

Hating journalism: Anti-press discourse and negative emotions toward journalism in Korea | Journalism

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In South Korea since the mid-2010s, the discourse on giraegi has prevailed. The word giraegi is a combination of gija, the Korean word for journalist, and tsuraegi, the Korean word for trash. By considering this distinctive discourse on giraegi as a negative emotional form of anti-press discourse, this paper explores the background logics and rationales behind the giraegi discourse that classifies journalists as trash, by focusing on the case of the networked public of #giraegi. Its analysis reveals that certain negative emotions toward the press – disgust, hate, and shame – are the sources of the formation and maintenance of the networked public of #giraegi and also the energy that directs the flow of their hostile messages about journalists and journalism. Moreover, journalists are considered ‘pollutants’ that tarnish Korean society and thereby something that needs to be eliminated. In connection with the growing research on hate speech against journalists on digital media, this research ultimately argues that this affective form of anti-journalistic discourse – mainly focusing on hate, disgust, and shame – can hardly bring about normative and constructive effects; its probable impact will be to exacerbate distrust and skepticism toward journalists and journalism itself.

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