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A Study on the Effect of the Introduction of the Online Petition System on Bill Deliberation of the National Assembly

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Abstract

Petitions refer to formal requests to an authority, usually a governmental institution. The right to petition has been guaranteed as a mean to correct social irrationality but fell into disuse in the twentieth century as representative democracy expanded. However, it has been regarded as a representative tool of participatory democracy which involves new information and communication technologies nowadays.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition System on the bill deliberation in the Republic of Korea and draw up policy implications for the improvement of the online petition system. As a result of analyzing all the written and online petitions received by the National Assembly for three years from the 21st National Assembly (from May 2020 to May 2023), the following results were derived.

First, the number of petitions received after the introduction of the online petition system decreased compared to the previous session. However, the total number of online petitions disclosed by meeting the disclosure requirements increased significantly compared to the previous session. After the introduction of the online petition system, there was no significant difference in the number of petitions between written and online petitions.

Second, in terms of issues of petitions, both written petitions and online petitions dealt with regulative policies in the highest proportion, but written petitions covered various policy types (distributive policy, redistributive policy, and symbolic policy) compared to online petitions. Written petitions were strongly related to local constituencies or civic groups, and online petitions had a relatively large amount of content to represent the profession's interests. Written petitions tended to deal with issues related to the particular benefits and costs of relatively few regions or organizations. In contrast, online petitions tended to deal with

broader or general public issues with a wide range of stakeholders.

Third, there are cases in which opinions in favor and opposition were received as petitions on controversial issues, such as the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act, the abolition of the National Security Act, and the abolition of the crime of abortion, and most of them were submitted by online petition system. The online petition seems to partially play the role of a public arena in that various opinions are expressed and deliberated in the National Assembly.

Fourth, in terms of the processing procedure of petitions, the average processing period and the most prolonged/shortest processing periods of online petitions were all shorter than those of written petitions. However, as a result of Wilcoxon' s rank sum test, there is no statistically significant difference between the processing period of written petitions and the processing period of online petitions. Compared to written petitions, online petitions had a lower review initiation rate but the higher rate and average number of examinations after being referred to the subcommittee. There has been a case in which a petitioner of an online petition appeared and directly explained the purpose of the petition in the Petition Deliberation Subcommittee.

Fifth, in terms of the processing results of petitions, the complete rate of written petitions (20.5%) was about twice as high as that of online petitions (9.5%). The rate of achieving the purpose of the petition was also more than twice as high in written petitions (15.9%) as in online petitions (6.3%).

In conclusion, the introduction of the online petition system increases citizen participation in quantitative and qualitative ways to some extent in the bill deliberation of the National Assembly. The issues and interests represented by online participation differ from those of written participation, and the proportion of online petitions related to a specific region or association is relatively low. Therefore, these results confirm the applicability of the mobilization theory, which claims that the internet can be a new space to facilitate participation by people alienated from offline politics.

However, looking at the processing process and results of petitions, the introduction of the online petition system did not lead to strengthening the responsiveness of the National Assembly, and it was confirmed that the National Assembly Online Petition system close to the government-led initiative or supply-side model, rather than the citizen-led initiative or demand-side model.

This study empirically analyzes the tendency of written and online petitions as an exploratory study that conducted a complete analysis of all petitions received after implementing the online petition system in the National Assembly. In addition, based on the analysis results, this study derives policy implications to improve the responsiveness and accountability of the National Assembly, such as increasing the number of petition examinations, timely and active examination of petitions, providing a space for online petitioners to express their opinions, and growing opportunities to listen to petitioners' explanations during the examination process.

However, this study utilized only cases from three years since the only petition system was introduced in 2020. Therefore, a statistically significant quantitative analysis could not be performed due to insufficient accumulated petitions. In the future, when cases of the system accumulate, it is necessary to analyze the impact of the system quantitatively. In addition, in terms of research methodology, when analyzing the effects of the introduction of the online petition system on participants' perceptions or behaviors, the substantive impact of the system can be analyzed by supplementing the results of comparative studies.

Keyword : petition, online (electronic) petition, bill deliberation, digital democracy, National Assembly
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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition System on the bill deliberation in the Republic of Korea and draw up policy implications for the improvement of the online petition system.

Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, which stipulates the right to petition, partly ensures a citizen's right to participate in the legislative process. The National Assembly of Korea introduced its online petition system in January 2020 based on the National Assembly Act. Previously, a petition could be submitted only with the introduction of a member of the National Assembly. However, according to the amendment of the National Assembly Act, any person who desires to make a petition can present a petition with the consent of the people in the number of 50,000 during the 30 days via the electronic petition system. This change aimed to enhance and substantiate the people's right to petition. In May 2023, a total of 758 petitions were disclosed as they were judged to meet the petition requirements. Of these, 70 cases were established as valid petitions with the people's consent, and 14 of them were accepted or repealed by the National Assembly.

The right to petition gained attention after the introduction of the Blue House Online Petition System in 2017. There have been debates on the significance and effectiveness of online petitions, especially regarding the Blue House Online Petition System. Many have argued that online petition complements the deficit of representative democracy and functions as a public forum for policy discourse. On the other hand, some have claimed that online petitions brought about problems such as abuse of power and hyper-partisan conflict between political forces. National Assembly Online Petition System seems to have some strengths compared to

the Blue House online petition system. Members of the National Assembly can directly respond to petitioners who request amendments to existing legislation or changes in current institutions. Therefore, petitioners can expect relatively tangible outcomes. However, there may be a concern that the bill deliberation process will be reduced or omitted based on public opinion.

Therefore, this study aims to find the significance, limitations, and policy implications of the National Assembly Online Petition System. Firstly, this study will examine the current status of petitions submitted by the new online petition system. Secondly, this study will compare the characteristics, processes, and results of petitions between the previous petition system which requires an introduction of a Member of the National Assembly and the new online petition system.

1.2. Scope and Method of Research

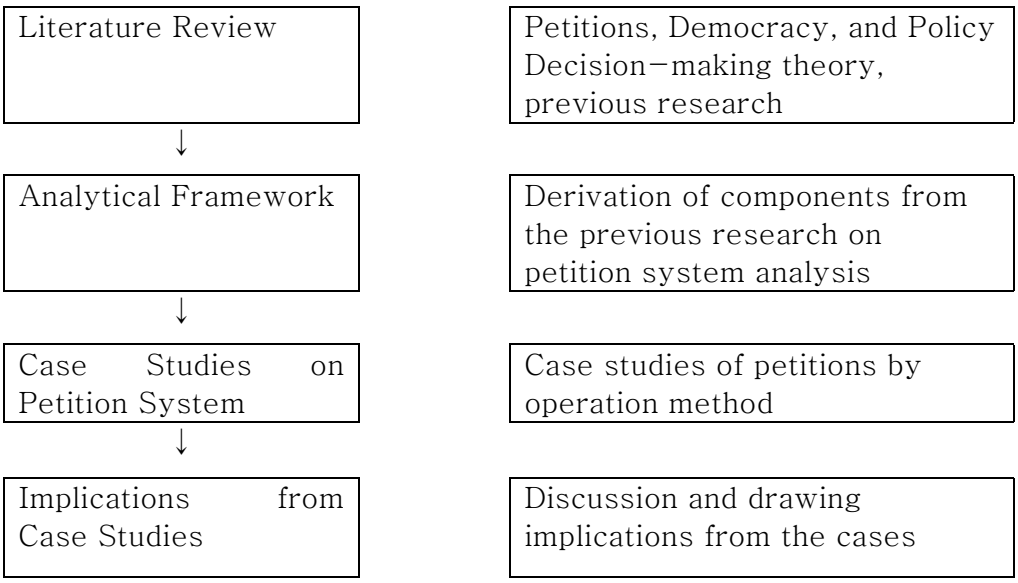
It has been three years and five months since the online petition system was introduced, and there are not sufficient cases to do a valid quantitative analysis. Therefore, this study will compare the National Assembly Online Petition system with other petition systems with different operation methods. The case is limited to the petitions submitted by the traditional written (offline) petition system and the online petition system of the National Assembly. The two system has the same environment except for the media characteristics.

To this end, this study will explore the theories and previous studies regarding online petitions. Next, utilizing the components in the previous study, this study will form the analytical framework to examine subcomponents involved in petition systems to be applied to this study.

Next, this study will examine the characteristics or features of petitions submitted by different systems. Finally, this study will draw implications from the case studies and draw implications that can be applied to the National Assembly Online petition system for

improvements.

Figure 1: Structure of study



In the aspect of the method of research, this study takes comparative analysis. It will compare the petitions by the previous offline petition system and the new online petition system of the National Assembly. Particularly, it will focus on differences in amounts, issues, processes, and results on the petitions according to the petition channel.

Second, this study takes literature research methods. It will review a wide range of prior studies about petitions and policy decision-making as well as the online petition systems.

1.3. Petition System of the National Assembly

Through the revision of the National Assembly Act in April 2019, an online petition system was introduced that allows citizens to petition the National Assembly with the consent of a certain number of citizens for a certain period of time without being introduced by a member of the National Assembly.

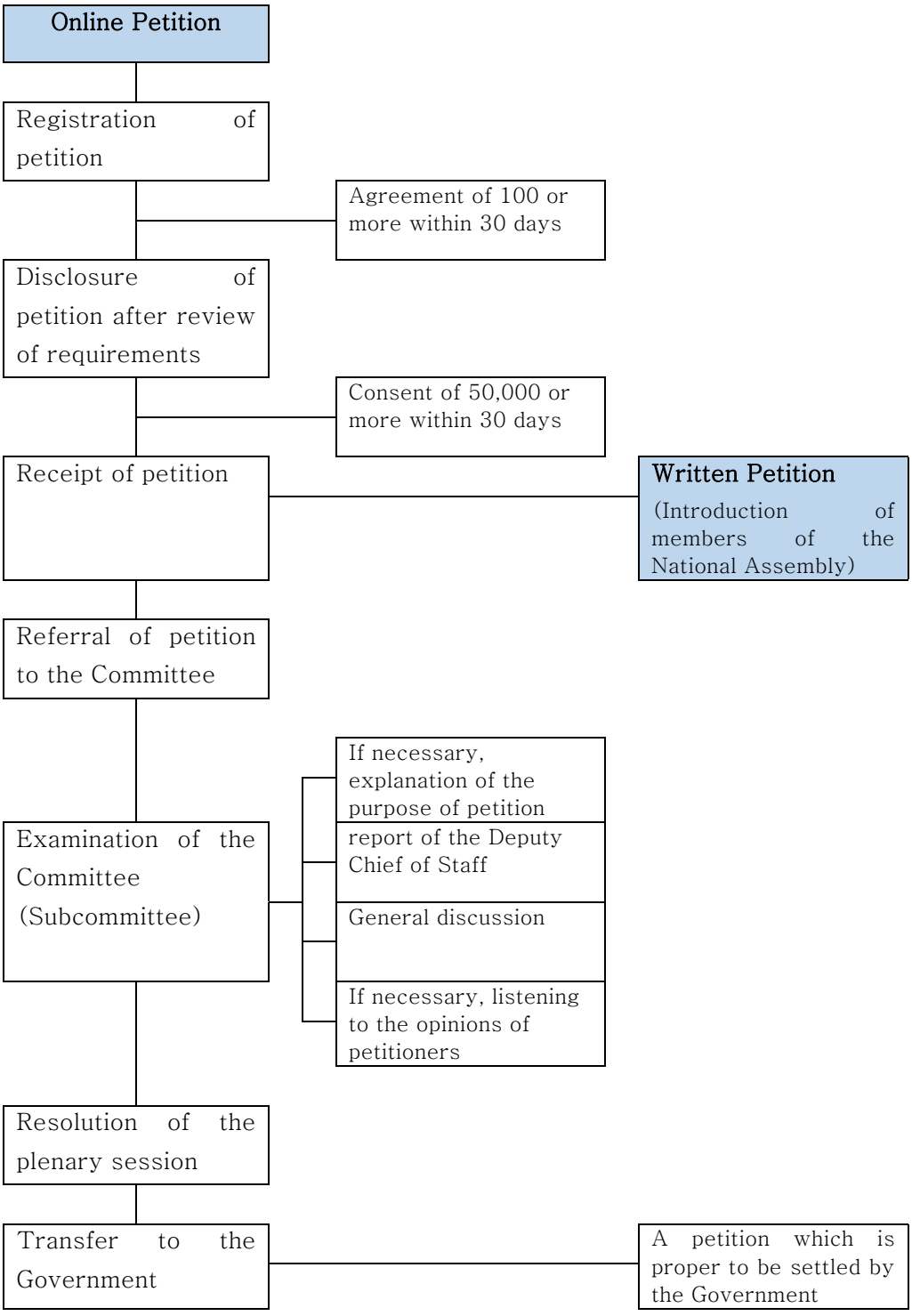
In accordance with the delegation of the National Assembly Act, the Petition Examination Rules of the National Assembly stipulates that the petition should be disclosed if it obtains 'agreement of 100 or more within 30 days' from the date of registration of a petition, and the petition should be submitted to the National Assembly if it obtains 'consent of 100,000 or more within 30 days.'

In December 2021, in order to strengthen the guarantee of the right to petition and to secure the effectiveness of the system, the requirement for submitting a petition was revised so that a petition can be submitted if it obtains ‘consent of 50,000 or more within 30 days.’

According to the National Assembly Act, when the Speaker receives a petition, he or she shall refer the petition to the applicable committee for examination (Article 124). The committee shall report the results of the examination to the Speaker within 90 days from the date on which a petition is referred to it: Provided, That where the committee fails to complete the examination of the petition within the aforesaid period due to compelling reasons, the chairperson of the committee may request the Speaker to extend the examination period only once up to 60 days. Where there are extenuating circumstances under which the committee cannot complete the examination of a petition within the period under the aforesaid paragraph which takes much time to examine, the committee may request the Speaker to approve an additional extension of the examination period following its resolution (Article 125 (5), (6)).

When the committee has decided to refer the petition to the plenary session, it shall notify the Speaker and send its opinion. If the committee has decided not to refer the petition to the plenary session, it shall report the result of its settlement to the Speaker, and the Speaker shall thus inform the petitioner (Article 125 (7), (8)).

Figure 2: Examination process of the petition in the National Assembly



Chapter 2. Theoretical Backgrounds and Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Backgrounds

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of the introduction of the online petition system of the National Assembly. In this regard, this study would examine the theoretical background related to the right to petition and policy-decision making.

2.1.1. Theory of Participatory Democracy

There is an inbuilt tension between the liberal democratic or Madisonian state and the republican democratic or Rousseauian state. The former focuses on the rule of law and fundamental rights, and the latter focuses on the people's direct and unmediated decision-making power. Liberal and republican principles of democracy depend on each other, but they can also oppose each other.

A participatory form of democracy has been the alternative to liberal representative democracy. Participatory democracy has a long tradition of political theory with Aristotle, Rousseau, Mill, and Cole, who emphasized the educative, psychological, and distributive effects of participation. Modern advocates of participatory democracy, such as Pateman (1970), Barber (1983), Bachrach & Botwinick (1992), and Gould (1990) assumed the equal right to self-determination of all adult individuals as the foundation of a participatory democracy.

Theorists of participatory democracy view the public as knowledgeable and active, if given the opportunity for effective public participation. They promote including the general populace in the decision-making process. They believed that by doing so, not only would the policy develop but also the individual's ability to participate in society. Participatory democratic theorists maintain

that active involvement confers social and political benefits on both the individual and society. They believe that political participation is a part of the good life or a way of self-development. For instance, Arendt (2013) argued that representative democracy limits the opportunity for people to become politically worthy by performing their words and deeds in public spaces and pursuing the meaning of their existence and public happiness. Gould (1990) claimed that democratic participation allowed an individual's right to freedom or self-development to be exercised with others in common social activities. Gould also argued that the representative democracy system could be well harmonized with participatory democracy if it was supplemented with various systems. Pateman (1970) emphasized the educational aspect of civic participation, highlighting that participation should not be limited to the political realm but spread throughout the social realm.

The criticism of participatory democratic theorists against liberal representative democracy has persuasive power considering the phenomenon of civic participation erupting in various fields since the 1960s. The current various civic participatory mood in Korean society also partially contains disappointment about the limitations or problems of the existing representative democracy system. In this view, the right to petition or online petition system can be the substantive linkage or channel between the representatives and the people.

2.1.2. Theory of Policy Decision-making: Elite Model and Pluralist Model

The elite model emphasizes the leading role of elites in the policy-making process. This model was developed under the influence of elitism developed by Mills (2018) and Mosca (2018). The significant characteristics of this model are that power is concentrated, the elites are unified, the non-elites are diverse and powerless, and the interests of elites are unified due to their common backgrounds and status. Elite theorists view the capacities

of the public as apathetic, easily manipulated, and uninformed.

In this model, policies appear in the form of elite-led decisions and public follow-up. Policy decision-making is best left to the domain of experts, such as the bureaucratic or technical elites, who are regarded as the most capable actors in making policy decisions and thus can be protected from the capricious influence of the public. Elite theorists promote a rational decision-making process. The form of public participation advocated by elites is voting and the ratifying of leadership.

On the other hand, the pluralist model assumes that power is not concentrated in a small number of ruling elites and is widely distributed. The pluralist model emphasizes how multiple groups and interests have an influence on representation, contributing to appropriately representative political outcomes that reflect the collective need of society. This model presupposes that stakeholder groups interested in policy issues have the same accessibility to the exercise of influence. The policy appears as a response to the demands of the public, reflecting the will of various interest groups.

2.1.3. Theory of Deliberative Democracy

The indicator of the crisis of representative democracy is the widening gap between the representative and the constituency. Nowadays, the responsiveness of representative democracy to the demands of citizens has significantly decreased. There are complaints that communication between citizens and the elected elite is limited, and the agenda-setting of the needs of citizens is not reflected in the parliamentary policy-making process. Therefore, it is meaningful to discuss whether the deliberative model can be an alternative or remedy to representative democracy.

Deliberation means a discussion process in which people of different backgrounds and interests can listen, understand, and persuade each other to make more rational and legitimate public decisions to solve public problems. Deliberative democracy is a theoretical system in which democratic decision-making can be

justified only by public deliberation participated in by liberal and equal citizens.

Under a deliberative model, citizens are free to make political choices, following extensive debate and discussion regarding the implications and consequences of those choices, for both individuals and society. Under such an ideal model, citizens would be more actively envolved in their institutions and processes of governance. Leaders would be more assured of public support because the basis for making difficult and complex political decisions would be more transparent and legitimate (LeDuc, 2015).

Deliberative democracy as a theory began with scholars who studied it at the norm level. Cohen (1989) claimed that deliberative democracy worked as a moral requirement and emphasized the value of deliberative democracy on democratic legitimacy. Habermas (1996) pointed out that in the democratic polity, decisions must go through a deliberative democratic process based on legitimacy and rationality. Dryzek (2000) and Elstub (2000) noted the institutional feasibility of deliberative democracy. They emphasized reason-giving, preference change, consensus and compromise, and applicable forms of communication. Ackerman and Fishkin (2003) introduced various deliberative institutions such as deliberative polls, citizens' juries, planning cells, consensus conferences, and participatory budgeting. They emphasized the role of 'mini-public.'

According to Habermas (1996), deliberative democracy can coexist with representative democracy. Habermas' s Two-track model consists of two different contexts of the deliberative process: the informal public sphere and the institutionalized political system. The public sphere emphasizes the context of discovery, which is comparable to agenda-setting, while the political system emphasizes the context of justification which is comparable to policy decision-making and legislation. The deliberative process and contents in the informal public sphere and institutionalized political system can occur independently but organically.

It is not easy to operate an effective deliberative process or

realize deliberation in a large-scale country. In this regard, the electronic petition system can be a model for realizing deliberation if it is used as a public sphere and facilitates the deliberative process. The e-petition by the National Assembly can be viewed as a frame of deliberative process within the democratic system of representative democracy.

2.1.4. Theory of Digital Democracy

Since the early 1960s, new ICT emerged as a tool with massive potential to transform existing political communication and political system practices. Enormous literature deals with a wide range of issues and implications of ICT for the political process in theory and practice. Articles use the terms "electronic or e-democracy," "digital democracy," "teledemocracy," and "cyber democracy" (Hennen et al., 2020).

Hacker and van Dijk (2000) defines "digital democracy" as the use of information and communication technology and computer-mediated communication in all kinds of media (e.g., internet, interactive broadcasting, and digital telephony) for purposes of enhancing political democracy or the participation of citizens in democratic communication. Päivärinta and Sæbø (2006) argue that "e-democracy" refers to the use of information and communication technology in political debates and decision-making processes, complementing or contrasting traditional means of communication, such as face-to-face interaction or one-way mass media. The key concept of digital democracy is the practice of democracy with the support of digital media in political communication and participation Hennen et al., 2020).

Internet-based political participation covers both formally institutionalized mechanisms and informal civic engagement. For instance, Lindner et al. (2016) emphasize three dimensions of e-democracy by separating issues of the electronic public sphere (e-public) from issues of electronic participation (e-participation) in its manifold forms, and electronic voting (e-voting) as a category

of voting mechanism. Hennen et al. (2020) suggest a threefold structure of major digital tools used in different types of participation, serving different functions of citizen involvement: such as monitoring (e-information, e-deliberation, e-complaints), agenda setting (e-petitions, e-initiatives, e-campaigning), and decision-making (e-consultations, e-participatory budgeting, e-voting).

There are 'mobilization theory' and 'reinforcement theory' regarding online political participation (Nam, 2012; Cho Sung-dae & Jeong Yeon-jeong, 2016). The mobilization hypothesis postulates that the ICTs mobilize online participation of traditionally politically uninvolved people. It argues that using the Internet facilitates and diffuses new forms of political participation because the Internet would inform, organize, and engage people currently inactive and marginalized from the existing political theory (Norris, 2000). In contrast, the reinforcement hypothesis postulates that online resources would be utilized primarily for political participation by people who are already active and well-connected with traditional political channels. It is argued that the Internet has played a role in encouraging people who have been interested in politics from the past to become more interested and involved, but it does not play a pivotal role in mobilizing those who are non-participating or underrepresented (Best & Krueger, 2005).

Regarding the democratic roots of electronic participation, there is a 'government-led initiative,' also called the 'top-down approach' or 'supply-side model' (Islam, 2008; Pirannejad et al., 2019). This viewpoint focuses on the government's attempt to develop citizen participation through digital technologies (Pirannejad et al., 2019). In this model, the initiative in agenda-setting and policy-making rests with the political elites, and citizens are given opportunities to participate in a limited way. On the other hand, there is a 'citizen-led initiative,' which is labeled as a 'bottom-up approach' or 'demand-side model' (Alomari et al., 2012; Benz & Stutzer, 2004; Pirannejad et al., 2019). This viewpoint focuses on the process of citizen empowerment toward engagement in the

processes of policy and political decision-making (Pirannejad et al., 2019). This model emphasizes the formation of a diverse public sphere and open and voluntary participation.

2.1.5. Theories and Recent Debates on Online Petition System

Petitions are defined as formal requests to an authority, usually a governmental institution. In most liberal democracies, the citizen's right to petition the government, parliament, or other public entities is codified in legal documents (Huzzey & Miller, 2020). The right to petition has been guaranteed as a mean to correct social irrationality but fell into disuse in the twentieth century as representative democracy expanded. However, it has been regarded as a representative tool of participatory democracy which involves new information and communication technologies nowadays (Wright, 2016).

The online petition system takes various forms depending on the institutionalization, operation method, operating entity, and operation level (Linder & Riehm, 2009). An online petition system refers to a system that is operated by the executive, legislative, or independent public institutions at the national level and in which the petition is submitted electronically and disclosed to the public via the Internet.

In 2000, the Scottish e-petitioner was the first e-petition system established by an elected parliament. Since 2005, Germany's Federal Parliament, the Bundestag, has operated an e-petition system similar to the Scottish one (Linder & Riehm, 2009). The British Parliament also operates an e-petition system, which incorporated the Prime Minister's e-petition system in 2015. Currently, it is known that at least nine countries operate the online petition system at the national level.①

The evaluation of mechanisms for digital participation, such as

① Germany (2005), Lithuania (2007), United States (2011), United Kingdom (2006), Ireland (2016), Ukraine (2016), South Korea (2017), Australia (2016), Brazil (2009).

electronic petitions, is divided. There is a position that positively evaluates the potential of new politics brought by the internet (Bochel & Bochel, 2017; Jungherr & Jurgens, 2010; Wright, 2016). On the other hand, there is an opinion that digital media is not influential enough to change the rule of political participation or their influence is insignificant (Breuer & Farooq, 2012; Christensen, 2011).

For citizens to submit the petition to the internet space, a platform should be provided by the authority. The right to petition is basically in constitutive asymmetry because it can be realized only when an appropriate environment is provided for individuals from political authority. Therefore, in order to examine the role of the electronic petition, not only the quantitative aspect of participation but also the space in which participation takes place and its operating entity should be considered (Lee Ji-eun, 2021).

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. Foreign Studies

In foreign studies, Leston-Bandeira (2019) conducted a theoretical study on the online petition system. This study provides a new framework for the functions of electronic petition (e-petition) by analyzing the British Parliament's e-petition system. The functions are linkage, campaigning, scrutiny, and policy. As a result of the analysis, it was found that a large portion of e-petitions to the British Parliament was rejected, and only a tiny number led to specific actions, some of which served as campaigns or scrutiny, but the main impact was to promote public participation.

Tiburcio (2015) analyzed the petition system of European countries and the European Parliament and suggested a method for evaluating the petition system. According to this study, 19 evaluation criteria were suggested in categories such as conventional features, E-petitions, and leading actors' performance.

Wright (2016) questioned how they perceived “successful petitions” with the British petitioners and announced that various perceptions existed. In the past, recognition of the success or failure of a petition was limited to the policy impact. Wright claimed that in addition to the policy impact, raising awareness, expressing a strong attitude, and creating a sense of solidarity can be the successful result of the petition.

As a specific case study related to online petitions, Margetts et al. (2015) analyzed the behavioral patterns of citizens in e-petitions and the principle of operation of e-petitions in the United Kingdom. The authors were concerned with the main characteristics of the e-petition’s operation process: visibility (Is it known by others or the public that I am doing a specific action), social information (whether a specific person can observe other people’s specific behavior), and initial participation groups were suggested.

2.2.2. Domestic Studies

In domestic studies, studies were conducted on the Blue House Online Petition system. Lam (2020) compared the Blue House Online Petition system with domestic and foreign systems, such as the British online petition system and the US “We the People” system, and analyzed the characteristics, meaning, role, function, and effectiveness of the system. This study evaluated the Blue House Online Petition system based on the evaluation framework of the e-petition system drawn by Leston-Banderia (2019) and Tiburcio (2015).

There were studies analyzing the contents of petitions that are frequently mentioned or that obtain a large number of consents. Eom Seok-jin (2019) analyzed the characteristics of the petitions, the trend of consent, and the network effect. According to this study, these petitions contain public issues in various policy fields, and the pattern of citizens’ consent shows a typical power function distribution. On top of that, the pattern was analyzed by petitioners, and issues of the online network changed after 200,000 consent

were obtained in some cases.

Kim Jeong-in (2019) analyzed which factors affected the public agenda setting via the Blue House Online Petition platform from December 2018 to February 2019 and claimed that the purpose of the petition, whether the petitioner introduced himself or not, the type of attached URL, the number of petitions registered together on the day, the percentage of signatures each petition obtained on the first day affected the number of final signatures obtained for each petition.

Kim Ji-young & Kim Sang-hyun (2020) compared 51 petitions that received official responses from the Blue House to analyze the indirect impact of the content of online petitions on policy decision-making. This study argued that petitions citing media reports tended to function as agenda-expanding, while petitions originating from individual experiences tended to function as agenda-setting. In addition, most petitions have increased the number of media reports since more than 200,000 consent were obtained, empirically revealing that online petitions are performing the function of agenda-setting and expanding.

There were studies analyzing the participation factors of the users of the Blue House Online Petition system. Kim Tae-eun & Mo Eun-jung (2018) studied the psychological factors of petitioners participating in the online petition and concluded that the symbolism, usefulness, satisfaction, and users' trust in the online petition system were factors affecting the continuity of the intention to use the system. Kim Tae-eun, Mo Eun-jung & Yang Seon-mo (2020) conducted targeted group interviews with users of the Blue House Online Petition System to test hypotheses derived from the previous study and confirmed the results of the previous study.

Lee Seung-won, Yim Han-saem & Lee Hyun-woo (2018) examined two hypotheses, whether the factor of participation in online petitions was a phenomenon due to populism or an increase in political efficacy through an online survey. As a result, internal efficacy, the willingness to influence government policy through participation, and political interest were the main motives for

participating in the petition.

Regarding the petition system of the National Assembly, Ka Sang-jun et al. (2019) examined the status and limitations of the system and suggested ways to improve the system. The authors pointed out that the number of petitions and acceptance rate were very low and suggested the abolition of the referral system by MPs and the introduction of the online petition system.

Yoon Hyung-seok (2020) claimed that the National Assembly Online Petition System based on the National Assembly Act could directly contribute to the realization of the petitioner's rights because the entire process of the petition could be managed by the National Assembly and suggested institutional supplementary measures to expand participation opportunities.

2.3. Critical Review

Most of the recent studies focus on the Blue House Online Petition System. Research considering the characteristics of the National Assembly Online Petition system is needed. The National Assembly Online Petition system is different from the Blue House Online Petition system because the former has an effective policy linkage network therefore, petitions are likely to be reflected in actual legislative activities. The National Assembly Online Petition system has significance due to the meaning of supplementing the limitation of representative democracy.

On top of that, most studies focus on the actual status, activation plans, and influencing factors of online petitions. There is no empirical study on whether there are differences regarding the issues, processes, and results of petitions according to the operation method (written or online). This study will analyze the characteristics and effects of the new online petition system based on empirical case studies.

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methods

3.1. Research Questions

This research aims to examine the effect of the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition system on bill deliberation. Therefore, in order to find out the impact of the new online petition system on the bill deliberation of the National Assembly, this research raises three research questions as follows;

Research Question 1: Does the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition system increase citizen participation in the bill deliberation process?

Research Question 2: Does the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition system broaden the representation of different interests and issues than written petitions?

Research Question 3: Does the introduction of the National Assembly Online Petition system strengthen the responsiveness of the National Assembly?

Through these questions, this study would examine whether there are differences regarding the issues, processes, and results of petitions between the previous petition system which requires an introduction of members of the National Assembly and the new online petition system.

Regarding Research Question 1, this study will examine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of political participation through the petition system. To be specific, the number of petitions, disclosure, and submission of online petitions, and the level of involvement in the process of petitions can be examined.

Regarding Research Question 2, this study will examine whether there are differences in agendas between online petitions

and written petitions. To be specific, policy typologies, petition topics, petition typologies, and relevance to a specific region or organizations of both types of petition can be compared.

Regarding Research Question 3, responsiveness means making the political system more responsive to citizens' needs and preferences (Böhle & Riehm, 2013). This study will examine whether there are differences in terms of processing procedures or processing results between online petitions and written petitions. Specifically, the processing period, number of deliberations, and acceptance rates of both petition types can be compared.

3.2. Research Design

This study would employ a qualitative multiple case study. Multiple case studies identify similar phenomena occurring in comparable and contrasting cases so that they can strengthen and support the validity, precision, and stability of the findings. The inclusion of multiple cases is also a way to reinforce the internal validity and generalizability of the study.

With regard to research question 2, this study will compare the number of petitions before and after the introduction of the online petition system. This study will also compare the number of petitions by two petition systems.

With regard to research questions 3, 4, and 5, this study will compare the characteristics of two petition systems by investigating the petitions submitted to the National Assembly since the introduction of the online petition system. Descriptive statistics can be derived, and qualitative studies about the process can be done using the proceedings of the National Assembly.

3.3. Data Collection

The data regarding petitions would be collected from websites such as National Assembly Bill Information System

(http://likms.assembly.go.kr/bill/main.do) and National Assembly Online Petition System (https://petitions.assembly.go.kr).

The data also would be collected from a review of documents and archival records such as research articles, press articles, proceedings of the committees, subcommittees, and plenary sessions in the National Assembly as well as the contents of legislative bills and budget bills in which the petition was accepted.

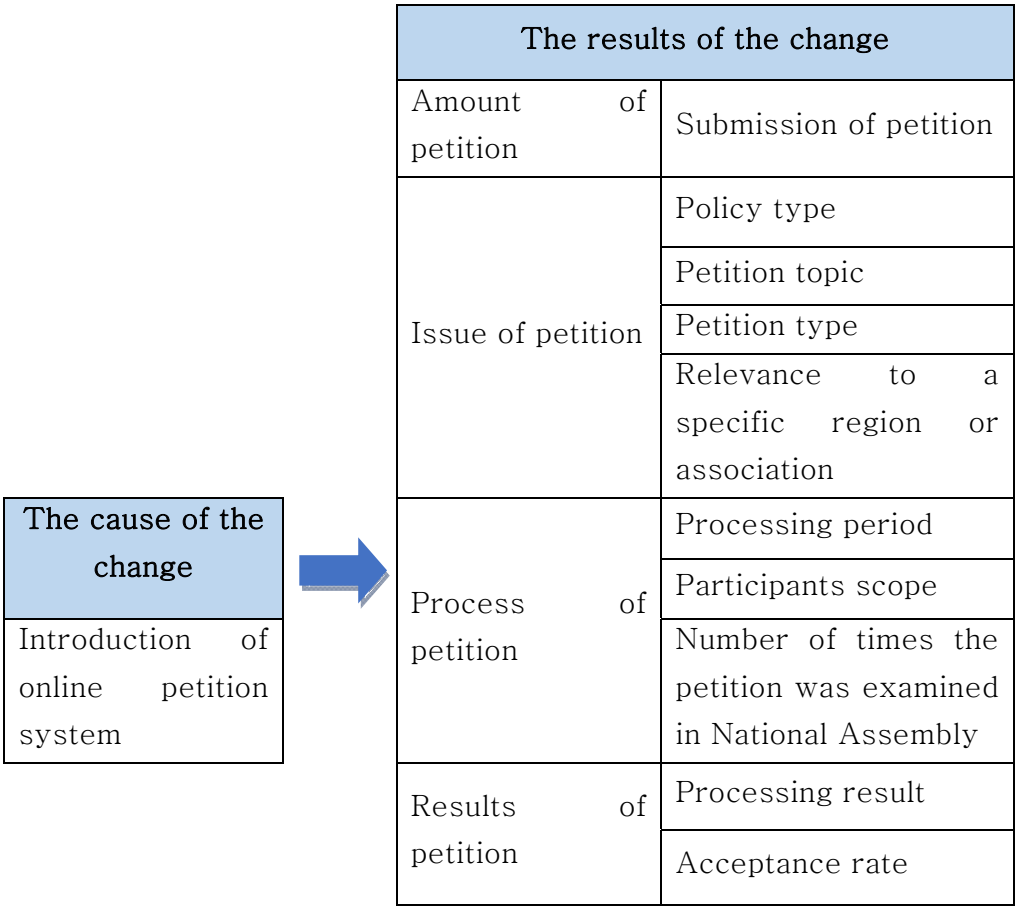
3.4. Analytical Framework

In this research, the factor that caused the change is the instruction of the online petition system of the National Assembly. The result of the change is the bill deliberation which can be categorized into four aspects such as amount, issue, process, and result of petitions.

This study would examine the amount, issue, process, and result of petitions according to the operation method. To this end, each petition case should be studied according to unified, reasonable, and relevant standards. In order to do so, this study will use an analytical framework with items from Leston-Banderia (2019), Tiburcio (2015), and other researchers on the petition system.

This study compares the existing written petition system and the newly introduced online petition system. Online petitions and written petitions operated by the National Assembly may be in a competitive or complementary relationship, as the operating entity and the subject of the petition are the same, but the petition method is different. In other words, in that the content requirements are the same, but the formal requirements are different, it provides an opportunity to compare the impact on the deliberation of the bills according to the petition method.

Figure 3: Analytical framework



To be specific, the amount of petitions helps examine whether the introduction of the online petition system has quantitatively expanded citizen participation. According to the theory of digital democracy, information and communication technologies enhance citizens' participation by lessening obstacles such as apathy, disabilities, time, and distance (Hennen et al., 2020). By comparing the number of petitions submitted, it can be confirmed whether the introduction of online petitions contributes to expanding citizen participation.

Issues of petitions can be discussed in relation to the agenda-setting function. Regarding the "issue of the petition," this study

would use detailed comparison criteria such as policy type[②], petition topic, petition type[③], and relevance to a specific region or association. Policy type and petition type show what purpose and intention the petitioner is requesting regarding the policy for each petition medium. The petition topic indicates the variety of petitions and the characteristics of the main issues. Relevance to a region or association shows the nature of interest pursued[④] by petition.

The process of the petition is the process by which petitions are examined and approved by the National Assembly. Regarding the "process of the petition," this study would use detailed criteria such as processing period, participants scope, and number of times the petition was examined in the National Assembly. This analysis shows how the National Assembly responds to petitions by each medium.

The result of the petition shows that the content of the petition transforms policy or is reflected in legislation/budget as a result. Regarding the "result of the petition," this study would use detailed criteria such as processing result and acceptance (complete) rate. Through this analysis, it is possible to know how quantitatively or qualitatively the purpose of the petition is approved by the National Assembly for each petition medium.

This analytical framework allows for a comparison of the characteristics of different mediums of the petition as it follows the entire process through which petitions are submitted, received, examined, and processed. Based on this framework, this study would compare petitions between different petition channels, such as the traditional sponsor system and e-petition. Through this

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② This study will use the public policy typologies of Lowi (1972), Frohock (1979), and Almond & Powell (1978) to compare the types of policies covered by each petition: Distributive policy, redistributive policy, regulative policy, ethical policy, constituent policy, symbolic policy.

③ This study will use the petition typologies of Lee Ji-eun (2021) to compare the types of each petition: Expressing opinions and feelings, appeal, request for investigation and punishment, request for examination, and request for institutional improvement.

④ This is one of the characteristics of the petition system by Tiburcio (2015): General or private.

comparison, it is expected that the features of the petition channel can be compared. As a result, this study examines how the online petition system contributes to the purpose of digital democracy, such as strengthening participatory democracy or enhancing democratic structures and processes, compared to the traditional written petition system.

Chapter 4. Analysis

4.1. Amount of Petitions

After the opening of the 21st National Assembly, from May 2020 to May 2023, a comparison of the written petition along with the introduction of Members and the online petition along with the consent of the people at the National Assembly is shown in Table 1. A total of 69 written petitions were submitted after being introduced by Members, and a total of 63 electronic petitions were established with the consent of the public. The number of petitions submitted by petition type was similar.

Table 1: Submission and processing status by petition type

Petition type	Submission	Completion	Complete rate
Written petitions	69	14	20.3%
Online petitions	63	6	9.5%
Total	132	20	15.2%

Compared with the state of submission of petitions since the 17th National Assembly (May 30, 2004 – May 29, 2008), the number of petitions submitted continues to show a decreasing trend, as shown in Table 2. Even considering that the term of the 21st National Assembly is until May 29, 2024, about one year left, the number of petitions submitted during the 21st National Assembly is only 63.8% of the total number of petitions submitted during the 20th National Assembly (May 30, 2016–May 29, 2020).

Table 2: Submission status of petitions

Session	Submission	Completion	Pending	Repeal
The 17th	432	116	-	316
The 18th	272	69	-	203
The 19th	227	50	-	117
The 20th	207	41	-	166
The 21st (20.5.30.-23.5.29.)	132	20	112	-

Note: Among the 207 cases submitted during the 20th National Assembly, 5 cases were received by online petitions.

It was expected that the number of petitions would increase with the introduction of the online petition system, but the number of petitions actually decreased. The data give no indication that the introduction of the online petition system has contributed to an overall increase in submitted petitions. However, according to Table 3, a total of 758 cases were disclosed by meeting the disclosure requirements (more than 100 people in favor within 30 days) of the online petition system, suggesting that the public's interest in the petition system and the desire to participate in it have increased. Moreover, given that 4.95 million signatures were required to establish 70 petitions, there was a lot of public participation in registering and receiving petitions.

Table 3: Disclosure and submission status of online petition

Session	Disclosure	Establishment (Submission)	Establishment rate
The 20th (20.1.1.-20.5.29.)	92	7	7.6%
The 21st (20.5.30.-23.5.29.)	666	63	9.5%
계	758	70	9.2%

Note: The number of disclosures is the number of cases for which the consent period is until May 29, 2023.

Table 4 shows the status of petitions received by the standing committees. Twenty-eight petitions were referred to the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, followed by 17 petitions to the Health and Welfare Committee and 14 petitions to the Public Administration and Security Committee.

Table 4: Receipt status by committee

Committee	Referral	Completion	Pending
House Steering	3	-	3
Legislation and Judiciary	28	1	27
National Policy	11	1	10
Strategy and Finance	6	-	6
Education	10	1	9
Science, ICT, Broadcasting, Communications	1	1	-
Foreign Affairs and Unification	3	2	1
National Defense	3	-	3
Public Administration and Security	14	2	12
Culture, Sports and Tourism	5	2	3
Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	6	2	4
Trade, Industry, Energy, Startups	7	2	5
Health and Welfare	18	4	14
Environment and Labor	7	-	7

Land Infrastructure and Transport	6	1	5
National Intelligence	1	–	1
Gender Equality and Family	1	–	1
Others	2	1	1
Total	132	20	112

4.2. Comparison of Agendas of Petitions

4.2.1. Policy Typology

This chapter analyzes the policy typologies that petitions deal with. Policy typologies were categorized into ‘distributive policy,’ ‘redistributive policy,’ ‘regulative policy,’ ‘ethics policy,’ ‘constituent policy,’ and ‘symbolic policy’ according to Lowi (1972), Frohock (1979), and Almond & Powell (1978).

In terms of policy typologies by petition type, as shown in Table 5, in the case of written petitions, 27 petitions (39.1%) were related to regulative policies, followed by 13 petitions (18.8%) related to distributive policies, 11 petitions related to constituent policies (15.9%), and eight petitions on redistributive policy (11.6%). Although the number of cases was not significant, there were some petitions regarding ethics policies (five petitions, 7.2%) and symbolic policies (five petitions, 7.2%).

In the case of online petitions, petitions related to regulative policies were the most with 41 cases (65.1%). Next, nine petitions on ethics policy (14.3%), eight petitions on constituent policy (12.7%), three petitions on distributive policy (4.8%), and two petitions on redistributive policy (3.2%) in order. There has yet to be a petition received regarding the symbolic policy.

Table 5: Policy typologies by petition type

	Total	Distri-butive	Redistri-butive	Regula-tive	Ethics	Consti-tuent	Sym-bolic
Written Petitions	69 (100%)	13 (18.8%)	8 (11.6%)	27 (39.1%)	5 (7.2%)	11 (15.9%)	5 (7.2%)
Online Petitions	63 (100%)	3 (4.8%)	2 (3.2%)	41 (65.1%)	9 (14.3%)	8 (12.7%)	0 (0%)
Total	132 (100%)	16 (12.1%)	10 (7.6%)	68 (51.5%)	14 (10.6%)	19 (14.4%)	5 (3.8%)

Both types of petitions deal with regulative policies the most, but written petitions cover more diverse policy typologies than online petitions. In particular, the numbers of petitions related to distributive policy, redistributive policy, and symbolic policy of written petitions are higher than those of online petitions. In the case of the distributive policy, as seen in Table 6, it seems to be because many contents are highly related to local districts or urge the distribution of resources such as budget support.

Table 6: Petitions regarding distributive policies among written petitions

Num	Petition Name	Committee	Status
1	Petition for the creation of a stable foundation for research and education in the field of humanities and social sciences	Education	Pending
2	Petition for budget support for the salvage of Sokcho 72 patrol boat by the Coast Guard	Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	Pending
3	Petition for the amendment to the Infectious Disease Prevention and Management Act	Health and Welfare	Pending
4	Petition for the enactment of the	Trade,	Completed

	Special Act on Compensation for Losses, Income Guarantee and Support for Victims in accordance with Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Measures	Industry, Energy, and Startups	
5	Petition for payment of the 4th disaster subsidy including farmers, fishermen, and livestock farmers	Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	Completed
6	Petition for the promotion of revision of related laws to improve the environment for using hearing aids for the disabled	Health and Welfare	Pending
7	Petition for the revision of the Act on the Establishment of Associations by Persons of Distinguished Service to the State	National Policy	Pending
8	Petition regarding the original plan for the GTX-D route (Gimpo-Hanam) and the extension of Line 5 (Gimpo-Hangang Line)	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
9	Petition for expansion of recognition period for participation in the Vietnam War	National Policy	Pending
10	Petition for a supplementary budget increase to support small business owners and self-employed people affected by COVID-19	Trade, Industry, Energy, and Startups	Completed
11	Petition for compensation for property restriction in the Ukraine-Russia crisis	National Policy	Pending
12	Petition for the promotion of the original plan for underground construction of the GTX-C route in Dobong-gu, Seoul	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
13	Petition regarding the revision of the Dementia Management Act to the Dementia and Degenerative Brain Disease Management Act	Health and Welfare	Pending

Table 7 shows petitions regarding redistributive policies among written petitions. Regarding redistributive policy, petitions aim to introduce policies aimed at income transfer and readjustment of distribution, such as the introduction of social solidarity tax and the enactment of the Land Excess Gains Tax Act. It is understood that Members introduced the petitions requested by non-governmental or non-profit organizations.

Table 7: Petitions regarding redistributive policies among written petitions

Num	Petition Name	Committee	Status
1	Petition for the amendment to the Income Tax Act	Strategy and Finance	Pending
2	Petition for the amendment to the Corporate Tax Act	Strategy and Finance	Pending
3	Petition for the enactment of Land Excess Gains Tax Act	Strategy and Finance	Pending
4	Petition for the amendment to the Electricity Business Act to reduce the burden on farm households	Trade, Industry, Energy, and Startups	Pending
5	Petition to request public stockpiling of 300,000 tons of rice produced in 2021	Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	Pending
6	Petition for implementation of market quarantine for 300,000 tons of rice produced in 2021	Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	Pending
7	Petition regarding the examination of the Korean version of the PPP Act in the February special session of the National Assembly	Strategy and Finance	Pending

8	Petition for the amendment of the Elderly Welfare Act	Health and Welfare	Pending

In the case of the symbolic policy, as seen in Table 8, it is understood that Members introduced the petitions of related civic groups to use symbols to trust the political system, such as designation as national treasures or public holidays.

Table 8: Petitions regarding symbolic policies among written petitions

Num	Petition Name	Committee	Status
1	Petition for designation of Hunminjeongeum Haeryebon as National Treasure No. 1	Culture, Sports and Tourism	Completed
2	Petition for the amendment to the Act on the Honorable Treatment of and Support for Persons of Distinguished Service to the State for the restoration of the rights and interests of recipients of the Medal of Merit of the Allied Forces	National Policy	Pending
3	Petition for designation of Constitution Day Holiday	Public Administration and Security	Pending
4	Petition for designation of Chungmugong Admiral Yi Sun-sin's relics as national treasures	Culture, Sports and Tourism	Completed
5	Petition regarding the request for support (arbitration) from the Korean government for the preservation of Jaeunsa Temple, a Korean temple located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Foreign Affairs and Unification	Completed

In the case of online petitions, the rate of dealing with regulative policies is overwhelmingly high (64.5%), which is because they deal with policies on restricting individual or corporate activities, that is, introducing, changing, or abolishing policies related to the real life of the people.

4.2.2. Petition Topic

This chapter analyzes keywords appearing in each of the written and online petitions to analyze the diversity of topics dealt with by petition type.

According to the results of frequency analysis of keywords derived using Python (Table 9), words such as 'state,' 'people,' 'prohibition,' 'revision,' 'National Assembly,' and 'committee' appear with high frequency in both petition types. In the case of written petitions, topics related to the exercise of property rights, such as 'bond,' 'debt,' 'housing,' and 'collateral,' showed a relatively high frequency of appearance. In addition, words such as 'farmland,' 'plan,' 'facility,' 'region,' and 'support' appeared frequently.

On the other hand, in the case of online petitions, human rights issues such as 'discrimination,' 'human rights,' 'women,' 'labor,' and 'equality' emerged as significant topics. In addition, words such as 'medicine,' 'family,' 'election,' 'policy,' and 'disaster' showed a high frequency of occurrence.

Table 9: Result of keyword frequency analysis

Rank	Written petition	Online petition
1	State	Discrimination
2	Bond	Prohibition
3	Housing	People
4	Corresponding	State
5	Debt	Human rights

6	Code	Homosexuality
7	Behavior	Women
8	People	Labor
9	Relevance	Reason
10	Collateral	Medicine
11	Institution	Amendment
12	Farmland	Institution
13	Public service	Education
14	Following	Content
15	National Assembly	Usage
16	Declaration	Committee
17	Content	Equality
18	Usage	Period
19	Plan	Family
20	Association	Criteria
21	Duty	Gender
22	Above	Intent
23	Facility	Opposition
24	Region	Election
25	Amendment	Guarantee
26	Support	Registration
27	Member of committee	Policy
28	Committee	Disaster
29	Reason	Behavior
30	Prohibition	National Assembly

4.2.3. Petition Typology

This chapter categorizes the types of petitions. The types of petitions are classified into 'expression of opinions/emotions,' 'appeals/complaints,' 'demand for investigation/punishment,' 'demand for examination,' and 'demand for institutional improvement' with reference to the research of Lee Ji-eun (2021).

The 'expression of opinions/emotions' type is a type whose primary purpose is to express positive or negative emotions in favor of or against a specific event or government policy. The 'appeals/complaints' is a type that expresses personal resentment, resentment, and false accusations. 'Demand for investigation/punishment,' 'demand for examination,' and 'demand for institutional improvement' have a relatively higher level of demand for listeners than the previous two types. 'Demand for investigation/punishment' is a type of request for investigation or punishment for a specific target or case and is a type that mainly requires the realization of judicial measures. 'Demand for examination' is a type of request for a specific review or examination of a specific subject or incident and is a type that mainly requires the realization of administrative measures. 'Demand for institutional improvement' is a type of request to revise or abolish an existing system or establishment of a new system. It is a type of petition for the change to be applied to society beyond a one-time response or action to the petition (Lee Ji-eun, 2021).

Table 10 shows the classification of the petition type. The petitions of the ‘demand for institutional improvement’ accounted for a high percentage of both written and online petitions. Of written petitions, 50 cases (72.5%) were demoing for institutional improvement, and were online petitions also 50 cases (79.4%).

Among the written petitions, 17 cases (24.6%) were of the ‘demand for examination’ type, and only 2 cases (2.9%) were of the ‘demand for investigation/punishment” type. Ten cases (15.9%) of the online petitions were of the ‘demand for examination’ type, and three cases (4.8%) were of the ‘request for investigation/punishment’ type. There were no types of ‘expression of opinions/emotions’ and ‘appeals/complaints’ in both written and online petitions.

Table 10: Classification of petition types

	Total	Expression of opinions/ emotions	Appeals/ Complaints	Demand for investigation/ punishment	Demand for examination	Demand for institutional improvement
Written	69	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.9%)	17 (24.6%)	50 (72.5%)
Online	63	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.8%)	10 (15.9%)	50 (79.4%)
Total	132	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (3.8%)	27 (20.5%)	100 (75.8%)

Petitions of the type of 'demand for examination' are matters that are not the inherent authority of the National Assembly, such as deliberation of legislation and budget bills, and are mainly urged to do matters that fall within the authority of the executive branch. It is understood that the petition was submitted to the National Assembly because the National Assembly, as a representative of the people, has extensive supervision and control over the executive branch. The National Assembly exercises control over the executive's executive power through reports, inquiries, inspections of state affairs, and state affairs investigations.

Table 11 shows cases of petitions demanding examination by petition medium. Among the written petitions, there were several issues with an executive character for a specific individual or corporation, such as the designation of a person killed for a righteous cause, granting veterans benefits, recognition of soldiers injured/wounded in the course of performing their duties, withdrawal of disposition to close a university, change of kindergarten establishment location, and review of GTX routes. On the other hand, among online petitions, there were cases in which administrative measures were requested for issues with multiple stakeholders, such as rapid approval for the use of disease treatments or reimbursement by health insurance.

Table 11: Cases of petitions demanding examination

Type	Petition Name	Committee	Status
Written Petition	Petition for the designation of a person killed for a righteous cause for Doctor Heo Yeong-gu, who died while treating a patient with COVID-19	Health and welfare	Completed
	Petition for the granting of veterans benefits in relation to an assault case during military leave	National policy	Pending
	Petition for a request for recognition of a soldier injured/wounded in the course of performing their duties by public volunteers during military service leave	National policy	Pending
	Petition for revision and follow-up of a compulsory closing policy of the university	Education	Completed
	Petition for change of establishment location of Singil Kindergarten	Education	Pending
	Petition regarding the original plan for the GTX-D route (Gimpo-Hanam) and the extension of Line 5 (Gimpo-Hangang Line)	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
	Petition for the promotion of the original plan for underground construction of the GTX-C route in Dobong-gu, Seoul	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
	Petition regarding the request for support (arbitration) from the Korean government for the preservation of Jaeunsa Temple, a Korean temple located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Foreign Affairs and Unification	Completed
	Petition for the establishment of	Foreign	Pending

	Orange County Consular Branch Office	Affairs and Unification	
Online Petition	Petition for expedited approval of Enhertu, a breast cancer treatment	Health and welfare	Completed
	Petition for expedited approval of Crysvita for XLH Hypophosphatemic Rickets	Health and welfare	Pending
	Petition for treatment benefit request for lung cancer drug 'Tagrisso'	Health and welfare	Pending
	Petition strongly calls for the eviction of serial sex offender Suwon Balbali Park ○○	Legislation and Judiciary	Pending

The point is that even if the petitioner presents their circumstances in detail and complains of injustice, most of them contain content demanding institutional improvement. In accordance with Article 123 (3) of the National Assembly Act, petitions that interfere with trials, insults state agencies and state secrets cannot be accepted by petitions. Moreover, in accordance with Articles 6 and 16 of the Petitions Act, petitions regarding matters that are under investigation, objection, or remedy procedures under other laws, such as trial, administrative adjudication, conciliation, and arbitration, are matters that cannot be accepted as petitions. Therefore, they seem to be filtered out at the receipt stage of petitions.

Among the online petitions, the following are cases in which the petitioner introduced himself/herself and their circumstances in detail and demanded institutional improvement, not just appeals and complaints.

Petition for strict punishment and identity disclosure of perpetrators of child abuse and murder (No. 2100128)

I am the uncle of a child who was recently murdered by child abuse.
I petition for more substantial judgment and personal disclosure of

precedents than amending the maximum sentence law in child abuse cases. I will say it comprehensively because it is a matter of non-acceptance of the petition if I mention the case currently being investigated.
Please remove the reduced sentence due to the issue of raising children left behind or due to mental and physical weakness, such as pregnancy or postpartum depression, because she wrote several statements of self-reflection and was reflecting.
(Omitted) In a case like this where there is no agreement or damage compensation, please punish the act of hiring a lawyer first to live first.
Please disclose the identity of child abuse criminals. These people can be anywhere around us.
I am anxious. Can I send my child to the playground? Can I send them to school or to a friend's house?

Petition regarding school violence suffered for 12 years (No. 2100124)

I have been a victim and survivor of school violence in OO Elementary School, OO Elementary School, OO Girls' Middle School, and OO Girls' High School for 12 years that occurred 8 years ago in OO County, Gyeongsangnam-do. I have difficulties in forming interpersonal relationships due to the aftereffects of school violence, and have been receiving treatment in a psychiatrist for over a year due to anxiety, insomnia, and depression, suffering from unknown abdominal pain. I happened to watch the drama "The Glory", and I am applying for a petition with the hope that there will be no more victims like me. School violence is difficult to say due to secondary harm like child sexual assault. In addition, it is a reality that it is difficult to report immediately because it takes time to heal as much as the damage has been done. I was exposed to school violence for 12 years, but the statute of limitations set by law is up to 10 years. I require to abolish the statute of limitations for school violence. I hope that the statute of limitations will not block the victim's path when he or she becomes an adult while being exposed to school violence. Second, the abolition of defamation is stated in a factual manner based on the facts of the crime. It is the people's right to speak out about those who should be isolated from society based on the facts of the victimization. Factually, there are people who need protection against defamation, but the reality is that current factual defamation is degenerating into a means by which perpetrators try to silence victims. I hope it will be a world that protects

the victims' wounds and the victims' human rights rather than the perpetrators' honor.

Petition for amendment of the Product Liability Act to 'switch the burden of proving the cause of a defect' in the event of a suspected sudden acceleration accident (No. 2100119)

Eight years ago, 2022.12.06, in Hongje-dong, Gangneung, my 12-year-old dreamy and bright son, Do-hyeon, was sent to heaven in an OOOOO sudden rash accident, and my mother, who was a driver at the time, was charged as a criminal.
(Omitted) While preparing for the lawsuit after being in this accident, I felt the pain of sadness and pain that I had left Dohyeon, and the cause of the accident as to why the sudden rash occurred without fully mourning. I burst into resentment and collapsed at the unfair and frustrating reality that I had to prove the truth.
- It is unfair and deplorable to have been in an accident, but why do the parties involved have to investigate the cause of the accident?
- Should not another precious life like Dohyeon be sacrificed in a sudden accident in this unfortunate and tragic reality of Korea where you have to prove if you are unfair?
- Until when should the value of the people's precious lives be neglected for manufacturers' interests and tyranny?
In order to alleviate Dohyeon's regret, I appeal to the National Assembly on behalf of all drivers and the people who are suffering the same pain due to sudden acceleration accidents that "in case of suspected sudden acceleration accidents, the burden of proof of defects should be shifted" and "manufacturers should prepare technical countermeasures." I earnestly and anxiously ask you to [join the petition for public consent].

4.2.4. Relevance to a Specific Region or Association

The motive for the petition can be divided into private interests (individual interests, collective interests of labor unions, occupational associations, and interest groups) or public interests (production of public goods, values such as human rights, peace,

and gender equality). This chapter examines the relevance of each petition type to a specific region or association. Relevance was counted when the petitioner specified that they were petitioning as a representative of the relevant organization or directly mentioned regional/professional relevance. Table 12 shows the region and association relevance by petition type.

Table 12: Region and association relevance by petition type

	Total	Subtotal	Region	Profession	Religious organization	Civic organization
Written petition	69	40 (58.0%)	8 (11.6%)	5 (7.2%)	1 (1.4%)	26 (37.7%)
Online petition	63	14 (22.2%)	2 (3.2%)	11 (17.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.6%)
Total	132	54 (40.9%)	10 (7.6%)	16 (12.1%)	1 (0.8%)	27 (20.5%)

In the case of written petitions, regional relevance and civic organizational relevance were stronger than online petitions. There were petitions regarding the benefits and costs of border areas and constituencies, including cases directly filed by local organizations (Chiaksan National Park Local Residents Association, Orange County Korean Association), as shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Cases of petitions related to the region among written petitions

Num	Petition Name	Committee	Status
1	Petition for the amendment to the Development of Inter-Korean Relations (Proposed by Congressman Song Young-gil) regarding the ban on the distribution of leaflets to North Korea	Foreign Affairs and Unification	Completed

2	Petition for cancellation of national park designation for farmland with low conservation value	Environment and Labor	Pending
3	Petition regarding the original plan for the GTX-D route (Gimpo-Hanam) and the extension of Line 5 (Gimpo-Hangang Line)	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
4	Petition for the promotion of the original plan for underground construction of the GTX-C route in Dobong-gu, Seoul	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending
5	Petition regarding the request for support (arbitration) from the Korean government for the preservation of Jaeunsa Temple, a Korean temple located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Foreign Affairs and Unification	Completed
6	Petition for the establishment of Orange County Consular Branch Office	Foreign Affairs and Unification	Pending
7	Petition for legislation to be reflected in the Special Act on the Establishment of Gangwon Special Self-Governing Province	Public Administration and Security	Pending
8	Petition for legislation for deregulation of military facility protection zones in border areas	National Defense	Pending

In addition, as shown in Table 14, 26 of the written petitions were submitted by civic organizations, accounting for 37.7% of the total petitions. In the case of petitions submitted by the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), most of them attach a detailed amendment to the law that contains the purpose of the petition. It can be seen that civic organizations are using the petition for the introduction of Members of the National Assembly as an institutional window to urge legislative institutional improvement.

Table 14: Cases of petitions related to civic organizations among written petitions

Num	Petition Name	Organization	Status
1	Petition for designation of Hunminjeongeum Haeryebon as National Treasure No. 1	Finding the Place of Cultural Heritage	Completed
2	Petition for the enactment of Public Officials' Conflict of Interest Prevention Act	PSPD	Pending
3	Petition for the revision of the Criminal Procedure Act to expand the public judgment system	PSPD	Pending
4	Petition for the amendment of the Civil Procedure Act to abolish the fee for the disclosure of judgments	PSPD	Pending
5	Petition for the amendment to the Infectious Disease Prevention and Management Act	PSPD	Pending
6	Petition for the enactment of the Special Act on Compensation for Losses and Income Guarantee and Support for Victims in accordance with Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Measures	PSPD	Completed
7	Petition for the amendment to the Income Tax Act	PSPD	Pending
8	Petition for the amendment to the Corporate Tax Act	PSPD	Pending
9	Petition against the establishment of the Public Prosecutors' Office and the Severe Crime Investigation Office and the abolition of the Prosecutor's Office	Citizen Coalition for Social Justice	Pending
10	Petition for the revision of the Public Housing Special Act	PSPD	Pending

11	Petition for the enactment of Land Excess Gains Tax Act	PSPD	Pending
12	Petition for the revision of the Act on the Establishment of Associations by Persons of Distinguished Service to the State	Korean Patriotic Martyrs' Association	Pending
13	Petition for the amendment of the Farmland Act to establish the land to the tillers principle and eradicate farmland speculation	Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice	Pending
14	Petition for the impeachment of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Kim Myung-soo	Lawyers for Human Rights and Unification of Korea	Pending
15	Petition for designation of Constitution Day Holiday	Lawyers for Human Rights and Unification of Korea	Pending
16	Petition for revision of the Interest Limitation Act	PSPD	Pending
17	Petition for revision of the Act on Registration of Lending Business and Protection of Financial Users	PSPD	Pending
18	Petition for the amendment of the Special Act for the Protection of Guarantors	PSPD	Pending
19	Petition for the amendment of the Fair Debt Collection Act	PSPD	Pending
20	Petition for the amendment of the Debtor Rehabilitation and Bankruptcy Act	PSPD	Pending
21	Petition for the amendment of the Act on the Organization and Operation of National and Autonomous Police	PSPD	Pending
22	Petition for the revision of the National Assembly Act and the National Assembly Petition Review	PSPD	Pending

	Rules to ensure the people's practical right to petition		
23	Petition for the amendment of the Act on Allowances for Members of the National Assembly to suspend the payment of allowances during detention	PSPD	Pending
24	Petition for expedited legislative processing of the National Cyber Security Framework Act announced by the National Intelligence Service	Northeast Asian Diplomacy and Security Forum	Pending
25	Legislative petition for the amendment to the Public Official Election Act to introduce a 100% linked proportional representation system and prevent the creation of satellite political parties	Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice	Pending
26	Petition regarding the revision of the Dementia Management Act to the Dementia and Degenerative Brain Disease Management Act	Korean Parkinson's Disease Association	Pending

In the case of the online petition, it was found that the profession-relatedness was higher than in the written petition. 17.5% (11 cases) of all online petitions were petitioned to represent the interests of the profession, and there were also a small number of cases related to regions (two cases) and civic organizations (one case).

Table 15: Cases of petitions related to profession among online petitions

Num	Petition Name	Committee	Status
1	Petition for opposition to the enactment and revision of laws related to the local	Health and Welfare	Pending

	doctor system and regarding the reconsideration of the number of doctors using the quota of Korean medicine schools		
2	Petition for the revision of education-related laws to prepare legal grounds for education officials and after-school/care classes	Education	Pending
3	Petition to reduce the number of patients treated per nurse	Health and Welfare	Pending
4	Petition for the Framework Act on Agriculture, Rural Community and Farmers	Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	Pending
5	Petition for the enactment of the Framework Act on Caring, which stipulates the state's responsibility for caring and includes improvements in the treatment of 1.1 million caring workers	Environment and Labor	Pending
6	Petition for the enactment of the Special Act on the Livelihood Protection of Street Vendors	Trade, Industry, Energy, and Startups	Pending
7	Petition for the elimination of the income gap in the civil servants' pension and the guarantee of full severance pay	Public Administration and Security	Pending
8	Petition for the amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Union Act to guarantee the labor rights of all workers	Environment and Labor	Pending
9	Petition against unrealistic integration of kindergartens and daycare centers	Education	Pending
10	Petition for improving treatment of professional soldiers	National Defense	Pending
11	Petition for the statutory body of Korean Realtors Association	Land Infrastructure and Transport	Pending

The proportion of petitions related to a specific region or group was higher in written petitions (40 cases, 58.0%) than in online petitions (14 cases, 22.2%). It can be interpreted that petitions for the introduction of Members tend to deal with issues limited to the particular benefits and costs of a relatively small region or organization, and online petitions tend to deal with public issues related to the benefits and costs of the entire state or people. However, since the petitions that did not directly mention the relevance to the region or organization were not counted, the possibility that the representative of a specific organization initiated the online petition and disseminated it to obtain the consent of group members and the public cannot be ruled out.

4.2.5. Cases in which multiple petitions have been submitted for the same issue

Examining the issues addressed by the petition, there are many cases in which various opinions in favor and opposition have been submitted as petitions on controversial issues. First, in relation to the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act, one online petition was submitted in favor of the enactment, and four petitions against the enactment (three online petitions and one written petition) were submitted. The argument in favor of the petition is that 15 years have passed since the National Human Rights Commission of Korea recommended the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act and that the enactment of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law is necessary for the realization of equal rights under the Constitution. The main argument of the opposing petition is that the purpose and nature of the law are ambiguous and that it is likely to reverse discriminate or punish people with different opinions in the name of protecting victims of discriminatory acts.

Figure 4: Petition related to the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act

Pros			Cons		
2100048	Online petition	Petition for the enactment of Anti-Discrimination law	2100003	Online petition	Petition Against the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Act
			2100012	Written petition	Petition against the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act
			2100049	Online petition	Petition against Equality Act
			2100093	Online petition	Petition against the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act

Second, in relation to the abolition of the National Security Act, one online petition was submitted in favor of the abolition, and one online petition against the abolition was submitted. The argument in favor of the petition is that the National Security Act should be abolished to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience, basic labor rights and political freedom, and creative artistic activities. The argument for the petition against the abolition of the act is that it is necessary to maintain the law for the security and safety of the country and its people.

Figure 5: Petition related to the repeal of the National Security Act

Pros				Cons		
2100043	Online petition	Petition for repeal of the National Security Act	⇔	2100047	Online petition	Petition against repeal of the National Security Act

Third, one online petition claiming to strengthen the protection of women's reproductive rights and one online petition claiming to strengthen the protection of the fetus's right to life were submitted after the decision on the constitutional inconsistency of the crime of abortion under criminal law. The former argues that the crime of abortion should be completely abolished without limiting the number of weeks, given that the crime of abortion threatens women's body sovereignty and right to health. On the other hand, the latter argues that it is necessary to protect the life of the fetus whose heartbeat is detected, so it opposes the permission of abortion for reasons other than maternal health and rape.

Figure 6: Petitions related to granting abortion

Pros				Cons		
2100019	Online petition	Petition for the complete abolition of the crime of abortion and amendment of laws related to	⇔	2100026	Online petition	Petition requesting the amendment to the abortion law to protect

		guaranteeing women's reproductive rights			fetal life

Fourth, in relation to the establishment of the Severe Crime Investigation Agency, one online petition in favor of the establishment and one written petition against the establishment were submitted. The argument for the petition in favor is the claim that legislative measures and deadlines for establishing the Severe Crime Investigation Agency should be legislated to complete the prosecution's advancement, which is a demand of the people and a task of the times. The objecting petition argues that the amendment to the law does not conform to the principle of institutional consistency or legitimacy of the criminal law, weakens the guarantee of the people's fundamental human rights, and diminishes the state's investigative capacity.

Figure 7: Petition related to the establishment of the Severe Crime Investigation Agency

Pros			Cons		
2100088	Online petition	Petition for the enactment of establishment and deadline of the Severe Crime Investigation Agency	2100033	Written petition	Petition against the establishment of the Public Prosecutors' Office and the Severe Crime Investigation Agency and the abolition of the Prosecutor's Office

Most of the petitions with conflicting opinions were received in the form of online petitions. Although there is no space to express separate opinions for each online petition, the online petition system partially functions as a public forum in expressing opinions for and against a specific issue and deliberation of various opinions in the National Assembly.

On the other hand, there are cases in which many petitions with similar purports have been submitted. As shown in Table 16, several petitions were submitted on issues such as public stockpiling of rice, counting of votes in public elections, abolishment of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, support for compensation for damage caused by COVID-19, and shortening of the mandatory quarantine period. The repeated submission of similar petitions serves the function of expressing a strong preference for a particular policy or reviewing various aspects of the arguments in favor.

Table 16: Cases of petitions with similar purposes

Issue	Number	Type	Petition Name
Public stockpiling of rice	2100066	Written	Petition to request public stockpiling of 300,000 tons of rice produced in 2021
	2100068	Written	Petition for implementation of market quarantine for 300,000 tons of rice produced in 2021
Implementation of counting votes in election	2100051	Written	Petition for the passage of the amendment to the Public Official Election Act, initiated by Congressman Dae-Chool Park
	2100071	Written	Petition for the amendment of the Public Official Election Act for the implementation of counting votes in the March 22nd presidential election
	2100077	Online	Petition for the amendment of the

			Public Official Election Act
Abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family	2100005	Online	Petition for the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
	2100089	Online	Petition in favor of and consent to the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
Compensation and support for damage by COVID-19	2100029	Written	Petition for the amendment to the Infectious Disease Prevention and Management Act
	2100030	Written	Petition for the enactment of the Special Act on Compensation for Losses and Income Guarantee and Support for Victims in accordance with Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Measures
	2100076	Written	Petition for supplementary budget increase to support small business owners and self-employed people affected by COVID-19
Reduction of mandatory quarantine period	2100036	Written	Petition for conditional exemption from mandatory 2-week quarantine for Korean businesspeople and Koreans entering from the United States
	2100037	Written	Petition for shortening the mandatory quarantine period for overseas Koreans visiting their home country

4.3. Comparison of Petition Processing Procedures

4.3.1. Processing Period

Regarding the process of petitions, Table 17 shows the processing period by petition type. The average processing period after submission of petitions was 320 days in the case of written petitions. Among the written petitions, the petition that took the longest time to complete was the ‘Petition for the designation of a person killed for a righteous cause for Doctor Heo Yeong-gu, who died while treating a patient with COVID-19,’ which took 1,021 days. The petition was completed as unrealizable due to a result of the Medical Case Review Committee review in May 2021, as the doctor was not designated as a person killed for a righteous cause.

The petition that was processed in the shortest time was the ‘Petition regarding the revision of the Special Act on Public Housing,’ which took nine days to complete. The petition calls for institutional improvement to prevent using undisclosed information related to the development of public housing districts by employees in related organizations. This is because the importance and urgency of the issue in relation to the suspicion of pre-purchase of new town sites in Gwangmyeong and Siheung by employees of Korea Land and Housing Corporation was great, and it was reflected in the discussion on institutional improvement that proceeded quickly in the National Assembly.

In the case of online petitions, it took an average of 121 days to complete, which was shorter than written petitions. Among the online petitions, the petition that took the longest time to process was the ‘Petition for expedited approval of Enhertu, a breast cancer treatment,’ which took 237 days. The petition that was processed in the shortest time was the ‘Petition for revision of the law for freedom of the press and political independence of public broadcasting,’ which took only four days from referral to the committee to be completed.

In the former case, after the petition was submitted in August

2022, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety approved the item in September 2022, and the deliberation by the Petition Subcommittee was conducted in April 2023. In the case of the latter, the petition urges improvement in the governance structure to strengthen the political independence of public broadcasting. It was referred to the committee on November 28, 2022, and the related amendment bills, including the 'Broadcasting Act', passed in December 2022. It seems that it was processed within a short period as it was processed by the opposition party alone at the Science and Technology Information Broadcasting and Communications Commission on December 2, 2022.

Table 17: Processing period by petition type

(Unit: Day)

Type	Average processing period	Longest processing period	Shortest processing period
Written petition	320	1,021	9
Online petition	121	237	4
Total	260	1,021	4

The processing period of the petition is related to the urgency of the issue addressed by the petition and the responsiveness of the National Assembly to the issue.

Wilcoxon's rank sum test[⑤] was conducted on the processing

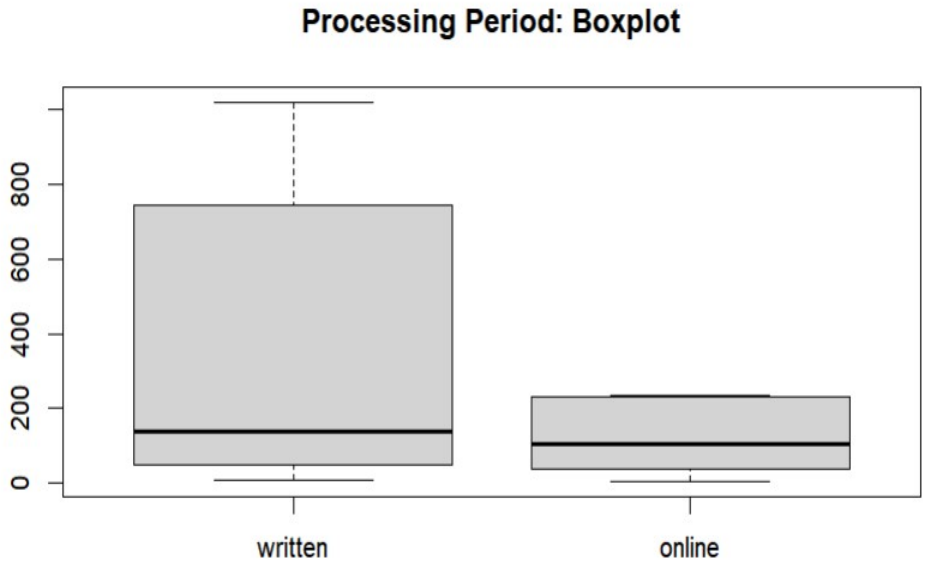
⑤ The Wilcoxon rank sum test is the non-parametric method of the paired t-test which is used to test whether there is a difference between the means of two groups. While the general independent t-test is a method used when observations have a normal distribution, the Wilcoxon rank test is a non-parametric method used when it is difficult to assume a normal distribution.
As a result of the Shapiro-wilk normality test, the processing period data of

period of written petitions and online petitions to examine whether there was a significant difference in the processing period of the two types of petitions.

The null hypothesis is that 'the processing period of written petitions is not different from the processing period of online petitions.'

As a result of analysis using the statistical package R, the p-value is 0.397. At a 5 percent significance level, this analysis would fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the processing period of written petitions and the processing period of online petitions. Figure 8 shows a boxplot of the processing period of the two types of petitions.

Figure 8: Processing period of the two types of petitions



written petitions followed a normal distribution (p-value = 0.002397), but the processing period data of online petitions did not follow a normal distribution (p-value = 0.3413).

4.3.2. Number of Deliberation

Petitions referred to the relevant committees are presented to the plenary session and, after alternative discussions, are referred to subcommittees (petition review subcommittees or bill review subcommittees) for more in-depth review. However, under Article 58 (4) of the National Assembly Act, a petition directly related to an agenda under examination after being referred to a subcommittee can be directly referred to the subcommittee for examination.

Table 18 shows the number of deliberations by petition type. Fifty-six petitions were presented to the committee or directly referred to a subcommittee out of 69 written petitions, and the ratio of petitions for which review was initiated beyond the review threshold of the committee (referred to as the 'presented ratio') is 81.2%. In the case of online petitions, 43 petitions were presented to the committee or directly referred to the subcommittee out of 63 petitions, with a presented ratio of 68.3%. The ratio of online petitions is about 10% lower than that of written petitions.

In the case of written petitions, out of 56 cases referred to the subcommittee, 15 were examined by the subcommittee, and the actual examination rate was 21.7%. In the case of online petitions, 16 of the 43 cases referred to the subcommittee were reviewed by the subcommittee, and the examination rate was 25.4%.

Table 18: Number of deliberations by petition type

Type	Total (A)	Presented to the committee (B)	Directly referred to the subcommittee (C)	Unpresented	Presented rate [(B+C)/A]	Examination by the subcommittee (D)	Examination rate (D/A)
Written	69	40	16	13	81.2%	15	21.7%
Online	63	34	9	20[1)]	68.3%	16	25.4%
Total	132	74	25	33	75.0%	31	23.5%

Note: 1) Including one withdrawal

Of the petitions referred to the relevant committee, 33 petitions (13 written petitions, 20 online petitions) have not been presented to the committee and have not passed the threshold of review. In addition, the rate of review by the subcommittee was 23.5% (written petition 21.7%, online petition 25.4%), indicating that only about 1 out of 5 petitions are being examined. An active examination is needed to improve the National Assembly's responsiveness and accountability to the petitioner's petition.

Meanwhile, looking at the number of subcommittee examinations by petition type in Table 19, the total number of examinations was 22 for written petitions and 34 for online petitions, which is more than 1.5 times higher than the number of examinations for online petitions. When calculating the average number of subcommittee examinations, it can be understood that written petitions went through substantive review 0.32 times per petition and online petitions 0.54 times per petition. The average number of examinations per petition referred to the subcommittee was 0.39 for written petitions and 0.79 for online petitions, more than twice as high for online petitions.

Table 19: Number of subcommittee examinations by petition type

Type	Total (A)	Referred to the subcommittee (B)	Examination by subcommittee (C)	Average number of examination	
				C/A	C/B
Written petition	69	56	22	0.32	0.39
Online petition	63	43	34	0.54	0.79
Total	132	99	56	0.42	0.57

The subcommittee reviews whether the purpose of the petition is desirable and feasible and determines whether to reflect it in the legislative or budget bills. Although online petitions show a higher number of examinations than written petitions, the fact that each petition has not gone through a single subcommittee review suggests the need to enhance the National Assembly's interest in the deliberation of petitions. It can provide a signal that the opinions of citizens who have submitted petitions are being fully heard and considered by their representatives.

4.3.3. Significant Issues in the Process

Usually, the petition subcommittee listens to the report of the chief expert on the petition and the opinions of the government and proceeds with a decision after going through questions and answers from the members of the subcommittee.

Among the online petitions submitted to the 21st National Assembly, the ‘petition for the enactment of the coal phase-out law for the withdrawal of new coal-fired power plants’ aims to provide grounds for canceling the license for a coal-fired power plant project that has already been approved and is under construction to respond to the climate crisis. On February 14, 2023, during the process of examining the petition by the National Assembly Trade, Industry, Energy, Small and Medium Venture Business Committee, the petitioner, the co-representative of the Samcheok Thermal Power Plant Opposition Committee, stated the purpose of the petition.

○Petitioner Seong Won-ki hello. I am Seong Won-ki, an honorary professor at Kangwon National University and co-representative of the Samcheok Coal-Fired Power Plant Opposition Committee. I want to express my gratitude to Chairperson Kim Jung-ho and the members who attended today for holding a subcommittee to examine the petition regarding the withdrawal of new coal-fired power plants. As you have heard in the previous

explanation, this is the content of the petition for public consent petitioned by 50,000 people. To recap, the new coal-fired power plant, now the Samcheok coal-fired power plant is the only one left. About Samcheok Coal-fired Power Plant Units 1 and 2, 50,000 people have petitioned to withdraw this power plant.
You are talking about a lot of general things. In a few respects, I will briefly tell you the essentials. (omit)

Considering that the relevant legislative bill is pending at the subcommittee, it was decided to refer the petition to the relevant subcommittee for combined review with the related bill.

Allowing the petitioner to directly explain the purpose of the petition can activate public participation in the petition reviewing process and provide a signal that the National Assembly is listening to the public's opinions. Furthermore, it is expected that the e-petition system combined with the representative democracy system can contribute to functioning as a public sphere by providing opportunities for additional exchange of opinions and mutual exchanges between the 'informal public realm' and the 'official political system.'

4.4. Comparison of Processing Results

4.4.1. Processing Results

A comparison of written and online petitions processed by the National Assembly after the opening of the 21st National Assembly (from May 2020 to May 2023) is as shown in Table 20. Fourteen out of 69 written petitions were completed, showing a complete rate of 20.3%, while only 6 out of 63 online petitions were completed, resulting in a complete rate of 9.5%. The complete rate of written petitions is about twice as high as that of online petitions.

Table 20: Processing results by petition type

Petition type	Submission	Completion	Complete rate
Written petitions	69	14	20.3%
Online petitions	63	6	9.5%
Total	132	20	15.2%

Compared to the status of petition processing since the 17th National Assembly (May 30, 2004 – May 29, 2008), the complete rate, including adoption, not to refer to the plenary session, and withdrawal, shows a decreasing trend since the 17th National Assembly. The complete rate, which was 26.9% in the 17th National Assembly, decreased to 15.2% in the 21st National Assembly. It is expected that the examination of petitions will proceed during the remaining term, so the complete rate is expected to increase compared to the current one.

Table 21: Petition processing status by the National Assembly

Session	Submission	Completion				Pending	Repeal
		Adoption	Not to refer to the plenary session	Withdrawal	Subtotal (Complete rate)		
The 17th	432	4	102	10	116 (26.9%)	–	316
The 18th	272	3	61	5	69 (25.4%)	–	203
The 19th	227	2	44	4	50 (22.0%)	–	117
The 20th	207	4	37	–	41 (19.8%)	–	166
The 21th (20.5.30.–23.5.29.)	132	2	17	1	20 (15.2%)	112	–

Note: Among the 207 cases submitted during the 20th National Assembly, 5 cases were received by online petitions

Looking at the status of petitions completed by the standing committees in Table 22, the number of cases completed is generally small. The Health and Welfare Committee completed four petitions, and Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, Public Administration and Security Committee, Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Food Committee, and Industry and Trade Committee each completed two petitions.

Table 22: Completion status by Committee

Committee	Referral	Completion	Pending
House Steering	3	–	3
Legislation and Judiciary	28	1	27
National Policy	11	1	10
Strategy and Finance	6	–	6
Education	10	1	9
Science, ICT, Broadcasting, Communications	1	1	–
Foreign Affairs and Unification	3	2	1
National Defense	3	–	3
Public Administration and Security	14	2	12
Culture, Sports and Tourism	5	2	3
Agriculture, Food, Oceans and Fisheries	6	2	4
Trade, Industry, Energy, Startups	7	2	5
Health and	18	4	14

Welfare			
Environment and Labor	7	–	7
Land Infrastructure and Transport	6	1	5
National Intelligence	1	–	1
Gender Equality and Family	1	–	1
Others	2	1	1
Total	132	20	112

Looking at the specific processing status of petitions by petition type in Table 23, in the case of written petitions, out of 14 cases completed, one petition was discarded after being reflected in an alternative such as a legislative bill, four petitions were reflected in an alternative, six petitions were purpose achieved, and six petitions were not realized (inconsistency with the legal policy, inherent authority of other ministries, lack of budget situation or conditions). The rate of achieving the purpose of the petition, excluding the unrealizable, was 15.9%.

In the case of online petitions, out of six completed cases, one petition was discarded by being reflected in the alternative, two petitions were reflected in the alternative, one was achieved, and one was unrealizable. The rate of achieving the purpose of the petition was 6.3%.

Table 23: Specified processing status by petition type

Type	Discarded by being reflected in alternatives	Not to refer to the plenary session			Total	Rate of achieving the purpose of petition
		Reflected in alternatives	Purpose achieved	Unrealizable		
Written petition	1	4	6	3	14	15.9%
Online petition	1	2	1	1	6	6.3%
Total	2	6	7	4	20	11.4%

4.4.2. Significant Issues in the Processing Results

Regarding the processing results of petitions, it should be noted that there are some petitions that have not been completed even though legislative bills with contents similar to the purpose of the petitions have been approved.

For instance, as shown in Table 24, the ‘petition for the enactment of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants’ calls for the enactment of a law to ensure fairness in the performance of public officials’ duties and to block the possibility of corruption. The legislative bill was passed in April 2021, and the purpose of the petition was achieved. However, the petition was not examined or reflected as an alternative in the Legislative Bill Deliberation Subcommittee.

In addition, the ‘petition for a deferment of the financial investment income tax without justification and no actual benefit’ was a petition to postpone the introduction of the financial investment income tax for two years, which was scheduled to be implemented in 2023. Although the ‘Amendment Act of the Income Tax Act’ was passed in December 2022, the petition was not discarded by being reflected in the alternative.

Table 24: Cases of pending petitions not being reflected in alternatives

Petition Name	Type	Commi-ttee	Referral	Examination	Legislative bill
Petition for the enactment of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants	Written	National Policy	2020.11.24.	2021.02.16. presented to the committee	Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants approved (2021.04.29.)
Petition against the establishment of the Public Prosecutors' Office and the Severe Crime Investigation Agency and the abolition of the Prosecutor's Office	Written	Legislation and Judiciary	2021.03.04.	2021.03.16. presented to the committee, 2021.04.18, 04.19, 04.20, 04.25, 04.26. examined by the subcommittee	Amendment to the Public Prosecutor's Office Act approved (2022.04.27.)
Petition for a deferment of the financial investment income tax without justification and no actual benefit'	Online	Strategy and Finance	2022.10.01.	2022.12.01. presented to the committee	Amendment to the Income Tax Act approved (2022.12.23.)

According to Article 13 of the 'Petition Examination Rules of the National Assembly,' if the committee decides not to refer the petition to the plenary session or if the petition is approved in the plenary session, the petitioner must be notified. If it is expected that the purpose of the petition can be achieved, it is desirable to examine and complete the petition and notify the petitioner of the result.

Meanwhile, among the petitions that have not referred to the plenary session considered that the purpose of the petition has been achieved, there are cases in which the purpose of the petition has not actually been achieved because the examination of petitions was delayed. Two petitions referred to the Health and Welfare Committee in March 2021 were intended to request exemption from or shortening the two-week quarantine for overseas Koreans vaccinated or issued negative certificates.

The committee examined and completed the petition in April 2023 after the mandatory self-quarantine measures for all entrants from abroad were abolished on June 8, 2022, following the stabilization of the COVID-19 situation.

Table 25: Cases in which the purpose of the petition was not actually achieved due to delay in examination

Petition Name	Type	Commi-ttee	Referral	Examination	Status
Petition for conditional exemption from mandatory 2-week quarantine for Korean businesspeople and Koreans entering from the United States	Written	Health and Welfare	2021.03.25.	2021.04.26. presented to the committee 2023.04.18. examined by the subcommittee	Not to refer to the plenary session (purpose achieved)
Petition for shortening the mandatory quarantine period for overseas Koreans visiting their home country	Written	Health and Welfare	2021.04.08.	2021.04.26. presented to the committee 2023.04.18. examined by the subcommittee	Not to refer to the plenary session (purpose achieved)

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.1. Research Results and Implications

As a result of analyzing all the written and online petitions received by the National Assembly for three years from the 21st National Assembly (May 2020 to May 2023), the following results were derived.

First, the number of petitions received after the introduction of the online petition system decreased compared to the previous session. However, the total number of online petitions disclosed by meeting the disclosure requirements increased significantly compared to the previous session. After the introduction of the online petition system, the number of written and online petitions received was 69 and 63, showing no significant difference.

Second, in terms of issues of petitions, both written petitions and online petitions dealt with regulative policies in the highest proportion, but written petitions covered various policy types (distributive policy, redistributive policy, and symbolic policy) compared to online petitions. In written petitions, topics related to the exercise of property rights showed a relatively high frequency of appearance. On the other hand, in online petitions, human rights issues emerged as an important topic. Written petitions were strongly related to local constituencies or civic groups, and online petitions had a relatively large amount of content to represent the interests of the profession. Written petitions tended to deal with issues related to the particular benefits and costs of relatively few regions or organizations, while online petitions tended to deal with broader or general public issues with a wide range of stakeholders.

Third, there are cases in which opinions in favor and opposition were received as petitions on controversial issues, such as the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act, the abolition of the National Security Act, and the abolition of the crime of abortion, and most of them were submitted by online petition system. It can be

interpreted that the online petition is partially playing the role of a public arena in that various opinions are expressed and deliberated in the National Assembly.

Fourth, in terms of the processing procedure of petitions, the average processing period and the most prolonged/shortest processing periods of online petitions were all shorter than those of written petitions. However, as a result of Wilcoxon's rank sum test, there is no statistically significant difference between the processing period of written petitions and the processing period of online petitions. Compared to written petitions, online petitions had a lower rate of initiation of review but the higher rate and average number of examinations after being referred to the subcommittee. Although rare, there has been a case in which a petitioner of an online petition appeared and directly explained the purpose of the petition in the Petition Deliberation Subcommittee.

Fifth, in terms of the processing results of petitions, the complete rate of written petitions (20.3%) was about twice as high as that of online petitions (9.5%). The rate of achieving the purpose of the petition was also more than twice as high in written petitions (15.9%) as in online petitions (6.3%). Although the complete rate is lower than that of the previous session, there is a possibility that the rate will increase from the current level as the examination of petitions proceeds during the remaining term.

Table 26: Results of comparative analysis

Bill Deliberation Process	Comparison Criteria	Written Petition	Online Petition
Submission of petition	Amount of petition	69 submitted	63 submitted 666 disclosed
		Total amount decreased after introduction of the online petition system	
Issue of petition (Agenda	Policy Type	-Covers various policy types including distributive (related to local districts	-The rate of regulative policy is overwhelmingly high (65.1%)

setting)		or requesting budget support), redistributive (submitted by civic groups), and symbolic (national treasures or public holidays) policy	− Related to the real life of individuals or corporations
	Petition Topic	Exercise of property rights shows a relatively high frequency of appearance ('bond', 'debt', 'housing', and 'collateral')	Human rights issues show a relatively high frequency of appearance ('discrimination', 'human rights', 'women', 'labor', and 'equality')
	Petition Type	‘demand for institutional improvement’ accounted for a high percentage of both type	
		‘demand for examination’: issues with an executive character for a specific individual or corporation	‘demand for examination’: administrative measures requested for issues with a wide range of stakeholders
	Relevance to a Specific Region or Association	Related to local constituencies or civic groups	Relatively large number of contents to represent the interests of the profession.
		−The proportion of petitions related to a specific region or organization is higher in written petitions (58.0%) than online petitions (22.2%) −Written petitions deal with special benefits and costs of a relatively small region or organization −Online petitions deal with public issues related to the benefits and costs of the entire state or people	
	Noteworthy	−	Cases in which opinions in favor and opposition are submitted as petitions on controversial issues (e.g. Anti−Discrimination Act, National Security Act, and crime of abortion)
Process of Petition (Examination by committees)	Processing Period	Relatively longer average(320), the longest(1,021)/shortest(9) processing periods	Relatively shorter average(121), the longest(237)/shortest(4) processing periods
		There is no statistically significant difference between	

		the processing period of written petitions and the processing period of online petitions	
	Numbers of Examination	−Higher rate of initiation of review (81.2%) −Lower rate of examinations by subcommittee (21.7%) −Average number of examination by subcommittee: 0.32	−Lower rate of initiation of review (68.3%) −Higher rate of examinations by subcommittee (25.4%) −Average number of examination by subcommittee: 0.54
	Noteworthy	−	Case in which a petitioner appeared and explained the purpose of the petition in the subcommittee
Result of Petition	Completed (Acceptance) Rate	20.3% (The rate of achieving the purpose: 15.9%)	9.5% (The rate of achieving the purpose: 6.3%)
	Noteworthy	−Cases that have not been completed even though legislative bills with contents similar to the purpose of the petitions have been approved −Cases in which the purpose of the petition has not substantively been achieved due to examination delay	

Through the analysis, the conclusions regarding the research questions are as follows. First, the online petition system increases citizen participation in quantitative and qualitative ways to some extent in the bill deliberation of the National Assembly. Although the number of petitions that were established and submitted decreased compared to the past, there was a quantitative increase in that there was 4.95 million consent to the establishment of the petition and that the number of registered and open petitions reached 666. In addition, the qualitative aspect of participation has also increased, considering that most of the pros and cons of controversial issues are raised through online petitions, and the petitioner of the online petition appeared and explained the purpose of the petition in the subcommittee.

Second, the online petition system broadens the representation

of different interests and issues than written petitions. Although the socio-demographic composition of the user populations cannot be identified, this study cannot be empirically rigorous to ascertain whether the online petition system mobilizes the non-participating or reinforces existing underrepresentation. However, the issues and interests represented by online participation differ from those of written participation, and the proportion of online petitions related to a specific region or organization is relatively low. Therefore, these results confirm the applicability of the mobilization theory, which claims that the internet can be a new space to facilitate participation by people alienated from offline politics.

Third, the online petition system does not strengthen the responsiveness of the National Assembly. There is no statistically significant difference between the processing period of written petitions and online petitions. The acceptance rate and the rate of achieving the purpose of online petitions are not as high as those of written petitions. These results confirm that the National Assembly Online Petition system is close to the government-led initiative or supply-side model rather than the citizen-led initiative or demand-side model.

The policy implications derived from this study are as follows.

First, only 75.0% of the petitions referred to the relevant committees were presented and reviewed, and only 23.5% were examined substantially by the subcommittee. The average number of examinations per petition was only 0.42. In order to enhance the National Assembly's responsiveness and accountability to petitions, it is necessary to increase the number of examinations.

Second, the complete rate of petitions was only 15.2% (written petitions 20.3%, online petitions 9.5%), and the average processing period of petitions was 260 days, with the most prolonged processing period reaching 1,021 days in a case. Under the current law, the committee shall complete the examination within 90 days from the date of referral of the petition and report the results of the examination to the chairperson. Given this, it is necessary to

practically guarantee the people's right to petition through more rapid examination. In addition, some petitions have not been completed despite the approval of a bill with similar content to the purpose of the petition. There is a need to actualize the obligation to notify the petitioner of the result through active deliberation.

Third, when an online petition is registered, it is difficult for the petitioner to give additional feedback or modify the contents, and it has a structure that makes it difficult for petitioners to exchange opinions within the platform. If a space for expressing opinions for each online petition is provided, the educational function of the online petition system will be strengthened so that citizens can have thoughtful opinions. This is because the deliberative public sphere should include a deliberation process for the various opinions and arguments of the participants in the public sphere.

Fourth, it is necessary to increase opportunities to hear the opinions of the petitioner or related experts during the deliberation process. Having opportunities for additional discussions and dialogues beyond submitting petitions can signal that the National Assembly, a representative body, is actively listening to the opinions of the people. In addition, political legitimacy can be strengthened through mutual exchange between the 'informal public realm' (online petition platform) that discovers the agenda and the 'official political system' (committees of the National Assembly) that legislates the contents of the agreement. The online petition system combined with the representative democracy system can function as a public sphere in reality.

5.2. Limitations of Research and Future Research

This study utilized only cases from three years since the only petition system was introduced in 2020. Therefore, a statistically significant quantitative analysis could not be performed due to insufficient accumulated petitions. In the future, when cases of the system accumulate, it is necessary to quantitatively analyze the

impact of the system.

In terms of research methodology, the results of comparative studies can be supplemented by analyzing the impact of the introduction of the online petition system on participants' perceptions or behaviors. If a survey or in-depth interview is conducted with public officials of the National Assembly who practically support the examination of petitions, assist the Members, and operate the petition system, it is expected that the practical impact of the introduction of the online petition system can be analyzed in depth.

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초록(국문)

청원권은 국가기관에 대하여 자신의 의견이나 고충을 진술하고 적정한 처리를 요구할 수 있는 권리이다. 청원제도는 대의민주주의의 확대 이후 활용이 저하되어 그 위상이 약화된 측면이 있으나, 최근 정보통신기술의 발달로 전자적 방식을 통한 청원제도가 도입되면서 정치과정에서 국민의 참여를 증가시킬 수 있는 대표적인 수단으로 여겨지고 있다.

본 연구는 전자청원 플랫폼의 도입이 국회의 안건 심사에 미친 영향을 분석하는 것을 목적으로 한다. 연구방법은 제21대 국회(2020년 5월부터 2023년 5월까지) 3년간 국회에 접수된 의원소개청원(서면청원)과 국민동의청원(전자청원)에 대한 전수분석을 실시하고, 청원의 양, 이슈, 처리과정 및 처리결과 측면에서 비교연구를 수행하였다.

분석결과를 요약하면 다음과 같다. 첫째, 청원의 양 측면에서, 전자청원 제도의 도입 이후 접수된 청원의 건수는 종전 국회에 비하여 감소하였으나, 전자청원의 공개요건을 충족하여 공개된 총 건수는 종전 국회에 비하여 크게 증가하였다. 전자청원 도입 이후 서면청원과 전자청원의 접수 건수는 큰 차이를 보이지 않았다.

둘째, 청원의 이슈 측면에서, 서면청원과 전자청원 모두 규제정책을 다루고 있는 비중이 가장 높았으나, 서면청원이 전자청원에 비하여 다양한 정책 유형(배분정책, 재분배정책 및 상징정책)을 포괄하고 있었다. 서면청원은 지역구 또는 시민단체 관련성이 강하게 나타났으며, 전자청원은 상대적으로 직역의 이익을 대변하기 위한 내용이 다수 존재하였다. 서면청원이 상대적으로 일부 지역 또는 단체의 특수한 편익 및 비용에 관한 이슈를 다루는 경향이 있고, 전자청원은 이해관계자가 보다 광범위하거나 일반적인 공공 이슈를 다루는 경향이 있었다.

셋째, 차별금지법 제정, 국가보안법 폐지, 낙태죄 폐지 등 논쟁적이고 찬반 대립이 있는 이슈에 대하여 찬성과 반대의 의견이 각각 청원으로 접수된 사례가 다수 있으며, 대부분 전자청원이 활용되었다. 다양한 의견이 개진되고 국회에서 심의된다는 점에서 전자청원이 일정 부분 공론장의 역할을 수행하고 있는 것으로 해석할 수 있다.

넷째, 청원의 처리절차 측면에서, 서면청원보다 전자청원의 평균

처리기간, 최장 및 최단 처리기간은 모두 짧았으나, Wilcoxon 순위합 검정 결과 전자청원과 서면청원의 처리기간에는 통계적으로 유의한 차이가 없었다. 전자청원은 서면청원에 비하여 심사가 개시된 비율은 낮았으나, 소위원회에 회부된 이후 심사된 비율 및 평균 심사횟수는 높았다. 드물지만 전자청원의 청원인이 청원심사소위원회에 출석하여 청원의 취지를 직접 설명한 사례가 있었다.

다섯째, 청원의 처리결과 측면에서, 서면청원의 처리율(20.3%)이 전자청원의 처리율(9.5%)보다 약 2배 정도 높았으며, 청원취지의 달성비율 또한 서면청원(15.9%)이 전자청원(6.3%)보다 2배 이상 높았다. 처리율은 종전 국회에 비하여 낮은 수준이나, 잔여임기 동안 청원의 심사 및 처리가 진행됨에 따라 처리율이 현재보다는 증가할 가능성이 있다.

결론적으로, 전자청원 제도의 도입은 국회의 안건 심사 과정에서 양적 및 질적으로 국민의 참여를 증가시키는 측면이 있다. 청원의 의제 측면에서 대표되는 이익과 이슈가 상이하고 특정 지역 또는 단체와의 관련성이 낮은 이슈가 전자청원으로 제기된다는 점에서, 인터넷의 이용이 새로운 형태의 정치 참여를 촉진한다는 동원이론의 적용 가능성을 확인할 수 있었다. 그러나 청원의 처리과정 및 처리결과를 보면, 전자청원 제도의 도입이 국회의 반응성을 강화시키는 데 이르지는 못하였으며, 국회의 전자청원 제도는 시민주도형-수요측면 모델보다는 정부주도형-공급측면 모델에 가까움을 확인할 수 있었다.

본 연구는 국회 국민동의청원제도 실시 이후 접수된 청원에 대하여 전수분석을 실시한 탐색적 연구로서 서면청원과 전자청원의 경향성을 실증적으로 분석한 것에 의의가 있다. 아울러, 분석 결과를 토대로 청원 심사횟수 증가, 청원에 대한 조속하고 적극적인 심사, 전자청원인들 간의 의견 개진 공간 마련, 심사 과정에서 청원인 의견 청취 기회 증가 등 청원에 대한 국회의 대응성과 책임성을 제고하기 위한 정책적 시사점을 도출하였다.

다만, 본 연구는 전자청원인 국민동의청원제도가 2020년에 실시되었기 때문에 2023년까지 3년간의 사례만 활용할 수 있었으며, 축적된 청원건수가 충분하지 않아 통계적으로 유의미한 양적 분석을 수행하지 못하였다. 향후 동 제도의 적용 사례가 축적되면 동 제도의 도입 영향을 양적으로 다시 분석해볼 필요가 있다. 또한, 연구방법 측면에서 전자청원제도의 도입이 참여자들의 인식 또는 행태에 미친 영향을 분석할 경우, 비교연구의 결과를 보완하여 제도 도입의 실질적

영향을 분석할 수 있을 것으로 생각된다.

주요어 : 청원, 전자청원, 국민동의청원, 안건 심의, 전자민주주의, 국회
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