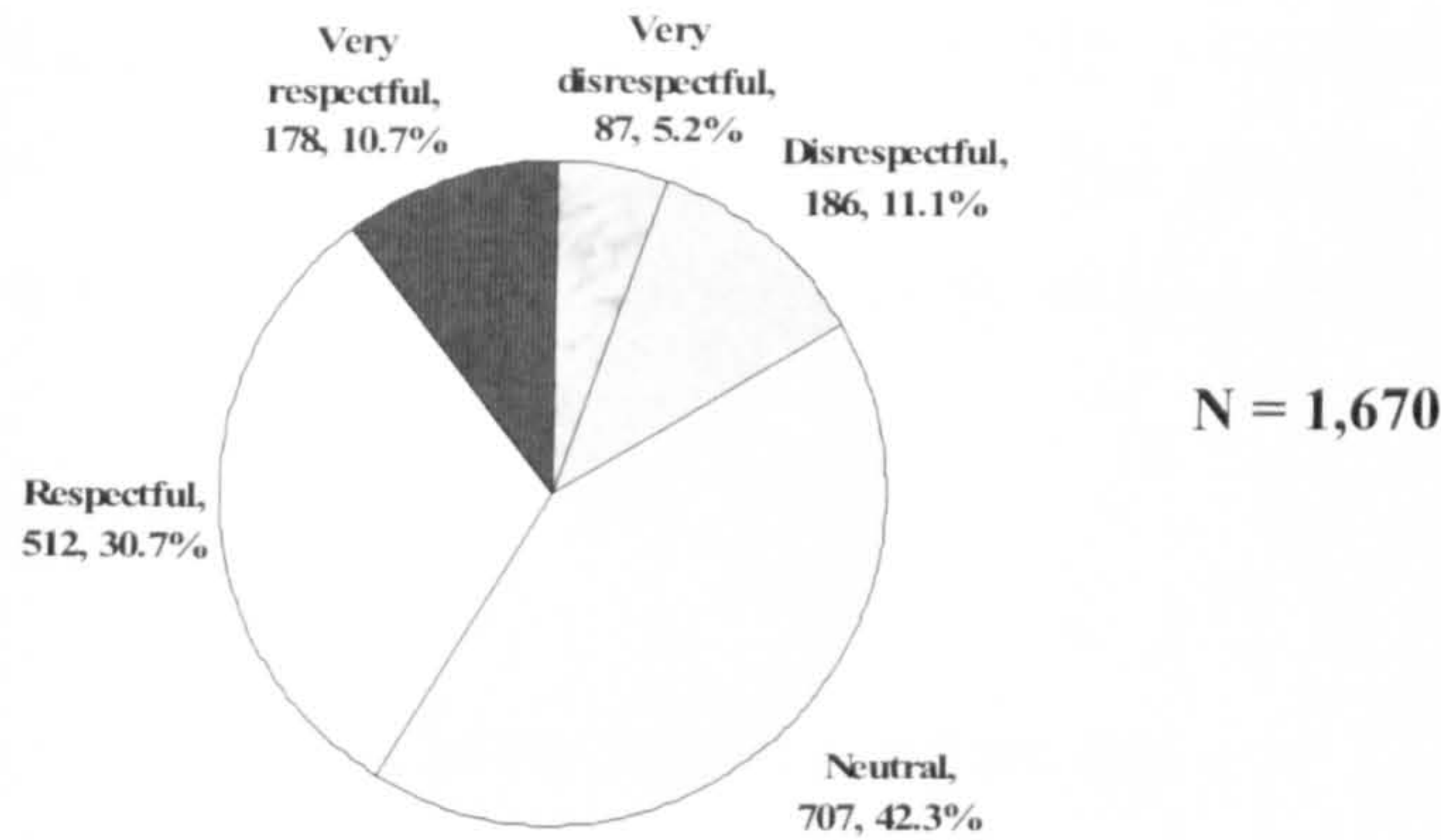
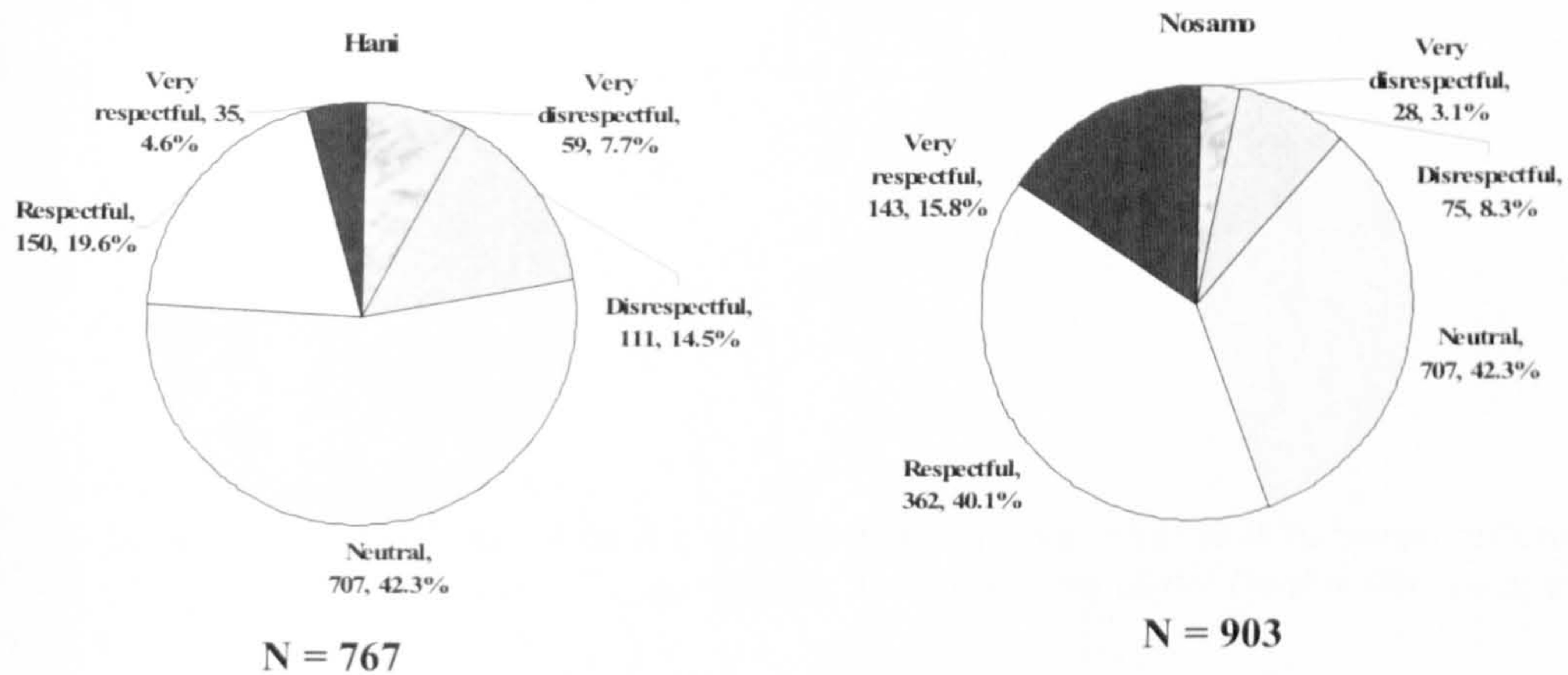


Figure 5.27 illustrates a comparison of message tone between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of opinion messages is 767. Among them, 24.2 percent (N = 185) are respectful toward other participants and their opinions (19.6% moderately, 4.6% very) and 22.2 percent (N = 170) are disrespectful (14.5% moderately, 7.7% very), with 53.7 percent (N = 412) being neutral. In the *Nosamo*, the total frequency of opinion messages is 903. Among them, 55.9 percent (N = 505) are respectful toward other participants and their opinions (40.1% moderately, 15.8% very) and 12.4 percent (N = 103) are disrespectful (8.3% moderately, 3.1% very), with 32.7 percent (N = 295) being neutral. On both bulletin boards, respectful attitudes outweigh disrespectful attitudes.

Figure 5.27 Comparison of message tone between the two groups



A T-test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the level of respectfulness. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (t-value = - 12.710, p = 0.000). The mean value of the *Hani* is 2.99, compared to 3.57 in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are expressed more respectfully and in a decent manner than those in the *Hani*<sup>6</sup>.

### Discussion

See the discussion of the following subsection.

#### 5.2.2.2 Vulgarities use

##### Results of analysis

'Vulgarity use' is measured using two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion messages is 1,670. Among them, 28.7 percent (N = 480) contained vulgar expressions. Looking at the targets of vulgarity, among the messages that contain vulgarity, 72.1 percent (N = 346) target political figures (candidates, other politicians, etc), while 20.4 percent (N = 98) target other participants in online deliberation. The results are shown in Figure 5.28 graphically. The results demonstrate that in online bulletin boards vulgar expressions are not frequently used in general. Furthermore, most of the expressions target mostly political figures rather than other participants.

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<sup>6</sup> The results of Mann-Whitney U test also show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (z = -12.831, p = 0.000). The mean rank of the *Hani* is 608, compared to 967 in the *Nosamo*.



Figure 5.28 Vulgarly use

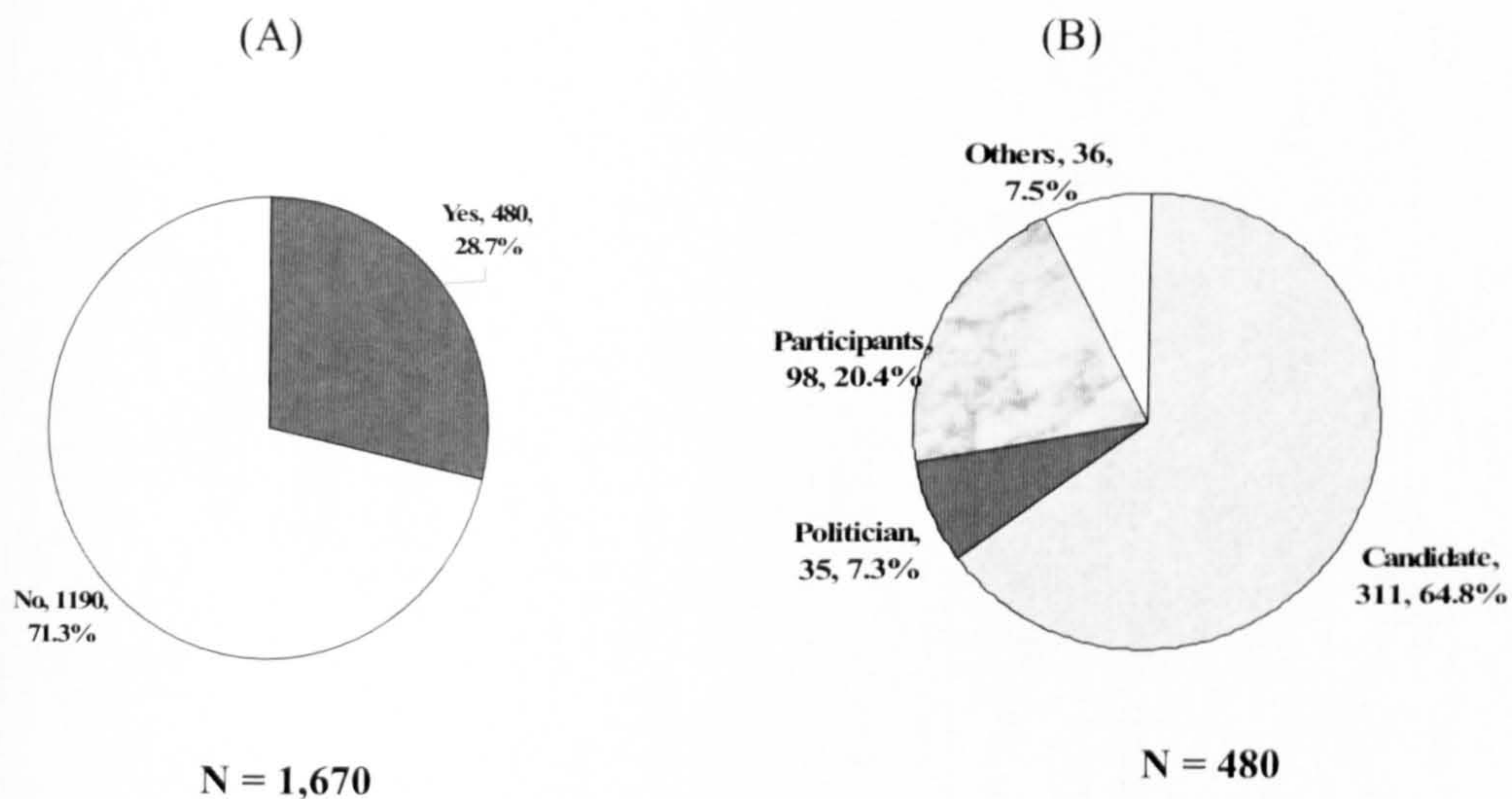
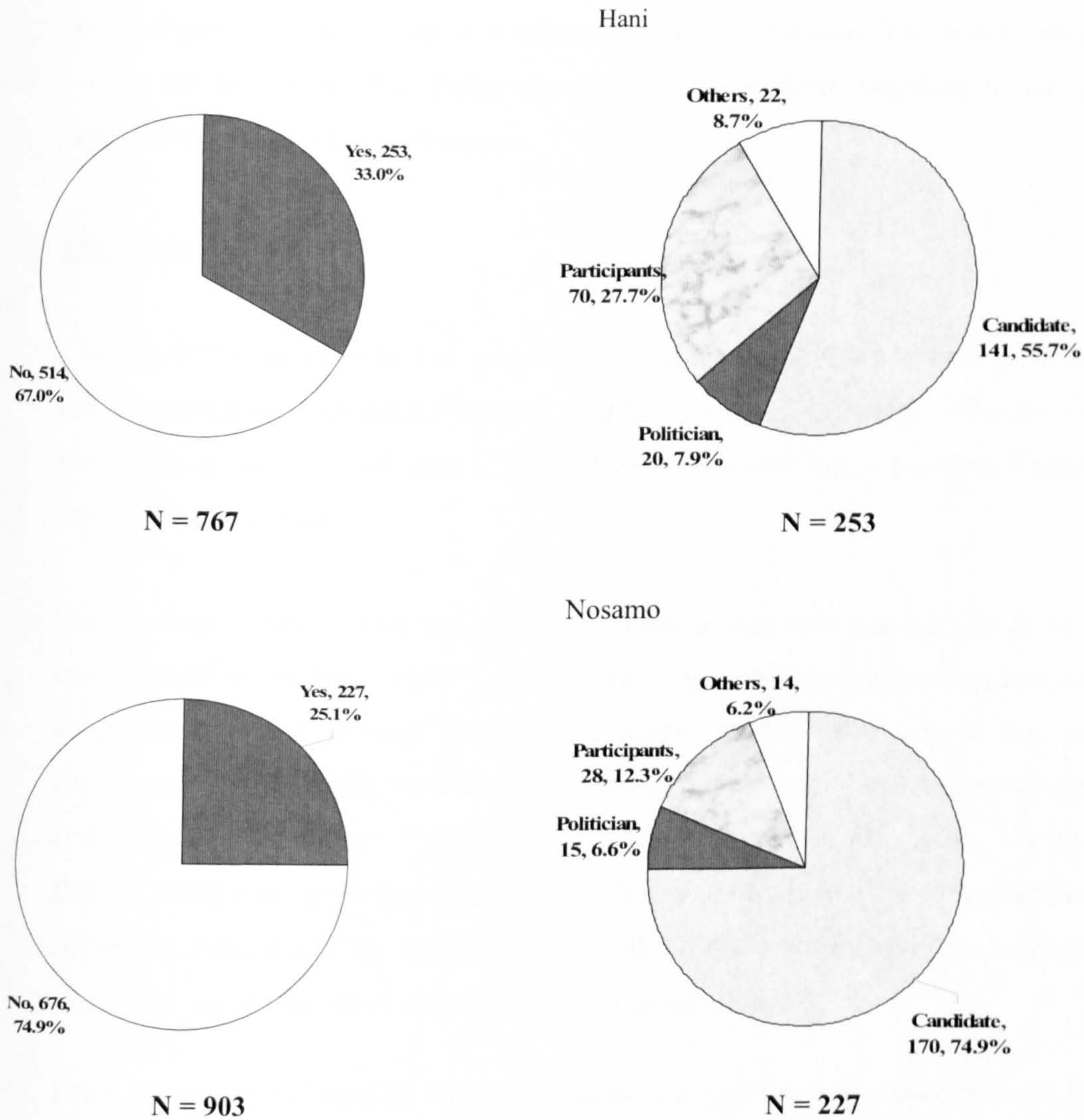


Figure 5.29 illustrates a comparison of vulgarly use between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of opinion messages is 767. Among them, 33 percent (N = 253) contained vulgar expressions. Among the messages that contained vulgarly, 63.6 percent (N = 161) target political figures (candidates, other politicians), while 27.7 percent (N = 70) target other participants in online deliberation. In the *Nosamo*, the total frequency of opinion messages is 903. Among them, 25.1 percent (N = 227) contained vulgar expressions. Among the messages that contained vulgarly, 81.5 percent (N = 185) target political figures (candidates, other politicians), while 12.3 percent (N = 20) target other participants in online deliberation.



Figure 5.29 Comparison of vulgarity use between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of vulgarity use. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (Chi-square = 12.469,  $p = 0.000$ ). The proportion of messages that contain vulgarity accounts for 33 percent in the *Hani*, compared to 25.1 percent in the *Nosamo*. On the other hand, another Chi-square test is carried out to find any difference between the two groups in the distribution of vulgarity targets. The results also show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups



(Chi-square = 21.852,  $p = 0.000$ ). While the proportion of messages that target political figures and participants account for 63.6 percent and 27.7 percent respectively in the *Hani*, the proportion of messages that target political figures and participants account for 81.5 percent and 12.3 percent respectively in the *Nosamo*. The results suggest that vulgar expressions are less frequently used in the *Nosamo*, targeting mostly political figures rather than other participants.

### Discussion

The results demonstrate that in general the messages in the two online bulletin boards are expressed in a respectful manner. Furthermore, in the boards vulgarities are not frequently expressed, and most of the vulgar expressions target political figures rather than other participants.

This finding contrasts with the popular perception that that the Internet is an uncivil environment. Barber et al. (1997), for example, argue that the Internet tends to make for a general lack of civility. Previous empirical studies also report that impolite expressions can be easily noticed in the anonymous setting of online discussions (Hill and Hughes, 1998; Davis, 1999; Streck, 1999; Coleman et al., 2000). For example, Davis (1999) concludes that online discussion tends to favour “the loudest and most aggressive individuals” (p.163). Coleman et al. (2000) also find that the messages that contain negative comments outweigh positive comments.

There can be several reasons for explaining such a high level of respectfulness. First, as discussed in Chapter four, the two online bulletin boards are run under basic rules. According to the rules, independent administrators eliminate messages containing commercial advertisements, abuse, and insults using vulgar expressions. Therefore such administrators can contribute to maintaining a low level of vulgar expressions. Second, many initiatives are taken to promote a healthy and sound cyber culture by public organisations. In June of 2000, the Korean Internet Safety Committee (KISC) initiated ‘a code of Netizen ethics in order to create a healthy and sound Internet culture built on mutual respect. It also provides a broad spectrum of counselling services for victims of

cyber violence. In addition, the Ministry of Education, initiated 'a code of Internet ethics' in 2001 in order to promote educational programs for moral and ethical Internet practices.

When comparing the two groups, it is found that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are more respectful and less frequently use vulgar expressions than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The results are inconsistent with the argument that exposure to divergent views facilitates greater tolerance, understanding and esteem for others (Mutz, 2002; Song, et al., 2004; Voltmer and Lalljee, 2004). Diverse and contradicting views between participants in heterogeneous group may foster bitter argument, a sharpening of conflicts, a deepening of hostility and/or violence rather than mutual understanding or consensus. Conversely, a homogeneous group with similar opinions or beliefs enable members in the group feel more empathy with each other and, thus, it may foster respect.

### 5.2.2.3 Respect toward counterargument

#### Results of analysis

'Respect toward counterargument' is measured on a five-point scale: (1) Very disrespectful (value = 1), (2) Disrespectful (value = 2), (3) Neutral (value = 3), (4) Respectful (value = 4), and (5) Very respectful (value = 5). As can be seen in Figure 5.25, messages that respond to other messages are divided into two groups, those who disagree (N = 264, 41.1%) or agree (N = 358, 55.8%). Among the messages that disagree with previously posted messages (N = 264), 66.3 percent (N = 175) reacted aggressively (moderately 37.1% very 29.2%) and 26.9 percent (N = 71) reacted in a respectful manner (moderately 22.7% very 4.2%), with 6.8 percent (N = 18) being neutral. The results are shown in Figure 5.30 graphically. Disrespectful attitudes outweigh respectful attitudes. This tendency is confirmed when looking at the mean score of 2.36. The results demonstrate that messages in online bulletin boards in general are disrespectful toward others with different opinions.



Figure 5.30 Respect toward counterargument

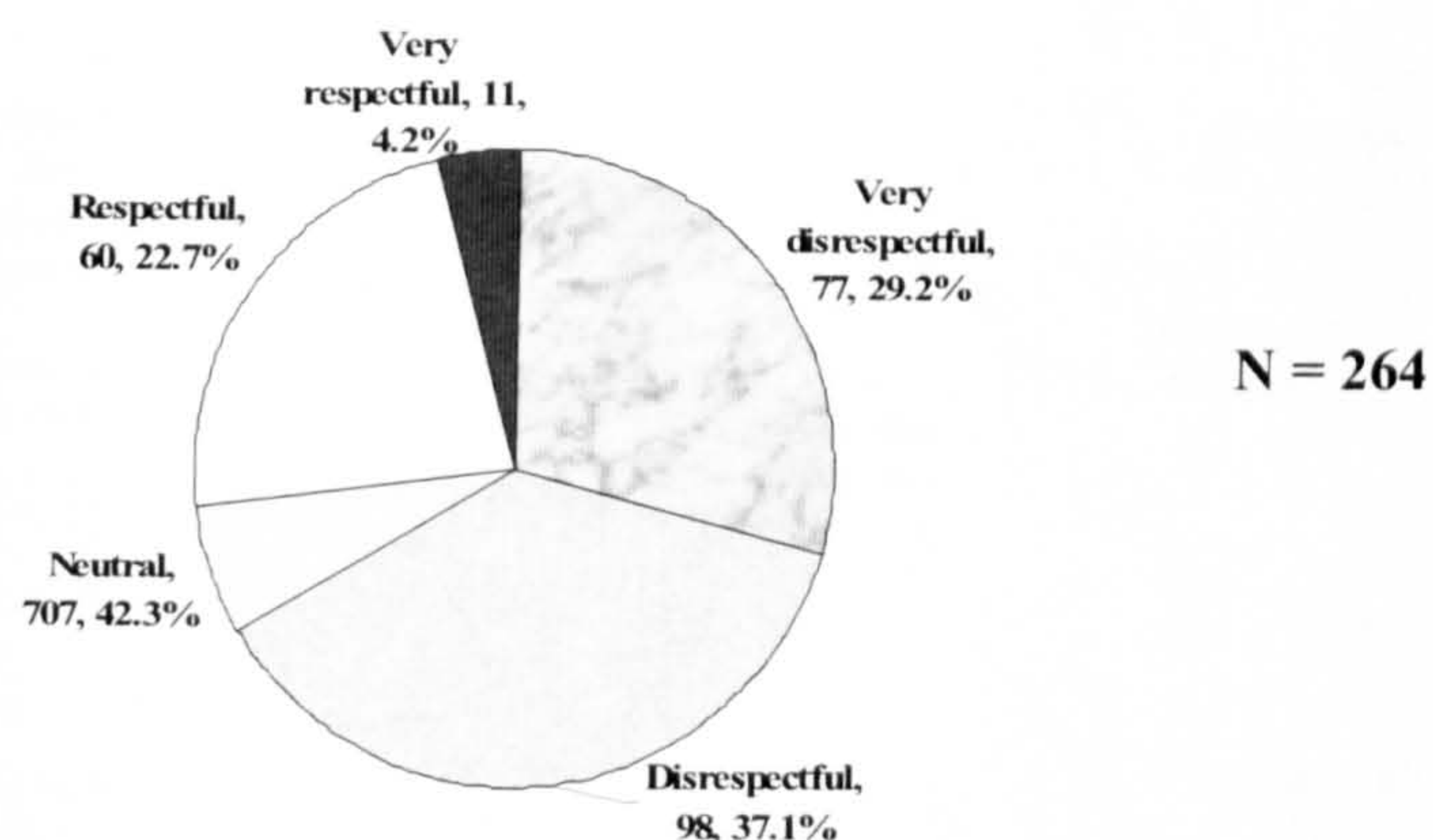
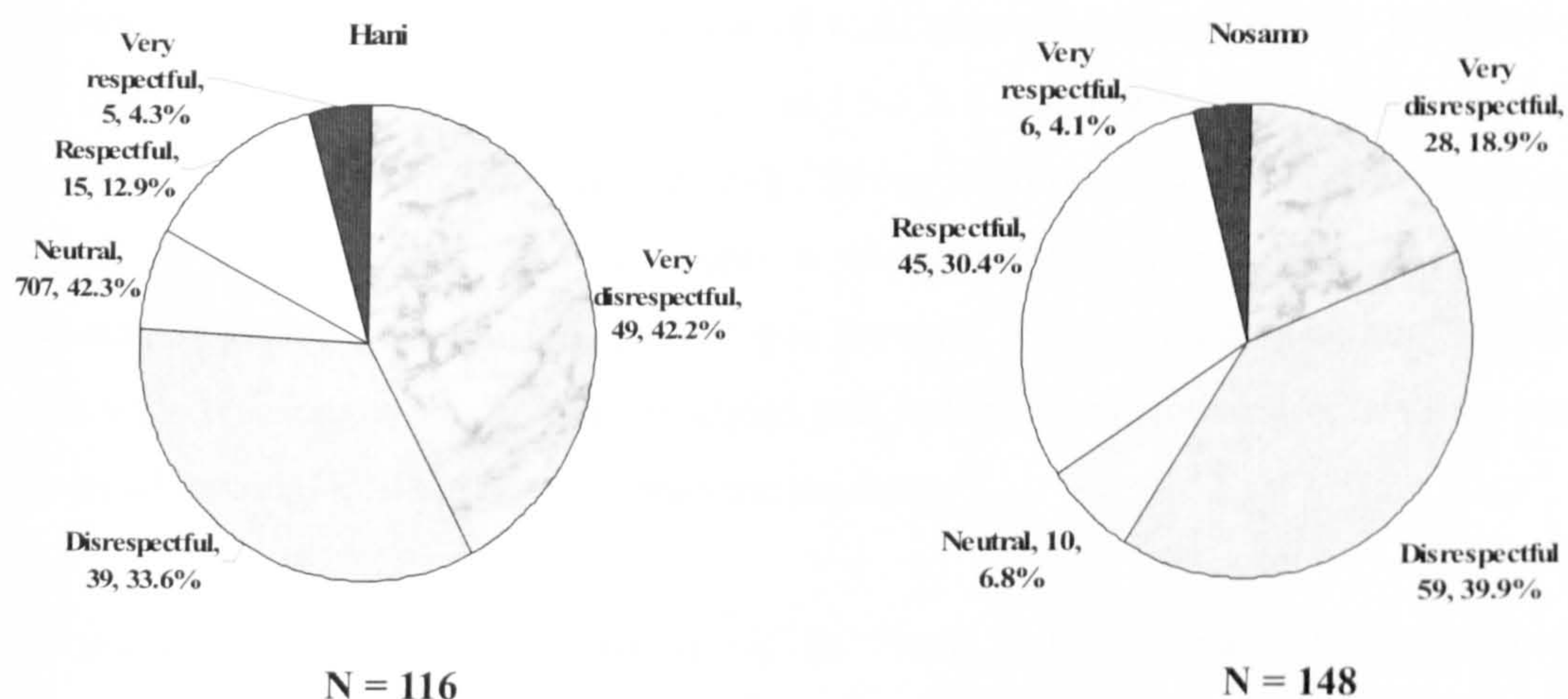


Figure 5.31 illustrates a comparison of message tone between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total number of messages that disagree with previously posted messages is 116. Among them, 75.8 percent react aggressively toward others with different opinions (moderately 33.6% very 42.2%) and 17.2 percent react in a respectful manner (moderately 12.9% very 4.3%), with 6.9 percent being neutral. In the *Nosamo*, the total number of messages that disagree with previously posted messages is 148. Among them, 58.8 percent react aggressively toward others with different opinions (moderately 39.9% very 18.9%) and 34.5 percent react in a respectful manner (moderately 30.4% very 4.1%), with 6.8 percent being neutral.



Figure 5.31 Comparison of respect toward counterargument between the two groups



A T-test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the level of respectfulness toward counterargument. The result shows that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $t = -3.845$   $p = 0.000$ ). The mean score in the *Hani* is 2.03 compared to 2.61 in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* tend to be more respectful toward counterargument than those in the *Hani*<sup>7</sup>.

### Discussion

As discussed in subsections 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2, messages show a reasonable level of respect towards others and their opinions, and a low level of vulgar expressions, indicating the existence of mutual respect. However, interestingly, they show aggressive and disrespectful attitude toward others with different opinions.

This phenomenon can be explained by the anonymous characteristics of the Internet.

<sup>7</sup> The results of Mann-Whitney U test also show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups ( $z = -4.085$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The mean rank of the *Hani* is 112, compared to 149 in the *Nosamo*.



The blindness of cyber space enables participants to feel freer to express themselves. Furthermore, it allows them to react more aggressive when countering contradicting views from their own. It can also be related with 'strength of opinion' and 'justification,' as discussed in the subsection of 5.1.1.3 and 5.1.2.1. Most opinions are expressed with conviction but without objective grounds. Strong opinion may increase the chance of conflicts, in particular when it meets a counterargument. In addition, when the counterargument is recognised as lacking in grounds, the conflict may be heightened. In this way, opinions with strong convictions and lacking in objective grounds may result in an adversarial attitude toward counterarguments.

When comparing the two groups, it is found that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) tend to be more tolerant toward different opinions than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The results also suggest that correspondence in a heterogeneous group may result in bitter arguments, a sharpening of conflicts, deepening of hostility and/or violence, rather than an encouragement of respect toward other participants and their views.

### 5.2.2.4 Summary

The results of analyses for mutual respect and discussion on the results can be summarised as follows.

The messages in general are expressed in a respectful manner, implying high level of respect toward others and their opinions. Furthermore, little vulgarities are expressed toward other participants. These results may be largely due to the fact that the online boards are run by independent administrators along with initiatives to promote sound cyber cultures. It seems that similar views in homogeneous group poster participants to be more respectful toward others and their opinions.

Most of the messages are not open-minded toward other messages with different opinions. This may be related to 'strength of opinion' and 'level of justification'. On the

other hand, similar views in homogeneous group also contribute to respectful attitude toward other with different views.

### 5.2.3 Sincerity

Sincerity refers to being open and honest towards others. This study tries to observe sincerity with two variables: 1) Self-disclosure and 2) Perceived deception.

'Self-disclosure' is to see the extent to which messages attempt to reveal self information, and 'Perceived deception' is to capture the extent to which messages report the deception perceived during the course of discussion with others. Thus, these two variables are also analysed within messages expressing opinions (N = 1,670). The numbers of messages for analysis of sincerity are shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Number of messages analysed for sincerity

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Self-disclosure	767	903	1,670
Perceived deception	767	903	1,670

#### 5.2.3.1 Self-disclosure

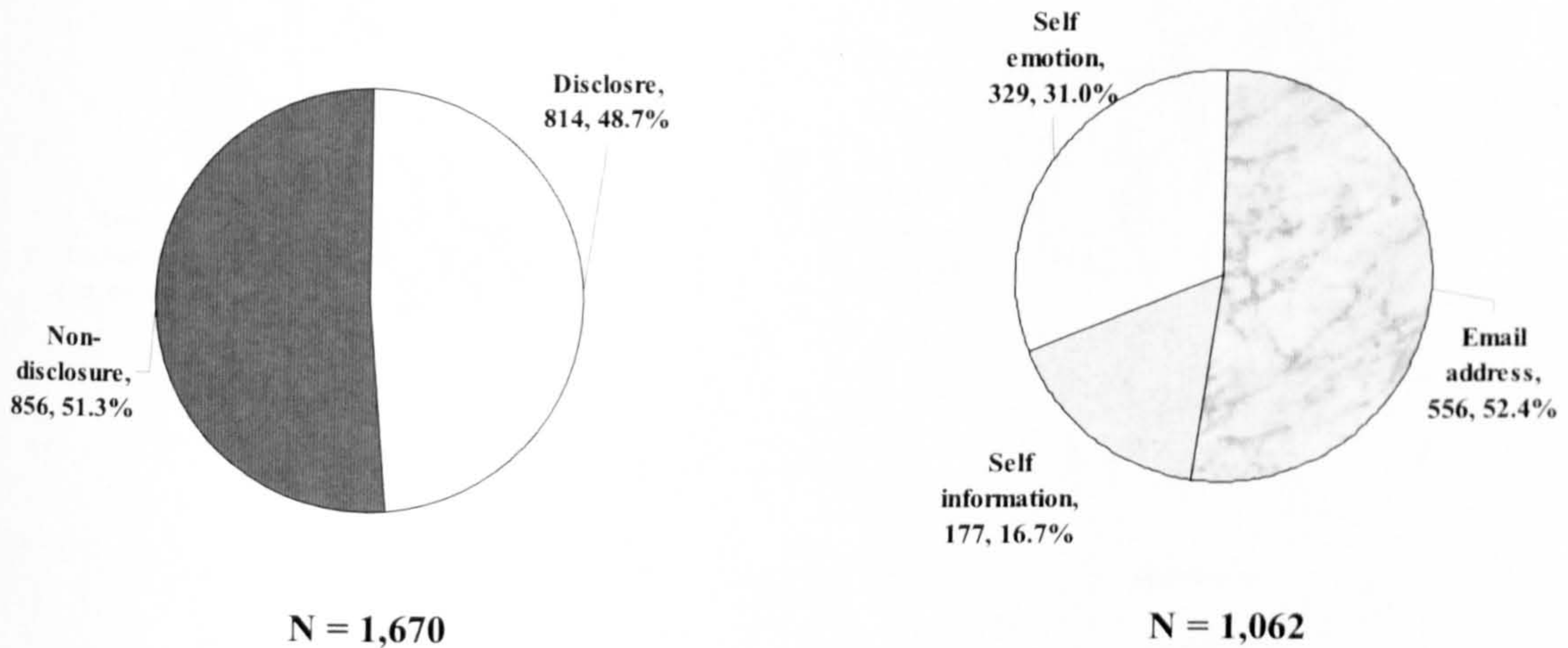
##### Results of analysis

Self-disclosure is measured by using three categories: (1) E-mail address, (2) Self-information, and (3) Self-emotion. The total number of opinion messages is 1,670. Among them, messages that contain at least one of these indicators account for 48.7 percent (N = 814), while 51.3 percent of messages (N = 856) remain anonymous. The frequency of the messages that contain either of the indicators is 1,062. Among them, 52.4 percent (N = 556) is provided with an email-address, 31 percent (N = 329) with self-emotion, and 16.7 percent (N = 177) with self information. The results are shown



graphically in Figure 5.32. The results demonstrate that almost half of messages in online bulletin boards reveal themselves in various ways, implying high level of sincerity.

Figure 5.32 Self-disclosure

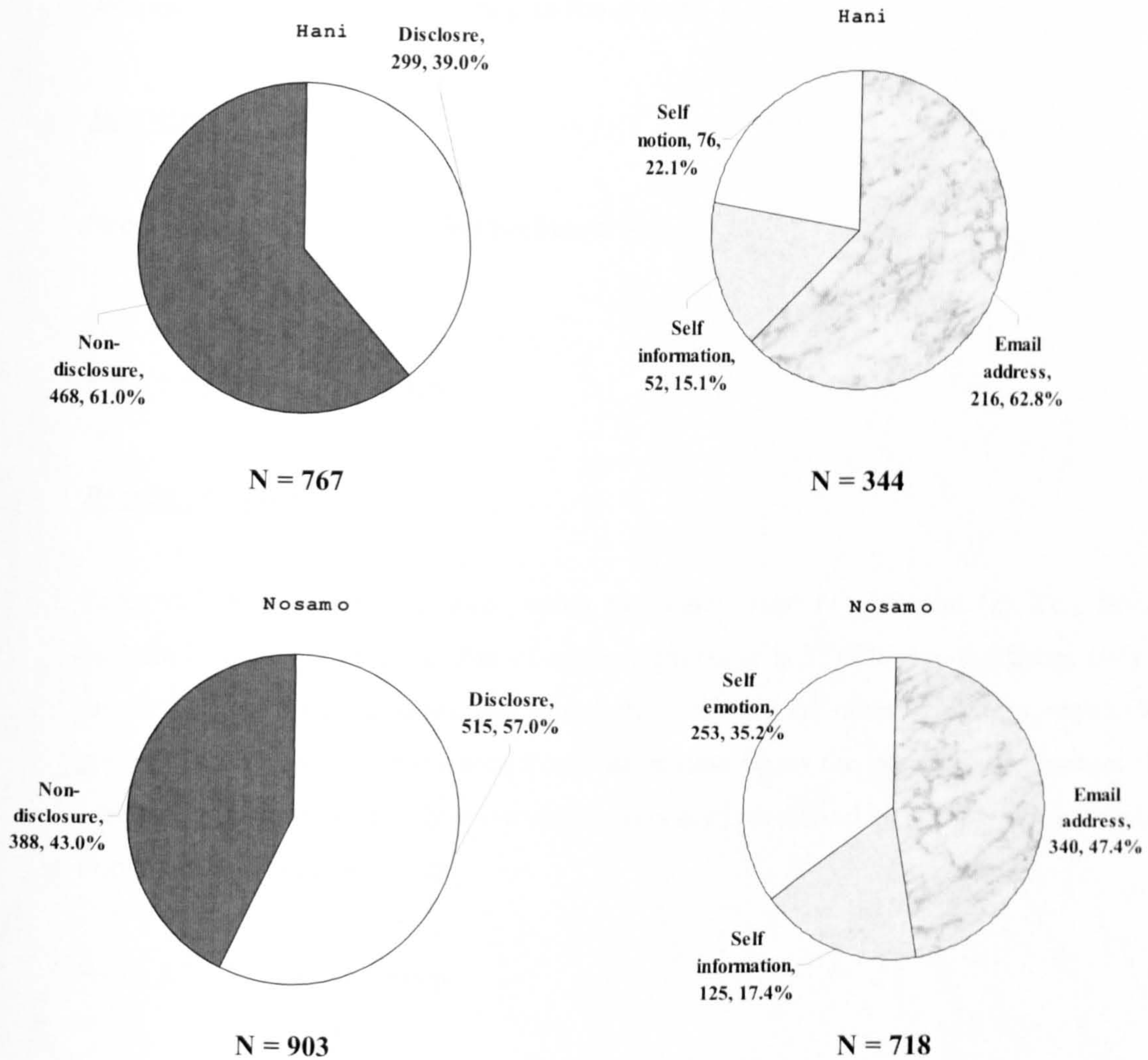


In the *Hani*, the total number of opinion messages is 767. Among them, messages that contain at least one of these indicators account for 39.0 percent (N = 299), while 61.0 percent of messages (N = 468) remain anonymous. The frequency of the messages that contain either of the indicators is 344. Among them, 62.8 percent (N = 216) is provided with an email-address, 22.1 percent (N = 76) with self-emotion, and 15.1 percent (N = 52) with self information. The results are shown graphically in figure 5.33.

In the *Nosamo*, the total number of opinion messages is 903. Among them, messages that contain at least one of these indicators account for 57.0 percent (N = 515), while 43.0 percent of messages (N = 388) remain anonymous. The frequency of the messages that contain either of the indicators is 718. Among them, 47.4 percent (N = 340) is provided with an email-address, 35.2 percent (N = 253) with self-emotion and 17.4 percent (N = 125) with self information. The results are shown graphically in figure 5.34.



Figure 5.33 Comparison of self-disclosure between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of the three categories. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups (Chi-square = 21.84,  $p = 0.000$ ). The proportion of opinion messages that provide e-mail addresses account for 62.8 percent in the *Hani*, compared with 47.4 percent in the *Nosamo*. 15.7 percent of opinion messages in the *Hani* make reference to self-identity, compared to 17.4 percent in the *Nosamo*. 22.1 percent of opinion messages in the *Hani* include a description of personal emotion, compared to 35.2 percent in the *Nosamo*. As a whole, the proportion of messages that contain at least one of these indicators account for 39 percent in the *Hani*,



compared with 57 percent in the *Nosamo*. The results show that the messages in the *Nosamo* tend to be more sincere than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

See the discussion of the following subsection.

#### 5.2.3.2 Perceived deception

##### Results of analysis

Perceived deception is measured using two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion message is 1, 670. Among them, only 2.3 percent (N = 39) raise questions about the sincerity of other messages, while 97.7 percent (N = 1,631) do not contain any statements about the perceived deception. The results demonstrate that only a few deceptions are recognised by the participants which imply a high level of sincerity.

Figure 5.34 Perceived deception

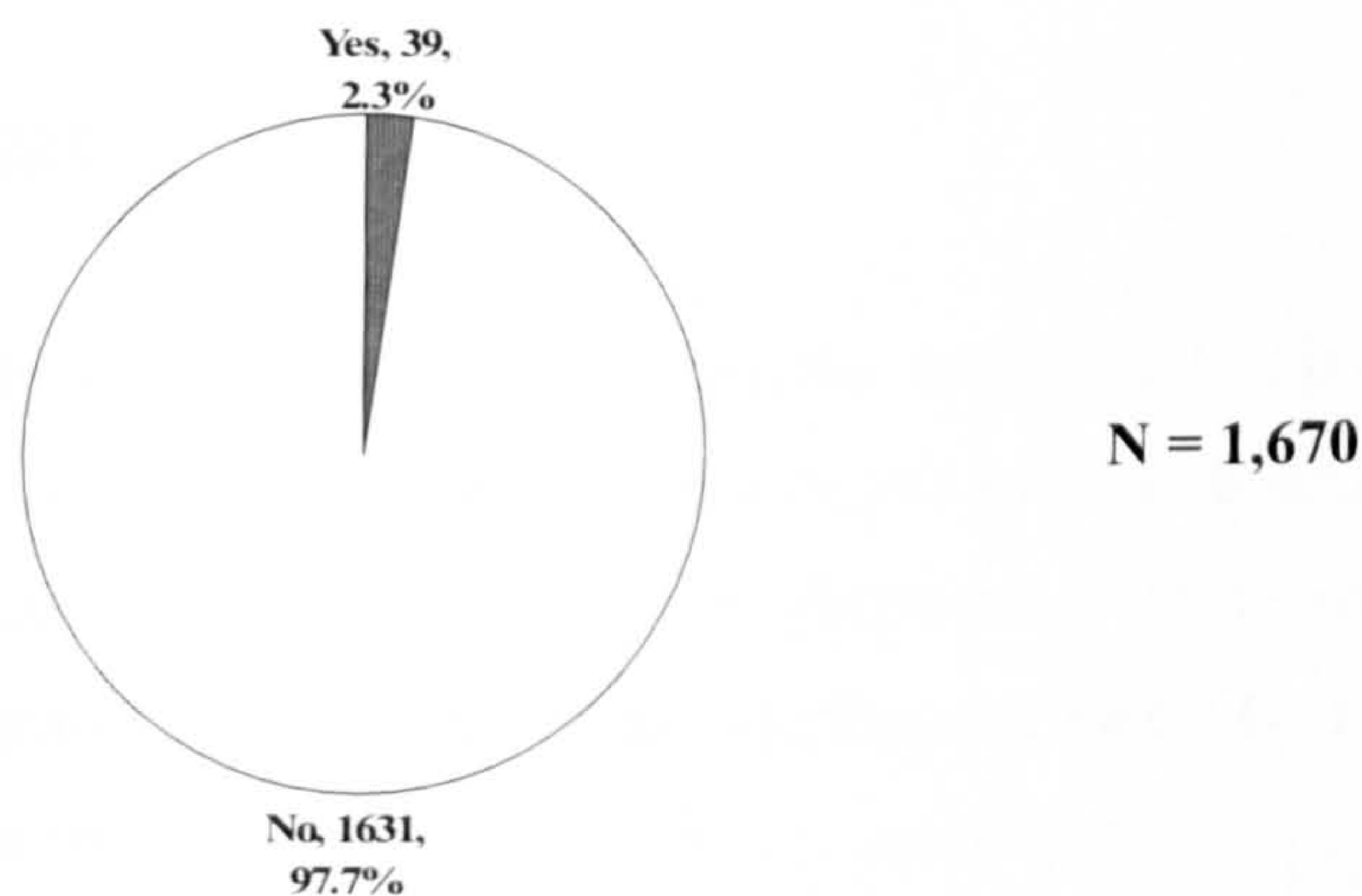
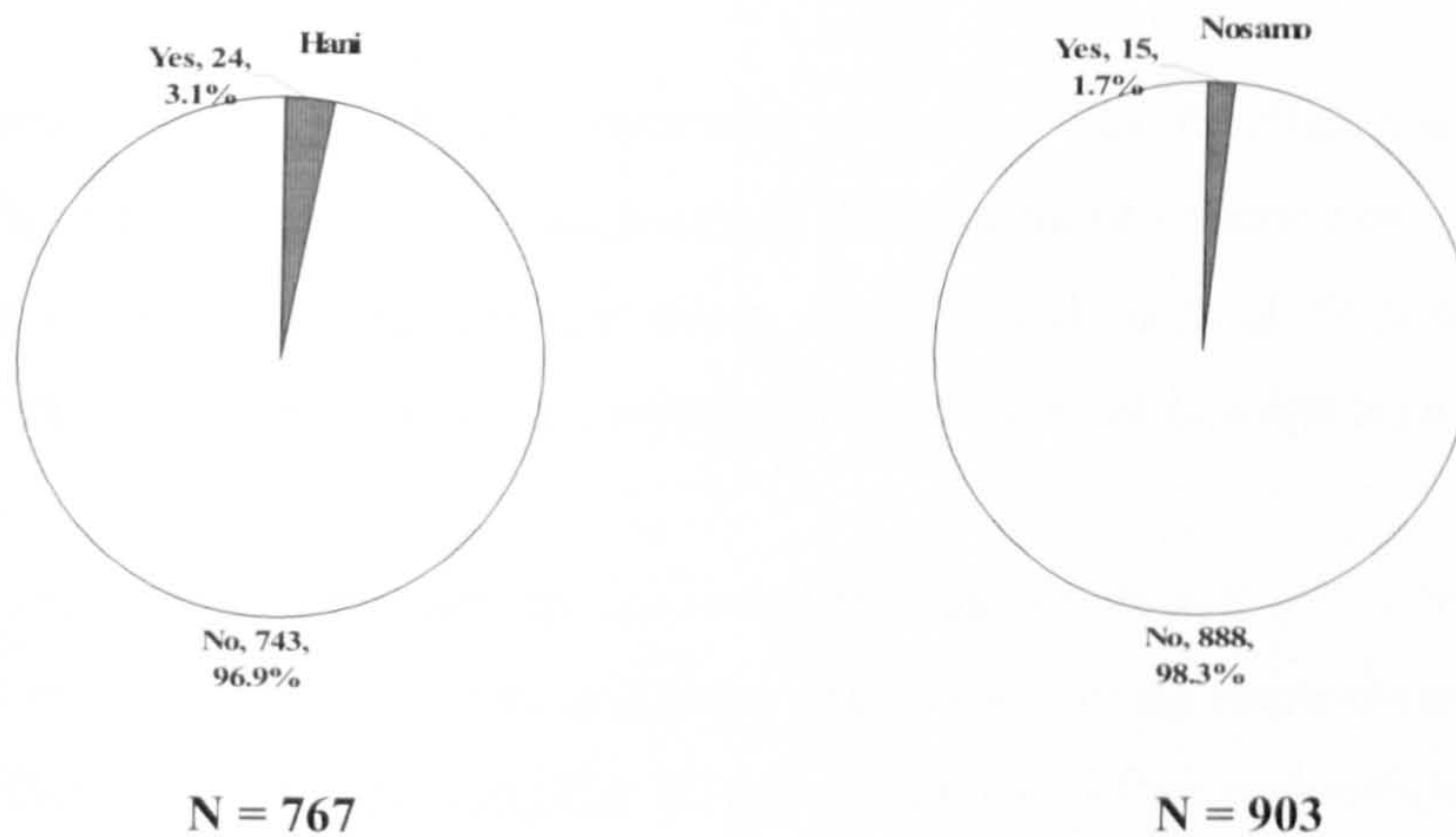


Figure 5.35 illustrates a comparison of perceived deception between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total frequency is 767. Among them, only 3.1 percent (N = 24) raise questions about the



sincerity of other messages, while 96.6 percent ( $N = 743$ ) do not contain any statements about perceived deception. In the *Nosamo*, the total frequency is 903. Among them, only 1.7 percent ( $N = 15$ ) raise questions about the sincerity of other messages, while 98.3 percent ( $N = 888$ ) do not contain any statements about perceived deception.

Figure 5.35 Comparison of perceived deception between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of perceived deception. The results show that no statistical difference exists between the two groups (Chi-square = 0.204,  $p = 0.652$ ).

### Discussion

Despite the anonymous characteristics of online discussion, the results show that almost 50 percent of the messages in the online bulletin boards disclose themselves. Although the bulletin boards do not ask participants to provide their email addresses, 556 participants provide their email addresses voluntarily. Furthermore, in the boards only a few deceptions are recognised by the participants.

Knowing one's true intentions may never be obtained unless one can read another's mind. Moreover, in an online environment, false information can be easily passed on and identifying this falsification is difficult. In this sense, disclosure of self information



can provide a more effective tool in checking the degree of sincerity.

Previous empirical studies produce mixed results on the level of openness of online discussions. According to Yoon (2002), only 8.4 percent out of 1,764 messages reveal information regarding one's identity. On the other hand, Jensen (2003a) reports that majority of messages in online discussions reveal both or either of their names and e-mail addresses.

A sense of anonymity allows participants to express what they think and/or feel in a true way. In addition, anonymity can increase the sharing of intimate experiences and, thus, makes it easier to tell another about oneself and to find common grounds. The implication is that despite the anonymity, there exist relationships between participants.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) tend to be more sincere and more open to disclosing themselves than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The *Nosamo* consists of like-minded people and, thus, it may be easier for such homogeneous group to build trust. The trust among members may lead participants to be ready for revelation.

### 5.2.3.3 Summary

The results of analyses for sincerity and discussion on the results can be summarised as follows.

A substantial number of participants disclose themselves and a large part of them disclose themselves by e-mail addresses. Few messages raise questions about the sincerity of other messages. These may be due to fact that anonymity can contribute to establishing close relationships between participants. It seems that similar views between participants in homogeneous group contribute to a higher level of sincerity.

### 5.2.4 Corrigibility

Corrigibility is defined as reflecting and revising initial preferences in the light of other claims and critiques. This study tries to observe corrigibility with two variables: 1) Opinion requesting and 2) Opinion change.

‘Opinion requesting’ aims to investigate the extent to which messages request opinions from other participants during the course of discussion. ‘Opinion change’ is to measure the extent to which messages show any sign of opinion change during the course of discussion. These two variables are also analysed within messages expressing opinions (N = 1,670). The numbers of messages for analysis of corrigibility are shown in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Number of messages analysed for corrigibility

Variables	Number of messages analysed		
	Hani	Nosamo	Total
Opinion requesting	767	903	1,670
Opinion change	767	903	1,670

#### 5.2.4.1 Opinion requesting

##### Results of analysis

‘Opinion requesting’ is measured using two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion messages is 1,670. Among them, only 3.3 percent (N = 55) of the messages asked for other opinions during online deliberations. The results demonstrate that messages in online bulletin boards in general present little effort to reflect other participants’ opinions in an effort to rethink individual positions.



Figure 5.36 Opinion requesting

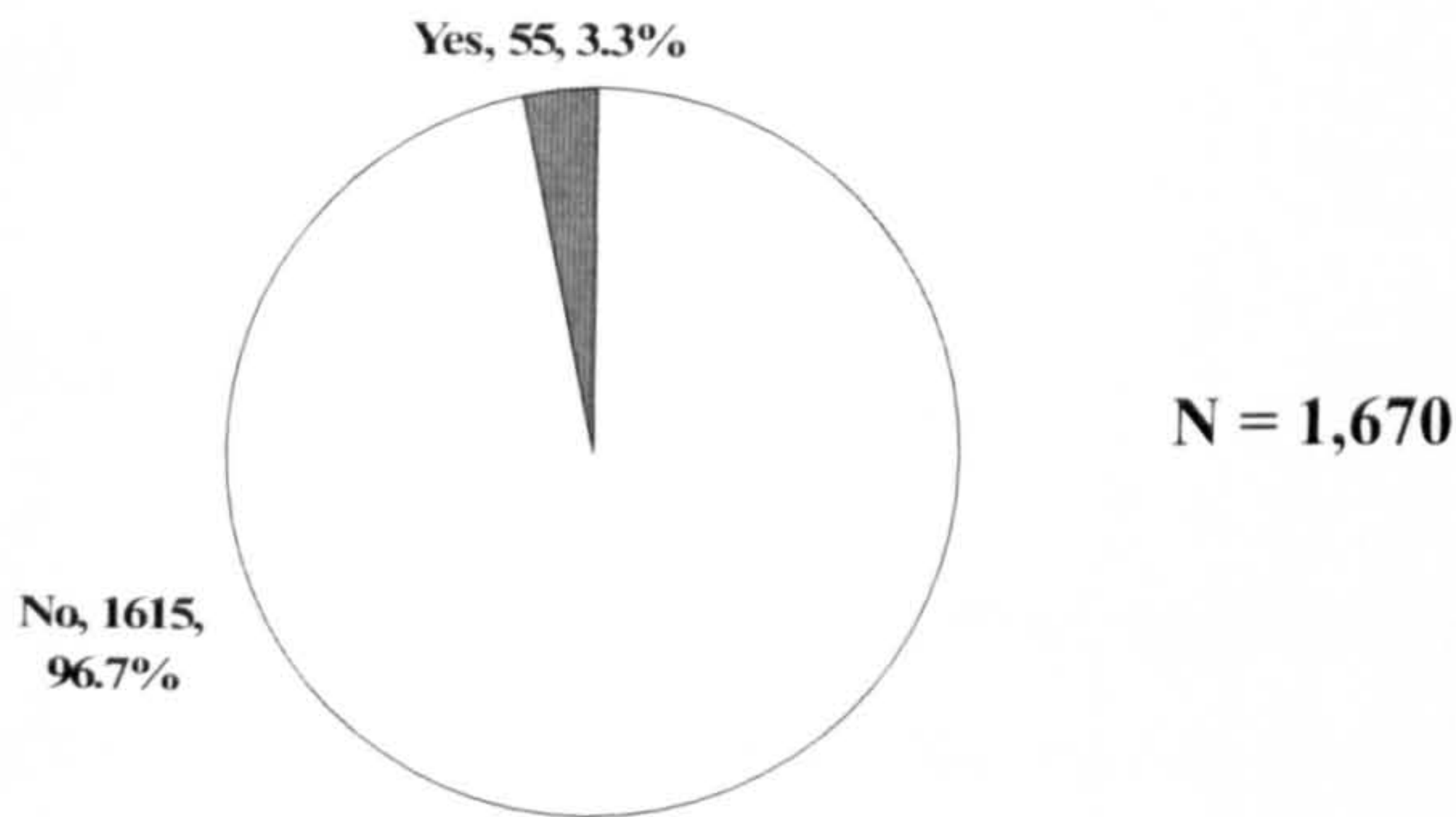
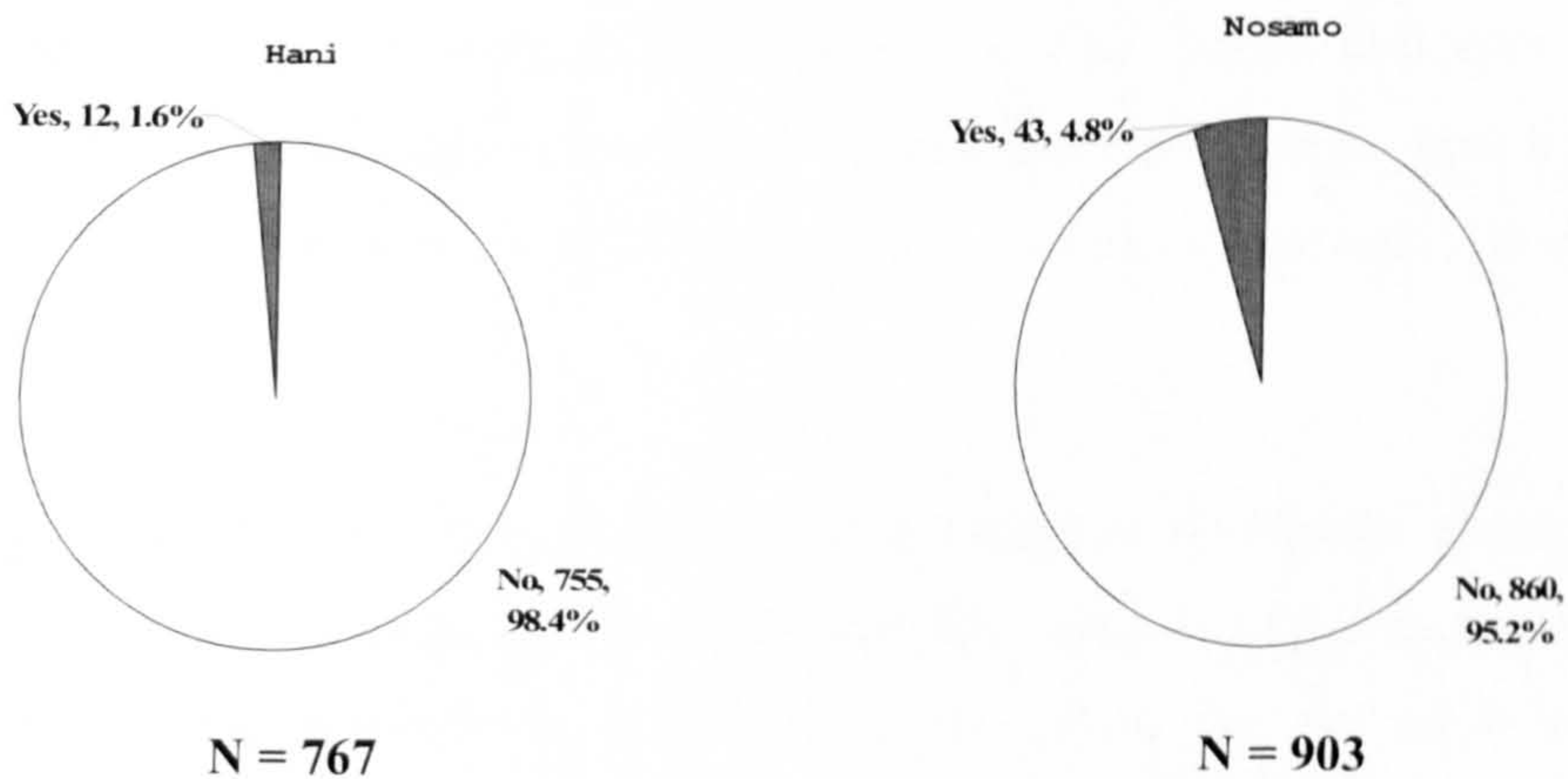


Figure 5.37 illustrates a comparison of opinion requesting between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, total frequency of opinion message is 767. Of the messages, 1.6 percent (N = 12) request other opinions. In the *Nosamo*, total frequency of opinion messages is 903. Of the messages, 4.8 percent (N = 55) ask for other opinions and feedback.

Figure 5.37 Comparison of opinion requesting between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of opinion requesting. The results show that there is a significant statistical difference between the two bulletins (Chi-square = 13.312,  $p = 0.000$ ). The proportion of messages that ask for other opinions account for 1.6 percent in the *Hani*

(N = 12), compared to 4.8 percent (N = 55) in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are more active in requesting other opinions than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that messages in online bulletin boards rarely ask for other opinions. Compared to previous studies, the results show the unfavourable sign of this aspect. According to Wilhelm (1999), approximately 30 percent of messages seek out information on a particular topic. Jensen (2003a) also reports that only 8.6 and 17 percent of messages seek information from others.

There can be three main reasons for such a low level of opinion seeking. Firstly, as discussed in subsection 5.1.1.1, the Internet creates oceans of opinions and information. As information is always available on the Internet, participants may not need requesting other participant's opinion during the course of online discussion. Secondly, as discussed in subsection 5.2.2.3, participants with opinions are not open-minded toward messages with different opinions. Such close-minded attitudes may also limit seeking other opinions. Lastly, participants may engage in online deliberation with their own given preferences on candidates and issues. Participants with such given preferences may not be involved in seeking other opinions in a discussion not aimed at reaching a consensus.

The comparisons of the two groups reveal that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are more active requesting other opinions than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). As discussed in subsection 5.2.2.1, discussion in the *Nosamo* tends to be more respectful than that in the *Hani*. Such mutual respect during deliberation may leads to serious listening (Steenbergen et al., 2003). As such, participants in the *Nosamo* request more opinions of others.



### 5.2.4.2 Opinion change

#### Results of analysis

'Opinion change' is measured using two categories: (1) No and (2) Yes. In both bulletin boards, the total number of opinion message is 1,670. Among them, the majority of messages stands firmly on their original positions, while only 2.8 percent (N = 47) of messages show signs of opinion change during the course of discussion with others. The results demonstrate that messages in the online bulletin boards rarely concede, standing firmly on their original positions.

Figure 5.38 Opinion change

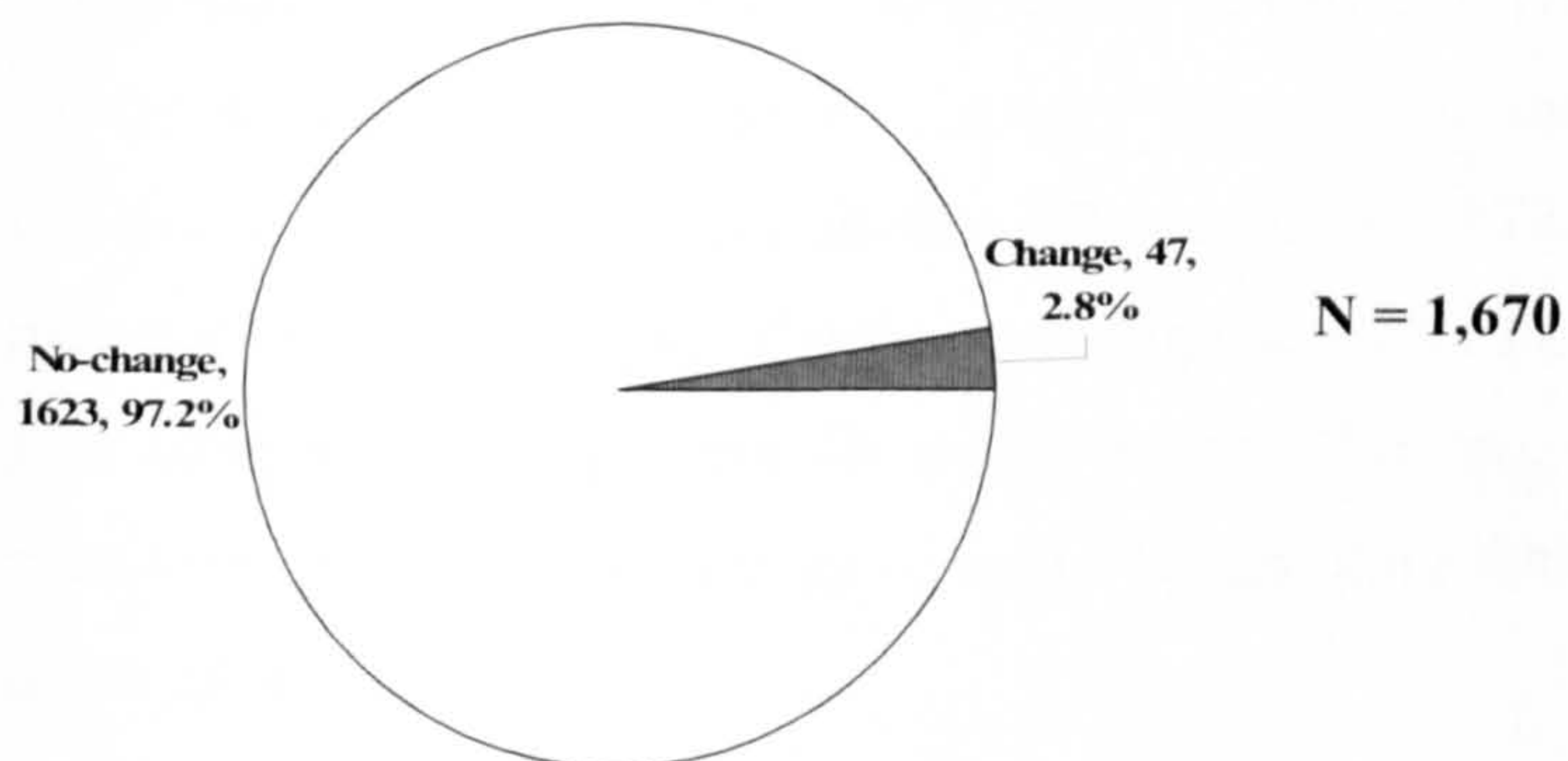
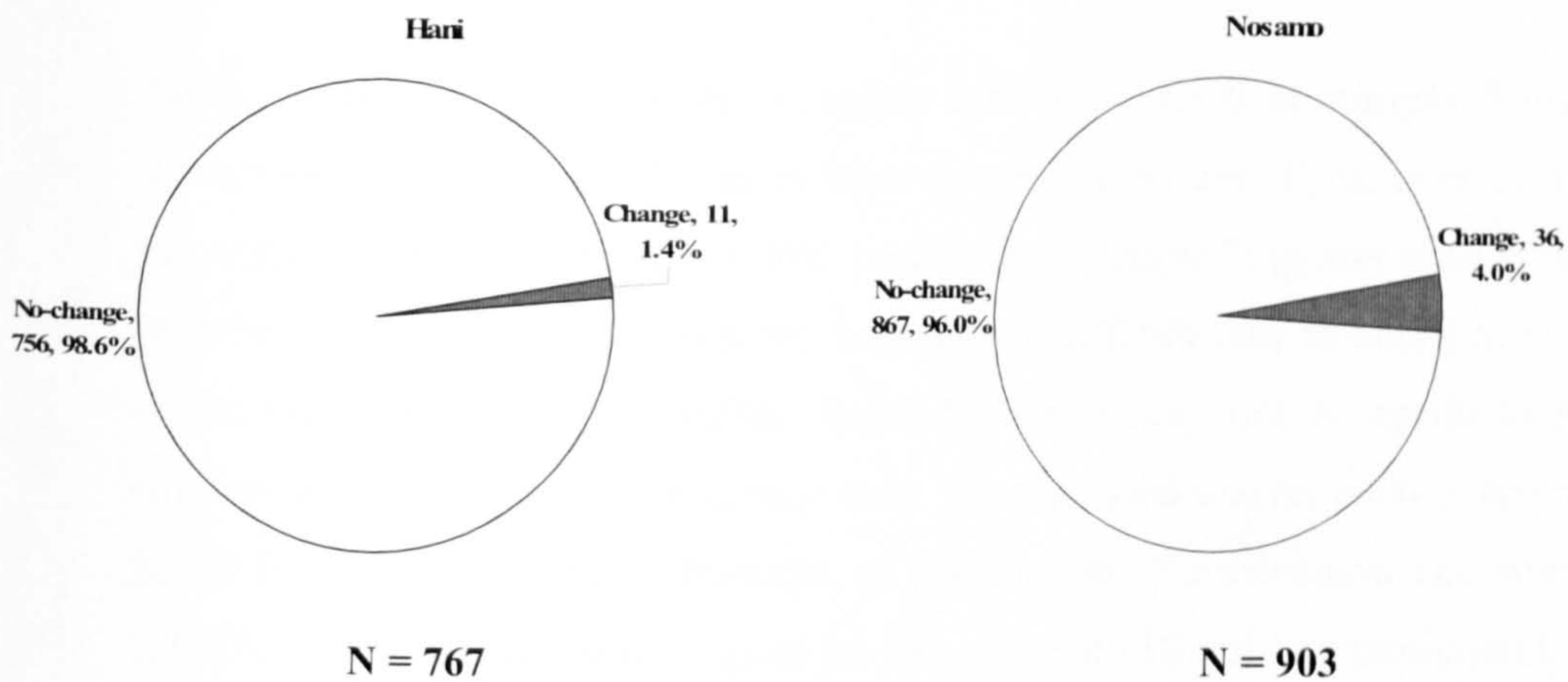


Figure 5.39 illustrates a comparison of opinion change between the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group) and the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group). In the *Hani*, the total frequency of opinion messages is 767. Among them, the majority of messages maintain their positions (N = 756, 98.6%), while only 1.4 % (N = 11) of messages show signs of opinion change during online deliberations. In the *Nosamo*, the total frequency of opinion messages is 903. Among them, the majority of messages stay on their positions (N = 867, 96%), while only 4 percent (N = 36) of the messages show signs of opinion change during online deliberations.



Figure 5.39 Comparison of opinion change between the two groups



A Chi-square test is carried out to find any statistical difference between the two groups in the distribution of opinion change. The results show that there is a statistical difference between the two bulletins (Chi-square = 9.879,  $p = 0.002$ ). The proportion of messages that show signs of opinion change accounts for 1.4 percent in the *Hani* ( $N = 11$ ), compared to 4 percent ( $N = 36$ ) in the *Nosamo*. The results demonstrate that messages in the *Nosamo* are more active in changing their original positions than those in the *Hani*.

### Discussion

It is found that the majority of messages in online bulletin boards stand firmly on their own original position without any room for compromise. The results are congruent with some previous studies. According to Yoon (2002), only 10.1 percent show any sign of acceptance or compromise of counterarguments in online discussions. In addition, Jankowski and Van Os (2002) report that no indication of position convergence is found in online discussions. Furthermore, Streck (1998) argues that online discussions “are woefully circular; discussion reduces to the same people saying the same things in the same ways” (p.44). On the other hand, some empirical researches report opinion changes in online discussions. For example, in her study on a newsgroup, Tanner (2001)



finds that “though some people brought set opinions to the debates, others used the forum to create, modify, and develop opinions” (p.399).

There can be several arguments to explain such a low level of opinion change in online discussions. First, corrigibility is an inner process in nature. Thus, even though one has the willingness to revise one’s initial preferences, that willingness cannot be perceived by others until expressed. Therefore, it may be a difficult task to check or evaluate such conditions from texts in websites. Second, people may not be ready to revise their original preferences in online discussions. As discussed above, such unwillingness can result from strong given preferences of participants. Furthermore, according to Yoon (2000), the lack of validated arguments can make it difficult for participants to reach a mutual understanding or consensus. In addition, the presence of opinion polarisation can lead to such unwillingness. Besides, a weakened sense of responsibility to respond in online discussion (Heim, 1994) can also result in a low level of corrigibility.

When comparing the two groups, the results show that messages in the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) are more active in changing their original positions than those in the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group). The findings contrast with the arguments that heterogeneity in deliberation facilitates people to change their own views and adopt a better viewpoint (Mill, 1859; Manin, 1987; Song et al., 2004). This inconsistency may be due to the fact that opinions in the *Nosamo* are more rational and respectful as discussed before. In addition, the *Nosamo* consists of like-minded people and thus, people are closer to each other, and this may allow them to have more flexibility in changing their original opinions.

#### 5.2.4.3 Summary

The results of analyses for corrigibility and discussion on the results can be summarised as follows.

Majority of messages in both online bulletin boards rarely request other participants’

opinions, implying little effort is being made to rethink individual positions. It seems that similar views between participants in homogeneous group poster more active requesting of other participants' opinions.

Regarding opinion changing, majority of messages in the online bulletin boards are standing firmly on their original positions. In addition, similar views between participants in homogeneous group allow participants to rethink their initial preferences and thus, finally change their position.

### **5.3 Summary**

This study employs two dimensions of the quality of deliberation, which are widely adopted by researchers: (1) individual dimension and (2) interpersonal dimension. Individual dimension implies the inner process of reflecting and developing one's own view while interpersonal dimension involves the deliberation process of the considering of others and their perspectives.

Based on the literature individual dimension is constructed with four concepts: (1) Opinionation, (2) Rationality, (3) Impartiality, and (4) Autonomy. Interpersonal dimension also is built with four concepts: (1) Reciprocity, (2) Mutual respect, (3) Sincerity, and (4) Corrigibility.

#### **Quality of deliberation**

In regards to the individual dimension, the discussions in the two bulletin boards can be described, by and large, as they are 'opinion-oriented, rational and autonomous' but 'lacking in impartiality'. The main purpose of posting messages is to express individual opinions, and the opinions are expressed with a small number of words and a strong conviction. The messages are provided with a low level of justification; however, they appeal to the common good and are relevant to the topic. The messages are free from



the conservative media and refute regionalism. In addition, the messages tend to be focused on a single candidate, leading to an unbalanced discussion on the two candidates.

On the other hand, in regards the interpersonal dimension, the discussions can be described, by and large, as they are 'respectful to others and sincere' but 'not very reciprocal and lacking in corrigibility'. The messages are respectful towards others and their views; however, they are not open-minded towards views that are contradictory to their own. They are inclined to disclose their identities and report little deception. While the messages are less interactive, they contain heated pros and cons. In addition, little effort is made to reflect other opinions or change original opinions.

Table 5.11 summarises the results of the analyses

Table 5.11 Results of analyses on deliberation quality

Dimension	Concept	Variable	Results
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Message purpose	• Main purpose is to express opinions
		Opinion length	• Expressed with a short length of words
		Opinion strength.	• Expressed with a strong conviction
	Rationality	Justification	• A low level of justification
		Reference to the common good	• Most indicated opinions appeal social and national interests
		Topic relevance	• Relevant to the main topics
	Impartiality	Attempt to weigh	• Weighing only one candidate is prevalent
		Opinion homogeneity	• Unbalanced evaluation on candidates
	Autonomy	Independence from mass media	• Critical toward traditional media
		Independence from regionalism	• Critical toward regionalism
Reciprocity	Interactivity	• Not very interactive	
	Pros and cons	• Heated pros and cons debate presented	
Interpersonal dimension	Mutual respect	Message tone	• Generally decent and respectful
		Use of vulgarity	• Few vulgarities used
		Respect toward counterargument	• Not respectful toward different opinions
	Sincerity	Self-disclosure	• Reasonable level of self-disclosure
		Perceived deception	• Few deception perceived
	Corrigibility	Opinion requesting	• Little effort to seek others' opinion
Opinion change		• Little effort to change original position	



**Comparisons of the deliberation quality between the two groups**

This study compares the quality of online deliberation between the *Nosamo* (Homogeneous group) and the *Hani* (Heterogeneous group).

In regards to the individual dimension, the *Nosamo* develops a longer argument and expresses opinions with more conviction. In addition, the *Nosamo* shows a higher level of justification. While the *Hani* tends more to express opinions, the *Nosamo* tends more to provide facts, suggestions and enquiries. Furthermore, the *Nosamo* presents a more topic relevance and a more criticism toward conservative media and regionalism. However, the *Nosamo* lacks impartiality compared to the *Hani*.

In regards to the interpersonal dimension, the messages in the *Nosamo* are more interactive, corrigible and respectful than the *Hani*. However, pros and cons are more prevalent in the *Hani* and no difference in perceived deception is found between the two groups.

Table 5.12 summarises the results of the analyses

Table 5.12 Results of the comparisons of deliberation quality

Dimension	Concept	Variable	Results
Individual dimension	Opinionation	Message purpose	• While the <i>Hani</i> is more tend to express opinion, the <i>Nosamo</i> is more tend to provide fact, suggestion and enquiry
		Opinion length	• More discursive in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Opinion strength.	• More conviction in the <i>Nosamo</i>
	Rationality	Justification	• More justification in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Reference to the common good	• More no reference in the <i>Hani</i>
		Topic relevance	• More topic relevance in the <i>Nosamo</i>
	Impartiality	Attempt to weigh	• More weighing in the <i>Hani</i>
		Opinion homogeneity	• More homogeneity in the <i>Nosamo</i>
	Autonomy	Independence from mass media	• More counterarguments in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Independence from regionalism	• Less regionalism in the <i>Nosamo</i>
Interpersonal dimension	Reciprocity	Interactivity	• More interactive in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Pros and cons	• More pros and cons in the <i>Hani</i>
	Mutual respect	Respect	• More respectful in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Use of vulgarity	• Less use of vulgarity in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Respect toward counterargument	• More respectful in the <i>Nosamo</i>
	Sincerity	Self-disclosure	• More disclosure in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Perceived deception	• No difference
	Corrigibility	Opinion requesting	• More requesting in the <i>Nosamo</i>
		Opinion change	• More change in the <i>Nosamo</i>



## CHAPTER 6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary and conclusions of the study. To begin with, a summary of the study is highlighted. Then, the contributions of this study to knowledge are offered. Limitations and suggestions for future study are presented. Lastly, the conclusion is summarised.

### 6.1 Summary of the study

#### Research objectives

The primary objective of this study is to explore the quality of online deliberation, and thus seek to answer whether the Internet can contribute to deliberative democracy in South Korea. More specifically, this study is to examine the extent to which online deliberations meet the requirements of democratic deliberation in terms of the individual dimension and the interpersonal dimension. In addition, this study investigates the effects of heterogeneity on the quality of online deliberation by comparing differences of online deliberation practices between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups.

The main research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1) *To what extent do online deliberations meet the requirements of democratic deliberation process?*
- 2) *What differences in the process of deliberation exist between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups?*

### **Background**

Over the last decades, deliberative democracy has been paid increasing attention as a complement for representative democracy. Deliberation is based on a mutual communication between people, and thus any change of communication technology has a potential to change the practices of deliberation. Today, the Internet is creating a new environment of deliberation and is paid a great deal of attention by researchers.

There have been significant amounts of theoretical grounds with regard to the relationship between the Internet and deliberative democracy. However, empirical studies in this area are have not been well explored. In addition, four major limitations are recognised in the literature regarding the impact of the Internet on democratic deliberation.

Firstly, most previous studies have been conducted in the context of the established democracies of western countries with Asian context studies being largely limited. Secondly, most existing empirical measurements for the quality of online deliberation focus on specific aspects of deliberation and do not reflect the depth of theoretical discussions. Thirdly, in dealing with the impact of the Internet on deliberation, previous empirical studies have primarily attempted to measure the quality of deliberation in terms of deliberation outcomes, while much fewer numbers of process-oriented empirical studies have been found. Lastly, few attempts have been made to measure the deliberation quality of the heterogeneous group in an online environment. Furthermore, little attention has been given to a systematic comparison of deliberation quality between homogeneous and heterogeneous online groups.

### **Conceptual research framework**

This study develops a conceptual framework of the research. For this, specific approaches are determined among various approaches to online democracy study. The deliberative democracy approach is employed considering the critical impact of new communication technology on democracy. This study focuses on the horizontal

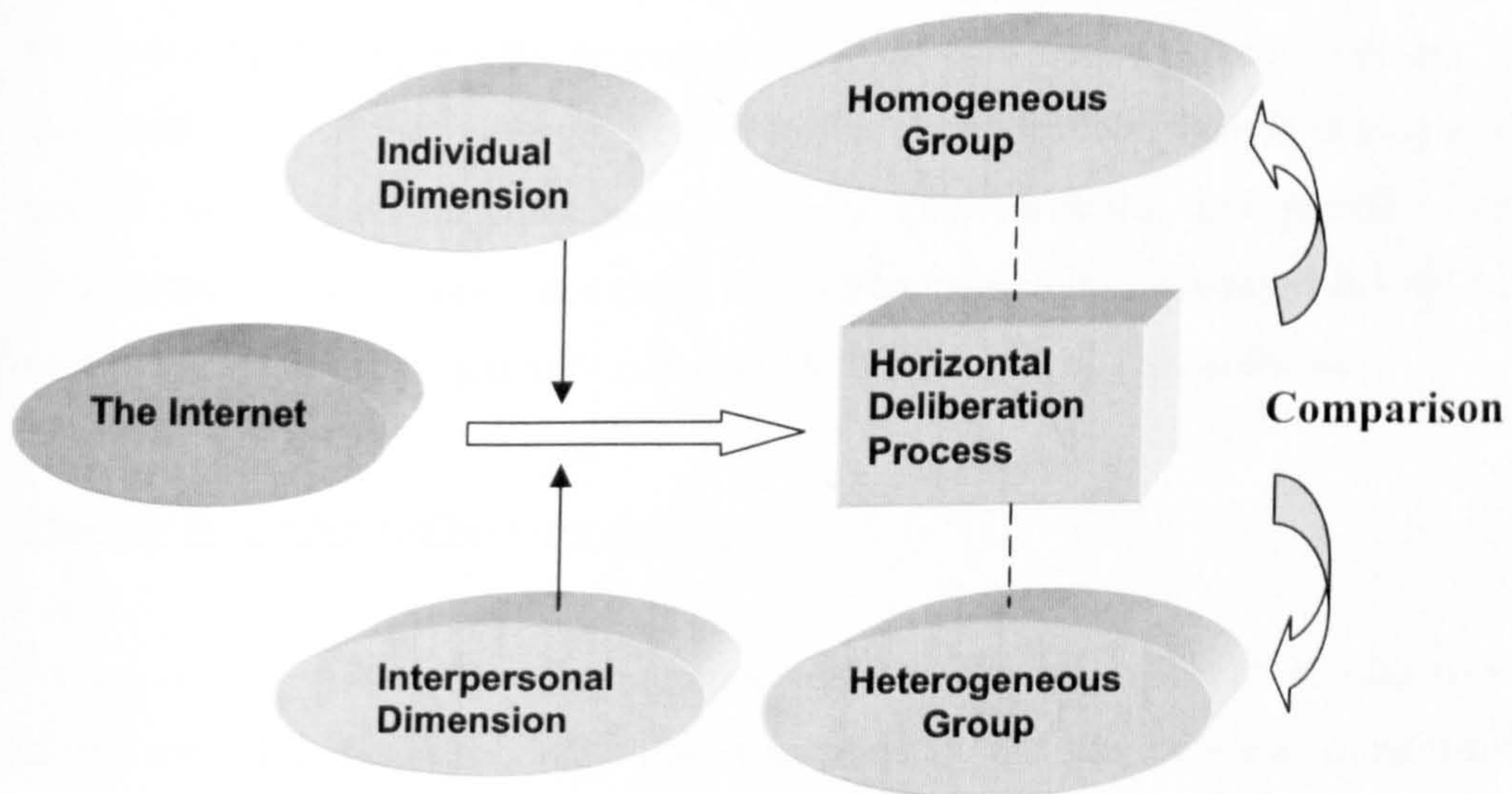


deliberation that takes place among citizens. This study adopts two dimensional approaches to the measurement of the deliberation process: *individual* and *interpersonal* dimensions. Then, this study investigates the deliberation processes in both the homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group and compares the deliberation quality between the two groups.

The conceptual framework is shown in figure 6.1. The framework implies that the Internet has an impact on the horizontal deliberation process, and the impact is divided into individual and interpersonal dimensions. In addition, the framework indicates that there exist differences between the two different conversational networks in the impact of the two dimensions.

Figure 6.1 shows the proposed research framework graphically.

Figure 6.1 Conceptual research framework





### Selection of cases

Two cases of online bulletin boards are selected as the study subject, which the most influential and busiest websites during the 2002 Presidential campaign period in South Korea: the *Nosamo* and the *Hani*.

Internet usage in South Korea is in a definite growth phase. South Korea is maintaining the world's highest growth rate of high-speed Internet services relative to its population, and the Internet is emerging as a powerful political instrument. In addition, South Korea has a very strong presidential system, and citizens, parties, civic groups and interest groups are more interested in the presidential election than any other political elections. All these turn Korean presidential elections into an interesting field for empirical research on the relationship between the Internet and deliberative democracy.

Both websites are organised to discuss the issues related to the 2002 Presidential election. *Nosamo* represents a homogeneous online conversational network composed of like-minded people who support Roh. *Hani* is a heterogeneous network open to everybody. All of the messages posted to the online bulletin boards during a 42 hour period are collected for subsequent analyses. This particular time period triggers the most heated deliberations throughout the 2002 presidential campaign. A total of 2,223 writings – 1,313 messages on *Nosamo* and 910 on the *Hani* - are archived.

### Measurements for deliberation quality

To begin with, this study conceptualises requirements of deliberation with two broad dimensions; (1) the individual dimension and (2) the interpersonal dimension. The individual dimension implies the inner process of reflecting and developing one's own view, and the interpersonal dimension involves the deliberation process of considering others and their perspectives.

Then, a set of concepts that corresponds to each dimension is identified based upon an extensive literature review. The individual dimension is constructed with four concepts:

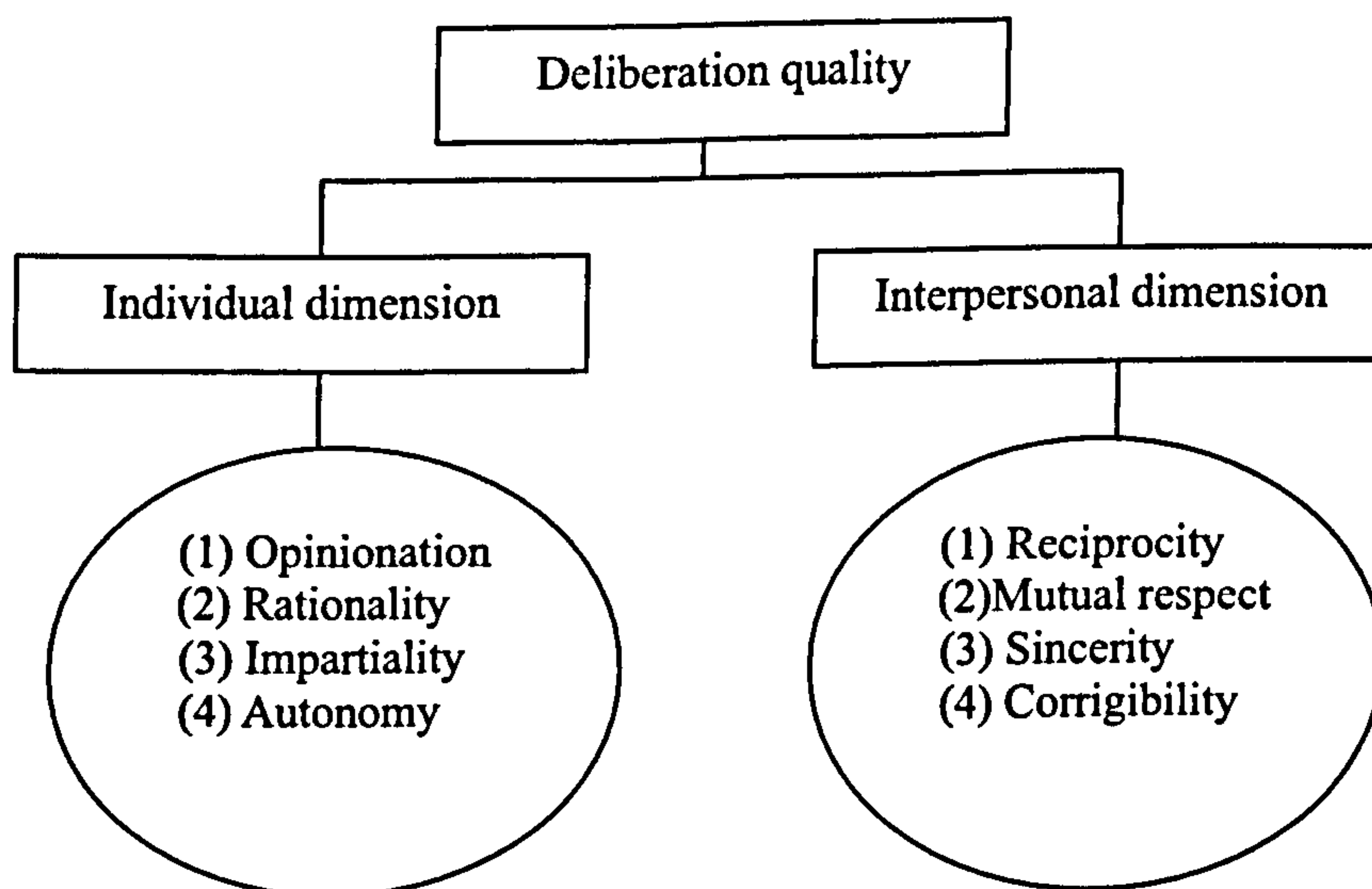


(1) opinionation, (2) rationality, (3) impartiality, and (4) autonomy. Opinionation refers to the expression of individual views or preferences. Rationality is defined as providing reasons in support of individual claims coupled with staying on topic. Impartiality refers to taking into account a broad range of perspectives on an issue. Lastly, autonomy is defined as the critical assessment towards power control and irrational beliefs and conventions prevalent in society.

The interpersonal dimension also is constructed using four concepts: (1) reciprocity, (2) mutual respect, (3) sincerity, and (4) corrigibility. Reciprocity refers to the responsiveness to other arguments. Mutual respect is defined as the consideration of others and the tolerance of differing views. Sincerity refers to an open and honest attitude towards others. Lastly, corrigibility is defined as reflecting and revising initial preferences in the light of other critiques and claims.

Figure 6.2 shows graphically the construct of the measurements employed in this study.

Figure 6.2 Construction of measurement



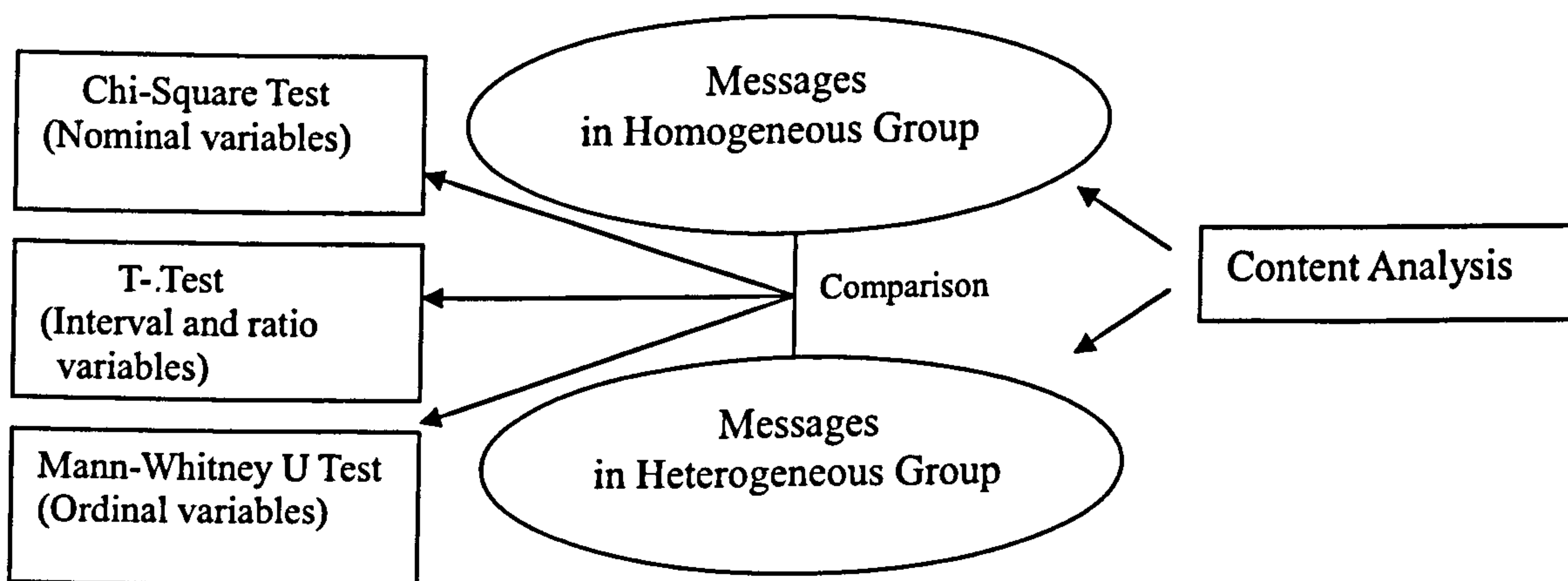
**Data analysis**

A content analysis is selected as the appropriate method because it is widely employed to evaluate different types of texts in online discussions. Through the content analysis, the study tries to search for patterns and structures in the texts to categorise the texts and then to make inferences on them.

In addition, a Chi-square test is employed to see whether the two groups are similar in the nominal variables, and a T-test is adopted to examine whether differences exist in interval and ratio variables between the two groups. In addition, a Mann-Whitney U test is employed to see whether differences exist in ordinal variables.

Figure 6.3 illustrates the analysis strategy of this study.

Figure 6.3 Analysis strategy





*Results of the analyses*

The content analysis produces following results.

In regards to the individual dimension, the discussions in the two bulletin boards can be described, by and large, as they are ‘opinion-oriented, rational and autonomous’ but ‘lacking in impartiality’. The main purpose of posting messages is to express individual opinions, and the opinions are expressed with a small number of words and a strong conviction. The messages are provided with a low level of justification; however, they appeal to the common good and are relevant to the topic. The messages are free from the conservative media and refute regionalism. In addition, the messages tend to be focused on a single candidate, leading to an unbalanced discussion on the two candidates.

On the other hand, in regards the interpersonal dimension, the discussions can be described, by and large, as they are ‘respectful to others and sincere’ but ‘not very reciprocal and lacking in corrigibility’. The messages are respectful towards others and their views; however, they are not open-minded towards views that are contradictory to their own. They are inclined to disclose their identities and report little deception. While the messages are less interactive, they contain heated pros and cons. In addition, little effort is made to reflect other opinions or change original opinions.

The following results are obtained from Chi-square test, T-test and Mann Whitney U test.

In regards to the individual dimension, the *Nosamo* develops a longer argument and expresses opinions with more conviction. In addition, the *Nosamo* shows a higher level of justification. While the *Hani* tends more to express opinions, the *Nosamo* tends more to provide facts, suggestions and enquiries. Furthermore, the *Nosamo* presents a more topic relevance and a more criticism toward the conservative media and regionalism. However, the *Nosamo* lacks impartiality compared to the *Hani*. In regards to the

interpersonal dimension, the messages in the *Nosamo* are more interactive, corrigible and respectful than the *Hani*. However, pros and cons are more prevalent in the *Hani* and no difference in perceived deception is found between the two groups.

## 6.2 Contribution to knowledge

Even though the Internet, as the newly evolving means of communication, has a clear potential to change the practice of democracy, and there has been a large amount of theoretical grounds on the Internet in relation with deliberative democracy, the empirical evidence in the area of the impact of the Internet on democracy has not been well explored in the literature (Graham and Witschge, 2003; Weare, 2002). In particular, few studies have attempted to measure the quality of deliberation, a critical element of democracy (Ryfe, 2005). Due to the lack of multi-dimensional measurements for deliberation quality, previous empirical researches remain inconclusive, fragmented and immature.

In addition, even though heterogeneity in deliberation has been regarded as a critical factor in obtaining the full benefits of deliberation, systematic comparisons of deliberation quality between homogeneous and heterogeneous online group have been largely less explored in the literature. Furthermore, previous researches have primarily attempted to measure the deliberation quality in terms of outcomes and have paid little attention to the actual process of deliberation.

A major contribution of this study is to begin to measure the deliberation quality in a comprehensive manner. The study attempts to construct a comprehensive set of measurements for deliberation quality, in terms of process, based upon an extensive literature review on deliberation. To this end, this study proposes two critical dimensions of deliberation quality: individual and interpersonal dimensions. Then, several critical concepts to be included in each dimension are identified. Among the total of eight concepts, a different set of four concepts is allocated to each dimension.



As such, a comprehensive set of measurements for deliberation quality consisting of eight concepts with two dimensions is completed.

A unique contribution of this study to knowledge in the field of online deliberation is that the study finds that the comparison of different online groups gives a better insight into the impact of the Internet on democratic deliberation. This study compares two distinctly different groups in terms of group member homogeneity. The *Hani* represents the heterogeneous group and *Nosamo* is typical of the homogeneous group. It was found that there exist significant differences between homogeneous and heterogeneous online discussion groups in the practices of deliberation. This finding suggests that a study on online deliberation should pay special attention to the differences for a better understanding of deliberation practices.

Another major contribution of this study is that it explored online deliberation in the context of a newly democratised and highly Internet penetrated country. In such a country, the impact of the Internet on democratic deliberation is greater than in any other country (Meinardus, 2003), thus giving this study a better understanding of the impact.

### **6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future study**

#### **Sample limitations**

The study explored online discussions in two bulletin boards during the 2002 Presidential Election in South Korea. The two boards are selected because the websites they are located on are regarded as the most influential and busiest during the election. However, examining a limited number of online discussions, specialised in presidential election issues, may limit the finding's ability to generalise it to other online discussions or issues.

In addition, this study explored the online bulletin boards for a specific period of time; thus, the results and conclusions should not be overly generalised. Studying a longer

period of time would have produced a more comprehensive evaluation of the online discussions.

**Limitations attached to the operationalisation of concepts**

This study develops a structure of measurements with a coding scheme, in a manner as comprehensive as possible, to examine the extent to which online discussion meets the fundamental notions of deliberative democracy. However, the structure only acts as a tentative guideline and future studies have room to interpret the results and develop their own structures. The notions of deliberation are very complex, which makes it difficult to translate them into empirical indicators. Therefore, in addition to the proposed structure in this study, a more comprehensive level of indicators for the notions may be required to fully evaluate its complexity in future studies.

**Analysis limitations**

In this study, no comparisons are made between online and offline discussions. Such a comparison may give a better insight into the relationship between the Internet and deliberation by providing an opportunity to capture the nature of political conversations both online and offline.

In addition, the results of this study are largely based on content analysis. Although the analysis widely employed to evaluate texts in online bulletin boards, such a textual analysis is limited in finding out how participants truly perceive other opinions, how they feel about other views and what is taking place inside the minds of participants during discussion. Therefore, a survey or an interview may provide additional insight into the degree of deliberation quality. As noted by Ggraham (2003), a combination of content analysis, which assesses what is being said, and a survey and interview, which assesses what participants are thinking, may give a better explanation for deliberation quality in online groups.



#### 6.4 Conclusion remarks

The primary objective of this study was to explore the potential of the Internet on deliberative democracy by examining online deliberation practices. Specifically, this study aimed to examine (1) *the extent to which online deliberations correspond to the requirements of democratic deliberation* and (2) *the differences of online deliberation practices between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups*.

Although further analysis is needed for a comprehensive evaluation of the online discussion, we are able to draw some tentative conclusions from the results.

First, the online discussions did not meet all the requirements of ideal democratic deliberation. The Internet seems to provide a venue to voice one's own views and opinions in a free atmosphere; however, we are not able to find the diversity, common good and rationality in the views and opinions in the way that we have hoped. The Internet seems to provide a venue to exchange different views and opinions; however, the Internet does seem to have a limit in facilitating participants to reach a consensus in the way that is hoped. Anonymity seems not to liberate all the fears in encountering conflict. Rather, anonymity seems to result in a lack of accountability.

Second, different features between online discussion groups resulted in differences in the deliberation practices to some extent. However, it seems that characteristics of the Internet do not affect such differences. In other words, the differences seem to be found in both online and offline discussions in a similar way.

Although the online discussions did not meet all the requirements of ideal democratic deliberation, we cannot conclude from this that the Internet does not contribute to enhancing democracy. For, democracy can benefit from small contributions of online deliberation. In addition, the above findings are tentative in nature because many gaps in the study need to be bridged before making any conclusions on the potential of the Internet with respect to deliberative democracy.

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## Coding Scheme

### Individual dimension

Concept	Variable	Type	Coding
Opinionation	Message purpose	Norminal	<p>(1) Opinion: A message is coded as 'Opinion' when it states personal position on an issue.</p> <p>(2) Fact: A message is coded as 'Fact' when it contains fact without adding individual opinion.</p> <p>(3) Suggestion: A message is coded as 'Suggestion' when a message contains an explicit sign to extend the discussion to an external societal agenda.</p> <p>(4) Enquiry: A message is coded as 'Enquiry' when a message contains at least one sentence of instance of inquiry of opinion, fact and explanation.</p>
	Opinion length	Ratio	The number of words in a message
	Opinion strength	Ordinal	<p>(1) Little conviction (2) Moderate conviction (3) Strong conviction.</p>
Rationality	Justification	Ordinal	<p>(1) No reason: A message is coded as 'No reason' when it does not provide any reason to support its claim.</p> <p>(2) Subjective reason: A message is coded as 'Subjective reason' when the reasons for its claim are based on personal values such as personal prejudice and emotion.</p> <p>(3) Objective reason: A message is coded as 'Objective reason' when the reasons are based on objective information such as newspapers, websites, broadcast news or particular people who are recognised as knowledgeable or authoritative on the subject matter.</p>
	Reference to the common good	Ordinal	<p>(1) Individual interest: A message is coded as 'Individual interest' when its claim is explicitly anchored in the participant's own interest.</p> <p>(2) Group interest: A message is coded as 'Group interest' when its claim is explicitly anchored in the interest of its own group.</p>

*Continued*

**APPENDICES**

Concept	Variable	Type	Coding
Rationality	Ordinal	Nominal	(3) Social interest: A message is coded as 'Social interest' when its claim is anchored in the interests of all the members of society such as the good for the country, the best for society, or best for the most people.
	Topic relevance	Nominal	(1) On topic: A message is coded to be 'On topic' when it is consistent with the main theme of debate. (2) Off topic: A message is coded as 'Off topic' when it is not related to the main topic.
Impartiality	Attempt to weigh	Nominal	(1) Jung: A message is coded as Jung' when a message makes an explicit evaluation on candidate Jung. (2) Roh: A message is coded as 'Roh' when the message makes an explicit evaluation on candidate Roh. (3) Jung & Roh: A message is coded as 'Roh and Jung' when the message makes an explicit evaluation on both of the candidates.
	Opinion homogeneity	Interval	(1) Very negative, (2) Negative, (3) Neutral, (4) Positive (5) Very positive.
Autonomy	Independence from mass media	Nominal	(1) Accept: A message is coded as 'Accept' when it quotes and just restates the view of traditional media. (2) Refute: A message is coded as 'Refute' when it contains counterargument and rebuttals against traditional media and their views.
	Independence from regionalism	Nominal	1) Accept: A message is coded as 'Accept' when it contains a statement that reflects the prevailing prejudice. (2) Oppose: A message is coded as 'Oppose' when it contains counterargument and rebuttals against it.



**Interpersonal dimension**

Concept	Variable	Type	Coding
Reciprocity	Interactivity	Nominal	(1) Stand alone: A message is coded as 'Stand alone' when it is a starting point of discussion, but is never responded to. (2) Seed: A message is coded as 'Seed' when it is a starting point of discussion and is responded to. (3) Reply: A message is coded as 'Reply' when it responds to other previously posted messages.
	Pros and cons	Nominal	(1) Disagree: A message is coded as 'Disagree' when it disagrees with the message previously posted (2) Neutral: a message is coded as 'Neutral' when it neither agrees nor disagrees with the previous message (3) Agree: a message is coded as 'Agree' when it agrees with the message previously posed
Mutual respect	Message tone	Interval	(1) Very disrespectful, (2) Disrespectful, (3) Neutral, (4) Respectful, and (5) Very respectful.
	Vulgarity use	Nominal	(1) No: A message is coded 'No' when it contains no vulgar expressions (2) Yes: A message is coded 'Yes' when it contains such characteristics.
	Respect toward counterargument	Interval	(1) Very disrespectful, (2) Disrespectful, (3) Neutral, (4) Respectful, and (5) Very respectful.
Sincerity	Self-disclosure	Nominal	(1) E-mail address: A message is coded as 'Email address' when it provides the author's email address. (2) Self-information: A message is coded as 'Self-information' when it reveals information about the author. (3) Self-emotion: A message is coded as 'Self-emotion' when it states self-emotion.
	Perceived deception	Nominal	(1) No: A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no report for the perceived deception. (2) Yes: A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains statement(s) about the perceived deception.

*Continued*

**APPENDICES**

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Concept	Variable	Type	Coding
Corrigibility	Opinion requesting	Nominal	(1) No: A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no request for other participants' opinion. (2) Yes: A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains at least one instance of enquiry of another participant's opinion
	Opinion change	Nominal	(1) No: A message is coded as 'No' when it contains no sign of opinion change. (2) Yes: A message is coded as 'Yes' when it contains any sign of opinion change



## Sample of messages

### Opinionation

#### 1) Message purpose

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#### (1) Opinion

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*Written by: joh111*  *Subject: Moo-hyun Roh must join hands with Mong-joon Jung.*

The citizens are diverse, and so are their interests. The supporters of Moo-hyun Roh should not overlook this fact.

I, for one, am a common folk and support Moo-hyun Roh. I'm not a fool enough to not know the reality. I think Moo-hyun Roh has to join hands with Mong-joon Jung, who is closer to those with vested rights and better than him in terms of money and organisation. I believe that is the only way for Moo-hyun Roh to reach even 10% of his expectations – society for the common men, mature freedom, continuous economic growth, fair distribution, peaceful unification, etc. ...(Omitted) .....

*Written by: toby89*  *Subject: Guarantee fair chances on TV debate programs.*

Have you heard that Hoi-chang Lee, demanding fair chances on TV debate programs, requested a “solo” debate for next Monday (25th)? Then, wouldn't it be very fair to have a chance for him to be on a joint debate with candidate Young-Ghil Kwon of the Democratic Labor Party? I believe it's not fair to have a joint debate for one person and a solo debate for the other. ...(Omitted) .....

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#### (2) Fact

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*Written by: leeha*  *Subject: Veterans of various fields release statements concerned about the current political situation – actually supporting Moo-hyun Roh*

Veterans of various fields release statements concerned about the current political situation (Scrapped from Hankyoreh)

At a press conference held on the 21st at zelkova tree café in Ankuk-dong, Seoul representatives of various academia, religion, and social organisations are proposing the promotion of a ‘Second Democratic Movement’ Article by Jongjin Im [stepano@hani.co.kr](mailto:stepano@hani.co.kr)

**□ Written by: Rules of the game (twinsfa21) □ Subject: Just received a phone call from the pollsters!!**

I'm not sure if this is a survey for unification or one from another survey institution. But these are the questions they asked me. Hope this helps~

1. Age?
2. Which candidate do you support?
3. Why do you support him?
4. Is there a possibility that you will support a different candidate later on?
5. If the unification should head towards Jung , who will you vote for?

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### **(3) Suggestion**

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**□ Written by: koreanerboy □ Subject: Choosing between Roh-Lee and Mong-Lee candidate unification in terms of competitive power...**

You should keep the following in mind during the survey after the debate.

Tell your friends, and please keep this posting on the front page and prevent it from "getting old."

...(Omitted) .....

**□ Written by: □ (koreanerboy) □ Subject: Public survey ==> Danger [Important]**

What we need now is concentration. If this was a soccer game, now would be 1 minute before the game is over. We have to pay attention.

Please, let's advance.

No time to waste.

Roh's wind doesn't blow alone.

Concentrate and focus on vulnerable areas and the social classes. There's no time to send letters, so we have to call, call, call..... we must block reverse information of CJD (Chosun, Joongang, and Dong-a) and Hannara (Grand National Party).

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### **(4) Enquiry**

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**□ Written by: pjy1980 □ Subject: The choice of a twenty-something voter.**

...(Omitted) .....Mong-joon Jung and Moo-hyun Roh.. Jung boasts his competitive power against Hoi-chang Lee while Roh wants to maintain the existing treaties... Who should I support? I wish to hear your opinions.



□ *Written by: sjkim0370* □ *Subject: What happened to Mr. Mong-joon's Hyundai Heavy Industries trust?*

Mong-joon Jung said that he would tie his Hyundai Heavy Industries stock up for a trust for 5 years – did he actually do it? Haven't heard from him yet; is he cheating on us? Did he lie after realising that he won't make it to presidency? ...(Omitted) .....

□ *Written by: hmoon2* □ *Subject: Hey everyone! What if..*

Ladies and gents..what if..the current president Dae-jung Kim declares support for Hoi-chang Lee.... How would the Gyungsang-province people react?.. So curious...though this doesn't even make sense.....(Omitted) .....

## 2) Opinion length

## 3) Opinion strength

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### (1) Little conviction

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□ *Written by: esfing* □ *Subject: Considering the circumstances..*

I'm guessing...that this is not a survey on competitive power. It seems like they will select the candidate based on who – among the three Moo-hyun Roh, Mong-joon Jung, Hoi-chang Lee – is supported. Perhaps that's why – to prevent reverse choice – there's a saying that Hoi-chang Lee votes under a certain percentage will be called void. ...(Omitted) .....

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### (2) Moderate conviction

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□ *Written by: gosu7323* □ *Subject: What are ten doctorate degrees worth?*

What good is having ten doctorate degrees? If a person of integrity and voice becomes the president, I believe that those around him will participate and help further develop this nation. FYI, former president Chung-hee Park was a military man, but he created a miracle for our economy – because he had a vision that he pressed on.. and because all the citizens brought together their strengths. ...(Omitted) .....

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**(3) Strong conviction**

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*Written by: ewha*  *Subject: No wonder, it's Moo-hyun Roh*

...(Omitted) ...I was able to firmly believe that Moo-hyun Roh is the candidate fitting for this day and age, who can win against Hoi-chang Lee.

It is obvious that a man like Mong-joon Jung as a president will either set this nation on fire or flood it (It is obvious that this nation will enter chaos). Was it that wrong for Moo-hyun Roh to visit Young-sam Kim?...If his only goal was to become the president he would never have visited Young-sam Kim. What harm did it do? (How much of minus is it?)

**Rationality**

**1) Justification**

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**(1) No reason**

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*Written by: analyst (koreanerboy)*  *Subject: President Moo-hyun Roh is a historical inevitability*

Unification... it is difficult anyway. However...despite that, Moo-hyun Roh will become the president. He's a historical inevitability. And Moo-hyun Roh is the product of the zeitgeist of our generation – so the nation cries out for president Moo-hyun Roh. Do you not see the whole nation's cries and movements towards Moo-hyun Roh??? He is the only leader fit for the 21st Century; he is the great world leader.

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**(2) Subjective reason**

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*Written by: Naragu (Ysds)*  *Subject: I've decided*

Yesterday, I confirmed that a person like this should be our president.

How he is - with a pride about the path that he had taken and confidence from dignity, always with stability, accurate and on time, omitting extraneous stuff and tersely voicing his opinion... his charisma as a leader flourished, well enough to become the leader of a nation. ...(Omitted) .....



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**(3) Objective reason**

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*□ Written by: Nosamo girl (oknal) □ Subject: I oppose Mr. Moo-hyun Roh*

There would be several reasons...but first you should remember how he visited Young-sam Kim – whom for ten years he criticised like crazy after he became the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party - and sucked up to him with that watch..... (Omitted)..... Second, he's always been emphasising how he will do politics for the common men, but he abandoned his political stubbornness and to win the election joined hands with candidate Mong-joon Jung, who's being accused for stock manipulation and inappropriate gain of tens of billions Won... ...(Omitted) .....

**2) Reference to the common good**

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**(1) Individual interest**

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*□ Written by: Yong7 Subject: A bright sunny day*

Cheers, Moo-hyun! I want to see a countryside examinee like me someday basking in some sunshine

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**(2) Group interest**

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*□ Written by: Nosamo good! □ Subject: I have a dream*

I wish...for us the members of Nosamo... to branch away ... get some small land in some part of our country... and appoint Moo-hyun Roh as our prime minister...and...though small...create an ideal nation...that we've been dreaming of...like Singapore...

65 thousand is...enough as a sovereign nation for anything to happen...but it's not realistic so...I'll dream it in my sleep...just complaining...Bye~~ Have a good dream everyone~~

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**(3) Social interest**

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*□ Written by: Huh-joon (changho56) □ Subject: This nation wishes not for a politician who passed an exam, but an economic president.*

We must vote for an economic president. If we, at a time like this when economic crises are crucial, elect a president according to regional, academic, familial interests, there will be no use crying over

such a choice once a war breaks out or a second IMF crisis occurs. ...(Omitted) .....

**3) Topic relevance**

- |                  |                                  |                              |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10 = Candidates  | 30 = Parties                     | 50 = TV debate               |
| 11 = Roh         | 31 = GNP(Major opposition party) | 51 = Filing single candidate |
| 12 = Jung        | 32 = MDP(Ruling Party)           | 52 = Other issues            |
| 13 = Lee         | 33 = NA21                        |                              |
|                  |                                  | 60 = Other's postings        |
| 20 = Politicians | 40 = Mass media                  |                              |
| 21 = President   | 41 = Newspaper                   |                              |
| 22 = MP          | 42 = Broadcasting                |                              |

**Impartiality**

**1) Attempt to weigh**

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**(1) Jung**

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□ *Written by: Chan-Joong (gcj0429)* □ *Subject: A mid-aged subject really wants to let Mong-joon Jung know about this*

I watched, with breathless interest, the 2-hour TV debate between Moo-hyun Roh and Mong-joon Jung. Isn't this event – before being a selection process for a national president for the next five years – an election that will select the national leader who will open the new 21st Century and decide the future of myself, my family, my nation, and its people? So how can I not be interested in this above all else! ...(Omitted)... and considering from such a point of view, and to state the conclusion first, candidate Mong-joon Jung is not a proper candidate for presidency. I summarise my reasons as follows.

First, someone who breaks a small rule is prone to ignore and break larger rules or laws. .... (Omitted) .....

Second, he attempted to teach an opposing candidate ... (Omitted) ..... Third, he was considering unification by himself. .... (Omitted) .....

Fourth, he is just another privileged royalty as well as a millionaire; he has no idea what we common people demand .....(Omitted) .....



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**(2) Roh**

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□ *Written by: changho56* □ *Subject: Moo-hyun Roh is a politician lacking disposition and ability for presidency*

Moo-hyun Roh is a politician known, as a man of clear rules and vision, to have sufficient disposition and ability of a president. As one of the people who agree that such view is not necessarily so, I will omit his strengths – which are so well known, and will attempt to examine what he lacks in terms of disposition and ability for presidency.

Everyone has weak spots, but Moo-hyun Roh, along with other weak spots contains a critical weakness called <rashness> as a president. In saying <rashness> I do not mean just carelessness in words but also that of <action> .....(Omitted) .....

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**(3) Jung and Roh**

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□ *Written by: Jin-Woo (hi4989)* □ *Subject: TV debate review*

(1) When candidate Moo-hyun Roh argued an equal relationship with the United States and said that he “will never bow down” – a rather primitive expression, I was very thrilled. It felt as if the statement soothed and encouraged the citizens’ pride that was wounded after the U.S Army officer murderer was judged innocent. On the other hand, candidate Mong-joon Jung was contrasting with Moo-hyun Roh in that he unnecessarily overemphasised the worldly supremacy of the United States. It was a large mistake for candidate Jung to ask such a question and provide a chance to peek at Moo-hyun Roh’s anti-American tendencies and diplomacy involving independence.

(2) As for corporate tax reduction, candidate Roh was focused on very small businesses with annual net profit of less than a hundred million Won, whereas candidate Mong-joon Jung spoke as if he considered a business with annual net profit of three hundred million Won to be a very small business. Well, it may not be so surprising that from candidate Jung’s standards 300 million won is for very small business and a trillion Won for mid-to-small businesses. ... It was a scene where he clearly showed to whom his economic policies were targeted. Though he spoke of a necessity for corporate tax reduction, he avoided talking about fulfillment of insufficient source of tax. Of course, the common men have to make that up...

(3) In terms of privilege and relations to Hyundai Group regarding the next government’s North Korean

business, candidate Roh questioned with North Korean business such as Hyundai Asan and Hyundai Merchant Marine in mind; however, candidate Jung's answer completely missed the point by talking about share structure of Hyundai Motors. Who doesn't know that Hyundai Motor is a global company? What was more striking than that was how he used the topic of the demise of Hyundai Group quickly as a chance at attacking the government – while he should have at least symbolically apologised and showed atonement. Anyone could have thought that he was so brazen.

(4) The topic that candidate Jung confused us all with was indeed the North-South issue. By talking about the conditional – regarding giving up of nuclear weapons - economic collaboration, he exhibited nearly a same viewpoint as candidate Hoi-chang Lee; however, when discussing about the moving of municipal capital he argued that the capital should not be moved so hastily when unification might be near, as if he is being optimistic and expecting on unification. He confused us on how he will solve the North-South issue. Well, that's not the only thing he's confusing us with...

(5) Candidate Jung, in various statements that he made, sneakily showed off that he graduated from Seoul National University, has a master's degree in economics as well as in management from an American university, and has a doctorate degree of international politics from the States. I could not help but laugh at how a man like this could argue for a revolution in a academic status-based society. Furthermore, by going overtime at almost every question I could not find in him an attempt to follow the rules of the game. On the other hand, candidate Roh kept his time so much that it seemed way too much.

### **2) Opinion homogeneity**

#### *5-point scale*

(1) Very negative (2) Negative (3) Neutral (4) Positive: (5) Very positive



## **Autonomy**

### **1) Independence from mass media**

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#### **(1) Accept**

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*Written by: Amoro*  *Subject: Tax rate reduction*

As pointed out in yesterday's Dong-a Daily, it is necessary to lower the tax rate ....(Omitted).... Of course, some argue that lowering the tax rate of the common folks means nothing much of a reduction, and that expanding social welfare expenses will be more favorable towards the common men.

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#### **(2) Refute**

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*Written by: crazan*  *Subject: Joongang!! Randomly encouraging a Hoi-chang – Mong-joon solidarity..haha*

Well..

The Joongang Daily argues that the Jung-Roh Solidarity is a mere alliance and doesn't earn much force, while it encourages the Hoi-chang-Mong-joon solidarity and claims that it will have a great synergistic effect. Chosun Daily jerks sure are nervous that the anti-Hoi-chang might join forces.

*Written by: edgen*  *Subject: A visit to Chosun*

Hankyoreh reported that candidate Roh's yielding led to a dramatic agreement, but our ChosunDaily freaks obviously reported as if the two candidates are the same people. Well..this kind of distorted reporting now explains why Moo-hyun Roh support rate has been skydiving...Media power really is scary.

### **2) Independence from regionalism**

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#### **(1) Accept**

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*Written by: song-hj*  *Subject: A stereotypical Gyungsang province asshole*

I am well aware of the stereotypical Gyungsang province asshole. Especially the "logic" of the young Gyungsang province assholes is so embarrassing that it will wake me up at night. The two kids who wrote the postings above are the of young Gyungsang province assholes that I hate the most.



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**(2) Oppose**

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□ *Written by: dunsim* □ *Subject: Is it true?*

One of the concerns about candidate Hoi-chang Lee becoming the president is worsening of regionalism. And to no surprise, I am greatly worried that this election will be clearly affected by regionalism. It seems as if YS decided to help candidate Lee... Well... I can see with my own two eyes the Hoi-chang Lee's strategy of relying on regionalism. Raised in Gyeonggi-do, I am almost free of regionalist influences. However, considering that a national leader has a major task of unifying the nation and the strengths of its people, I will ask for no more than a candidate selected by the majority of the Gyungsang - Cholla people to become the president.

□ *Written by: Ryu (tesa1234)* □ *Subject: Mr. Reporter, please refrain from using the words "Gyungsang province" and "Cholla province"!*

We've heard enough about Gyungsang province and Cholla province from geography class. These two words should vanish from politics. Our country is so small, that our life zone is only half a day. How can there be regional distinction in such a small country! Let's talk about DJ and YS, not about Cholla province and Gyungsang province. They should be seen as politicians only; if we see them with their regional affiliations we will never become free from conservatism Mr. Reporter! As a political reporter please do not use the words Gyungsang province and Cholla province ever again. Just talk about DJ, YS, Moo-hyun Roh and Hoi-chang Lee.

**Reciprocity****1) Interactivity**

(1) Stand along (2) Seed (3) Reply



## 2) Pros and cons

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### (1) Disagree

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*Written by: lkh4806*  *Subject: Do you know democracy?*

I think you got it wrong. The basis of democracy is the acknowledgement of the other. And fairness. Simply put, candidate unification is an issue of the party. The broadcasting of such issue on TV itself is unfair. Thus, according to the principle of fair providing of chances, chances should be given to other candidates. Whether or not this is valuable news is not something you should decide on. Don't you think that a thought like that is taking it too far?

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### (2) Neutral

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*Written by: Nakendi*  *Subject: Min-suk Kim the villain*

FYI, attached is information about Min-suk the villain, whom you were curious about.

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### (3) Agree

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*Written by: sad democracy*  *Subject: A very relieving entry. Two thumbs up!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

A person like you help sustain Nosamo even just to this level. May I ask you to continue your harsh criticism...thank you again.

## **Mutual respect**

### 1) Message tone

*5-point scale*

- (1) Very respectful: Using an honorific expression, stating warm and friendly words.
- (2) Respectful: Using an honorific expression
- (3) Neutral: Using neutral expression (Using neither honorific expression nor the low forms of speech)
- (4) Disrespectful: Using the low forms of speech
- (5) Very disrespectful: Using the low forms of speech, using unfriendly, threatening, vulgar expressions.

**2) Vulgarities use**

**(1) No**

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**(2) Yes**

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*□ Written by: Hyuk-Joon (cha9624) □ Subject: An idiot, right here...*

It's fools like you that make Moo-hyun Roh support rate only 20%...

You piece of crap...maybe it is asking too much to understand that out of the 35% that supports Hoi-chang Lee some like him and majority is choosing not the best or the second but the absolute worst thinking, and that this government has to be judged.

*□ Written by: gkgk (sjkim0370) □ Subject: Haha you kids, if you have head injury go home take some pills and rest...ROFL*

You idiotic Nosamo assholes...how is demise of private organisations handled by Hoi-chang Lee?

You're out of your mind...so if anything goes wrong it's all Hoi-chang Lee's fault, isn't it? I'm not his supporter, but shouldn't we go mess with those assholes still alive?

**3) Respect toward counterargument**

*□ 5-point scale*

(1) Very respectful: Using an honorific expression, stating warm and friendly words.

(2) Respectful: Using an honorific expression

(3) Neutral: Using neutral expression (Using neither honorific expression nor the low forms of speech)

(4) Disrespectful: Using the low forms of speech

(5) Very disrespectful: Using the low forms of speech, using unfriendly, threatening, vulgar expressions.



## Sincerity

### 1) Self-disclosure

#### (1) E-mail address

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#### (2) Self-information

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*Written by: goldmund*  *Subject: Slightly disappointed in candidate Roh*

I'm one of the panel members at the debate that was recently hosted by Internet News Organisation. I am one of the people confidently pitching in for making 'president Moo-hyun Roh' and majored in politics in graduate school. I watched last night's TV debate and ruminated...

*Written by: rohyi*  *Subject: To people from Gyung-sang province*

I am from Cholla province. Do you know what it is like to live as a Cholla province person in this country? I have always felt restrained in politics and lifestyle, as if I have committed some kind of an original sin. But I cannot hold it anymore, and must say one thing while revealing my original sin.

I support Moo-hyun Roh not because I am from Cholla province. Honestly, if Moo-hyun Roh can become the president I will follow him wherever he goes, even if he joins hands with the evil Hannara, because I trust him. Simply put, I support the Democratic Party not because I am from Cholla province. It's because I admire all of Moo-hyun Roh's philosophy, vision, and views on the people of this nation.

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#### (3) Self-emotion

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*Written by: ggorazi*  *Subject: Who is Moo-hyun Roh such a goody-two-shoed?*

Moo-hyun Roh, I don't know who my heart heated up after reading the article titled 'Complete accommodation of candidate Jung's needs.' I do have a tiny bit of concern that candidate Roh, whom I support, might lose the election but my heart still warms up.

The worries about Moo-hyun Roh taking the paths of the two Kims that greatly contributed to our nation's democracy but failed at candidate unification were completely washed away by our proud Gyung-sang-do hero Moo-hyun Roh. Long live Moo-hyun Roh. Even if you loses the election, you will be my president forever.

*Written by: zolla771*  *Subject: Oh~I'm in tears..*

I'm not happy or sad. Well..it's just that posts of these kind bring tears to my eyes..

Personally...the progressives are supporting candidate Young-Ghil Kwon ...those around me said that they're going to vote for candidate Kwon especially after the Roh- Jung unification...honestly right now I am very grieved and weak.

But.. no matter how the debate was today every time I see Roh-ey and people here I feel an emotional catharsis. Please.. I hope that he doesn't lose hope and passion.

## 2) Perceived deception

(1) No

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(2) Yes

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*Written by: hdyhsy*  *Subject: Everyone~ I think Huh-joon and Huh-gyun were paid for this. Be careful...*

Hey you, you must be busy writing posts here and there. But you're a bit lazy...you keep changing the ID but how come the IP address is the same all the time...now we know that you're all the same person...how much does Hoi-pest pay you for this? Does he give you a lot? Maybe I'll do it to...haha

*Written by: From hell (prozac98)*  *Subject: The writers to hell..*

The majority's toward Moo-hyun Roh already. The son of the pro-Japanese jerk Hoi-pest's of no use now. Why don't you stop the useless postings?



**Corrigibility**

**1) Opinion requesting**

(1) No

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(2) Yes

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*Written by: kkgurrl*  *Subject: Your rating of the debate*

I've been writing the same thing here and there. Honestly an average person like me saw that Mong-joon Jung continuously led the debate to his advantage. Whether or not candidate Roh did it on purpose I think Mong-joon Jung did the right thing during this debate...when I posted this at candidate Jung's homepage everyone replied as if he became the president already. When the same entry was posted at candidate Roh's homepage people were cursing. I just wanted to hear what your thoughts and reactions to the debate are. I would appreciate a response.

**2) Opinion change**

(1) No

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(2) Yes

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*Written by: hoyane*  *Subject: What if...what if...*

I will be voting for the first time at this election...if I were not a Nosamo member...if I had not talked with you here...I would have just followed my parents around to the ballot and picked whoever they picked...I learned a lot from you and...think that I became a more mature voter.