

# **Political Polarization of Japanese Media: A Comparative Content Analysis Study of Public Opinion of the Asahi Shimbun and Financial Times on Abenomics**

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## **ABSTRACT**

After Japan underwent two decades of economic stagnation, the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promised to revitalize Japan's economy by launching economy policies called Abenomics. Abe's economic policies contained three aspects: expansionary monetary policy, expansionary and flexible fiscal policy and structural reform including economic growth strategy. Those policies aimed to boost Japan's economy. However, the policy has generated mixed results. Number of economic performance showed that Abenomics achieved some and failed in others. However, the public opinions from the newspaper of the Asahi Shimbun and Financial Times tended to broadcast two extreme different stories. The Asahi Shimbun criticized the government and Abenomics. On the other hand, the Financial Times, which is a part of Nikki Inc., tended to support the government and said the Abenomics helped Japan's economy. This kind of phenomenon was called political polarization.

This paper aimed to discuss the idea of political polarization and illustrate the idea by analyzing newspaper reactions on the Abenomics.

The finding of the paper was that the polarized ideology from the two side of the political spectrum spoke out two different kinds of voices with their bias. This kind of polarization happened in the elite, the mass and the mass media. The party became more polarized overtime while, at the same time, the polarized voters casted their votes actively via receiving the partisan cues sent by the elites; and the party still won the election in this kind of polarized environment. Then the mass media acted as a mediator and exchanged idea with the elite and the individual voters. Since the people became more polarized, the mass media would offer the reading that was related to people's ideologies in order to maintain their subscribers.

Overall, political polarization is a new and dangerous phenomenon across the world. Taiwan also is experiencing political polarization. It needs more attention and research to understand the development and prospect of this modern democratic disease.

**Keywords:** Political Polarization, Japanese Media, Abenomics, Japan's Economy