Current-affairs talkshows: Public communication revitalized on television

Shen, M.H.C.

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FOCUS AND METHODOLOGIES

Live and participatory news talk programming, as we have seen in the case of Taiwan, requires some social and political conditions to emerge. In a society where the values of liberal democracy are recognized, however ambivalently, its emergence on weekday prime time marks the receding of state control and the rising of market force. New possibilities are now added to the use of television in public communication, as two-way, spontaneous news talks stand out in a great contrast to the one-way, highly edited traditional television news. An atmosphere of openness seems in the air, since along with the juxtaposed conflicting views, there are ordinary audiences active enough to voice their opinions, holding the power elite responsible for their words and deeds.

In the beginning months of its emergence, 2100 gave a stunning impression of freshness for audiences long used to a passive reception of the KMT-dominated news information. Such freshness led to its quick-built popularity and prestige, which were well deserved in a sense. It was, after all, a touching experience for Taiwanese viewers who until then had never seen how different political views could share an equal footing in front of a national audience, or how Taiwan television could ever function more or less as an access to the public discourse for ordinary people. It could be exciting enough simply watching how politicians of different party backgrounds gathered to debate on topics once forbidden or heavily censored—topics that would touch the present and future of Taiwan. It was nonetheless an emotional moment listening to those topics—which after all have been weighing heavily and by then silently on every mind—being debated in one’s most familiar language, mingled variously with Taiwanese and mandarin and spoken by both big guys and little guys on the screen. Yes, popularity and prestige seldom come along together, as most media/art critics would agree. 2100 deserved this mainly because of the timing of its emergence.

The use of a talkshow format on 2100 was a bold exploration of journalistic neutrality... a concept long forgotten by media professionals entangled in the decade-old
competition between the KMT and its oppositions in selecting and interpreting news events. Supported by capitalist entrepreneurship, 2100 entered the least tried zone and pioneered in kind of informational programming alternative to the traditional one stuck by the either-or approach long taken as granted: either sympathetic towards DDP or supportive of the KMT. Appealing to a society in democratic transition where something participatory easily gained legitimacy, 2100 seemed to arouse the long failed hope for a public forum on television. As it also proved that clashes of competing opinions could be made marketable, a new television phenomenon was triggered and the fad of participatory programming was initiated. Inevitably, the fresh air grew stale and it became more and more difficult to maintain both popularity and prestige for any talk program, including 2100. Well into early-1998, many of 2100’s followers or challengers have trailed and failed in the rating war and eventually disappeared from the screen while more continue to rise, facing uncertain future.

Yet 2100 still manages to survive, even thrive, when the stunning freshness is no longer and when doubts and critiques of call-in programming, from politicians, media observers or viewers, have been variously expressed. In fact, 2100 has been quite a money machine for TVBS, though the prestige it previously enjoyed is replaced by a mixed reputation. While TVBS itself has been the top winner among all cable stations in competing with the old Three Stations for a share of the lucrative advertising pie (see Chapter 6, Section 2.2.3), 2100 often ranks as its top harvester of advertising revenues and among all cable programs. The advertising price on 2100 is about NT$ 33,000 (equivalent of US$ 1,222) per ten seconds. This excludes the extra charge imposed on the sponsors who were often obliged, especially in election seasons, to buy extra advertising time from TVBS’ other odd time-slots, as advertising on 2100 is much on demand. The price is quite high if compared with the more common charge on cable channels: about NT$ 12,000 (equivalent of US$ 444) per ten seconds. The success in the rating war is essentially the success of strategic programming in a time-slot conventionally for fictional programming. Compared with most cable programs gaining pathetically less than 1% ratings, its 8-18 % rating range is rosy enough in a multichannel environment.

Steady popularity reflected by the rating success is indicative of the existence

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1 Based on the average exchange rate, 1:33, in 1998.
3 Several reports show that a majority of Taiwan cable households still tune in to the Three Stations before 21:00. After 21:00, they turn to cable-TV (e.g. Hwang 1995a, Ruan 1996).
of a sizeable national audience. Out of the 5.4 million televised households, minimally about 430 thousand and maximally about 972 thousand tune in to Channel 38 for 2100 and join the discussion of the day. Though quite a great distance from the whole population of twenty-one million as the title suggests, the image of an established institution is nonetheless implied as no other talkspaces, nor similar programs, have ever involved so many people nation-wide. Furthermore, 2100 has some specificities as a current-affairs talkshow that makes it quite a unique research target for our concerns. This chapter will first explore these programming specificities before we elaborate on our methodologies.

1. 2100'S SPECIFICITIES AS A TALKSHOW

Having been on air for more than three years, 2100 has become quite an established institution where supposedly the hottest and the most controversial topics of the day continue to be talked about every weekday. Though Mr. Chiu, TVBS’s Taiwan boss claims that he is mainly in the business of entertainment, 2100 is always categorized by the station as a news information program. Sharing the resources, in terms of facilities and staff, of TVBS’s news department, 2100 enjoys a great convenience to pick up topics from news bulletins, using the news video archives or doing live follow-up reporting/interviews for itself and other news programs. This is a good example for an “economics of scope” within one single television organization, as the use of a media product can be maximized. This also implies that 2100 is an integrated part of the whole news teamwork in TVBS, functioning to continue or maintain TVBS' on-going news narratives in the organization’s ever intensifying news competition with other stations in a multichannel era. In other words, 2100 shares, though in its own integrity, a relationship of interdependency with TVBS' other news informational programs.

Over the years, 2100 has established two major basic formats. The more predominant one is studio-based, mainly one-hour long with audience callers, and scheduled at 21:00-22:00, Monday to Thursday. The other is two-hours long, scheduled normally at 20:00-22:00, Friday, mostly studio-based and sometimes broadcasted outdoors with a live audiences. This is certainly not a distinctive categorization, for there are also two-hour long, even three-hour long (admittedly rather rare), studio-based or outdoor episodes on Monday-Thursday weekdays especially in election campaign seasons. A few times a small portion of a live audience appear in the studio as well, but the major appeal with a live audience comes mainly from those broadcasted outdoors, particularly from the townships of live audiences, including off-shore islands and occasionally abroad.

Compared with other current-affairs talkshows, local or foreign, 2100 seems
quite free or privileged in its flexibility both in scheduling and programming, to the extent that the convention of a set time-slot as a programming boundary can be blurred. Given a set time slot, it occasionally extends itself into a three-hour show and quite frequently “intrudes” into the set time-slot of its following program. It seems explained partly by the host’s administration status as the general manager in TVBS, and partly by the significance TVBS cares to assign to the program as a competitive and strategic rating gleaner as well as a time-filler for odd hours. Its live episode of every weekday evening is recast twice, that is, in the midnight (12:00-1:00 or 12:00-2:00) and in the afternoon next day (14:30-15:30 or 14:30-16:30). Obviously, TVBS tends to maximize the program’s marginal values to the extreme, as it does to its other talk programs.

The market concerns are apparently coupled with the consciousness for an “public forum”. This is reflected in various arrangements which characterize 2100 as a current-affairs talkshow and which make it an interesting case for academic research.

1.1. The Host off the Spotlight in the Ritual Opening

In its first two years of on-air service, 2100 followed the apparent convention of talkshows to spotlight the host by showing him cheerfully waving his hand to a loudly applauding and equally cheerful crowd. Beginning from campaign coverage in 1996, this highlight on the host is no longer. Instead, the emphasis is on the loud ringing phone call and a quick glimpse of Taiwan politics in recent years: some famous demonstration scenes and election campaigns with the three major parties specified by their respective flag colors. This is then followed by the symbolic traffic lights flashing on and off with the big three Chinese characters: Stop, Listen, and Watch. Afterwards a line of Chinese caption runs on the screen: Without bias and inducement, we sincerely provide and cultivate a fair, open, and rational public forum.

The zoom-out of the host from the ritual opening implies a conscious effort to avoid imposing too much of the host’s personality on the discussion. In a sense, this echoes the claimed programming principle of being fair, open, and rational, though how the principle is to be implemented will need further examination. The absence of the host gives an impression of trying to be public rather than personal, to be as neutral, disinterested and impartial as what is expected of the traditional anchorperson, on a “genre” where the host is expected to be inclusive, flexible, and hospitable.

1.2. More Significance Assigned to the Elite Talk

A typical 2100 episode starts with the ritual briefing by the host. Then he
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forwards to introduce his panelist guests, normally three or four, who are presented one by one and with a camera close-up. While the relevance of their individual presence to the topic is explained, the emphasis tends to be on their social positions and/or expertise. This introductory ritual, which gives salient significance to the panelist guests, is then followed by several rounds of debate by the panelists. In a sense, elite guests lay the foundation of talk for lay participants as the program foregrounds the elite talk, making it the “staple food” of 2100. Normally about two thirds of the whole episode duration is dedicated to the elite talk. This time arrangement, essentially the same in 2100’s two major formats mentioned above (i.e. with or without a live audience), makes 2100 more an elite talkshow, since much more time is dedicated to the more in-depth discussion of issues by elite guests.

The impressions of 2100 as an elite talkshow is reinforced by the presence of a long desk which separates the audience and the elite guests. In those studio-based episodes, the host sits half behind the L-shaped or S-shaped desk, making himself face both the guests and the audiences. The desk creates a clear distance and differentiation between the lay audience and the host, between the host and his guests. The host seems more close to his guests as he shares the same desk with them and remains equally distanced from the home audiences with them. In those broadcast outside of the studio (i.e., the so-called outdoor episodes), the host is mostly seen standing and facing the live audience in front of the platform where the elite guests have their seats behind the desk. He looks more distant from his guests yet closer to the audience, as he does not sit high on the platform and remains behind the same desk with the guests. Instead, he shares the same floor with the live audience. In outdoor episodes, 2100 seems carnivalesque and theatrical as the guests are virtually performers on stage, supposed to argue and dispute among themselves in front of the live audience.

1.3. Issue-oriented with Limited Topics in Each Episode

Talkshow journalism has a much criticized tendency to jump from one topic to another topic with ever changing guests. After all, the guests and the topics are the chief unstable ingredients for talkshows, and the aesthetic of the genre is such that what preferred is the range, rather than depth, in talk, especially on an easy, popular medium like television. Yet 2100 has its own programming rules to ensure that it is sufficiently “issue-oriented”. First and foremost, it normally treats only one or two topics in its one-hour or two-hour long episodes. Rather rarely, it has three topics for a two-hour studio-based episode without an audience. For those with a live audience, it has only one topic. This seems an abstention from treating too many topics at one time, so that sufficient time is dedicated to each topic.
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Echoing this limited number of topics arranged for each time is the principle of “sticking to the issue” which the host uses as a “weapon” in his hosting when he exerts his right to interrupting any talker, elite or lay, or cutting off any callers from the line. This is a principle much claimed and made known ever since the emergence of the program. The principle seems quite a necessity especially for a program dedicated most significantly for public debate by encouraging audiences to participate with its famous slogan: “Anything to say? Say it straight!”

If considered the much-criticized talkshow tendency to go antithetical in its endless juxtaposing, the limited number of topics in each episode and the principle of sticking to the issue seem to make the program hopeful of substantial discussion.

1.4. Many Ways of Audience Participation

Few participatory talkshows, whether local or foreign, have as many ways of practicing audience participation as 2100. Indeed, most of them have only one form of participation for lay audiences, and mostly either physical presence in studio, for those live-to-tape shows like Kilroy, or voice presence through call-in, for those live shows like Larry King. E-mails or facsimile are also used in some informational programs. As they involve written messages from lay audience participants to be read out loud, a more indirect participation is implied and much less participation appeal is presented on an audio-visual medium, as exemplified by CNN’s Q&A, which specifies e-mail participation. Whether direct or indirect, less or more appealing, they indicate that there are indeed a lot of possibilities to boost civil participation by combining the television set with other electronic technologies for various social groups.

From the very beginning up till today (Spring 1999), voice participation by call-in and physical participation in the studio or audience’s hometown remain the major ways of audience participation on 2100. Being a live show, 2100 relies mainly on these two means for a piece of life-world authenticity from the audiences. There are no other means as enduring as these two, but other possible channels for audience participation have been tried. For example, the electronic bulletin board system (so-called BBS) had been frequently in use for quite some time.\(^4\) The BBS participation disappeared from the

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\(^4\) An episode would begin with a computer monitor seen alongside of the host. As the debate between the expert guests began, written feedback from BBS viewers continued to be keyed in as occasionally shown on the monitor screen, but constantly shown on the bottom of the television screen for all viewers to read. This feedback did not interrupt the proceedings of the debate or the following call-in session in any way. It was just displayed and basically remained a segregated section by itself, as the host or his guests, or even the callers never responded to any of the comments no matter how “hot” they were. It was, after all, very exhausting to listen to the debate and watch the facial expressions of the guests, while at the same time having to read the
program but reappeared on the website of TVBS where 2100 established its extended discussion “room” for those who would like to say something on recent topics aired in the past two-week period or make any suggestions to the host. Other alternative channels include the use of fax-in and telephone survey, and street interviews done by TVBS reporters. Fax-in messages are read out by the host when the discussion is over. Telephone survey is done in two ways. One is by dialing the provided telephone numbers, so that viewers can leave their answers on the phone to the recorded question with pre-set options to choose. The other is that 2100 crew do a call-out survey, sometimes during the time when the programming is being aired, sometimes starting much earlier. Obviously, here the participation channels have a more collective nature.

1.5. Free Language Use and Various Program Forms

With relative flexibility in scheduling, 2100 shares the typical boundary-blurring nature of all talkshows and is itself a mixture of many traditionally distinct things. It is hard to describe it except perhaps as a live panel-debate participatory show mixed in various proportions with street or studio interviews, live reporting, news reels, and documentary clippings... etc., using various communication media, whether interpersonal, print, radio, satellite and more advanced telecommunications. Worth mentioning is that the one-language programming policy or convention is bleached as 2100, though mainly a mandarin program, allows its participants the comfort and convenience of using their preferred languages. This makes the discussion on 2100 relatively rich and vivid in language and language style, though essentially it is but a bilingual program.

Particularly in the beginning months, 2100 was in fact very much a bare “talk” program with few “visual aids” borrowed from other program forms. The freer use of language reinforced 2100's appeal as the first ever participatory TV news talkshow that had ever been broadcast in a time-slot usually for melodramas or mini-series and at a rather historical time in Taiwan. High frequencies of election campaigns since the early 1990s, which 2100 was in time to catch, endowed a timely nature to a talk program that allowed a great majority of residents to speak in their own mother tongues. Not

BBS messages on the bottom of the screen.

As the number of Internet users has been increasing rapidly in Taiwan (approximately 2.5 million by July 1998), this does not seem to be a trivial channel of participation.

The survey normally asked a question relevant to the topic under discussion and with three or four simple options for the interviewee to choose from. All input of audiences' answers are recorded and analyzed by computer and the results were released in statistics nearing the end of the episode.

There are several episodes in which English is used, by foreign guests, together with synchronized translation.

About 80% of Taiwan residents have the Taiwan dialect (the so-called Min-Nan Hwa) as their mother tongue.
surprisingly, however, the time came when the freshness of bilingual participation began to be taken for granted and something extra needed to be added to a bare transplant of radio call-in talkshow on television. This mainly explains the variation in the means of audience participation and the blurring of genre boundaries, utilizing the audio-visual medium’s tendency to hybridize. Thus it grew more and more mixed in its talk programming with video clippings, on-site demonstrations, street interviews or live news reporting which created quite some breaks for presumably weighty language about public affairs. Live news reporting in particular makes the program itself tightly follow a news event still in the process of unfolding.

With the specificities mentioned above, 2100 presents itself as a unique mixture of modernist journalism with postmodern practices. The traditional journalistic emphases on neutrality, impartiality, and on the long-recognized realm of the public seem to remain believed in and held on to, yet are being carried out by the inclusive, juxtapositional, and contingent approach typical of participatory talkshow programming. Hence, open to contest is the once unified and controlled discourse previously sustained by the familiar one-way, professionally-edited, well-integrated, and elegantly univocal dictation so characteristic of the traditional news reporting and current-affairs programming. As it seems that issues can be discussed with sufficient time, in a convenient time-slot, and live, through a constellation of various voices and visuals, 2100 is an interesting case for an empirical study through which we hope to investigate the strength of market-based participatory talkshow journalism when it seems apparently dedicated to public communication.

2. RESEARCH FOCUS

Central to our concerns is whether 2100 helps make information open and relevant to the concerns of its audiences through engaging them in its participatory talk format. Though necessarily related, openness and relevance are two different notions in our efforts to reconceptualize informational quality. Similarly neglected in the traditional thinking influenced by modernism, they were not taken into consideration among the quality-related issues until the high tide of modernism began to recede (Chapter 3). The notion of openness, however, is not excluded from traditional public communication values. In fact, it is implied in what McQuail (1992: 78) terms as “access” in his framework of communication values. According to him, concerns of senders’ access to channels have been an essential part in the traditional inquiry of basic communication values. Based on the assumption of a powerful image of the media and a from-senders-to-
receivers communication process, the concerns about equal access, which led to the values of objectivity and diversity, focus mainly on the needs of senders and the role of the media to be fair and open to diverse views and opinions from the senders. Thus, openness is a sender-oriented notion, though behind it there lies an equally important concern for diversity of choice for the receiver as a voter/consumer— a concern that perhaps can be related with the notion of relevance. By contrast, relevance is a receiver-oriented notion which didn’t really take form until the flourishing of audience studies in the 1980s reminded of the “active” nature in decoding activities of the receiver. With their concerns and interests to be addressed, receivers naturally play a significant part in deciding the information quality of a broadcast program aimed to inform and engage.

To differentiate the two notions respectively as sender-oriented and receiver-oriented is valid as long as communication can still be conceived as a process from senders to receivers with the media in between. The challenge involved here is that with practices of audience participation, the rigid dichotomy of active senders and passive receivers no longer holds, since the two roles are now interchangeable. However, the differentiation between senders and receivers is still inevitable, since the scale of audience participation is necessarily limited due to technical reasons— e.g., limited time and a certain time-slot. A great majority of audiences will still remain as mere receivers while a very small minority of audience members actively choosing and luckily chosen, whether or not randomly, are picked to participate, and qualified as senders. There is, after all, only a certain degree to which the boundary between performers and spectators can be blurred on any participatory programming, and 2100 is no exception. With this explained, I will proceed my inquiry by dealing with the two notions separately.

2.1. Openness as a Quality for 2100 as a Talkspace

Treating openness as a sender-related quality, I will examine how open 2100 is as a public talkspace for lay talkers. Here the term “lay talkers” refers to those who got a chance to “speak” on 2100, either as a caller or as a member in the live audience. Since we treat “openness” as a more sender-oriented concept, we will focus on those who actively participate and are treated in the program as individual lay talkers, rather than those who participate in 2100 through its other voiceless means of audience participation. In other words, the term “lay talkers” refers to those who have their voices heard through call-in or on-site participation since it is these voice participants that contribute to 2100’s on-air discussion.

We will examine how lay talkers are accommodated on 2100 as a public
talkspace through specifying three dimensions:

- The diversity dimension: Focus will be on the range of issue coverage and guest presentations.
- The rhetoric dimension: Focus will be on issue-framing and the host’s mediation, as these are where efforts can be made for engaging purposes.
- The participatory dimension: Focus will be on how lay talkers contribute to the public discourse on 2100 characterized by rhetoric and diversity-related emphases as discussed above.

For the convenience of discussion, the first two dimensions will be treated in Chapter 8 where they are specified for the purpose of grasping the program as a professional construct. Based on an understanding of this “constructedness”, Chapter 9 will tackle the third dimension and focus on the program as a talkspace with populist appeal, since audience participation is practiced and regulated explicitly.

2.2. Relevance as a Quality for 2100 as a Journalistic Practice

Treating relevance as a receiver-oriented quality, we will explore whether 2100 made news information relevant to the concerns and interests of its viewers as a journalistic practice with its participatory appeal. Obviously, viewers’ concerns and interests are far too complicated and ambiguous for a program or a researcher to grasp. To what degree 2100 makes information relevant to them, however, can be investigated by probing viewers’ attitudes towards the program. In particular, their attitudes are reflected in the following two aspects below:

- Viewers’ viewing habits: Viewing habits are a matter of frequencies and preferences, which are related to demographic features such as gender, age, and education. Viewing habits can be affected by viewers’ recognition of the nature of the program (i.e., as either informational or entertaining). In our case, we are interested to know whether viewers’ preferences differ in different time-periods, i.e., election time and non-election time.
- Viewer’s satisfactions: Focus will be on 2100 as an information source and 2100’s practices of audience participation. For the former, we will see how the viewers assess it regarding the choice of issues, coverage in election/non-election periods, the host’s performance, and the most preferred discussion atmosphere, the juxtaposition approach. As for the latter, we will narrow our attention on the two major
participation forms that allow individual lay voices to be heard, i.e. call-in and on-site participation. Focus will be on viewers’ satisfaction with the performance of lay talkers, their being representative or not, and the availability of participation chance as experienced by themselves.

Viewers’ viewing habits will be treated in Chapter 10, together with a demographic portrait of 2100’s viewers. Viewer’s satisfactions will be explored in Chapter 11.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Two different methods are involved here. Assessing openness as a sender-related quality on 2100 as a talkspace is essentially treated as a content study. By comparison, evaluating relevance as a receiver-related quality on 2100 as a journalistic practice is basically a reception study, as our focus is on viewers’ satisfaction. This means we need data from the program and from the viewers.

3.1. Content Study

Obviously, 2100 is a “discursive situation” (Renkema 1993), being an institution in its own right and with its specificities in talkshow programming brought up by those constant forms it has cultivated for itself over the years. To explore the degree of its openness as an discursive institution, it is necessary to study the program’s content. We have mentioned that our attentions will focus upon three dimensions, i.e., the diversity dimension, the aesthetics dimension, and the lay-participation dimension. The study in the first two serves a necessary background for us to grasp how or whether lay talkers can make their contributions at all to enriching 2100’s elite talk, making the discourse somehow open for less privileged audiences. The diversity dimension is more apparent on the surface, since our focus is on the coverage range and guest presentations. It will be sufficient to simply follow the issue coverage and study its guest presentations over a long enough duration. The second dimension is subtle therefore requires a closer look at what has been actually said in the talk sequence of an episode. As for the third aspect, it will involve both the range and the depth of the program content.

This means that to study the three dimensions as planned, it is necessary to have a collection of data that covers long enough periods of 2100’s consecutive episodes and that are in sufficient details of the talk content. Videotapes and transcripts of the program are therefore required. Living in Holland when these data needed to be collected,
I had, admittedly, encountered quite a hazard⁹, which eventually led to a reliance on my relatives for the videotaping of the program on time-periods I chose.

There are obvious disadvantages to videotape the program through someone else when one is abroad. First of all, I could not expect a collection of episodes taped with the kind of care and caution as I would prefer. After all, it was a favor granted with generosity and good will. I felt grateful already, even though sometimes, yes, defects did occur in the videotapes due to unknown reasons (perhaps e.g., power failure by the cable operator or the channel operator, or probably unintended mistakes in videotaping). Another weakness is that I could not follow the program on a daily or regular basis. This means that the developments in the program, either those concerning the social and political contexts external to the program or those change internal to the program itself (i.e. in areas such as issue coverage or guest combinations) couldn’t be traced as thoroughly and comprehensively as possible as might be by those living in proximity and viewing it daily or quite regularly. To compensate for possible inadequacies caused by the gap of distance, I returned to Taipei in July 1997 for an up-dated study of Taiwan and the program in proximity while writing on the empirical chapters.

Based on my best knowledge, I selected time periods that should be of great significance to Taiwan, in light of its recent political or social developments, and to 2100 the program, in terms of its developments in form and content. These time periods are:

- **Period A:** From Monday November 20 to Friday December 1, 1995: The two-week campaign period for the 1995 Parliamentary Election (the Legislative Yuan) on December 2, 1995.
- **Period B:** From Monday March 4 to Friday March 25, 1996: The three-week campaign period for the 1996 Presidential Election with a follow-up, on Monday March 25, after the results were known.
- **Period C:** From Monday May 20 till Thursday July 4, 1996: The six week period coinciding to the first term of Legislators’ conferences after the inauguration of the first elected President Lee.
- **Period D:** From Monday July 23 till August 9, 1996: The two-week period which captured the diversification of topics in the program, following the end of LY conferences.
- **Period E:** From Tuesday November 26 till Monday December 23, 1996: The four

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⁹I contacted TVBS by phone and by letter several times, expressing the wish to purchase or borrow episodes of the programs, and if possible, even the transcripts of each episode (BBC's *Kilroy*, for example, offers the transcripts when asked for). I was told that such a service is not available.
week-period with heavy coverage of issues related to social order and safety issues. Compared with a more neatly random selection of time periods, the above choice can perhaps be vulnerable to the criticism that it is not “objective” enough. Yet this less objective choice can be more helpful for grasping the development of the program itself in its social and political context. Here we have two election-campaign periods, which, as normally the case, would tend to be political intensive. We have the other three non-election periods, which can serve as our material basis to understand the fare of the program for normal time.

There is a reason why we specify between campaign time and normal time. This is mainly intended to examine how the advertising-financed program, claiming to be a public forum for public debate, would try to engage its audiences in a different social atmosphere. As mentioned already, the span of our collection covers the most historical and dramatic period in Taiwan’s democratization process, i.e., the first-ever Presidential Election in March 23, 1996, which was haunted by China’s military maneuver. Yet the historical and dramatic, though significant, should not obscure the normal and ordinary everyday life. This also explains why we end up having more coverage of normal time than campaign time and why there seems to be “unnecessary” and “arbitrary” time gap in-between Period C, D, and E. Being too politically intensive, Period C cannot stand for normal time sufficiently on its own, even though its duration (6 weeks) is longer than the combined time length (5 weeks) of Period A and B together. Period D and E were included mainly to balance the general fare of the collection.

Appendix 4 presents, in separate tables, a complete list of episodes in each of the aforementioned time periods. Information included in these tables are: the date and the length (in hours) of each episode, number and name of the topic discussed, names and number of panelist guests, and number of lay talkers. Outdoor episodes are specified as well.

Excluding those defected episodes useless for the study, our collection of five

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10 Besides the above time periods, I have a collection of many sporadic episodes since late October 1995 as well as various time periods from early March till October 1997. These episodes serve the purpose mainly for grasping the development of the program, and are not included in the systematic analysis of the content study. See Table 6 in Appendix 4 for a glimpse of these episodes.

11 Before I actually viewed the videotapes, I didn’t realize that Period C would be so political intensive with heavy coverage of parliamentary debates for more than six weeks.

12 This being said, it should be noted that since 1992 there has been an election, at either local or central level, almost every year in Taiwan. The country is after all in a rapid transition process, which is itself very historical and dramatic particularly in political sense.

13 Defected or missing episodes are found in Period C, D, E: June 12 (Thursday), July 31 (Wednesday, caused
time-periods has, as shown in Table 7:1 below, a total of 91 episodes aired in 17 weeks, and with 100 topics discussed for a total of 128 hours. The total number of guest seats are 381, involving 1515 lay talkers.\textsuperscript{14} The table also gives the detail, in terms of a differentiation between campaign time and normal time:

\textbf{Table 7:1 Description of the Episodes Analyzed}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of Episodes</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Number of Topics</th>
<th>Number of Guest Seats</th>
<th>Number of Lay Talkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Time</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Time</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17 weeks</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seen from any aspect, we obviously have more normal time coverage than campaign time coverage. The former covers 65 episodes dedicated to 69 topics with 77 hours. Guest seats are 257 while lay talkers are 915. In comparison, the later covers 26 episodes dedicated to 31 topics with 51 hours. Guest seats available are 124, while lay talkers engaged are 600.

Table 7:2a and Table 7:2b underneath offer a closer description of our collection respectively for campaign time, which includes Period A and Period B, and normal time, which includes Period C, D, and E:

\textbf{Table 7:2a Campaign Time}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of Episodes</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Number of Topics</th>
<th>Number of Guest Seats</th>
<th>Number of Lay Talkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period A</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period B</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Table 7:2b Normal Time}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of Episodes</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Number of Topics</th>
<th>Number of Guest Seats</th>
<th>Number of Lay Talkers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period C</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period D</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period E</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>915</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

by Typhoon), August 2 (Friday), 1996. The first two episodes are completely missing therefore not included in our study. The episode of June 28 become blurred after 8 lay talkers finished their talk. (Due to this reason, two more episodes--July 3 and 4, were included even though the LY conferences were already over on July 2.) The episode of August 2 is blurred after several shots, which showed the topics and the presence of Taipei County Magistrate. These last two episodes are still counted where applicable.

\textsuperscript{14} While aware of the possibility, I do not take into consideration of repeated lay talkers, as it was technically impossible to discern repeated lay voices. However, I do differentiate between the number of guests and the number of seats for them, as it is common to have frequent guests.
Table 7.2a and Table 7.2b show clearly what we have in each period (i.e., Period A, B, C, D, E) regarding the number of episodes, hours, topics, guest seats, and lay talkers. As described above, the collection is, I believe, sufficient in terms of range for grasping the diversity dimension related to the issue and guest representation. With the listed topics in Appendix 4, we will also be able to explore the issue-framing aspect in the aesthetic dimension. The more tricky part is the hosting rhetoric, which necessitates a careful choice of a certain excerpt from a certain episode for text analysis, as the thesis is intended for international audience. This will be elaborated in the second section of Chapter 8. As for lay talkers’ contribution to the public discourse on 2100, it will take an in-depth study of the real talk by the host, the guests, and even by lay talkers. To facilitate this, I have well-transcribed the main ideas expressed by every speaker in the talk sequence of every episode, with elite talk and lay talk, from Period A to Period E. Based on the transcription, the participatory dimension is explored in both quantity and quality, which will be elaborated in Chapter 9.

3.2. Telephone Survey

In Section 2.2 we treated relevance as a receiver-related quality and we planned to see how 2100 satisfies its viewers as a source of information and with its participation appeal. Here the focus is on the viewers, for information from the viewers will give a more realistic picture about 2100 than the impressions one would easily have from merely watching 2100. After all, 2100 has been trying hard to woo as many viewers as possible with the theatrical intensities it can command. Furthermore, we must stress that the term “its viewers” refers to 2100’s viewers in general, rather than any specific groups of viewers. This emphasis is important, for the nature of our study does not allow us to ignore a sufficient grasp, however problematic, of the troubling heteroglossia of authentic viewers in their great complexity. Hence, we need a methodology that can somehow provide us a picture of 2100’s viewers more than 2100 itself suggested.

For this reason, a survey was made. The method used was a telephone survey, which certainly has its merits as well as shortcomings. Based on a pre-designed questionnaire and proceeded through phone contacts, it is unable to collect data as detailed, genuine and precise as allowed by participatory observation, face-to-face interviews or discussions in, say, a focus group. For our purpose, more important is in the random nature of the sampling with a base wide enough to ensure the heterogeneity of respondents, so as to have samples as close as possible to real ordinary people 2100 wishes and claims to engage as its audience. In this case, random face-to-face interview is best, but inefficient. Participatory observation and focus-group discussions, normally based on a small sample,
lack the random and heterogeneous nature we need. By comparison, the telephone survey has its unique strength as it is an efficient way of obtaining information through a modern random sampling procedure and allows a relatively small number of people to represent a much larger population.

The unique strength in probability sampling, however, is exactly wherein lies the weakness of a telephone survey. From the random sample it might be difficult to get a hold of those who have actually viewed 2100 and hence capable of answering questions more specifically about the program. Yet it is through such a random sampling that we come close to a real picture of 2100's audiences embedded in the heteroglossia of life/reality which necessarily lacks the kind of performative intensities on screen. We believe that such performative intensities contribute to the construction of a 2100-defined reality, which, like all television programs intended to engage, tries to create homogeneity out of the heterogeneity of television audiences. The use of a phone survey can at least avoid getting an audience sample too homogeneous to be useful.

3.2.1. Designing and Processing of the Questionnaire

Based on our focus, the questionnaire\(^\text{15}\) was designed in a way that can utilize the strength of telephone survey and overcome the difficulties of finding a sample of respondents representative enough for our purpose. It was first drafted in early November 1996, revised several times after thorough discussions with experienced professors before the final version was completed in early January 1997. There were in all thirty questions. The last four questions are meant to collect respondents' personal backgrounds regarding gender, age, education, and occupation. The first three deal with television viewing frequencies, preferences of program-types, and viewing frequencies for participatory current-affairs talkshows. Question 4 asks whether 2100 has ever been heard of so as to examine 2100's fame and exclude irrelevant respondents in the meantime. Those who have heard continue to answer Question 5, which asks whether they have actually viewed 2100. Those who answer "no" are then asked to answer Question 6 intended to find out why they haven't viewed. After that they are asked to skip for personal-data questions. By this way we try to get a hold of relevant respondents who have actually viewed 2100 and can answer Questions 7-26, the main part of the questionnaire for surveying our viewers' opinions. This part was, as mentioned, intended to evaluate viewers' viewing habits as reflected in their viewing frequencies and preferences, and their satisfactions regarding

\(^{15}\) See Appendix 1 for the original questionnaire in Chinese, see Appendix 2 for the English translation with the results, and Appendix 3 for the survey results of each question (Questions 1-26) in the questionnaire.
2100 as an informational source and 2100’s practice of audience participation.

The questionnaire was handed to the Survey & Research Center for Public Opinions, a professional poll centre affiliated to The World College of Journalism and Communications in Mucha, Taipei. It was then processed by the Centre on February 20 and 21, 1997, a time when the social atmosphere was relatively calm and relaxed as the Chinese Lunar New Year festival period was just over. The timing was not a conscious choice, as the questionnaire had to queue in line waiting for its turn to be processed. Yet it was quite a fine timing for our purpose, as the responses we could collect might be closer to reality than those collected at a time of high social controversy or of political activities. The survey work was undertaken by a group of senior or qualified interviewers of the Centre who speak both Taiwanese dialect and Mandarin. As part of the normal procedure of any survey handled by the Centre, there was a pre-survey training of the interviewers tailored to the need of the survey. Interviewers were well informed of the purpose of the survey, the structure and content of the questionnaire before they started the process.

3.2.2. Sampling for the Survey

The survey drew samples from the adult population of Metropolitan Taipei over the age of eighteen. The focus on the adult population has something to do with the nature of the target program. 2100, claimed a public forum for current affairs and is implicitly an adult program catered to the presumed needs of adult TV viewers for talking about things current and of public concerns. The bottom limit of the age of eighteen-- an age over which one is legally expected to be responsible for own behaviors, serves as the bottom age limit for adulthood, if not yet citizenship. The focus of Metropolitan Taipei has a reason, too. Being the Capital city, Taipei has long been the centre of politics, television business, and therefore journalism. Being a symbol of urbanization with a huge population of more than three million, it has long been a place where more mobile people from various corners of the island gather for study, employment, and eventual residence. Therefore it has a population not only of the greatest density and variety (i.e., immigrated from other counties and townships, see GIO 1995), but also of far better cultural capital and socio-economical resources\textsuperscript{16}. It was presumed to be a place where people are more sensitive to public affairs and exposed to innovations. Drawing sample cases from the city meant a higher chance of coming across those who supposedly would be more interested in a program like 2100.

\textsuperscript{16} See (Taipei City Government 1998a).
The sampling method adopted is a combination of the systematic sampling method with the random phone-number sampling method. According to the former, the sample’s composition is decided by the population percentage a region occupies in the whole area, so as to ensure a proportional composition of the sample. There are twelve administrative districts in Metropolitan Taipei, each occupies a different percentage of the whole metropolitan population (see Table 7.3 below)\(^{17}\). We therefore sampled in proportion to the district population percentage. The reason for this is that district population rates can more or less reflect the degree of social developments in the whole metropolitan city. These social developments, in their turn, might tend to affect television viewing behaviors\(^{18}\). As for the random phone-number sampling method, we adopted it because our methodology is a telephone survey. Accordingly, phone numbers were to be sampled with attention paid to the equal distance between two subsequently chosen phone-numbers as shown on the phone directory, so as to ensure the randomness of the probability sample, i.e. each phone number in the guide book stood a fair chance to be picked up. Our survey sample cases were drawn from telephone numbers registered in the Metropolitan Taipei Residential Telephone Directory.

### 3.2.3. The Results of the Sampling

A total of 1804 telephone calls were made. Precluding the invalid call attempts (caused by nullified phone numbers, fax numbers, or no answers to the call, no one available for the interview, a busy line... etc.), there were 929 interviewees, among whom 296 refused to be interviewed. As a result, there were a total of 633 successful calls, which accounts for 68.13% of the valid call attempts. These 633 respondents constituted the sample, which was analyzed with the aid of computers, using SPSS-X software package. The confidence interval was 95% with a standard error of ± 3.97 (± 0.0397%). The test statistics used were counts, and percentages, together with the likelihood ratio $\chi^2$ (chi-square) and probabilities evaluated as two-tailed for bivariate tables. Following Howard Schuman and Stanley Presser (1996) in their *Questions & Answers in Attitude Survey*, we

\(^{17}\) See Taipei City Government (1998b). According to the statistics of December 1996 by Taipei City Government, the descending order of the district population density rates goes like this: Ta-An (12.3%), Shih-Lin (11.3%), Pei-Tou (9.3%), Hsin-Yi (9.2%), Nei-Hu (8.9%), Wen-Shan (8.8%), Jong-Shan (8.3%), Wan-Hwa (8.1%), Sung-Shan (8.1%), Jong Jeng (6.5%), Ta-Tung (4.9%), Nan-Kang (4.3%).

\(^{18}\) Though convenient for the purpose of random sampling, the district does not serve as a valid demographic feature for our study. Each of the twelve districts in Taipei has its respectively more developed areas and less developed areas. Actually it is not unusual that various degrees of developments mix in one single district. As these intra-district developmental differences are not captured through our telephone survey, our district-based statistics might be irrelevant for understanding demographic features of 2100's viewership.
regard a probability of less than \( p < 0.01 \) as borderline, \( p < 0.05 \) as significant, and \( p < 0.01 \) as highly significant.

These 633 successful calls were proportionately drawn from the twelve districts. From Table 7:3 (see below), we can see the distribution of respondents by district. Among the 633 respondents, 342 have actually viewed the program, which account for 54.0% of the sample size. This means that there were a total of 342 respondents as the sample of \( 2100 \)'s viewers for Questions 7-26, the part of the questionnaire directly relevant to the research. The distributions of these 342 respondents across various demographic features are part of the material on which our following related chapters will be based. For a glimpse of the representativeness of the 633 respondents drawn from Metropolitan Taipei, we will now forward to the basic personal data as disclosed by the respondents themselves through the questionnaire.

### Table 7:3 Distributions of Sample Cases in
The Twelve Administration Districts of Metropolitan Taipei

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Ta-An</th>
<th>Shih-Lin</th>
<th>Pei-Tou</th>
<th>Hsin-Yi</th>
<th>Nei-Hu</th>
<th>Wen-Shan</th>
<th>Jong-Shan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 1996 December statistics by Taipei City Government

### 3.2.4. Demographic Representations in the Sample of 633 Respondents

In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked for their personal data regarding gender, age, education and occupation. The levels of age and education, and the grouping of occupations used are what are normally adopted by most social science research in Taiwan. As some respondents didn't answer all items, the total number of respondents for every item was not always 633.

### Table 7:4 Gender Representations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this sample of 633, there are 271 men and 362 women (see Table 7: 4), which respectively accounts for 42.8% and 57.2% of the total respondents. According to
the statistics of the Taipei City Government for December 1996, the percentage occupied by male and female residents were respectively 49.8% and 50.2%. Our sample has more representation of women than of men.

Table 7:5 Age Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Level</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29 yrs</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 yrs</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 yrs</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 yrs</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+older yrs</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the age variable, there are five age levels (see Table 7:5 above). Among the 633 respondents, 25.6% belong to the first age level, i.e., “18-29 years” of age. The second and the third age levels, for “30-39” and “40-49 years”, have equal percentage of 22.9%, while the fourth and fifth levels have less percentages, respectively 13.3% and 14.5%. This seems to reflect reality. According to the December 1996 statistics from the Taipei City Government (based on a different grouping though), there are 51.99% residents that fit the category of “15-44 years” of age, 18.3% in the category of “45-64 years” old, while 8.75% are “65+older” years old.

Table 7:6 Education Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University+higher</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational colleges</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highschool+equivalents</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior secondary</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary+lower</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the education variable, our sample has the highest percentage of respondents in the highest education level, i.e., 29.4% for “university+higher” (see Table 7:6). The second level, “occupational colleges”, has 17.9% respondents while the fourth level, “highschool+equivalents”, has 27.8%. The lower two levels have fewer percentages, respectively 11.2% for “Junior secondary” and 12.2% for “primary+lower”. According to the December 1996 statistics by the Taipei City Government, 22.4% residents fit in the two highest levels, i.e., “university+higher” and “occupational colleges”, 25.7% in the third level, “high school and equivalents”, 21% residents in the fourth level, “junior secondary”, while 19.6% in “primary school”. With a grouping method more or less in accord with what we used, these official statistics reveal that the Taipei population does not seem to
have as many university-leveled residents as shown in our sample base. Yet our percentage value for “high-school” (27.8%) seems quite close to the official statistics (25.7%). Generally speaking, we have a bigger representation of better educated people in our sample. This may have something to do with the nature of our survey, which might be easier for the better educated, than for the less educated.

For occupation as a demographic feature, nine occupational groups are specified\(^\text{19}\). The first group, “self-employed businessmen” refers to those who work as their own boss. The second group “free profession” refers to those with special techniques or knowledge and who are less bound by set office hours, such as journalists and lawyers. The third group “public-sector workers” refers to those who work in the public sector such as schools or the police, the army, and the government. The fourth group “employed white collars” refers to those who work in the private sector as employees, in contrast to “self-employed businessmen”. In terms of economic stability, these four occupational groups are relatively better off than the other occupational groups. The “public-sector workers” group in particular enjoys much greater welfare security than all the rest. In terms of cultural capital, the “students” group, the “free profession” group, and the “public-sector employees” group are much better off than the rest.

Table 7.7 Occupation Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household care</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-owned Business</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Collars/Private Sector</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed/Self-employed Labor</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work for Public-sector</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/Retired</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Professions</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers/Peasant/Fishing/Miners</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 7.7, the top four occupational groups represented are household-care (109, 17.2%), followed by self-owned businessmen (97, 15.3%), then by White Collars in the private sector (95, 15%), then by Employed/Self-employed Labor (83, 13.1%). The big presentation of household care might partly explain why women are more presented in our sample base. In the middle are those hired in the public sector (76, 12%),

\(^{19}\) This categorization is commonly used by much social science research in Taiwan (see e.g. a series of cultural satisfaction survey reports in Shen and Jan (1991), Shen et al. (1994, 1995).
followed by students (70, 11%). The bottom three are Unemployed/Retired (8.6%), Free Professions such as journalists, photographers... etc. (34, 5.4%), and Fishers/Peasants/Miners (7, 1.1%). These statistics generally reflect the official records, though not in similar grouping.20

It is from the above described sample that we found the 342 respondents who have viewed 2100 and could respond to the main part of our questionnaire. Based on their responses, we will explore, through their viewing behaviors and opinions about the program, whether 2100 makes information relevant to their concerns and interests.

4. CONCLUSION

We hope that through this empirical study based on 2100’s content and its viewers’ responses, we may come to grasp what can be learned from this current-affairs talkshow dedicated, as claimed, to public debate, with apparent sincerity and dexterity in the use of television for public communication.

Choosing 2100 for an empirical study is a combination of both chance and design necessarily related with my own concern for the use of a most popular and easy technology for boosting democracy in my home country at a time when there is so much room for great expectations as well as suspicion. As the society is at crossroad, where the old traditional elitism clashes with the arising populism, how 2100’s participatory talk format captures such clashes is what we are going to turn to in the following chapters. As mentioned, we will proceed from our content study by which we want to explore how open 2100 functions as a talkspace for its lay talkers.

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20 For some references here, the Taipei labor force, under employment, is divided into four categories: Employers, which account for 8.4% of the labor force, Self-employed, which account for 11.2%, The employed, 76%, Unpaid Family workers, 4.4%. Peasant/Fishing/Mining, labeled as the primary industry, occupies only 0.11% labor force. See Taipei City Government (1998a)