

**Political Meme and Political Polarization in Taiwanese Social Media**

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# **Political Meme and Political Polarization in Taiwanese Social Media**

Jun-Jie Lin

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, 2021

## **Abstract**

In recent years, a few scholars are interested in political expressions of young people via social media. Meme is one of tools to show young people's political expression on social media. Meme, as a creative device, facilitates the potentially viral communication of one's own political beliefs and attitudes. When we start to review the information of political meme, we can see that most of the messages are emotional and aggressive. Therefore, in this long-term and aggressive way to show their political expression, the possibility of political polarization and the potential reinforcing single-sided political affiliation/identification might keep growing.

The research aimed to analyze how social media users' political ideology are impacted by political meme when they receive and learn the message of pan-blue and pan-green political meme. The primary data were collected from online questionnaire and analyzed by quantitative method.

The four main findings of this research are: 1) the respondents whose FREQUENCY are high was more reinforced on partisanship identification and Unification-Independent issue; 2) the political meme's two elements that humor perception and political expression are significant and have positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue; 3) most of respondents would like to use political meme as political expression. 4) over half of respondents would like to share political meme to same partisanship people rather than different partisanship people.

Keywords: Political Polarization, Political Expression, Meme, Humor

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

In recent years, a few scholars are interested in political expressions of young people via digital technologies, there are no small part people engage social media like Instagram or Facebook have become communicated and exchanged opinion platform for young generation to participate in political issues.

Meme also can be a political tools to identify unclear issue to show political affiliation that the independent voter can follow political affiliation to make decision.<sup>1</sup> Andrew S. Ross and Damian J. Rivers<sup>2</sup> explained the power and function of meme in further “Internet memes as a creative device which facilitates the potentially viral communication of one’s own political beliefs, attitudes and orientations.”. Moreover, social media users share political meme with groups which have the same ideology or similar position. Memes is able to be provided into media texts and intertwine with public discourses.<sup>3</sup>

In the 2016 American election, there are scholar pointed that the meme successfully intervene in popular press discourse, due forms of Internet humor have become powerful media or even decisive in contemporary political life.<sup>4</sup> For instance, dubbed the election “World War Meme” in a report on “how a group of anonymous internet commandos conquered the internet for Donald Trump”.<sup>5</sup> Taiwan also has similar phenomenon during 2020 president election and 2018 mayor election. It can be seen that meme accompanies with political propaganda, its mainly focus on the young

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<sup>1</sup> 林照真, 假新聞類型與媒體聚合: 以 2018 年臺灣選舉為例. 新聞學研究 • 第一四二期 2020 January: p. 111-153.

<sup>2</sup> Ross, Andrew, and Damian J. Rivers. "Digital Cultures of Political Participation: Internet Memes and the Discursive Deligitimization of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Candidates." *Discourse, Context and Media* 16 (01/14 2017): 1-11. Page.2

<sup>3</sup> Ryan M. Milner, *The World Made Meme: Discourse and Identity in Participatory Media* (University of Kansas, 2012-08-31).

<sup>4</sup> Penney, Joel. "It's So Hard Not to Be Funny in This Situation': Memes and Humor in U.S. Youth Online Political Expression." *Television & New media* 1-16 (2019). Page.2

<sup>5</sup> BEN SCHRECKINGER, "World War Meme," *POLITICO MAGAZINE* March/April 2017.

generation.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, humorous political memes could be a popular way to raise political participation as well as concern over their potential dangers of polarization. Joel Penney's paper<sup>7</sup> mentions that "Memes are very manipulative, and they really immediately pit people against each other, ostensible lack of substantive information in political memes is seen as leading not only to cynicism and dejected world, but to a hardening of partisan positions that foster division and endless arguments." As a result, People use political memes and aggressor memes to criticize or satire the politics in long-term as political expression. It has the potential risk to create hatred and between people who support KMT or DPP in Taiwan. In the other words, political meme would not only regard as something funny, but also it is an effective way as a political propaganda and political agitation to achieve some political purpose.

### **Motivation**

The convince of social media has brought a variety of different way to show political expression. Nowadays, young generation often express their opinions to politics via meme. In the other hand, as political memes become more popular on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. But when we start to review the information of political meme, we can see that most of the messages are emotional and aggressive. The offensive criticizes do not express their opinions or provide opinion in a rational way. Moreover, the replier of political meme who mostly have the same political inclination. Therefore, in this long-term and aggressive political expression, there might be increase the possibility of political polarization and the potential of

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<sup>6</sup> "迷因梗圖串流青年選票 網路空戰將成選戰主流," 2020 年 02 月 03 日, [https://www.upmedia.mg/news\\_info.php?SerialNo=80153](https://www.upmedia.mg/news_info.php?SerialNo=80153).

<sup>7</sup> Joel Penney, "'It's So Hard Not to Be Funny in This Situation': Memes and Humor in U.S. Youth Online Political Expression," *Television & New media* 1-16 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419886068>.

reinforcing single-sided political affiliation/identification.

### **Research Purpose**

The previous scholars mention that political meme might lead to interpersonal hatred environment in social media, the meme of the controversial and insubstantial information might shape how social media users think political situation.<sup>8</sup> Thus, approach the political meme and political humor that have become potential controversy to politics. The purpose of this research is to analyze how internet users' political ideology is impacted by political meme when they learn the information of pan-blue and pan-green political meme. At first, this research would like to find out how political meme reinforces Taiwanese partisanship identification/affiliation and the issue position of Unification-Independence issue. Next step, I would find out behavior pattern of social medial user share political meme with what kind of people. The research primary data would be collected from questionnaire, and then analyze it by one-way ANOVA and regression analysis.

### **Research Question**

1. How dose political meme enhances polarization of political identification?
2. With Whom do political meme users share political meme?

### **Contribution**

The contribution of this study is to understand how Taiwanese young generation political identification is influenced by social media when they learn political meme. Besides, this research will elaborate the potential of political meme in detail. In order

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<sup>8</sup> Lewis, Alice Marwick and Rebecca. "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online." (2017): pages.2.

to prevent Taiwanese social media getting more polarized, this research focus on what's elements reinforce social media users' political polarization and figure out the behavior pattern of social medial user share political meme with what kind of people.

### **Limits**

All of the people have the possibility to be social media user who approach to social platform to get the information. But because the elders often are not willing to use social medias and technological devices. Thus, the higher correlation between meme and respondent are young adults. The other thing is the limitation of time so that could not reach the whole age of people as research sample.

### **Delimits**

This study respondents would mainly focus on young adults. The range are between age 20 to 50 years old which means that these group are more frequent to use social media and technological device as contact. Moreover, at least people have to over 20 years old that could vote to election in Taiwan, so they have certain extent of political participation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Meme

#### Media Meme

In nowadays, we can see the classic type of meme that is combined with a funny image and some verbal component (comics, collage, clips etc.). when it comes to the power of the meme, most of time, meme is regard as a humorous way to express people opinion so people prefer to accept information in this way instead of a lengthy article. D. M. Bolton, & Yaxley, J.<sup>9</sup> said “this phenomenon is called ‘clickbait’ that the information is lacks substantive information and try to use something are attractive and amusing let people to follow some certain issue to reach benefit for themselves.”

Media meme could be seen as a cultural and informative unit and is spread by different formats of media. A tool to spread a certain information to impact audience in mass media. The term “meme” is originated with Richard Dawkins’ “The Selfish Gene” (1976). Dawkins<sup>10</sup> described “meme is a replicator, a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation which propagates itself in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.”

#### Political Meme of Aggressor and Protector

Meme also could be used in political science to spread the information then impact the audience ideology by political propaganda, political criticize and political satire on social media. S. Owens<sup>11</sup> said “Image macros are essentially images with overlaid text. they are simplest and most wide-spread online meme category, and they are snackable images that are easy to share with a simple tweet or Facebook post.”

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<sup>9</sup> D. M. Bolton, & Yaxley, J., "Fake New and Clickbait: Nature Enemies of Evidencebased Medicine.," BJU International 119(S5), 8-9 (2017).

<sup>10</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 3 ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> S. Owens, "How Internet Memes Went Corporate," (2012).

Political meme is digital package to be political commentary that combine image (ironic or funny), pop-culture information and phrase (political information) make people are easier share the meme on the social media.<sup>12</sup>

In Kuznetsov I.S. and Soldatkina Ya.V. paper<sup>13</sup> have a clear structure that classify the political meme of purpose in two way, Memes-aggressors & Memes-protectors.

- **Memes-aggressors:** Memes-aggressors are aggressive intention to discredit, attack and destruct the political opponent (destroy an idea, political program even person's authority). Besides, its information might have disinformation or misinformation to impact the audience.
- **Memes-protectors:** Memes-protectors is trying to keep the status quo, to motivate or incentive the supporter (make the slogan) to protect political elite's authority or an idea.

While media user just regard as meme is as an entertainment content, it already successfully intervenes in new media (social media, websites, blogs etc.). According to Douglas Rushkoff<sup>14</sup> "Even if a media meme was not created for the specific purpose and its generation was spontaneous (it means media meme is nothing but an audiences reaction to some event), it could most likely be used by political or business elite as a leverage.". Besides, there might be political elites' goal hidden behind the humor of political meme to achieve their benefit.

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<sup>12</sup> L Shifman, "Memes in Digital Culture," *Cambridge, MA: MIT Press* (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Ya.V. Soldatkina I.S. Kuznetsov, "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media," *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism* Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2017-22-2-333-339>.

<sup>14</sup> D. Rushkoff, *Media Virus!: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture* (Random House Publishing Group, 2010).

## Political Polarization

### The Definition of Political Polarization

Niemi, Weisberg and Kimball<sup>15</sup> reorganize the definition of political polarization from other scholars and divide it into two kinds of political polarization. First kind of political polarization is a group of people have opposite position on the specific issues, even their political spectrum toward the opposite side. Moreover, these issues need to be considered as importance to the society. This kind of Polarization is accordance to left-right ideology, it means that most people express their opinions on a certain issue and hold completely opposite views.<sup>16</sup>

Second kind of political polarization is “partisan”. The people position on a certain issue or ideology has relevance by his/her own partisan (political affiliation/partisanship).<sup>17</sup> For instance, in a country has A party and B party, if people support to A party, will support with A party’s promoted policies; in the other side, if people support B party and will opposite with A promoted policies. These two groups people opinion would be totally different due to the difference of partisanship. This kind of political polarization shows the character of “same groups are homogeneity” and “different groups are heterogeneity”. The point of polarization is examined that people behavior and attitude whether have obvious “party sorting”. When the differences are more obvious between “party sorting” in a country, it refers that the people in the country are more likely shape their political attitude or political expression by party sorting and make decision by political affiliation.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Herbert F. Weisberg Richard G. Niemi, "Controversies in Voting Behavior" (2001).

<sup>16</sup> 蕭怡靖、林聰吉. "〈台灣政治極化之初探：測量與分析〉." 載於《台灣選舉與民主化調查(TEDS) 方法論之回顧與前瞻》 (2013): Page 92

<sup>17</sup> 蕭怡靖、林聰吉. "〈台灣政治極化之初探：測量與分析〉." 載於《台灣選舉與民主化調查(TEDS) 方法論之回顧與前瞻》 (2013): Page 92

<sup>18</sup> Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 1 (2000). <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669291>.

## **An Appropriated Way of Examining Political Polarization in Taiwan**

Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching mentioned that use the first way of political polarization to examine PI (Polarization Index), the outcome showed that Taiwan's PI is stable and modest, even have no the characters of polarization, when PI compared by other democratic countries. Because most Taiwanese people do not familiar the concept of Left-Right political spectrum and politicians have not use this concept as political issue to manipulate public opinion, so that the validity is unstable and the outcome is not match with the reality of political situation in Taiwan.<sup>19</sup>

Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching define partisanship as pan-blue supporter and pan-green supporter, they also examine the different issue (left-right ideology, Taiwan independent vs. ultimate reunification, and environmental protection vs. economic development..., etc.) to find which issue could be seen an appropriated issue of polarization in Taiwan. Their research consequence (Table.1) shows "Taiwan independent vs. ultimate reunification" could be an appropriated issue to examine polarization.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, their research finding mentions that people who without partisanship, would not easier get impact and manipulated by political elites, also would not easier get impact on the position of partisan issue ; people who have strong partisanship. First, would easier accept their supporting party information that the information is to attack and discredit the opposite party. Second, the people would push the opposite party's spectrum to the counter side so that amplify the gap of opposite party position.

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<sup>19</sup> 蕭怡靖、林聰吉. 〈台灣政治極化之初探：測量與分析〉. 載於《台灣選舉與民主化調查(TEDS) 方法論之回顧與前瞻》 (2013): Page 95

<sup>20</sup> 蕭怡靖、林聰吉. 〈台灣政治極化之初探：測量與分析〉. 載於《台灣選舉與民主化調查(TEDS) 方法論之回顧與前瞻》 (2013): Page 104

**Table 1.** The Polarized Index of Taiwanese toward Different Issues in 2008.

Issue		Respondents	DPP	KMT	P.I
left ideology (0)	Mean	5.56	4.21	6.23	1.991
V.S.					
right ideology (10)	S.D	1.87	2.35	2.34	
Taiwan independence (0)	Mean	4.53	2.17	7.41	5.165
V.S.					
Ultimate reunification (10)	S.D	2.59	2.03	2.11	
Environmental protection (0)	Mean	5.91	5.47	6.78	1.291
V.S.					
Economic development (10)	S.D	2.71	2.30	2.11	
Retaining social welfare (0)	Mean	4.14	4.57	4.34	0.227
V.S.					
Developing social welfare (10)	S.D	3.34	2.51	2.67	
Social revolution (0)	Mean	7.07	4.72	6.03	1.291
V.S.					
maintenance of social stability (10)	S.D	2.95	2.70	2.82	

Source: sorted by Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching

### Trivialization-Memes: Trivialization and Political Polarization

Trivialization means that people focus on private matters (for example, the rumor about politician's relationship, oddity, family....., and so on) instead of public matters (such as public policy and public affairs.). In the democratic country, people have rights to know "public matters (which related to the well-being for the public)" rather than "private matters of others". But after the booming of social media which make the politics become more trivialized.<sup>21</sup> Trivialization meme combine with memes-aggressors and trivial matters, its purpose aims to discredit and disturb a group of people or certain people by trivial things, it is a long-standing critique in the study of media and popular culture discourse around politics, humor included. Thus, the potential of

<sup>21</sup> 祝基滢, 傳播·社會·科技 (臺灣商務, 1990/06/15).

trivialization drives people to be interpersonal hostility in a hyper-polarized social media environment. Especially for young people who often engage in social media, it makes the possibility to shape how young people view politics by learning trivial things and political memes, that the information are insubstantial and the source of much controversy.<sup>22</sup>

### **Social Identity Theory in Politics**

When people political polarization is shaped by partisanship rather than position of issue, it usually come with conflict between the opposite party and supporting party. If the conflict become more intensive, it refers people political polarization is relative higher. Kimball, Gross, Tajfel and Turner<sup>23</sup> proposal “Social Identity Theory”, it said that when a society politics become polarization, it accompanies with “us-versus-them mentality”. When people shape the politics by the partisan, even though the parties’ opinions or positions on a certain issue are same, people still complimented their supporting party and criticize their opposite party. Scholars said that animosity are rooted to party identity (also are social identities). The dynamics of social identity contribute to partisans’ intense dislike of opposite party.<sup>24</sup> Apparently, people have sense of identity have acceptance with certain group (supporting party), they will be favor to that certain group, and have bias or discrimination to the external groups(opposite party). Base on this theory, when the trend of political polarization becomes more obvious, people prefer for supporting political party and tend to hate the opposite parties at the same time. The correlation coefficient between the two attitudes (the attitude which people favor to supporting party and the attitude which people hate

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<sup>22</sup> Joel Penny. "It's So Hard Not to Be Funny in This Situation': Memes and Humor in U.S. Youth Online Political Expression." *Television & New media* p.12 (2019).

<sup>23</sup> David C. Kimball and Cassie A. Gross, "The Growing Polarization of American Voters," *political science* (2005).

<sup>24</sup> Shanto Iyengar, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes, "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization.," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (3): 405–31. (2012).

to opposite party) show a negative correlation when the higher degree of polarization, the higher negative correlation in static.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Influence of Political Meme Humor on Information**

In nowadays, social media is a role to shape perception of politics and political figures. Social media also give politicians a stage to portray themselves when politician on the media platform. Besides, Meme could be a tool to portray their character on social media. In order to explain how political memes influence audiences on their political affiliation and ideologies, it is necessary to talk about political meme's function of humor influence in people perceive information. When it comes to how people respond on humorous information, it often been grounded in Richard Petty's Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).<sup>26</sup>

According ELM theory, it suggests that when people deal with information often process in central route and peripheral route. "Central processing involves high cognitive function and is crucial to critical thinking, and its persuasive effect is long-term; Peripheral processing requires less cognitive effort, is more reliant on affective considerations, and increases the likelihood of success of a persuasive message, and its persuasive effect is long-term."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, ELM theory state that when people deal with humorous information, it is often occurred in peripheral route, it could attract and convince wide audience to accept certain information in short-term. Because humorous information process in peripheral route, this way relies on emotion, superficial

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<sup>25</sup> Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior: Key Readings," (2004).

<sup>26</sup> Sara K. Yeo Michael A. Cacciatore, Dietram A. Scheufele, Michael A. Xenos, Doo Hun Choi, Dominique Brossard, Amy B. Becker, Elizabeth Corley, "Misperceptions in Polarized Politics: The Role of Knowledge, Religiosity, and Media," *Political Science and Politics*, 47(3), 654-661. (2014).

<sup>27</sup> Michael A. Cacciatore, Sara K. Yeo, Dietram A. Scheufele, Michael A. Xenos, Doo Hun Choi, Dominique Brossard, Amy B. Becker, Elizabeth Corley. "Misperceptions in Polarized Politics: The Role of Knowledge, Religiosity, and Media." *Political Science and Politics*, 47(3), 654-661. (2014).

information (early part of the message), general impression to deal with humorous<sup>28</sup> Even the persuasive effect of humorous information is short-term and unstable, but owing to rapid growth of political memes are shared and generated on various online platform, let the social media user constantly accept the same or similar information on the social media. Therefore, this consequence makes up the short-term persuasive effect is due to rapid growth of political meme.<sup>29</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov and Ya.V. Soldatkina<sup>30</sup> interpret the entertainment function of political meme in further “Entertainment function of media memes plays the big role too, because audience often perceives media memes as a part of interpersonal communication or a humor unit of contemporary online culture.”

### **Different ways of political meme expressions toward political polarization**

#### **Political Satire**

Political satire is an attack of political expression based on entertainment, combining the pleasures of humor and the morality of social critique.<sup>31</sup> In political humor, Satire was explained as “a means of discrediting those in authority”.<sup>32</sup> As a consequence of technology development, it allows political satire transfer from traditional media (TV show, radio, novel...,etc.) to new media (social media or online platform.). The reason why younger engage in political satire as political expression is because satire could be pretend as serious criticize. But in the reality, it hopes younger toward to hatred and cynical society.<sup>33</sup> Memes also could be a way to satire politics on

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<sup>28</sup> Thompson S. Bryant J., *Fundamentals of Media Effects*. (McGraw-Hill, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov, Ya.V. Soldatkina. "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media." *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism* Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). Page.4

<sup>30</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov, Ya.V. Soldatkina. "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media." *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism* Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). Page.4

<sup>31</sup> L. Coletta, "Political Satire and Postmodern Irony in the Age of Stephen Colbert and Jon Stewart.," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 42(5) (2009).

<sup>32</sup> K. Cameron, ed., "Humour and History," *Oxford: Intellect Books*. (1993).

<sup>33</sup> J.P. Jones, *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*. *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement*. 2nded. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield. (2010).

social media that is combed humorous images and ironic text. The purpose of use political satire as political expression is to expose their commentary to postpone political programs or discredit politicians' authority. In essence, Heather L. LaMarre, Kristen D. Landreville, and Michael A. Beam<sup>34</sup> argue that "biased processing of ambiguous political messages and sources such as those found in certain types of satire leads to polarization among the electorate as well as serving as the basis for which people form future judgments and attitudes offered by the ambiguous source."

### **Political Online Criticize**

The difference between online criticize and satire, criticize is more intensive than satire, and it is a direct way to express their dislike on the political opinion. First, there are much online discourse which information quality is low and illogical, including emotional words and not insubstantial information, but also personal attack.<sup>35</sup> Second, online political discussions often are negative commentary which focus on criticizing political opponents.<sup>36</sup> The words of political criticize and online discourse is trying to stimulate people toward the affective and partisan polarization. There are several aspects of new media landscape point that online criticism have potential to rise the partisan and affective polarization through by uncivil discourse and criticism of political opponents.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Kristen D. Landreville Heather L. LaMarre, and Michael A. Beam, "The Irony of Satire Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What Youwant to See in the Colbert Report," *International Journal of Press/Politics* 14 (2) (April 2009).

<sup>35</sup> "How Social Media Can Distort and Misinform When Communicating Science.," *The Conversation*, 2016 June 30, <https://theconversation.com/how-social-media-can-distort-and-misinform-when-communicating-science-59044>.

<sup>36</sup> Jeffrey M. Berry, and Sarah Sobieraj., "The Outrage Industry: Political Opinion Media and the New Incivility.," no. New York: Oxford University Press (2014).

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Suhay, Emily Bello-Pardo, and Brianna Maurer. "The Polarizing Effects of Online Partisan Criticism: Evidence from Two Experiments." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* (2018, Vol. 23(1) 95–115). Pages.96

## Political propaganda

Political propaganda is a form to persuade people to impact their emotions, actions, attitudes. The prominent intention is influence people political ideology or position of political issues to achieve political elites' commercial or political benefits. The political propaganda often is single-side information (which may or may not be factual) by mass media.<sup>38</sup>

Propaganda can convene a wide range of their supports, but it always misleads (which information of propaganda might be misinformation) their supporters and the certain degree of deceive to them for political elites' political and commercial purpose<sup>39</sup>

The rapidly spread political propaganda of misinformation on the mass media let the society comes to have negative outcomes. The consequence of this long-term standing political propaganda that bring about the affective and partisan polarization in politics.<sup>40</sup>

Political memes are widely used for political propaganda to convince people by using political humor. Especially, when it is spread on the social media, it could be enhanced its persuasive effect, because social media allows people to gather same partisanship group together result in growing self-confidence of themselves<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Alfred Lawrence Lorenz, "Richard Alan Nelson, a Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States. Westport, Conn. And London: Greenwood Press, 1996. 336 Pp. ," *American Journalism* 14, no. 2 (1997/04/01 1997). <https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.1997.10731916>.

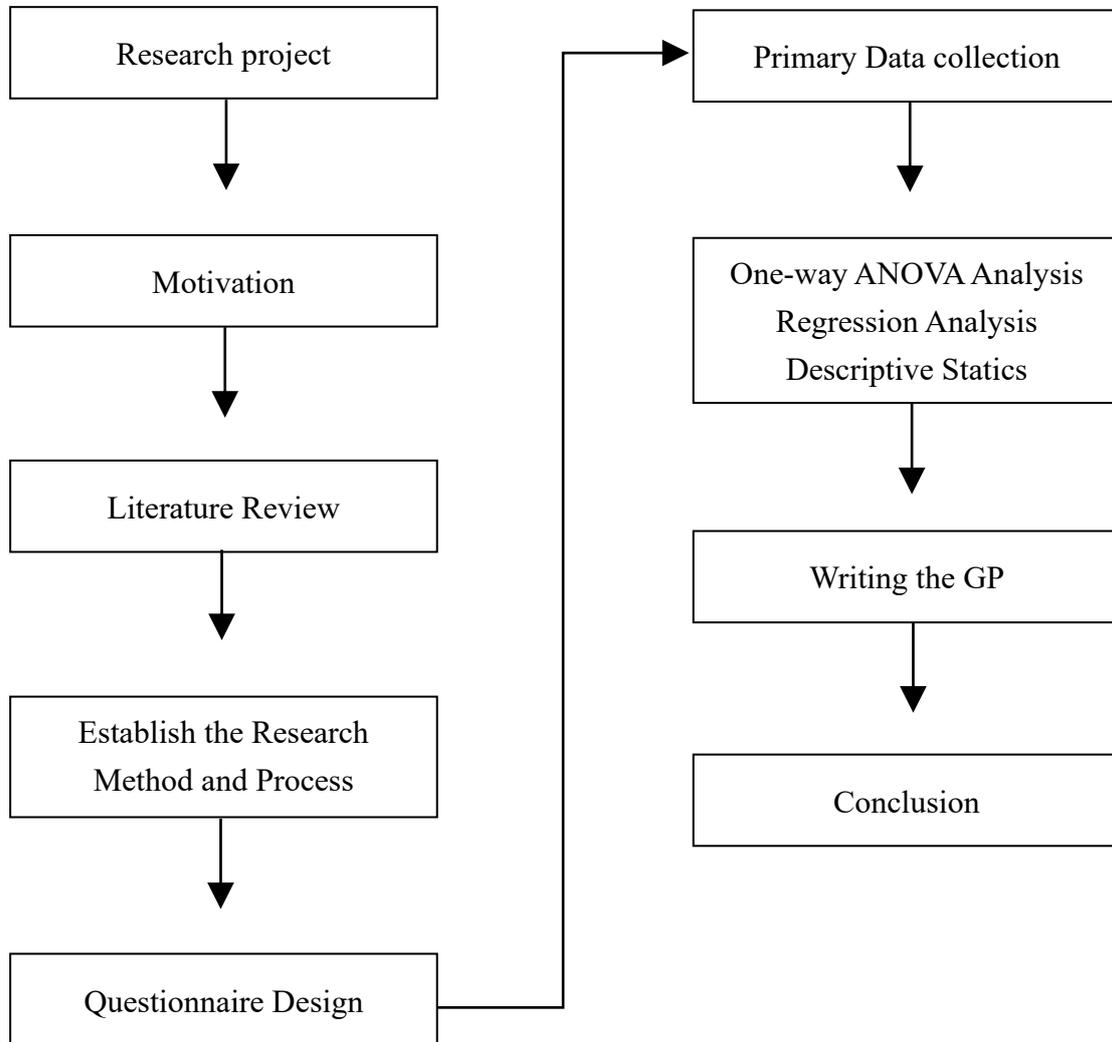
<sup>39</sup> Marc Dupuis and Andrew Williams, *The Spread of Disinformation on the Web: An Examination of Memes on Social Networking* (2019).

<sup>40</sup> C.R. Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>41</sup> Marc J. Dupuis and Andrew Williams. *The Spread of Disinformation on the Web: An Examination of Memes on Social Networking*. 2019.

## METHODOLOGY

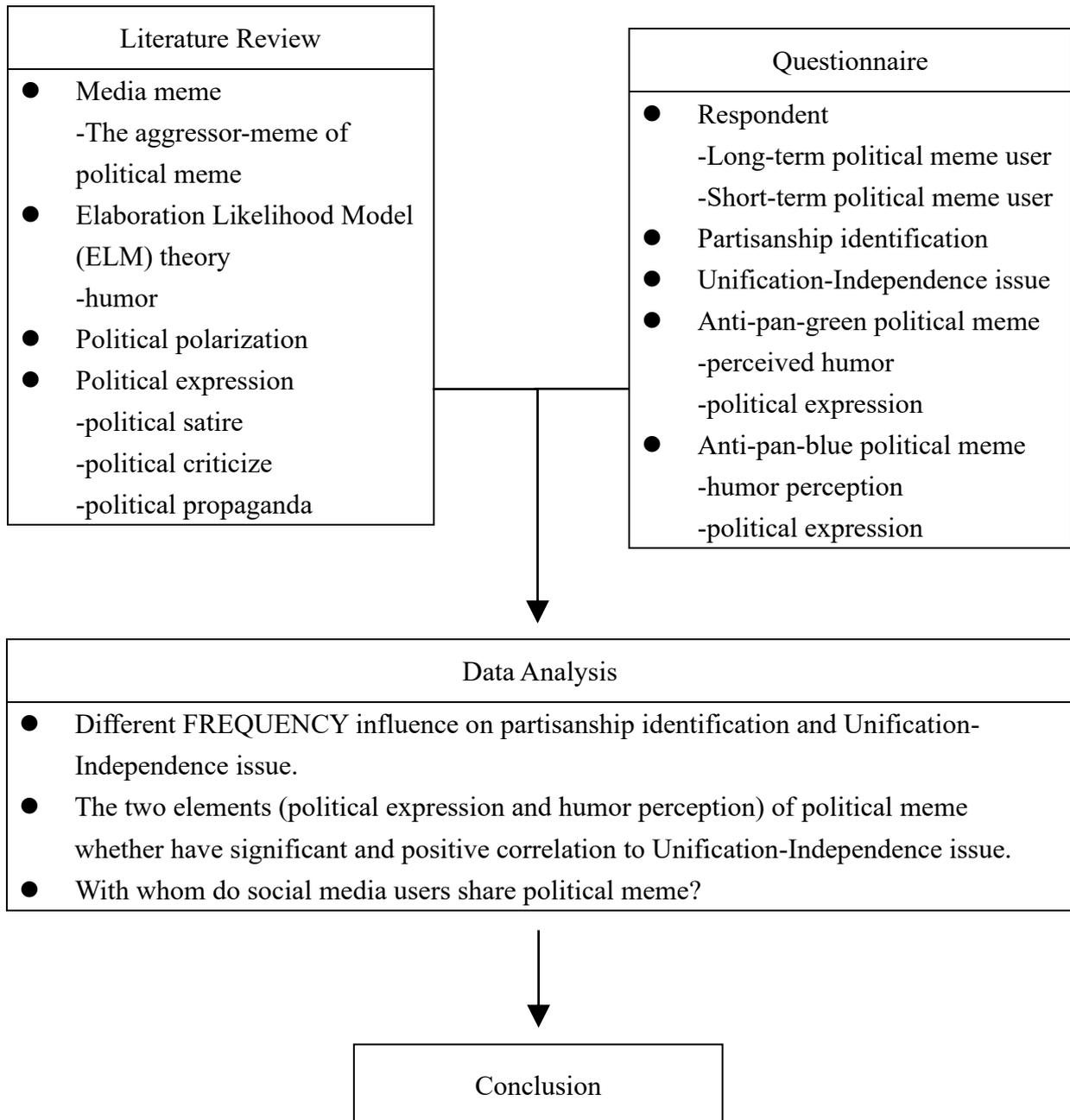
### Research Process



**Figure 1.** Research process

This research purpose aimed to figure out how social media users' political ideology is impacted by political meme when they learn the information of pan-blue and pan-green political meme. At first, I set up the research project such as motivation, research purpose, background all sorts of information. Moreover, I have to review the related literature to support my research method and design questionnaire. Last but not least, after collecting primary data, I used descriptive statistics, One-way ANOVA, Regression to interpret research questions.

## Research Design



**Figure 2.** Research Design

This research data was collected from literature review and questionnaire. In the literature review, it offers the definition of political polarization and the two elements (political meme of political expression and political meme of humor) have potential to increase political polarization. After analyzing the primary data given by questionnaire will generate the conclusion which is established by finding and research result.

## Different Frequencies of Political Meme User

Based on ELM theory<sup>42</sup>, it states that people deal with humorous information which often is processed in peripheral route. Thus, it could be stated that people perceive political meme is processed in peripheral route. When it comes to peripheral route of persuasion, its effect is weak and short-term. But because of rapid growth of political memes, and rapidly be shared and transfer on the social media, so people constantly accept same or similar information, this outcome make up for short-term persuasive effect.<sup>43</sup> Thus, people have different frequencies to approach political meme, will perceive different persuasive effect. In this research, I classified respondent into 3 kind of people, and compare which kind of people are more reinforced on partisanship identification and Unification-Independence issue.:

- Short-term political meme user:

The respondents approached (social media users share, like with political meme on online platform) to the political meme 0~10days in a previous month.

- Midterm political meme user:

The respondents approached (social media users share, like with political meme on online platform) to the political meme 11~20days in a previous month.

- Long-term political meme user:

The respondents approached (social media users browse, share, like with political meme on online platform) to the political meme 21~30days in a previous month.

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<sup>42</sup> Jody C. Baumgartner, Jonathan S. Morris, and Natasha L. Walth, "The Fey Effect: Young Adults, Political Humor, and Perceptions of Sarah Palin in the 2008 Presidential Election Campaign," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfr060>.

<sup>43</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov, Ya.V. Soldatkina. "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media." *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism* Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). Page.4

## Unification-Independence Issue and Partisanship Identification

The questionnaire's question takes Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching<sup>44</sup> as reference to design. In order to measure respondents' Unification-Independence issue and partisanship identification.

**Table 2.** The Question of Unification-Independence Issue

Issue	Question
Unification-Independence	<p>In Taiwan, we usually talk about Taiwan independent and ultimate reunification. Some people believe that Taiwan should declare independence as soon as possible; Some people believe that should be ultimate reunification as soon as possible; and others believe that Taiwan should be between these two views:</p> <p>If you believe that Taiwan should declare independence as soon as possible, check 0 as agree; if you believe that the two sides of the strait should be reunified as soon as possible, check 10 as agree.</p>

Source: sorted by Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching

**Table 3.** The Question of Partisanship Identification

Issue	Question
Partisanship Identification	<p>In Taiwan, we usually can classify Taiwan politics into pan-blue parties and pan-green parties. What do you think your partisanship identification? Are you “pan-blue supporter” or “pan-green supporter”? Or relatively speaking, do you have a slight tendency for which parties:</p> <p>Check 0 as Deep-pan-blue as supporter; check 10 as Deep-pan-green supporter; check 5 as Independent supporter.</p>

Source: sorted by Lin, Tsong-Jyi and Hsiao, Yi-Ching

<sup>44</sup> 蕭怡靖、林聰吉。〈台灣政治極化之初探：測量與分析〉。載於《台灣選舉與民主化調查(TEDS) 方法論之回顧與前瞻》

## Perceived Humor of Political Meme

In order to measure respondents' reflection of perceived humor of political meme, the researcher takes Hyongoh Cho article<sup>45</sup> "Humor Mechanisms, Perceived Humor and Their Relationships to Various Executional Types in Advertising" as a reference and creates three questions to measure perceived humor scale of political meme: funny, amusing, and understanding. The questions are designed as Table 4.

**Table 4.** Perceived Humor Scale of Political Meme

concept	Item (Likert 5 points scale)
Perceived Humor	Do you think the political meme is funny?
	Do you think the political meme is amusing?
	Do you understand the political meme?

Source: sorted by Hyongoh Cho

## Standards of selecting Political Meme (Pictures) in Questionnaire

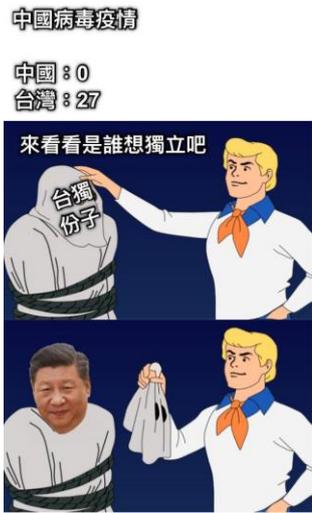
In order to collect primary data how internet user reflects on political meme of political expression and perceived humor, the researcher established a series of political meme questions. Before establishing questions, each question has to follow three standards below:

1. The political memes are collected from social media, instead of creating by the researcher. The political memes are collected from Facebook Fanpages ("反歧者情報主任", "Meme 梗圖倉庫", "台灣迷因 Taiwanese meme" and "政客迷因 politician meme") and Facebook Group (反歧者聯盟).
2. The political memes must relate to four public issues -- Unification-Independence issue, health-care issue, economic issue, and environmental issue, and one trivialized issue. Besides, each issue has two political positions: Anti-pan-green and Anti-pan-blue. Thus, there are 10 political memes.

<sup>45</sup> Cho, Hyongoh. "Humor Mechanisms, Perceived Humor and Their Relationships to Various Executional Types in Advertising." NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 22 | 1995.

3. The political memes must be aggressor-meme which obviously express attacking or discredit to opposite parties.

**Table 5.** Political Meme (Picture) in Questionnaire

Issue	Political Position	
Unification-Independence	Anti-pan-green (picture 1)	Anti-pan-blue (picture 2)
		
Health care	Anti-pan-green (picture 3)	Anti-pan-blue (picture 4)
		
Environmental	Anti-pan-green (picture 5)	Anti-pan-blue (picture 6)
		

Economic	Anti-pan-green (picture 7)	Anti-pan-blue (picture 8)
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Trivialized	Anti-pan-green (picture 9)	Anti-pan-blue (picture 10)
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Source: sorted by author

## **Source of Data**

In this research primary data, the research population are social media users and young generation. So, I set up the questionnaire by google form and posted the questionnaire's link on the Facebook Group. In order to fit the research issue in proper, those Facebook Groups are related to politics or political meme. Moreover, to collect respondent of two different political position, I choose two anti-pan-green groups(“反歧者聯盟” and “反民進黨社團”) and two anti-pan-blue groups(“政治迷因黨 Political memes Party” and “我台灣我驕傲，就是堵藍”).

## **Quantitative Method**

In the questionnaire, there are reverse question between partisanship and Unification-Independence issue. To conveniently analyze the data, so I code them as forward question. At first section, I would like to compare long-term political meme users with short-term political meme user to find which side is more reinforce on Unification-Independence issue and Partisanship. In this section, I used one-way ANOVA to interpret this section.

In the literature review, it mentions people political polarization is derived from partisanship and two elements (political meme of political expression and political meme of humor) have potential for increasing political polarization. Therefore, in order to prove these two element whether have positive correlation on Unification-Independence issue, partisanship was considered as independent variable, Unification-Independence issue was considered as dependent variable, and then this research would have two element was considered as mediator variable and put them in regression model.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I answered the research question one “How political meme reinforces Taiwanese political polarization” at first. In research question one, I divided two sections to discuss it. First section, I compared long-term (high FREQUENCY) with short-term (low FREQUENCY) political meme user to find which side was more reinforced on Unification-Independence issue. Second section, this section is to prove “What meme’s elements can reinforce Unification-Independence issue”. In this section, I divided two elements, the one is political meme of humor, the other one is political meme of political expression. These two elements would be regarded as mediator variable put in regression model to analyze whether have positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue.

But this research lacked too much pan-blue respondents to do one-way ANOVA, so it is impossible to prove regression analysis about pan-blue respondents of two political memes’ elements whether have positive correlation on Unification-Independence issue.

Based on the answer of research question 1, the result shows the long-term political meme user was more reinforced partisanship identification and Unification-Independence Issue. Next, in order to figure out the behavior pattern of political meme user share political meme to what people, I will use One-way ANOVA analysis and Descriptive Statistics Analysis to interpret the research question 2 “With whom do political meme user share”. I classified two groups of people with who do political meme users share political meme with, the one is same-partisanship people, the other one is different partisanship people.

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FREQUENCY: the abbreviation of different frequencies that the respondents approached (the respondents browse, share, like with political meme on social media) to the political meme 1~10days or 11~20days or 21~30days in a previous month.

## Reliability analysis

The questionnaire of two concepts' reliability (humor perception and political expression) is measured by Cronbach's  $\alpha$  to make sure the question is reliable. If Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient  $> 0.7$ , it could be regard as reliable.

### The Political Meme of Humor

This conception of Political meme humor is measured by 15 items (5 political meme questions each question has 3 items: amusing, funny and understanding), after reliability analysis (Table 1), it shows that this conception has Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.922$ , which means the concept has reliability and stability.

### The Political Meme of Political Expression

This conception is measured of political expression by 15 items (5 political meme questions each question has 3 items: political criticize, political propaganda and political satire), after reliability analysis (Table 1), it shows that this conception has Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.956$ , which means the concept has reliability and stability.

**Table 6.** The Reliability Analysis of Political Meme Humor and Political Expression

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
The political meme of Humor	15	0.922	Accepted
The political meme of political expression	15	0.956	Accepted

Source: sorted by author

### The Statics Analysis of Research Samples

The data presented in this study were collected in an online survey from 570 participants. After deleting invalid questionnaires (which the partisanship is independent) were 93 samples, the total Effective questionnaires (people whose partisanship is pan-blue and pan-green) were 477 samples (Effective recovery ration of questionnaire is 83.6%).

**Table 7.** The Statics Analysis of Samples

Name	Item	Sample sizes(people)	Ration
Gender	Male	377	79%
	Female	100	21%
Partisanship	Pan-green supporter	441	92%
	Pan-blue supporter	36	7.5%
Age	Under 17 years old	57	11.9%
	18 to 22 years old	252	52.8%
	23 to 29 years old	150	31.4%
	30 to 40 years old	15	3.1%
	41 to 50 years old	2	0.4%
Education	Junior high school students and under junior high school students	6	16.6%
	Senior high school students and junior college students	79	16.6%
	college students	343	71.9%
	Master's degree students and PhD students	49	10.3%

Source: sorted by author

### **1-1. The Influence of Different FREQUENCY on Partisanship in Taiwan.**

One-way ANOVA Analysis of “Different frequencies influence on partisanship identification in Taiwan”. The result (Table 3) shows, the DPP partisanship identification of pan-green respondents’ FREQUENCY is 21~30days, is stronger than the DPP partisanship identification of pan-green respondents’ FREQUENCY is 1~10days. The result revealing that different FREQUENCY was a significant predictor on partisanship (Table.9,  $F=3.082$ ,  $P=0.009<0.05$ ). It means that the DPP partisanship identification of pan-green supporters who have high FREQUENCY is stronger than the DPP partisanship identification of pan-green supporters who have low FREQUENCY.

### **1-2. The Influence of Different FREQUENCY on Unification-Independence Issue in Taiwan.**

One-way ANOVA Analysis of “Different frequencies influence on issue of Unification-Independence in Taiwan”. The result (Table 9) shows, the independent tendency (Unification-Independence issue) of the pan-green respondents’ FREQUENCY is 21~30days, is stronger than independent tendency (Unification-Independence issue) of the pan-green respondents’ FREQUENCY are 1~10days. It means that the independent tendency (Unification-Independence issue) of pan-green respondents who have high FREQUENCY is stronger than the independent tendency of pan-green supporters who have low FREQUENCY. It is revealing that different FREQUENCY<sup>47</sup> was a significant predictor on Unification-Independence issue ( $F=3.882$ ,  $P=0.027<0.05$ ). Thus, we could say people who approach to political meme

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FREQUENCY: the abbreviation of different frequencies that the respondents approached (the respondents browse, share, like with political meme on social media) to the political meme 1~10days or 11~20days or 21~30days in a previous month.

in long-term, they have certain extent to be reinforce on Unification-Independence issue.

**Table 8.** Descriptive Statistics of Different Frequencies Influence on Unification-Independence Issue and Partisanship Identification

D.V	Frequency(days)	Numbers	Means	S. D	S. E
Partisanship Identification	Non	2	6.50	.707	.500
	1~10	56	6.91	.880	.118
	11~20	55	7.31	.940	.127
	21~30	328	7.43	1.174	.065
Unification-Independence issue	Non	2	8.50	2.121	1.500
	1~10	56	7.73	2.236	.299
	11~20	55	8.42	1.487	.200
	21~30	328	8.52	1.749	.097

Source: sorted by author

**Table 9.** One-way ANOVA Analysis of Different Frequencies Influence on Unification-Independence Issue and Partisanship Identification

D.V	Source	SS	DF	MS	F	Scheff
Partisanship Identification	SSB	29.590	3	9.863	3.082**	
	SSW	1398.754	437	3.201		21~30days> 1~10days
	SUT	1428.345	440			
Unification-Independence issue	SSB	14.424	3	4.808	3.882*	
	SSW	541.186	437	1.238		21~30days> 1~10days
	SUT	555.610	440			

Source: sorted by author

After understanding the long-term political meme user (The respondents whose FREQUENCY is high) was more reinforced on partisanship identification and Unification-Independence Issue. The table 9 result is similar with ELM theory, when people approach political meme (humorous information) in long-term, they are deeply influenced on a certain issue.<sup>48</sup> Next, I need to find what meme's elements put people into be political polarization on Unification-Independence issue. According to literature review, I have mentioned that political meme has two elements "perceived humor (funny, amusing, and understanding)" and "political expression (political criticize, political propaganda, and political satire)" make people be political polarization. In this section, I will use regression analysis to prove whether humor perception and political expression has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue.

### **2-1. Taiwanese Political Polarization is Derived from Partisanship**

In the result of regression analysis (page. 33, Table 10 – model 2) shows that, if the respondent's partisanship identification is closer to pan-green tendency, then the respondent is closer to independent tendency. It means that, partisanship has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue ( $\beta=0.429$ ) and have significant correlation within each other ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ). It is same as the reference of Herbert F. Weisberg and Richard G. Niemi<sup>49</sup>, when political polarization is derived "partisan", the people position on a certain issue or ideology has relevance by his/her own partisan (political affiliation/partisanship)

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<sup>48</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov, Ya.V. Soldatkina. "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media." RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). Page.4

<sup>49</sup> Richard G. Niemi, Herbert F. Weisberg. "Controversies in Voting Behavior." 2001.

## **2-2. The Influence of Political Meme Humor on Unification-Independence Issue**

As the research result shows, long-term political meme user was more reinforced on independent tendency of Unification-Independence issue and partisanship identification. Therefore, I used regression to analyze political meme's element of humor whether has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue. Therefore, partisanship was considered as independent variable, Unification-Independent issue was considered as dependent variable, and then political meme of perceived humor was regarded as mediator variable in regression model.

The result of regression analysis (Table.10 – model 1) shows that the respondents' partisanship has positive correlation to humor perception ( $\beta=0.214$ ) and have significant correlation within each other ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ). It means that, the respondent's partisanship identification is closer to pan-green tendency, then the respondent has more humor perception of anti-pan-blue meme.

The result of regression analysis (table 10 – model 3) shows that the respondents' perceived humor has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue ( $\beta=0.220$ ) and have significant correlation between each other ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ). It means that, the respondent has more perceived humor of anti-pan-blue political memes, the respondent is closer to independent tendency of Unification-Independence issue.

**Table 10.** Standard Regression Analysis of Predicting” Unification-Independence Issue” (N=477)

Independent Variables	Mediator Variable		Dependent Variable	
	Humor perception		Unification-Independence issue	
	1	2	3	4
Partisanship	0.214***	0.429***		0.400***
Perceived Humor of Anti-pan-blue meme			0.220***	0.135***
F	22.729***	107.206***	24.224***	59.792***
$\Delta F$	22.729	107.206	24.224	10.283
R <sup>2</sup>	0.046	0.184	0.049	0.201
$\Delta R^2$	0.046	0.184	0.049	0.017
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.044	0.182	0.047	0.198

Source: sorted by author



**Figure 3.** The Mediator Model of Political Meme Humor

When partisanship was considered as independent variable, Unification-Independent issue was considered as dependent variable, and then political meme of humor was putted in this model as mediator variable. The result of regression analysis reveals that mediator model (Table 10 – model 4)  $\beta=0.400$  compares with the original model (table 10 – model 2)  $\beta=0.429$ . The influence of the independent variable on dependent is reduced. Thus, political meme humor has significant positive relation and partial mediator effect in this model.

## **2-3 The Influence of Political Meme Expression on Unification-Independence**

### **Issue.**

In this section, I used regression to analyze political meme's element of political expression whether has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue. Therefore, partisanship was considered as independent variable, Unification-Independence issue was considered as dependent variable, and then political expression was regarded as mediator variable in regression model.

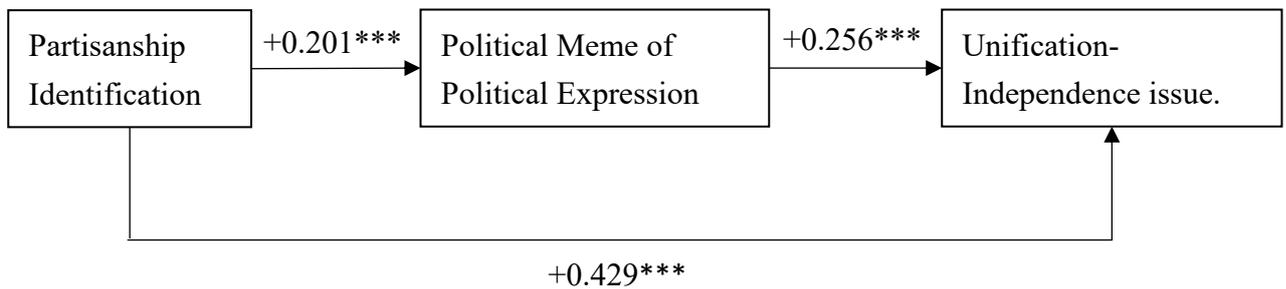
The result of regression analysis (Table 11 – model 1) shows that the political expression has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue ( $\beta=0.201$ ) and has significant correlation within each other ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ). It means that, the respondent is closer to pan-green partisanship tendency, then the respondent has more motivation to access political meme as political expression.

The result of regression analysis (Table 11 – model 3) shows that the political expression has positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue ( $\beta=0.256$ ) and has significant correlation within each other ( $P=0.000<0.05$ ). It means that, the pan-green respondent has more motivation of accessing anti-pan-blue political meme as political expression, then the respondent has a stronger independent tendency of Unification-Independence issue.

**Table 11.** Standard Regression Analysis of predicting” Unification-Independence issue” (N=477)

Independent Variables	Mediator Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Political expression	Unification-Independence issue		
	1	2	3	4
Partisanship	0.201***	0.429***		0.393***
Political expression of Anti-pan-blue Meme			0.256***	0.144***
F	19.991***	107.206***	33.441***	64.655***
$\Delta F$	19.991	107.206	33.441	18.218
R <sup>2</sup>	0.040	0.184	0.066	0.214
$\Delta R^2$	0.040	0.184	0.066	0.030
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.038	0.182	0.064	0.211

Source: sorted by author



**Figure 4.** The Mediator Model of Political Meme Political Expression

When partisanship was considered as independent variable, Unification-Independent issue was considered as dependent variable, and then political expression was putted in this model as mediator variable. The result of regression analysis reveals that, when mediator model  $\beta=0.393$  (Table 11 – model 4) compared with the original model  $\beta=0.429$  (Table 11 – model 2), The influence of the independent variable on dependent is reduced. Thus, political expression has partial mediator effect in this model.

### 3-1 With Whom Do Political Users Share Political Meme?

After understanding the long-term/high FREQUENCY political meme user was more reinforced on Unification-Independence issue. Then, I want to understand the different FREQUENCY political meme users shared political memes to what kind of people. The result (Table 12) reveals that, firstly, the sharing times of pan-green respondents whose FREQUENCY are 21~30 days share with same partisanship, is more than sharing times of pan-green respondents who FREQUENCY are 11~20 days share with same people. Secondly, the sharing times of pan-green respondents who FREQUENCY are 21~30 days share with same partisanship, is more than sharing times of pan-green respondents who FREQUENCY are 1~10 days share with same partisanship. It means that the sharing times of pan-green supporters who have high FREQUENCY with same partisanship people, is more than pan-green supporters who have low FREQUENCY share with same partisanship people. Thus, the different FREQUENCY was a significant predictor on sharing times to same partisanship ( $F=11.964, P=0.000<0.05$ ).

**Table 12.** Descriptive Statistics of Different FREQUENCY social media users shared political meme to same partisanship and different partisanship.

D.V	Frequency(days)	Numbers	Means	S. D	S. E
Same Partisanship	Non	2	1.00	.000	.000
	1~10	56	2.00	1.079	.144
	11~20	55	2.20	1.026	.138
	21~30	328	2.74	1.062	.059
Different Partisanship	Non	2	1.00	.000	.000
	1~10	56	1.54	.738	.099
	11~20	55	1.47	.766	.103
	21~30	328	1.80	.925	.051

Source: sorted by author

FREQUENCY: the abbreviation of different frequencies that the respondents approached (The respondents browse, share, like with political meme on social media) to the political meme 1~10days or 11~20days or 21~30days in a previous month.

**Table 13.** One-way ANOVA Analysis of Different FREQUENCY political meme users shared political meme to same partisanship and different partisanship.

D.V	Source	SS	DF	MS	F	Scheff
Same Partisanship	SSB	40.227	3	13.409	11.964***	21~30days>
	SSW	489.773	437	1.121		11~20days
	SUT	530.000	440			21~30days> 1~10days
Different Partisanship	SSB	8.651	3	2.884	3.694*	
	SSW	341.150	437	.781		n.s
	SUT	349.800	440			

Source: sorted by author

However, when it comes to sharing times of people shared with different partisanship people. The result shows that the different FREQUENCY did not have a significant comparison on sharing times to different partisanship, even it was a significant predictor on sharing times to different partisanship (Table.13,  $F=3.694$ ,  $P=0.012<0.05$ ). But according to the Descriptive Statistics Table (Table.14), 51% pan-green respondents were never share political meme to people who are different partisanship, 30% pan-green respondents were seldom share political meme to people who are different partisanship. It is same as research result of Joel Penney<sup>51</sup>, people do not want to share political meme with people who are different partisanship to avoid producing conflict.

<sup>51</sup> Penney, Joel. "It's So Hard Not to Be Funny in This Situation': Memes and Humor in U.S. Youth Online Political Expression." *Television & New media* p.12 (2019)

**Table 14.** The Descriptive Statistics of “Different FREQUENCY” and “Respondents shared Political Meme with Different Partisanship People

		Respondents Share with Different Partisanship				Total
	Days	Never	Seldom	Often	Always	
FREQUENCY	0	2(0.4%)	0	0	0	2(0.4%)
of pan-green	1~10	33(7.4%)	17(3.8%)	5(1.1%)	1(0.2%)	56(12.6%)
respondents	11~20	37(8.3%)	11(2.4%)	6(1.3%)	1(0.2%)	55(12.4%)
	21~30	154(34%)	108(24%)	42(9.5%)	24(5.4%)	328(74.3%)
Total		226(51%)	136(30%)	53(12%)	26(5%)	441(100%)

Source: sorted by author

In the questionnaire “How frequency you use the political meme as political expression in your daily life” is 5 level Likert scale. In order to convenient to do data analysis, I code them as 3 level Likert scale. People whose S.D are 1.00~1.67 would be regarded as “Disagree” to use political meme as political expression; People whose S.D are 2.00 would be regarded as “Neither agree nor disagree” use political meme as political expression; People whose S.D are 2.33~3.00 would be regarded as “Agree” to use political meme as political expression. The Descriptive Statistics analysis (Table.9) shows 85.8% respondents use political meme as political expression in their daily life. People use political meme as political expression on the internet, that is possibility to make the social media is political polarization. Especially, political meme is full of controversial information and have negative societal consequences. This process is a society that is increasingly misinformed and polarized.

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Table.14: The respondents Never, Seldom, Often, and Always share political memes to people who are different Partisanship

**Table 15.** The Descriptive Statistics of Pan-green Respondents Use Political Meme as Political Expression

	S. D	Numbers	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Disagree	1.00	25	5.7	5.7
	1.33	3	.7	6.3
	1.67	18	4.1	10.4
Neither agree nor disagree	2.00	17	3.9	14.3
Agree	2.33	55	12.5	26.8
	2.67	51	11.6	38.3
	3.00	272	61.7	100.0
	Total	441	100.0	

Source: sorted by author

## CONCLUSION

This research purpose is to find out how political meme influence social media user on political issue and with whom do political meme user share political meme. The main findings of this research are the following statements. Firstly, the respondents (pan-green supporters) whose FREQUENCY are high was more reinforced on partisanship identification and Unification-Independence issue. Secondly, the political memes' (anti-pan blue political meme) two element that humor perception and political expression are significant positive correlation to independent tendency of Unification-Independence issue. Thirdly, most of respondents would like to use political meme as political expression. Finally, over half of respondents would like to share political meme to same partisanship people rather than different partisanship people.

In first finding, I classified respondents' FREQUENCY into long-term (high FREQUENCY) and short-term (low FREQUENCY) political meme user. If compared long-term political meme user with short-term political meme user, we can see that people who are long-term political meme user was more reinforced on partisanship identification and Unification-Independence issue. It is similar to the meaning of ELM theory, Short-term political meme user often deals with political meme information in peripheral route, when it comes to peripheral route of persuasion, its persuasive effect is weak and short-term. But in terms of long-term political meme user, because of rapid growth of political memes, and constantly be shared and transferred on the social media, lead people to accept the similar information, so it could make up for short-term persuasive effect.<sup>53</sup>

In second finding, to further discuss what meme's elements have positive

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<sup>53</sup> I.S. Kuznetsov, Ya.V. Soldatkina. "Political Media Memes' Persuasion and Functioning in Social Media." RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism Vol. 22 No. 2 333—339 (2017). Page.4

correlation to Unification-Independence issue, I proposed two elements in my research, political meme of humor perception and political meme of political expression, both two element have significant and positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue. Moreover, these two elements were regarded as mediator variable in regression analysis, these two elements had partial mediator effect on Unification-Independence issue (Dependent variable) and partisanship identification (Independent variable). If taking the research result as example to interpret political elite goal is to reinforced pan-green supporters' independent tendency and Unification-Independence issue, the data analysis result shows that they have significant positive correlation to this goal, because the two political meme's elements (political expression and humor perception) are positive correlation to Unification-Independence issue. It is same as Rushkoff<sup>54</sup> meaning, "even if a media meme was not created for the specific purpose and its generation was spontaneous (it means media meme is nothing but an audiences reaction to some event), it could most likely be used by political or business elite as a leverage."

In third finding, according to the result of questionnaire, there are 85.8% of the pan-green respondents would use political meme as political expression (Please see Table.15). This result is similar to the meaning of article wrote by Jacob Groshek and Serena Bronda<sup>55</sup>, when people use political meme as political expression, this kind of political expression usually be considered as low quality, because its information are misleading, illogical argument and not insubstantial information, even have intention personal attack to political opponents.

In final finding, those respondents whose FREQUENCY are high, they usually share political meme to same partisanship people rather than different partisanship

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<sup>54</sup> D. Rushkoff, *Media Virus!: Hidden Agendas in Popular Culture* (Random House Publishing Group, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> "How Social Media Can Distort and Misinform When Communicating Science.," *The Conversation*, 2016 June 30, <https://theconversation.com/how-social-media-can-distort-and-misinform-when-communicating-science-59044>.

people. Although this behavior can avoid producing conflict with different partisanship people, it lacks to discuss with different partisanship people so it could not correct the information of political meme, because political meme usually is substantive, biased, and single-side information. In addition to this kind of communicate way (people share political meme to same partisanship people rather than different partisanship people), it always leads to “us-versus-them mentality” in Social Identity theory, people would like accept the information which is at same position, and then they will be favor to that certain group, and have bias or discrimination to the external groups.<sup>56</sup>

Overall, in this research, the pan-green respondents are young and have higher possibility to accept political meme information. “Does political meme reinforce the political polarization on Unification-Independence issue?”. Based on this research result, I only could answer “partial valid”, because the research lacked too much pan-blue respondent to do the data analysis, so I only could prove the pan-green supporters whose FREQUENCY are high are reinforced on the independent tendency of Unification-Independence issue. At the same time, political meme was considered as humor unit so that it could easily be active on social media. That is why young generation prefer to use political meme rather than a lengthy article. Furthermore, there might be political elites’ political goals which are hidden behind the humor of political meme.

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<sup>56</sup> David C. Kimball and Cassie A. Gross, "The Growing Polarization of American Voters," political science (2005).

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## APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. 問候語

各位填答者您好：

我是文藻外語大學國際事務系學生林俊傑，因為畢業專題製作課程進行問卷調查，需要花您寶貴的時間 5~10 分鐘。此份問卷採取不記名方式填寫，目的是了解政治迷因(梗圖)使用者與政治意識形態之關聯性。研究架構主要分為：政黨認同、統獨意識形態、迷因之態度使用評估、迷因之感受評估與私人訊息。本研究僅學術用途使用，並無挑起政治對立意圖，私人訊息也不會對外公開，請各位放心填答。

您的填答，對於此研究有所助益，再次感謝您撥空填寫這份問卷  
(對於問卷內容有疑問、給予提供建議與指教、圖源出處有錯誤，可以聯絡此信箱：cgg12g3920@gmail.com)

指導教授：謝仁和

研究學生：林俊傑

2020 年 8 月

### 2. 政治迷因之接觸頻率

\* 請問過去一個月內有幾天是會接觸政治迷因(這邊的接觸即有在社群軟體上觀看、分享、按讚)：

0~5 天

6~10 天

11~15 天

16~20 天

21~25 天

26~30 天

### 3. 政黨認同之評估

\* 有人認為現在台灣的政治分為「泛藍」(國民黨、親民黨、新黨……等等)、「泛綠」(民進黨、時代力量、台灣基進黨……等等)兩大陣營，請問你認為自己是「泛藍」的，還是「泛綠」的？或是相對來說，在這兩個陣營之間，請問你有沒有稍微偏向哪一個政黨？(0 是深藍，5 是無偏向，10 是深綠) ※未提及黨派請受測者自行判斷是泛藍或泛綠

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
深藍	<input type="checkbox"/>	深綠										

#### 4. 統獨意識形態

我們社會上的人常討論中國統一與臺灣獨立的問題，有人主張臺灣應該儘快宣布獨立；也有人認為兩岸應該儘快統一；還有人的看法是在於這兩種看法之間。如果主張臺灣應該儘快宣布獨立的看法在一邊，用 0 表示；認為兩岸應該儘快統一的想法在另一邊，用 10 表示。請問您主張：

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
台灣 獨立	<input type="checkbox"/>	兩岸 統一										

#### 5. 請問您日常使用政治迷因(政治梗圖)的政治表態方法

- \* 1. 政治諷刺：一種非直接性的批判政治，批判內容通常比較模糊、曖昧，且帶含有政治幽默的因素在裡面
2. 政治批評：包含使用網路術語(像是 1450、426、五毛、綠蛙)，帶含有批判性字詞或是針對不支持的黨派人物來做為批評
3. 政治宣傳：傳達的內容主要是影響其他人政黨認同的態度、行為、偏好，通常傳達出來的訊息是單一方面的資訊。

	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. 請問您平常是否會分享政治迷因?

	總是	經常	偶爾	從來不會
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. 您選擇分享政治迷因的平台

	總是	經常	偶爾	從來不會
Line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youtube	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ppt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. 分享政治迷因的對象

	總是	經常	偶爾	從來不會
相同黨派認同的人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
不同黨派認同的人	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 9. 政治迷因之使用態度與感受評估

### 1. (圖源：反歧者聯盟)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

2. (圖源：Meme 梗圖倉庫)

中國病毒疫情

中國：0

台灣：27



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

3. (圖源：政客迷因 Politician meme)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

4. (圖源：台灣迷因 taiwan meme)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

5. (圖源：政客迷因 Politician meme)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. (圖源：Meme 梗圖倉庫)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

7. (圖源：政客迷因 Politician meme)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默(政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法(政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度(政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

8. (圖源：Meme 梗圖倉庫)



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

9. (圖源：Meme 梗圖倉庫)

**\*韓粉反對通姦除罪化\***  
**韓國瑜跟新莊王小姐:**



	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默(政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法(政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度(政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

10. (圖源：台灣迷因 taiwan meme)



陳致中

誠摯終召妓

	非常同意	同意	不知道	不同意	非常不同意
此迷因(梗圖)的理解程度	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到好笑	<input type="checkbox"/>				
此迷因(梗圖)讓我感到有趣	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來表達政治幽默 (政治諷刺)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來做為表達我所不支持黨派人物的方法 (政治批評)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
我會用政治迷因來傳達特定訊息，來影響他人政黨態度 (政治宣傳)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## 10. 個人資料

本研究僅學術用途使用，私人訊息不會對外公開，請各位放心填答。

\* 性別：

男、女

\* 教育：

國中以下、高中職及專科、大學、研究所以上

\* 年齡：

17歲以下、18~22歲、23~29歲、30~40歲以上、41~50歲  
51~60歲、61歲以上

## 11. 平常接受政治資訊的來源

	總是	經常	偶爾	從來不會
Line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youtube	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instagram	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ppt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
電視	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
報紙	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>