

當主流媒體不再是主要的媒體來源：新媒體的 崛起與臺灣媒體的藍綠磅秤

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摘要

雖然臺灣與美國都有豐富的媒體環境，但是它們的政界截然不同，要比較這兩國的政治媒體狀況的話，恐怕研究結果是一團亂。臺灣是個年輕的民主社會，因此新媒體與智慧型手機的到來前，臺灣新聞算是傾向藍，白色恐怖時這個傾向最明顯。美國新聞的傾向左派現象已經存在了至少幾十年，而且新媒體的崛起對偏左派新聞環境應該沒什麼危險性。臺灣的情況可不一樣，藍媒體的聲量被年輕綠媒體人物淹沒，看起來這些主流聲音會慢慢地變成「小眾」的聲音。為了理解臺灣媒體民主化前與民主化後的差別，這則研究會引用關於臺灣媒體情況的研究，作者也會提供讀者數量與新聞台的收視率，透過這些數據我們可以知道臺灣的政治媒體變化遠遠比其他民主國家（像美國）大。

關鍵詞：新媒體、主流媒體、政治傾向、串流、民主

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When Mainstream Media Is No Longer Main: The Rise of New Media and How It's Tipping the Political News Scale in Taiwan

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Abstract

Despite being two democracies teeming with a variety of news sources, comparing Taiwanese and American politics, and their political news, is a messy affair. If we take job categories, such as businesspeople, educators, farmers, or even geographical distinctions, like north and south, we will understand just how hard it is to see commonalities, as businesspeople and farmers tend to be Republican in the USA but these groups seem to be on opposite sides in Taiwan. Whether we consider the past or more recent times, parallels between the two countries' political news situations are even harder to find. Because of Taiwan's political past, before the rise of new media alongside smartphones, the scale of news has typically tipped blue, especially if we consider the one-sided situation blue newspapers and news stations enjoyed during the White Terror Era. The US didn't undergo a political revolution in the late 20th century, and, as a result, US news sources have leaned liberal for decades. The rise of new media news on streaming platforms like YouTube and Spotify does not seem to pose a threat to the liberal lean in American news, despite there being reasonable concerns of unsavory deep right news sources growing in strength. The canvas of Taiwanese news, on the other hand, looks poised to be painted green as stalwart blue voices like CTi News (中天新聞台) are slowly, yet steadily, being drowned out by younger green voices as TV news and traditional news platforms continue to lose their influence. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how the political news balance is being changed in Taiwan by the rise of new streaming media platforms, and it will look into this trend by analyzing trends and statistics of the past and present.

Keywords: new media, mainstream media, political bias, streaming, democracy

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Introduction

I. What the World Wants and What It Gets

Sadly, even when the world wants something, like unbiased news, it rarely gets it. A Pew Research Center 2018 poll found that “75% [of poll respondents] across 38 countries say it is never acceptable for a news organization to favor one political party over others when reporting the news” (Mitchell et al). It is safe to say we can forget about expecting news companies themselves to be politically neutral, but, unfortunately, it is also unlikely we will ever see a country that is perfectly balanced when it comes to having an equal number of platforms on both sides of the political spectrum. Some countries just do not seem to budge, like the US, which has had a liberal news bias for decades, with the Civil Rights Era being the earliest recognized starting point (Greenberg), and that bias does not seem to be about to change. Believing that countries can get closer to a more even balance could be a bit too much to expect as well, because once the scale begins tilting to the other side does not mean that it will eventually stop at the middle; Taiwan is a fitting example of a country that went from one side (blue) to the other (green) in just a couple decades. A Nielsen TV ratings report in 2020 did a comparison on the ten biggest mainstream news stations in Taiwan, and it found that over 66% of the stations leaned green compared to just 34% for the pan-blue coalition (財經組). The above two numbers may not seem extraordinary, but they are if you consider that the side that has 34% used to have essentially 100% just three decades ago.

II. Definition of a Media Platform

This paper considers both big and small news platforms, but the key point of recognizing a platform is that it has to be established. Therefore, US media platforms could be as big and neutral as Politico or as small and dangerously biased as Before It's News (which is typically seen as having fake news), but something that pops up on a social media site without a clear source will not be part of this paper. As for Taiwan, everything from the neutral state-owned Central News Agency (CNA; 中央社) to niche news like Taiwan Buddhist Tzu-Chi Foundation's Da Ai Television (大愛電視) counts. We should pay especially close attention to small, low budget platforms in Taiwan because they are what are currently, and will continue, helping green news have a bigger voice.

III. Political Colors of Taiwan and the US Never Mix Together Easily

It is important to remove the emotion that comes with news, especially when it involves politics. Even the word “bias” does not need to be considered as being unfair or unjust; in this paper, the word is simply saying that one side enjoys more media representation than the other. Therefore, claims that US media has a liberal bias does not mean that being liberal is bad or that liberal entities are trying to suppress conservative news platforms. Just because Fox is alone in a competition against multiple liberal-minded heavyweights does not mean that Fox is the little guy who is morally good yet still being picked on. Politics and news may be an even touchier subject in Taiwan because just a few decades ago bloodshed and death were often either ignored or falsely reported by state news; all this is still in the memories of countless citizens. So, a prediction that Taiwanese media will one day be as green as the US’s media environment is blue also is not value judgment. If green news completely dominates the political news arena someday it does not mean the pan-blue coalition is being rightfully punished for its crimes in the past, just like we cannot claim that liberal news in America must apologize for Southern Democrats in the Jim Crow Era (1876-1965). Simply put, we must leave behind the scars and traumas of the past to focus on the numerical phenomena.

We must also realize that trying to connect similarities between parties is an unfruitful endeavor. For example, Taiwan’s Kuomintang and the USA’s Republican Party are often viewed as pro-business (as well as being a bit on the wealthier side), yet how can we see them as comparable when the Republican Party, during the Trump presidency, became rather chummy with the Tsai administration’s Democratic Progressive Party? The education world in the US has tended to vote blue ever since teacher unions became a key member of the Democratic Party; for example, a 2017 survey found 41% of teachers identified as Democrat, 30% as Independents, and just 27% as Republicans (Klein). Yet Taiwan’s secondary school educators were essentially always blue back in the White Terror days, when the KMT controlled everything from government to education, and being only a few decades ago means blue elementary and secondary school educators likely still outnumber green ones. While numbers for teachers’ political leanings could not be found, in 跨世紀（1991-2001）台灣地區大學生政治態度與行為變遷之研究, a 2012 dissertation, 鄭宏文 found that in 1991 23.4% of Taiwan’s college students leaned blue but that figure had dropped to 13% by 2001. A green swing happened in these ten years; in 1991 just 8.4% of the country’s college students identified as green yet that number jumped up to 34.7% in just a decade’s time. It’s unlikely that the figures of older teaching faculty changed on the

same scale as their younger students, but these figures do make one wonder just how much faculty changed in the 1990s, and are they becoming increasingly more green today?

Taking a look at the figures, or commonly held stereotypes, and looking for comparisons just causes more confusion no matter how you look at it. Like, even if we say that most of American academia is blue and most of Taiwanese academia is green, that does not mean American blue equals Taiwanese green and American red equals Taiwanese blue. And, in terms of geography, do people in southern Taiwan fit the stereotype of the American south being home to conservative, religious, and farming-intensive folks? Overall, there are similarities, but it is not a perfect fit. Whether we consider political ideology or geography, it can be hard to find similarities between these two countries politically once one dives into the details of political parties. The above is exactly why this writer has chosen to leave politics out of political news in favor of focusing on how American media started and has remained blue whereas Taiwanese media started a blue-to-green slide in the late 20th century.

IV. Politics Matter but Technology Changed the Ball Game

Many assume that politics is the sole reason why Taiwanese green media sources went from being underground and mostly illegal pre-1987 to a dominating force today, yet there are two other factors being forgotten: economics and technology. As the media world grew wealthier it was able to upgrade its technology, and this technology has given us more options. For example, digital television broadcasting only began in 1998 in the USA, and this was a huge development because digital TV can deliver more channels and better viewing quality at a significantly cheaper price compared to analog (Lemm). Essentially, developments like this is why TVs went from having a few channels at their invention to hundreds or thousands of channels today. Taiwan's green news heavyweights began with FTV in 1996 and others followed in the late 1990s, even though 1993 marked the first year private companies could start cable news channels, so technology and financial reasons seem to have been playing a role. Essentially, the three-year gap between 1993 and 1996 hint that money, or lack thereof, played a significant role in the pan-green coalition's late arrival to the 1990s news party.

The resulting increase of news platforms since the 1990s has not swung the news bias in the US but it has allowed for the rise of green media in Taiwan. And the newest technology, streaming media, is especially challenging for Taiwan's pan-blue coalition because unlike traditional media, such as newspapers (or their website versions) and TV stations, streaming media can be almost free to produce. Traditional media's mainstream media throne is once again being challenged by a technology that is cheaper,

faster, and requires less manpower, and there is more bad news for the pro-blue camp—this new broadcasting medium is controlled by young people who are overwhelmingly green. Essentially, the US's liberal bias is not facing a new wave of conservative streaming media yet Taiwan's pro-blue news is dealing with a strong, relentlessly green tide. As the younger generations grow up, increasingly more families will be shutting off their TVs and not buying newspapers (or reading mainstream media's websites) and instead be tuning into streaming media with their digital devices. And if the pro-blue coalition cannot figure out a solution the bulk of this streaming media will bleed green.

Historical Background

I. What is Political and What is Not

As mentioned above, it is easy to blame a lack of progress on politics, but sometimes certain advances do not come because either the technology is not mature enough and/or the market is not ready for technological change. Cable news is a prime example. Taiwan is now home to a healthy cable TV environment with hundreds of channels, but if we listen to anyone who remembers life three decades okay we will likely hear about the days of “The Big Three” (老三台), which were Taiwan Television (台視), China Television (CTV; 中視), and Chinese Television System (CTS; 華視). On a side note, CTV and CTS having “China” and “Chinese” in their names reflects KMT nationalist thinking, and so it is easy to see why green voices, especially ones that call for Taiwanese independence, would not be welcome on these platforms. What Taiwan might not know about the USA is that just three decades ago the US, with its thriving democracy and enormous economy, could only muster up its own big three: ABC, NBC, and CBS (McNeil 1143–1161). Taiwan went from having a GDP of just US\$148 billion in 1987 to being ranked 13th in the world with a GDP of US\$1.4 trillion in 2020. The US's GDP increased from US\$4.9 trillion to US\$21 trillion (“Report for Selected Countries and Subjects”). The US was ranked 1st in both 1987 and 2020, so it appears the lack of TV channels was tied mostly to technological, and not financial nor political, reasons.

Now, the reasons for these two countries' relative lack of television stations pre-1987 may be slightly different, as the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) prevented many entities from forming whereas the USA was mostly about the consumer market, but it would be unfair to say Taiwan's plethora of media options today is a direct result of democratization that began in 1987. Essentially, if authoritarianism was the only thing getting in the way of Taiwan enjoying a great variety of media platforms back in the White Terror Era, then why didn't you see hundreds of TV channels in the US until

around the turn of the century? If we could change the past by turning the pre-1987 Taiwanese world into a healthy democracy, maybe there could have been one or two heavy-hitter pro-green news platforms that could swing away at pro-blue stations and newspapers just like Fox does to the opposite party in the USA. But, if Taiwan became a democratic country a decade or so earlier, it would still be difficult for pan-green news to grow in strength because starting and running a news corporation is not cheap. Formosa Television (FTV; 民視), which is arguably just as proudly green as Fox is proudly red, had a paid-in capital valued at NT\$4.2 billion (US\$140 million) in 2011 (黃揚明). Considering Taiwan was a poor country with state-run corporations back in the 1980s, it just does not seem feasible that green news, with its limited financial resources, would be able to compete dollar-for-dollar with pro-blue platforms even if there were no laws barring private companies from creating news channels. If we go back to the 1980s, in the US, CNN was started by Ted Turner, an American billionaire, and Fox was bankrolled by Australian-American media mogul Rupert Murdoch. These two platforms needed years to challenge the Big 3, and so we can assume that green news would struggle to find big-pocketed investors back in the day even if the pan-green coalition wasn't restricted politically.

II. The Rise of the Little Guys

As strange as it seems, after the White Terror Era ended in 1987, the main difference between changes in the political news atmosphere in Taiwan and the USA has been political whereas the situation pre-1987 was often just as much about financial and technological limitations. In other words, in the White Terror Era there were no pro-green news stations but, as stated above, there is no conceivable way that there would be a great variety of pan-green options back in the final days of single-party rule because no country in the world had that many stations to choose from. In the USA today, the Big 3 of CBS, NBC, and ABC still exist. They are joined by the “Young Big Three” news stations, which are CNN (left), Fox (right), and MSNBC (left). The first Big 3 have been given a liberal label, and so, basically, instead of having to face a wave of red news companies, older blue news platforms have been joined by newer blue siblings that are arguably even more blue than they are. In 2019, a THR/Morning Consult poll revealed that 46% of Americans viewed CNN as having a more liberal bias whereas only 12% saw it as having a more conservative bias; the numbers for MSNBC are 43% and 10%, respectively (Hayden).

The USA's explosion of news stations may have begun a bit earlier than Taiwan, with CNN and Fox being born in the 1980s and becoming stalwarts in the 1990s while MSNBC joined a bit later with its birth in 1996, yet what has not changed in the USA

has been a perceived liberal bias. In the 2019 poll mentioned above, 34% of Americans viewed ABC as liberal-leaning whereas only 14% viewed the station as being conservative-leaning; the figures for CBS and NBC were 35% and 13% and 36% and 12%, respectively (Hayden). For those questioning the poll, the neutral web site Media Bias Fact Check rated ABC, CBS, and NBC as “slight to moderate liberal” and *The Hollywood Reporter*, which produced the article based on this poll, was also rated as leaning liberal by Media Bias Fact Check. And for anyone questioning the legitimacy of American political bias checker platforms and debate fact-checking experts, these tend to paint those on the left in a more positive light; in the 2012 Presidential Debates, National Public Radio (NPR) pointed out that Mitt Romney (Republican) lied 18 times in the three debates compared to Barack Obama’s (Democrat) 9 misstatements (Schumacher-Matos), and in 2016 *Politico* ran an article with the title of “13 Times Trump Was Dead Wrong at the Debate, and 2 Times Clinton Was” (Bender et al). In other words, liberal websites are saying that American news platforms lean liberal.

No one is denying that traditional news outlets in the USA tend to be liberal, just like no one could pretend that pre-1987 news in Taiwan was anything but blue. Yet things changed a lot once Taiwan began holding elections, whereas in the US only Fox (red) rose up to take on the Big Three, which had their defenses bolstered by having CNN and MSNBC join the fray. To be fair, the US does have a relatively balanced distribution of left and right news companies (see fig. 1), like the moderately red *The Washington Times* (founded in 1982) and red-leaning *The Wall Street Journal* (founded in 1889) (“Media Bias Chart 7.0 January 2021 Edition”), but the heavyweights of traditional media tend to be blue.

(5.46%), TVBS News (4.58%), SET News (4.53%), SET Taiwan (4.4%), CTi (4.11%), FTV News (4.02%), EBC News (3.76%), Era News (2.89%), and then the Old 3 were China Television (CTV, 中視, 2.44%), Taiwan Television (台視; 2.43%), and Chinese Television System (CTS; 華視; 1.52%). Next TV only garnered 1.95%. If we exclude the non-news stations (like SET Taiwan, 三立台灣), a simple calculation of blue news shows that they are getting almost 9% of the market compared to green news' 17%. But, half of that 9% is now essentially gone with CTi going off the air, and a look at their most popular show, which is news live, has 351,000 viewers, a number that is 1.4% of Taiwan's population (“【每日必看整點】必看大頭條:金門開第一槍"入境快篩"指揮中心深夜打臉 @中天新聞 20210524”).

III. The Old Guard vs the Newcomers of the 80s and 90s

Like the US's CBS, NBC, and ABC, the “Old 3” of Taiwanese broadcast TV never went away, it is just that Taiwan's Old 3 got less popular while the US's Big 3 are still the top dogs. Being part of a political bias poll with Fox, CNN, and MSNBC reflects that CBS, NBC, and ABC are still heavyweights, and in 2020 Nielsen ratings for most-watched networks, CBS, NBC, and ABC took home 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize, respectively. Fox was 4th, MSNBC 6th, and CNN came in 7th (Schneider). But in Taiwan, the older stations have struggled to stay relevant; a 2020 report by Taiwan Public Television Service Foundation provided Nielsen ratings that ranked China Television (CTV; 中視) at 9th, Taiwan Television (台視) at 10th, and Chinese Television System (CTS; 華視) all the way down at 14th. FTV (民視) was 1st, TVBS 2nd, SETN (三立新聞網) had two stations that took down 3rd and 4th, CTi (中天) was 5th, EBC (東森新聞) 7th, and Era News (年代新聞) came in at 8th (公視企劃部). When comparing individual stations, the top five stations in 2020 essentially had at least twice the amount of viewers compared to any one of the Old 3.

The problems that plague Taiwan's former three terrestrial TV giants are manifold. Viewers might have a bad taste in their mouths because of political history, or a simple explanation that private TV typically does better than public television holds true in both the US and Taiwan. In 陳一香's 2002 academic article “多頻道環境下的電視節目多樣性分析：以台灣無線電視台與有線電視台綜合頻道為例之比較分析” (a paper that analyzes and compares the variety of shows offered on cable TV and terrestrial TV), the writer explains that the lack of competition before 1987 resulted in low-quality, stale programming that lacked variety and these three entities have struggled to evolve since the democratization of Taiwan. For example, before the 1990s, the Old 3 rarely gave air time to disadvantaged groups such as farmers, blue-collar laborers, and non-KMT political parties. Also, many of the private stations broadcast

in Taiwanese Hokkien (once the most popular language in Taiwan until Mandarin Chinese was introduced by the KMT), Hakka, and other minority languages (陳一香 28). Overall, cable TV is beating Taiwan's Old 3 due to it being able to attract a greater variety of viewers because it has more money, does not play by the old rules, and it gives the viewers more of what they want.

The New Grew Up and Got Old So Fast: The Rise of Another New(er) Media

I. New Media vs. Social Media

It is important to make a distinction between new media and social media. It is evident that new media and traditional media are putting programming on social media platforms. And much work has been done that connects elections, such as the 2016 Trump upset victory over Clinton, with social media, particularly fake news or unfair news that painted one candidate (Clinton) in a bad light and glorified the other (Trump) in dishonest ways. The problem with “media” on social media is that it can often be hard to know the news source, like a news story could be US-based yet it also might just be “news” from entities ranging from state actors (e.g. Russia) to terrorist organizations (e.g. Al-Qaeda). Furthermore, the advertising models on Facebook and other social media platforms can make it hard to know the media sources behind the political articles and videos on these sites. Also, social media political advertising revs up during election season and then essentially disappears once votes are cast, and this makes it difficult to track the sources of political news on these sites in the long run. Therefore, the fickle nature of social media-based political news is messy and transient, which is why this paper has been, and is going to keep, staying away from social media; instead, the focus is on new media platforms that are long-term and have established a name.

II. The Quick Rise of Cable and Its Even Quicker Fall

Cable came for a few decades, but its demise is already on the horizon due to a newer technology: streaming. A CEO and chairman of multiple huge TV media companies, John Malone is known as a cable TV pioneer who once envisioned a world with 500-channels; he was an oracle then and now he sees the end of mass media: “There is not going to be any more mass media. Media will be the computers of individuals, and every individual will have a deep database on them in the hands of large organizations who are going to use artificial intelligence to service and exploit the knowledge of that individual.” He also said that broadcast networks “are going to go”,

meaning disappear (Goldsmith). In other words, we will all be tuning into streaming-based media sooner or later. The numbers in the US back him up. The peak of pay-TV subscribers in the US was 105 million in 2010, but that number fell to 83 million in 2020 and it is expected to drop to 73 million by 2023. Simply put, losing 30% of your business is not good for one's business model. Also not good for cable TV is that Netflix went from having a little over 20 million American subscribers in 2010 to almost 70 million in 2020, which means in the US Netflix subscribers will soon exceed all cable TV subscribers (Schneider and Aurthur).

Although it did actually gain subscribers in some years of the last decade, Taiwan's cable TV (第四臺) is also losing significant amounts of viewers. Taiwan's National Communications Commission found that in 2011 there were 5.1 million cable TV subscribers, yet, despite seeing that figure rise to 5.3 million in 2017, now less than 4.9 million subscribers remain (潘羿菁). Overall, cable TV has only lost 4% of its subscribers, but if Taiwan catches up with the trend, which it should, these numbers might spell disaster for the island's cable TV network.

The number of streaming options is growing almost exponentially, and the amount of platforms currently is already alarming. Netflix is not the only TV streaming service; in fact, there is an increasingly longer list of streaming services that service customers internationally (like Spotify), regionally (such as Tencent, which can be streamed across most of Asia), and in a more domestic fashion (like China's Youku). When one thinks of Netflix's peers, they will likely list Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Disney Plus, and YouTube. As for political news, content (especially podcasts) is steadily growing on everything from YouTube and Spotify to TuneIn, SoundCloud, and Apple Podcasts, and podcast platforms should become more influential as podcasting grows in popularity; for example, Spotify went from having 700,000 podcasts at the end of 2019 to 2.2 million at the end of 2020 (Sweney). In 2020, 35% of Americans had listened to a podcast in the past month, which is up from 9% in 2008 (Richter). And the best thing for consumers, and worse news for big-budget news entities, is a lot of these podcasting sites are free. Ross Winn's 2021 article "31 Best Podcast Hosting Sites (Top 7 Have Free Offers)" is a good example of just how many podcasting platforms are available.

In Taiwan's past, the gatekeepers were first the government and then news companies themselves, but those times are ending. Essentially, in the pre-democracy days the government could squash any news story it didn't want the public reading or hearing about, and when cable TV took off the gatekeeper became the news companies themselves. Like self-publishing, the only disadvantage streaming media has is exposure; if people know about your work, you can put it out there for thousands of

people to enjoy. Even if one splurges on microphones, sound equipment, and rents a room, podcasts and other forms of streaming media are still incredibly cheap to produce. Also, a company like FTV could stop a journalist from writing a story that paints a pan-green politician poorly, but companies like Spotify typically don't really care what you produce; in fact, Spotify continues to promote Joe Rogan despite his myriad controversies. All this means that young people are no longer limited by financial constraints nor can higher-ups tell them what is acceptable and what isn't, so if they are green they are going to be able to disseminate a lot of green news to green supporters for next to nothing. That tidal wave of green news will be powerful, and it might just wash away blue news if there isn't a plan to stop the momentum.

III. What (Young) People Are Tuning Into in the Digital/Streaming World

Streaming media should eventually take over as the number one media mode, but the changing of the guard will not happen overnight. That being said, Internet activity is officially becoming more popular than watching cable TV. A 2018 study of countries around the globe by Statista in *Business Insider* showed that in 2018 people were watching TV 164 minutes per day on average and going online 157 minutes; in 2009, those figures were 188 and 48, respectively (Dunn). In 2021, US adults on average spent 3 hours and 54 minutes on mobile devices per day compared to just 3 hours and 22 minutes in front of their TV sets (He). The figures above reflect that TV isn't going away but streaming media is here to stay and it's becoming the main source, or mainstream.

The pandemic may be helping TV hang on, but research in the past 10 years also points out that the eyes of young people haven't said goodbye to cable yet—it's just that they stream content more. In the USA, news watching on Cable TV was up during the pandemic (Schneider), and a 2014-2018 study featured on SETN's website showed that 79% of Taiwanese aged 25-29 watched TV the previous day. The figures for the 35-49 bracket was 90.1%, and the 50-64 group was 95%. As for those who watched TV as well as checked out content online the previous day, the 25-34 year-old group was 65.7%, 56.9% of the 35-49 group, and 51.6% for the 50-65 group (李鴻典). This study reveals that young people are much more likely to be getting news media through two different "channels", meaning TV and streaming media, yet it also shows that they like TV less than their parents and middle-aged adults. Statistics found in the 2020 *Rev* article "How Gen Z and Millennials Watch Video Content & What That Means for Production Teams" indicated that 33% of Gen Zers (who are between 6-24 years old) watch cable TV. When analyzed side-by-side with Millennials (25-34 years old), 59%

of Gen Zers used YouTube more than in the previous year compared to just 46% for their slightly older cohort, and the figures for Instagram are 55% and 50%, respectively. Essentially, it looks like everybody is using YouTube, Instagram, and other streaming media and social media more, but a clear phenomenon sticks out—the streaming media and social media rates of Generation Z's are the highest and growing the fastest.

The numbers above hint strongly that cable TV will be around for many years to come, but streaming media is steadily taking over. *The Storm Media* conducted surveys that showed 98.9% of Taiwan's university students are using the Internet compared to 77.7% of the general population. In these surveys, 73.4% of university students preferred to get their news through the Internet with only 20.4% preferring to watch news via cable TV; the figures for the general public were 28.6% and 58.9%, respectively (郭昱宏). In many ways, figures featured throughout this paper indicate that numbers for the youngest media consumers are directly opposite compared to the oldest media consumers, and if you wait for the younger population to grow up as the older one fades away, eventually you will get to a point where traditional media platforms are the minority. It'll take time, but Taiwan went from having three news stations to a country with seven 24-hour news stations—and it only took a couple decades (Rickards).

IV. Young People Are Growing Up Green

Winston Churchill apparently never said the words “If you're not a liberal when you're 25, you have no heart. If you're not a conservative by the time you're 35, you have no brain” (“Quotes Falsely Attributed to Winston Churchill”), but the quote often is connected to the common belief that young people will get more conservative as they get older—but what if they don't? According to the most recent political opinion poll, in early 2020 24.2% of 20-29 year-olds supported the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and for the 30-39-year-old group it jumped from 16.5% in 2019 to 29.1% last year. For the aged 20-29 and 30-39 groups, their support for the KMT (Chinese Nationalist Party) each dropped about 1 percentage point, coming in at 9.2% and 9.8%, respectively. The New Power Party, another pan-green party, lost support, but the two age groups supported them at 16.1% and 10.5%, respectively (李俊毅). If we consider the above quote about people changing their political affiliation as they get older, it seems like the KMT is not becoming a more attractive option for people as they age.

The 2020 election also points to worrying signs for the KMT. In that election 72% of people 40 and under voted for Tsai Ing-wen. This group accounted for 34% of voters, and if that group keeps pulling green it means bad news for the KMT. Furthermore, Taiwanese in their 20s cast over 3.1 million votes, the 30s crowd had 3.5 million votes,

and that election featured over 1 million new voters (林忻棣). With no sign that Millennials will turn blue as they age and Generation Z being even more green than them, it looks bad for the pan-blue coalition because it is even losing in traditional media when younger, and much greener, Taiwanese are turning to streaming media platforms that they can both consume and produce content on for next to nothing financially.

Conclusion

People change and so do countries. Taiwan changed into a country where green news has gone from being illegal to the dominating force. Who is to say that blue news cannot somehow rise again? And Taiwan has an aging population, so maybe the pan-blue coalition can use this to its advantage to stave off this young green tide. Furthermore, if CTi (中天) can pull in 300,000 viewers on YouTube videos despite being the party of older, and less technologically skilled, people, then maybe blue news can catch up to the streaming media train. Maybe the rise of smaller parties like the New Power Party (時代力量), Taiwan People's Party (台灣民眾黨), and Taiwan Statebuilding Party (台灣基進) along with younger people who care less about blue and green and more about Taiwan will mix political colors up so much that no one knows what is green and what is blue anymore.

In the US, the term mainstream media is still used to refer to national newspapers like *The New York Times* and broadcast media channels such as CNN. Yet the term "main" is losing its status as increasingly more people are turning to "non-mainstream" new media sources, often through streaming. Essentially, mainstream media can continue to call itself mainstream, but it will no longer deserve to be called main when the overwhelming majority of news followers have turned their devices to a newer stream of media.

No one questions the future of Taiwanese media being one that is streamed, yet what is uncertain is how political news competition will play out on this new technology. Younger people are much more likely to use mobile devices to get their news through streaming media, and that means, if we consider voter statistics, both the producers and consumers are going to be greener politically. If Taiwanese news ends up having a strong green lean like the liberal lean seen in the US, then that means we have observed something quite historical in nature. Political news situations in different countries have changed due to strong-arm tactics like communist takeovers or military coups, yet witnessing a complete change in political bias from one side to the other in just three decades in a democratic country is rather unprecedented.

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