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「重新界定臺灣」——左翼另類媒體《破土》的社會網絡與實踐

“Relocating Taiwan”: Exploring New Bloom's Impact as an Alternative Media Platform in the Digital Age

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摘要

本論文旨在探討於 2014 年成立的左翼另類媒體《破土》（New Bloom），其成立受美國佔領華爾街運動啟發，主要活躍於台灣，並以英文為主要發表語言。該媒體的核心目標在於提供「對台灣及亞太地區議題的激進觀點」，同時力求構建跨國性的左翼政治和智識交流對話。因此，本研究聚焦於三個核心研究問題：（一）

《破土》自成立以來所刊載與傳播的內容為何？（二）其在社交媒體平台 Twitter 上所形成的社群特徵為何？是否具有跨國性？（三）該媒體在不同層面上所帶來的影響為何？

本研究以混合研究方法回應上述研究問題。在量化方面，利用 R 程式語言進行網路爬蟲，擷取《破土》網站自成立以來的所有文章（共 3,059 篇），並運用自動化文本分析模型 STM（Structural Topic Modeling）解析文章主題，從而回答首個研究問題：該媒體過去發佈了哪些主題，並呈現了何種內容？隨後，針對第二個研究問題，本研究蒐集了《破土》在 Twitter 上的全部追蹤者（共 10,657 位）的相關資訊，以及該媒體所發布的所有推文（共 6,317 則）及轉發推文（共 46,141 則）。透過 OpenStreetMap，分析了《破土》追蹤者的地理分佈情形；並進一步運用社會網絡分析工具 Gephi，視覺化呈現追蹤者之間的社會網絡關係，並對其進行深入分析。最終，本文運用質性方法對《破土》成員進行訪談，以解答第三個研究問題。

研究結果顯示，《破土》關注的主題涵蓋台灣內政、COVID-19、香港政治、台灣社會議題以及跨國議題等。該媒體確實形成以美國、台灣和香港知識份子及離散社群（Diaspora）為主體的社群網絡。此研究不僅彌補了過去對台灣英語媒體研究的缺口，更以全新的研究取徑探究台灣獨立媒體，並成為首篇探討台灣獨立媒體跨國面向的學術論文。透過新聞報導與經營位於台北的實體場所「Daybreak Cafe」，

《破土》不僅實踐另類媒體的批判角色，更促成認同塑造和跨國行動者網絡的社群建構。藉由反覆地言說和行動，我們得以不斷重新界定「台灣」。



關鍵字：另類媒體、跨國社群、文本分析、社會網絡分析、社群媒體分析

Abstract



This study aims to comprehensively investigate New Bloom, a left-wing alternative media platform founded in 2014, inspired by the U.S. Occupy Wall Street movement. Operating primarily in Taiwan and utilizing English as its principal publication language, New Bloom is dedicated to offering "radical perspectives on Taiwan and the Asia Pacific" and endeavoring to foster cross-national dialogues in left-wing politics and intellectual discourse. Accordingly, this research centers on three primary inquiries: (1) What types of content has New Bloom produced and disseminated since its inception? (2) What distinct characteristics define the community it has cultivated on the social media platform Twitter, and does this community exhibit transnational attributes? (3) What multifaceted impacts has this media outlet generated across varying levels?

To address these research queries, a mixed-methods approach is employed. On the quantitative front, the R programming language is employed to conduct web scraping, amassing all articles ($N = 3,059$) published by New Bloom since its establishment. Subsequently, the Structural Topic Modeling (STM) method, a semi-automated text analysis model, is applied to decode prevalent themes and contents, thus providing insights into the first research question. Consecutively, in response to the second research query, this study aggregates comprehensive data about all Twitter followers ($N = 10,657$) of New Bloom, as well as all tweets ($N = 6,317$) posted by the platform and retweets ($N = 46,141$) of its content. Leveraging OpenStreetMap, geographical distribution among New Bloom's followers is analyzed. Furthermore, the Gephi software is harnessed for social network analysis, offering both visualization and in-depth analysis of the intricate social network

relationships among New Bloom's followers. Ultimately, qualitative interviews are conducted with New Bloom members to provide insight into the third research question.



The research findings underscore New Bloom's engagement with a spectrum of themes, including Taiwan's domestic politics, COVID-19, Hong Kong's political landscape, Taiwanese societal concerns, and transnational subjects. Significantly, the platform effectively forges a community primarily composed of intellectuals and diasporic groups from the United States, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. This research endeavors to address a gap in the study of English-language media within Taiwan, adopting innovative methodologies to investigate Taiwan's independent media scene. This study is notable as the first to explore the transnational dimension of Taiwan's independent media. Through news dissemination and the operation of Daybreak Cafe, a physical space in Taipei, New Bloom fulfills not only a critical role in alternative media but also shapes identity and nurtures cross-national activist networks within its community. Through iterative discourse and action, the very notion of "Taiwan" is continually redefined/ relocated.

Keywords: Alternative media, Transnational community, Content analysis, Social network analysis, Social media analysis

目錄 Index



摘要

Abstract

目錄 Index

圖目錄 Figure Index

表目錄 Table Index

I. Introduction

1-1. Alternative Media in the Age of the Internet in Taiwan

1-2. The birth of New Bloom

II. Literature Review

2-1. Media and Activism

2-1-1. Media, public sphere and Counterpublic

2-1-2. Media and Social Movement

2-2. Media and Identity

2-3. Media and Transnational Information Politics

2-3-1. Alternative Media

2-3-2. Alternative Media in Taiwan



III. Research Questions & Methods	14
3-1. Conceptual Framework	14
3-2. Research Questions	16
3-3. Data and methods	19
IV. Research Results	22
4-1. New Bloom Content & Communication Frame Analysis	22
4-1-1. Taiwan Domestic Politics	27
4-1-2. COVID-19 and Variants	28
4-1-3. Hong Kong Politics	29
4-1-4. Social Issues in Taiwan	29
4-1-5. Transnational Issues and Others	30
4-1-6. Number of articles published by New Bloom each month	31
4-2. Audience Location & Following Network Analysis	39
4-3. The Impacts of New Bloom on Different Levels	48
V. Discussion	51
5-1. The role of New Bloom in the media environment of Taiwan	51
5-1-1. The International Media outlets in Taiwan versus New Bloom	52
5-1-2. The English Media in Taiwan versus New Bloom	54
5-1-3. The Mandarin Alternative Media in Taiwan versus New Bloom	55
5-2. The purpose of New Bloom over the scale of time	57

Reference

Appendix

Pre-Interview Statement: Ensuring Confidentiality and Privacy Protection	60
Research Interview Questions	68
	71



圖目錄 Figure Index



Figure 1 Number of tags from all articles that New Bloom has ever published	24
Figure 2 The topics of all articles that New Bloom has ever published, calculated by topic modeling in R	27
Figure 3 Number of articles published by New Bloom each month	32
Figure 4 Numbers of New Bloom followers from different countries	41
Figure 5 The following network of all New Bloom Twitter followers	43

表目錄 Table Index



Table 1 The list of interviewees being interviewed in this research.	22
Table 2 Number of articles published by New Bloom each month	32
Table 3 User Location Distribution	40
Table 4 The compilation of theme hashtags used in retweeted tweets by New Bloom	46



I. Introduction

1-1. Alternative Media in the Age of the Internet in Taiwan

“We might note also that, rather than depending on the Western world or the United States to be their savior, it needs to be Taiwanese who save themselves—nobody else will and nobody else can. Nobody else will care so much about Taiwan’s problems. Yet is it not that, in some way, Taiwan’s internal problems are international ones in nature?” (Hioe, the founder of New Bloom, 2015)

For many people, the world and history processes were born with conflict, or rather, struggle. For Taiwan, a small island of sovereignty and democracy at the junction of the East and South China Seas in the northwestern Pacific Ocean, is no exception. Taiwan's democracy is a history of struggle with the colonial regime. The most advanced chips produced on this island are the holy grail of geopolitical competition. Its fate is sometimes not in its own hands, but in the battlefield of contesting powers, especially China and the United States.

At the point of conflict, the alternative media in Taiwan acted as a kind of witness to the history of the struggle. Alternative media has always been an important actor in Taiwan, serving as a corrective to mainstream media and providing a critical perspective on social, political, and economic issues (Cheng, 2009; Kuang, 2011). New Bloom, however, is an online magazine, also considered as alternative media featuring “radical perspectives from Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific region” (New Bloom, 2014), advocating for the promotion of

cross-national - and particularly left-wing - intellectual dialogue. The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether New Bloom has created such transnational networks and to understand its role in shaping transnational public discourse on key issues in Taiwan.

Often associated with social movements and civil society organizations, alternative media tend to be more diverse in their coverage and are not constrained by commercial interests. They tend to be organized in ways that subvert hierarchical structures and more often use inexpensive or widespread technology (Atton, 2002; Rauch, 2007; Atton, 2015; Cheng, 2009). In the case of Taiwan, alternative media have contributed to social justice, labor movements, human rights, and environmental protection (Kuang, 2011).

In addition to being the primary medium for alternative media, the Internet has played a key role in promoting activism in Taiwan, providing a platform for social movements to organize, communicate, and mobilize significant resources. Since the Anti-Media Monopoly movement in Taiwan in 2012, in opposition to the Sunflower Movement's Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with China - the Internet - plays a critical role (Rowen, 2015; Ho, 2015). In particular Lee's (2015) study highlights the way in which the Sunflower Movement used social media to tap into international media resources, and even used clever media strategies to reframe what appeared to be a local social movement. The Internet and social media platforms have made it possible for the Sunflower Movement to access the resources of international media.

The Internet and social media platforms, such as Twitter, have become increasingly important in shaping public opinion and political discourse. Not only has it changed the way politics is communicated, it has also become an important tool for agenda-setting (e.g. Parmelee & Bichard, 2012; Park, 2013; Gleason, 2013) Twitter has become an important tool in eloquent and media-savvy people outside the Twitter has also become an important

platform among eloquent and media-savvy people outside the traditional political, economic, or academic elites (Rogstad, 2016). On the topic of East Asia, particularly left-wing alternative media in the shadow of China – in a recent study by Nachman et al. (2022), using primarily Twitter social network analysis, the social networks and political discourses of the transnational media Qiao Collective and Lausan are identified. New Bloom is a media that is not mentioned in the context of the study but is strongly associated with the two left-wing media mentioned above.

In my thesis, I will conduct a Twitter analysis to examine the role of New Bloom in shaping public discourse on key issues in Taiwan. By analyzing Twitter data, I aim to understand how social media is being used to promote alternative viewpoints and how it is being used to shape public opinion.

Several aspects are important if we look at New Bloom: (a) alternative media (b) Taiwan-based English media and (c) Taiwan-based transnational media. In my thesis I will focus on all three aspects. Despite the importance of alternative media in Taiwan, most studies on Taiwan's independent media have focused on emphasizing their critical function (Huang, 1996; Cheng, 2009) or describing their empirical practices (e.g. Kuang, 2011; Kuo, 2010; Lu, 2016) and none, to the best of my knowledge, has focused on the transnational and international dimension of alternative media in Taiwan.

On the other hand, an overview of the existing research on English media in Taiwan is extremely sparse. Regarding the framework that Holt et al. (2019) raised, existing research is neither focusing on the role it played in the macro-level media environment, nor the meso-level of organisational context, for example, how those English media works. All of the existing research focused on the micro-level – the content produced by these media and using the framing analysis method. They analyze how English media in Taiwan cover

specific news issues. For example, how three English-language newspapers in Taiwan reported on the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) or the controversy over whether Taiwan should open up the import of U.S. beef in 2012 (Williams, 2010; Yen, 2012). Lastly, there is a lack of research literature on transnational media, mainly in Taiwan.

If we continue to use Holt et al.'s (2019) framework, this study would be the first to analyze the role of Taiwan-based English-language alternative media in a transnational media environment and to provide an analysis of the content produced using social media data analysis.

1-2. The birth of New Bloom

Founded in July 2014, the online magazine New Bloom Magazine aims to be a digital media outlet that connects Taiwan with the international community. Inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States and the subsequent Sunflower movement in Taiwan, New Bloom was first established by a group of students and social movement participants living in the United States.

Through the medium of text, such as live reports, interviews and political commentaries, New Bloom aims to export "radical new perspectives on Taiwan's analysis of the Asia-Pacific region" (New Bloom, 2014). New Bloom has also conducted the notable Daybreak Project, which is an over 400,000 words English-language encyclopedia and oral history archive on the personal accounts and testimonies of participants in the 2014 Sunflower Movement.

New Bloom also organizes regular physical events such as talks, reading groups, and workshops on political and social movement issues. At the beginning of 2022, they established their own physical space, "Daybreaks Coffee," with a community of Americans in Taiwan, international media correspondents in Taiwan, social activists and advocates, academics, the queer/ artists community, and people who care about democracy in Taiwan.

After the Sunflower movement, there are a lot of attempts to spread social issues in Taiwan to international audiences. However, merely any agents doing the opposite. "What is not attempted is to put the international in touch with the local", New Bloom has written on their website. To them, to solve the local issues, there are need to put the local issue embedded in the international context (New Bloom, 2014).

Before the Sunflower Movement, there were very few English-language media outlets in Taiwan. Although there are some more senior media such as the English version of Commonwealth Magazine, Taipei Times, Taiwan News, CNA English news (Focus Taiwan); broadcasting forms such as ICRT, Radio Taiwan International, Taiwan Plus, etc., as well as Ketagalan media founded in 2013, The News Lens, etc., there are still only a handful of reports on Taiwan available in English-language.

On the structure of this thesis, I will firstly review the relevant literature. With regards to some concepts as activism, public sephe, counterpublics, media and social movement, media and identity and transnational information politics. After that, I will raise the conceptual framework, then explain my research question, data and the method that I use. Lastly, I will claim the expected outcome and the possible limitations.

At the core of my thesis is the question what, in the context of East Asian and international democracies, impact does New Bloom have? To answer these broad research

questions, I will use a multi-method approach. I will combine social network analysis, automatic content analysis, and qualitative interviews.



II. Literature Review

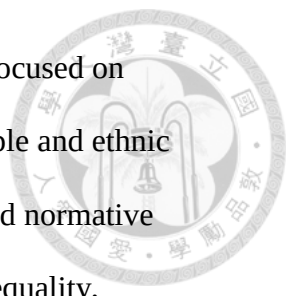
2-1. Media and Activism

Media has always been associated with activism and social movements. In the traditional sense of media, the media can play several roles. First, media can act as a kind of public sphere, or said counterpublic. Also, Media has always been integrated with social movement. I'll explain below.

2-1-1. Media, public sphere and Counterpublic

According to Habermas' (1992) concept of the public sphere, As a place of political power, cultural recognition and reproduction, the media can be included as a concept of public sphere.

The first to introduce the concept of Counterpublic was Negt and Kluge (1993 [1972]), who introduced the concept of 'proletarian public sphere' as a critique of the bourgeois public sphere as normed by Habermas. Fraser (1992) then criticizes Habermas's concept as overly idealistic, excluding marginalized voices and ignoring the power relations between them. Fraser then proposes the concept of "counter-public spheres" - that is, subaltern social groups in which they can invent and circulate a counter-public discourse that also allows them to form a counter-public discourse based on their needs, interests, and identities (Rauch, 2007).



In the tradition of counterpublics theory, this literature has mainly focused on progressive and left-wing groups such as workers, women, LGBTQ people and ethnic minorities (Warner, 2002; cf. Downey & Fenton, 2003). This concern and normative definition of counterpublic theory is related to its historical struggle for equality, reproduction and freedom for disadvantaged groups (Lien, 2022). Simultaneously, members of counterpublics are not necessarily subaltern in the traditional sense, but may also have a high social status based on solidarity with a particular issue (Breese, 2011; Lien, 2022).

The Internet, on the other hand, is seen as a space for the development of counterpublics (Downey & Fenton, 2003; Lien, 2022; Nachman et al., 2022; Toepfl and Piwoni, 2015 & 2018). In a contrast to mainstream discourse, there are alternative media that can provide a counter-hegemonic discourse (Holt et al., 2019; van Leeckwyck, 2019). The media has always been seen as a tool for public debate, civic engagement, and democracy. In summary, media could serve as a counterpublic space for counter-hegemonic discourses -- for example, minority discourses -- to circulate, especially on the internet. Next up, I'll discuss the relation between media and social movement.

2-1-2. Media and Social Movement

Media can also play a role as a tool of social movement. The media serves as a critical tool for social movements to spread their message, gain support, and mobilize action. As sociologist Charles Tilly (2004) argued, the media amplify the political significance of social movement activities.

In the past, studies of Media Activism have examined how and what effects activists create social change through media and information dissemination (Meikle, 2002). Media

activism focuses on how activists can influence media output through specific strategies to increase the visibility of activist concerns and even influence policy-making agendas.

(Pickard & Yang, 2017; Carroll & Hackett, 2006).

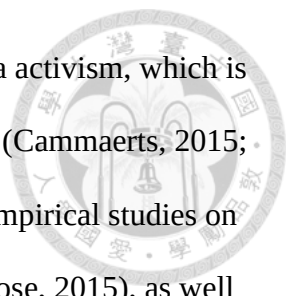
In today's digital age, social media platforms have become even more crucial for social movements to gain visibility and connect with potential supporters. Therefore, the relationship between media and social movements is a vital one, as it can ultimately impact the success or failure of a social movement's goals.

2-2. Media and Identity

Finally, the media can be a source of shaping personal identity (Buckingham, 2008; Page, 2013; Sergeant & Tagg, 2014; Kellner, 2003). News maintains symbolic meanings, including the synchronization of society and the reproduction of shared beliefs (Rauch, 2007).

With the rise of social media, many studies have turned their attention to digital media & social media. Through digital media and social media, larger and more extensive, distributed networks of connections have become possible. Such research views the Internet or digital media as a site of power or discursive contestation, particularly social media (e.g. Seargeant & Tagg, 2014; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015).

As a mediator of social movements, that is, through a network of actors, social media can thus serve as a site for collective action, forming collective identity and even virtual communities. It is also a venue for resource mobilization, which makes connective action possible (Bennett et al., 2013).



Therefore, some scholars have proposed the concept of social media activism, which is the study of how social media connects people to promote social change (Cammaerts, 2015; Gerbaudo & Treré, 2015; Yilmaz, 2017; Fullam, 2017). There are also empirical studies on the motivations of activists to engage in social media (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015), as well as studies on how minority groups such as indigenous people use social media for social movements (Carlson & Berglund, 2021). More research has begun to examine how political and social movement discourses are shaped by Twitter as a public space (Gerbaudo, 2015; Cheng et al, 2023).

Since counterpublics are participants who perceive themselves as marginalized or excluded by larger public spheres, such political participation also contributes to the formation and transformation of member identities (Asen, 2000; Brouwer, 2006; Warner, 2002; Toepfl and Piwoni, 2015 & 2018).

More importantly, according to Toepfl and Piwoni (2018), two types of goals for counterpublics are distinguished: Inward-oriented goals and Outward-oriented goals. The former is considered to be a goal that primarily seeks to invent, elaborate, and formulate alternative identities, interests, and needs. Those pursuits were expected to happen in safe, secluded communicative spaces. In contrast, Outward-oriented goals – “most crucially, the breaking up and shifting of consensus structures within dominant publics by engaging with wider audiences and targeting dominant publics with ‘counterpublicity’” (Toepfl and Piwoni, 2018, pp.4-5) . As they have highlighted, differently configured online communicative spaces are conducive to different degrees with regard to these two types of goals.

2-3. Media and Transnational Information Politics



On the other hand, media can also serve as a resource that presents opportunities for resistance. Evolutionized from Keck & Sikkink's "information politics" (1998) and Tarrow's "transnational activist networks" (2001), explained by Tarrow:

... shifting from the broad canvas of globalization to the finer fabric of the mechanisms of activism is a step that will take us far in understanding the dynamics of transnational contention. (p. 246)

The concept of "transnational information politics" has thus been raised. (Ron et al, 2005; Huang, 2014). In the past, a series of studies have been produced in the context of globalization theory. What began as a study of transnational networks of advocates - particularly NGOs - was later used to examine the flow of discourse and information within social movements. Resistance within a country, has been proposed as a way of reframing resistance issues, thereby opening up transnational "discursive opportunities" to influence the nation-state's response to domestic social movements (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Ron et al., 2005; Thörn, 2007; Huang, 2014; Alvarez et al., 2018)

In the past, in the context of globalization and technological development, social movements have been able to gain attention not only from domestic but also transnational sources. While past research has focused on newspapers, some scholars have begun to analyze how Twitter serves as a transnational action, that is, as a space for political discourse through the universal conditions of the Internet (Cheng et al, 2023).

In summary, the media has always had an intertwined relationship with social movements and activism, and the direction of media or communication process analysis is

not limited to one country, but extends to transnational networks. Returning to New Bloom, on the one hand, serves as a media outlet that produces news, political commentary, and interviews, can be a representative of counterpublics. On the other hand, its active nature on social media - especially Twitter - also gives it the function of mobilizing collective identity. In the next section, I will discuss another concept, alternative media.

2-3-1. Alternative Media

What is alternative media? Alternative media serve as a voice outside of the mainstream media, and they are able to give voice to marginalized groups (Atton, 2002; Rauch, 2007; Atton, 2015). Alternative media also provide opportunities to participate in the world far beyond the narrow conception of citizens as passive consumers and marginal participants in politics and culture. They provide a means of appropriate active citizenship. At the same time, alternative media provides educational and political empowerment for its participants (Atton, 2007).

Alternative media can serve as a ritual for creating social bonds, where news is more than mere information, but a description of the competing forces in the world (Rauch, 2007). Alternative media also often contribute to social movements (Downing, 2008). For example, in his study, Dowling (2021) examines how alternative media, Unicorn riot, became part of a social movement by documenting social movements through the medium of video. His research points out that alternative media, as advocates, can be the interface between activism and media. Alternative media is also associated with community, and in many cases of alternative media is community media (Atton, 2015).

And even though alternative media has been associated with left-wing politics for a longer period of time, some recent studies suggest that alternative media may be associated

with right-wing movements (Rauch, 2016), and some studies have investigated how left- and right-wing politics affect mainstream politics (Cushion et al., 2021).

If we focus back on independent media in Asia, Lee (2018) examines the Umbrella movement in Hong Kong and suggests that the more people consume alternative media, the more likely they are to support social movements. Nip & Cheng's (2022) study analyzes the process of mainstream and alternative news media in Taiwan during the Sunflower Movement in 2014 and the 2015 Umbrella movement, which also had anti-China overtones, in Hong Kong. Their study examines how independent media interacted with mainstream media during the two social movements on Facebook.

In summary, there are many studies on alternative media.. However, as Previous Research suggested (Downing, 2003; Rauch, 2007), there is very little empirical research on alternative news audiences, such as the role that producers' intentions play in the lives of their readers. In the next section, I will further review the alternative media research in Taiwan.

2-3-2. Alternative Media in Taiwan

In Taiwan, some scholars have studied alternative media in the 1990s and how it shaped underground culture (Huang, 1996). The 1990s, after the declare of martial law ended, was inevitably the starting point for many liberation movements. However, in the first decade before the liberation, some researchers studied the Tan-Wai Movement in Taiwan from the 1980s (1980 ~ 1990), that is, how Tan-Wai Magazine served as the nourishment for the Tan-Wai movements (Hsiao, 2006).

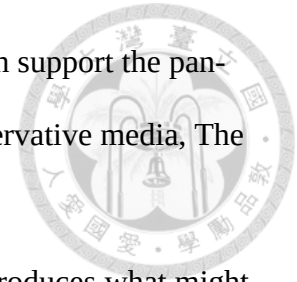
Before the rise of alt-right media in the West, the concept of alternative media was often associated with pro-democracy activism (Nip & Cheng, 2022). In the Taiwanese

context, the definition of independent media is much more specific. Cheng (2009) summarizes ten characteristics of alternative media from Western studies: (1) aim, (2) content, (3) receptors, (4) revenue, (5) distribution, (6) content copyright, (7) sources of perspective, (8) structure, (9) organization, and (10) innovation and adaptation. In the chapter on alternative media in her edited book, she further identified advocacy and grassroots media as two main types of alternative media.

Kuang (2011) reviewed how several cases of alternative media in Taiwan have given voice to marginalized groups. Lu (2016) examined the news production process of the independent media *News & Market* (上下游市集). In Taiwan, most of the research on alternative media has focused on its relationship with social movements.

On the one hand, existing independent media research has focused exclusively on Taiwan's media that produce content in Mandarin. On the other hand, there is not a single study on the English media in Taiwan. As mentioned before, all the studies focused on the content those Taiwan English media produced using framing analysis method. Williams (2010) analyzed three English media in Taiwan --The Taipei Times, The Taiwan News, and The China Post framed news about the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). The study found that The Taipei Times and The Taiwan News, which are more politically supportive of the Democratic Progressive Party, the liberal party in Taiwan, claimed that supporting the agreement would result in the loss of Taiwan's sovereignty. The China Post, which is more supportive of the conservative party Kuomintang, was more likely to praise the agreement (Williams, 2010); on the other hand, the Taipei Times, The China Post and The Taiwan New, Yen (2012) were also analyzed. Taiwan New, Yen (2012) examined the narrative framing of the 2012 debate over whether to open up U.S.

beef imports in Taiwan. The Taipei Times and The Taiwan News, which support the pan-green camp, are more opposed to the import issue, while the more conservative media, The China Post, has more coverage in support of the issue (Yen, 2012).



New Bloom, as an Taiwan-based English-language media outlet, produces what might be considered "local news" in Taiwan. However, New Bloom's intention is not just domestic but wants to reach out to a broader context of local issues. Whether it is a general issue of capitalism, geopolitics, or colonialism. These need to be addressed through political ties, or solidarity.

Thus, New Bloom hence has a duality - it is both local and international. The question I ask is, who is New Bloom's audience? Is it really shaping a transnational network? How does it re-frame domestic issues in the context of transnational information politics, so that the international community can pay attention to Taiwan?

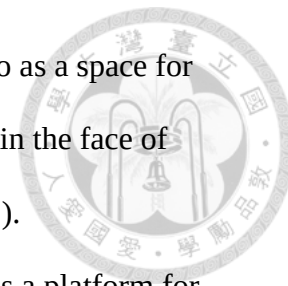
The next chapter will discuss the methods used to analyze New Bloom's content and audience engagement, contributing to a better understanding of its role in the island's media landscape.

III. Research Questions & Methods

3-1. Conceptual Framework

Integrating the concepts of Transnational Information Politics previously discussed in the literature review section (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Ron et al., 2005; Thörn, 2007; Huang, 2014; Alvarez et al., 2018), and recent social network analysis research on Twitter (cf. Parmelee & Bichard, 2012; Park, 2013; Gleason, 2013; Alperstein, 2021). We can view

Twitter not only as an arena for individual and group contesting, but also as a space for heterogeneous discourse to circulate mainstream or dominant discourse in the face of threats from authoritarian states (Kavanagh, 2022; Nachman et al., 2022).



In addition to Twitter, New Bloom also has its own news website as a platform for publishing articles. As a left-wing alternative media, we can consider these online spaces as the presentation of New Bloom as a Counterpublic. At the same time, it serves as a space to achieve its outward-oriented goal of breaking with the mainstream (Toepfl and Piwoni, 2018).

According to Toepfl and Piwoni's (2018) pioneering study, defining whether a comment or article is counterpublic or not can be defined according to the following criterion:

- (a) Argumentatively countered the mainstream consensus within one of the six emphasis frames identified above (***argumentative countering***), or
- (b) Strengthened the collective identity of the emerging counterpublic collective by making a statement of personal identification or by employing emotional statements (***strengthening identity***, for example, “we will win an even bigger share of the vote in the next elections!”), or
- (c) Explicitly pointed to firmly consolidated power relationships within the media, politics, or society as allegedly working against the counterpublic (***deconstructing power relationships***, for example, referring to German public television as “state TV”). (Toepfl and Piwoni, 2018, pp.7-8)

On the other hand, as Holt et al. (2019) has suggested, alternative media can be analyzed at three levels - the Macro-level of societal function, the meso-level of

organization, the micro-level of news content and producers (Holt et al., 2019). A more detailed explanation is as follows:



- (a) Macro-level: Alternative media's function and impact on the societal structure. In other words, system level.
- (b) Meso-level: Alternative publishing routines and media organization. The organizational level.
- (c) Micro-level: Alternative content producers, content and style. The individual level. (Holt et al., 2019)

Based on the above criteria, I have developed a major conceptual framework for this study. I then proceed to the chapter on research questions, research methods, and data.

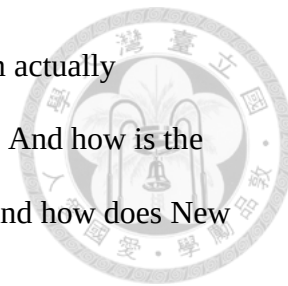
3-2. Research Questions

As Nachman et al. (2022) attempted in their study on transnational left-wing alternative media, they not only used quantitative methods to analyze how the two alternative media Qiao Collective and Lausan differ in the social networks they form on Twitter, but also used qualitative methods to analyze all the Tweets of these two alternative media. Continuing its methodological contribution, I ask a firstsecond research question:

RQ1: What kind of contents has New Bloom been producing?

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the concept of Counterpublics (Warner, 2002; Warner, 2002; Downey & Fenton, 2003) applies to New Bloom as an alternative left-

wing media. From the beginning, what kind of content does New Bloom actually disseminate? What are the themes present in all their published articles? And how is the distribution of these themes? What narratives do these themes convey, and how does New Bloom categorize and organize its content?



On the other hand, in their previously published content, what communication strategies does New Bloom employ? As mentioned in the previous section, Toepfl and Piwoni (2018) used three criteria to distinguish whether content is counterpublic. In my research, I will conduct a framing analysis on the content of New Bloom.

Once we have obtained a comprehensive understanding of the content produced by New Bloom, the next step is to inquire: Who are the readers or audience of New Bloom? As Rauch (2007) has criticized, there is very little empirical research on alternative news audiences. Meanwhile, Downing (2008) has argued that there is a disconnect between social movement theory and communication research. Here I use the aforementioned concept of transnational information politics (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Ron et al., 2005; Thörn, 2007; Huang, 2014; Alvarez et al., 2018) to ask the second research question :

RQ2: *How does the New Bloom community look like in the Twitter space?*

I will mainly focus on the background of users that engage with New Bloom on Twitter. This will allow me to assess whether New Bloom's audiences are local or rather transnational. In other words, if we assume that interactions on social media represent weak ties, we can reexamine what New Bloom claims on its "about me" page: Does it truly foster political and intellectual transnational dialogues in the Left (New Bloom, 2014)?

Finally, as Holt et al. (2017) has suggested, one aspect of studying alternative media at the micro-level is not just the content and style, but also the producers themselves. Also, as I have discussed in the literature review part of the relationship between alternative media, activism, and identity, I will thus ask the last research question:

RQ3: What impact does New Bloom have on a different level?

Here I will focus on the framework that Holt et al. (2019) has suggested – the three different dimensions.

Firstly, according to their proposed framework, the study of alternative media can be analyzed at three levels: Macro, Meso, and Micro levels. In my research, I will further expand their research framework. Not only will I focus on how New Bloom operates at these three levels internally, but I will also examine how New Bloom influences the external environment in a bidirectional manner.

At the broadest level, I will discuss New Bloom as a left-wing alternative media and explore the role they play and the impact they bring. In other words, I will examine their influence on societal structures within the context of Taiwan or transnationally. This influence encompasses not only the media environment but also the transnational communication environment and its impact on different groups.

At the meso level, I will analyze how New Bloom operates, including their internal processes for publishing articles, organizational functioning, agenda setting, funding sources, and their activities in physical spaces. Additionally, I will investigate the reach and impact caused by New Bloom's authors in their past article publications.

Finally, at the micro level, I will approach the discussion from two aspects: first, I will examine the intentions and intended audience of New Bloom's authors when producing content in the past. Second, I will assess the impact of New Bloom on the individuals involved, which may include personal growth, changes in identity, or any other potential alterations. In the next section, I will further elaborate on the data and methods used in this study.

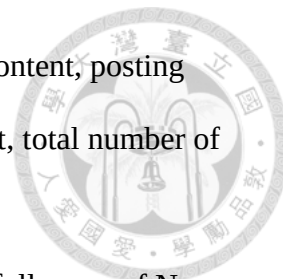
3-3. Data and methods

As with research question one, which is: What kind of contents has New Bloom been producing? I used all the articles ($N = 3,059$) that New Bloom has ever published. The articles will be directly scraped from their homepage as they all are publicly available. In my analysis, I found that New Bloom has covered a diverse range of topics. By using web scraping with R, I retrieved all the articles published by New Bloom and conducted an analysis. I analyzed with both automatic content analysis (topic model) as well as a more qualitative frame analysis all the articles that New Bloom has published since the beginning.

In all the data obtained, I retrieved the post ID, article title, URL, article author, major category (category) of each article on the website, tags associated with each article, and the publication date of each article. The earliest article in my research timeframe was published on July 4, 2014 (“Photos: Sunflower Retrospective by Justim Pam”), while the latest article was published on June 26, 2023 (“Hou You-yi, Ko Wen-je Call for Reviving CSSTA”).

Furthermore, I’ve also downloaded all tweets that the New Bloom account has ever tweeted ($n = 6,317$), as well as all retweets ($N = 46,141$ tweets). In all the tweets retrieved

from New Bloom, there are a total of 32 variables, including the tweet content, posting time, posting language, whether it is a retweet or a reply to another tweet, total number of likes received, and more.



For the second research question focusing on Twitter all the followers of New Bloom ($n = 10,402$) and their follower relations were downloaded, as well as all the retweets that New Bloom received on Twitter. I utilized the R package "Rtweets" to obtain a comprehensive dataset comprising 91 variables containing detailed user information. The collected data includes user ID, account creation date, screen name, location, total count of past retweets, self-description from the profile, and whether the profile is public or private, among other data.

Thus, I can analyze all the follower relations between these users as well as the users that engage with New Bloom directly on Twitter. The data was processed with R, and Gephi for social Network visualization. For the location messages, I used location information that Twitter users added to their accounts which can be used to identify and check on OpenStreetMap which country the user is located in. I used the same approach as used by Nachman et al. (2022).

Finally, to the third question: What impact does New Bloom have on a different personal level? To answer this research question, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with the main founder, main contributor, and active members of the New Bloom community.

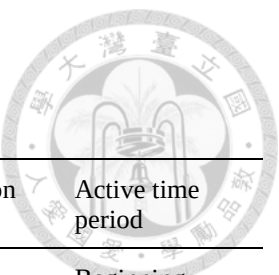
Since its establishment in 2014, New Bloom has operated entirely on a volunteer basis, without any full-time employees. The level of involvement and responsibilities of members varies based on their life stage, employment status, relationships with other members, and their unique skill sets. In selecting interviewees, I considered factors such as

the roles played by current and former members of New Bloom, their gender identities, ages, current locations, professions, and periods of active engagement.

Additionally, I referred to an internal document written by New Bloom members about the organization's history to assess the contributions and significance of each member within the organization. As a result of these considerations, a total of seven participants were chosen, as shown in the table below (Table 1).



Table 1 *The list of interviewees being interviewed in this research.*



	Name	Role/ function	Pronoun	Age	Current Residence	Occupation	Active time period
New Bloom (NB) members	Brian Hioe	Co-founder	He/ him	31	Taipei, Taiwan	Journalist	Beginning (2014) - Present
	Daniel Yo-Ling Chen	NB core member	They/ them	25-30	Taipei, Taiwan	Research assistant	Beginning (2014) - Present
	Aurora Chang	NB core member	She/ her	25-30	Taipei, Taiwan	Activist / Data Analyst	2021 - Present
	Jennifer (pseudonym)	NB core member	She/ her	25-30	Taipei, Taiwan / U.S.	Content Creator	2023 - Present
	Yang (pseudonym)	NY Branch founder/ Contributor	They/ them	36	Taipei, Taiwan	Scholar	Beginning (2014) - Present
Former NB members	Symin Chang	Founding member/ Former NB core member	She/ Her	28	Taipei, Taiwan	Writer	Beginning - 2015

In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of my research using a comprehensive mixed-method approach.

IV. Research Results



4-1. New Bloom Content & Communication Frame Analysis

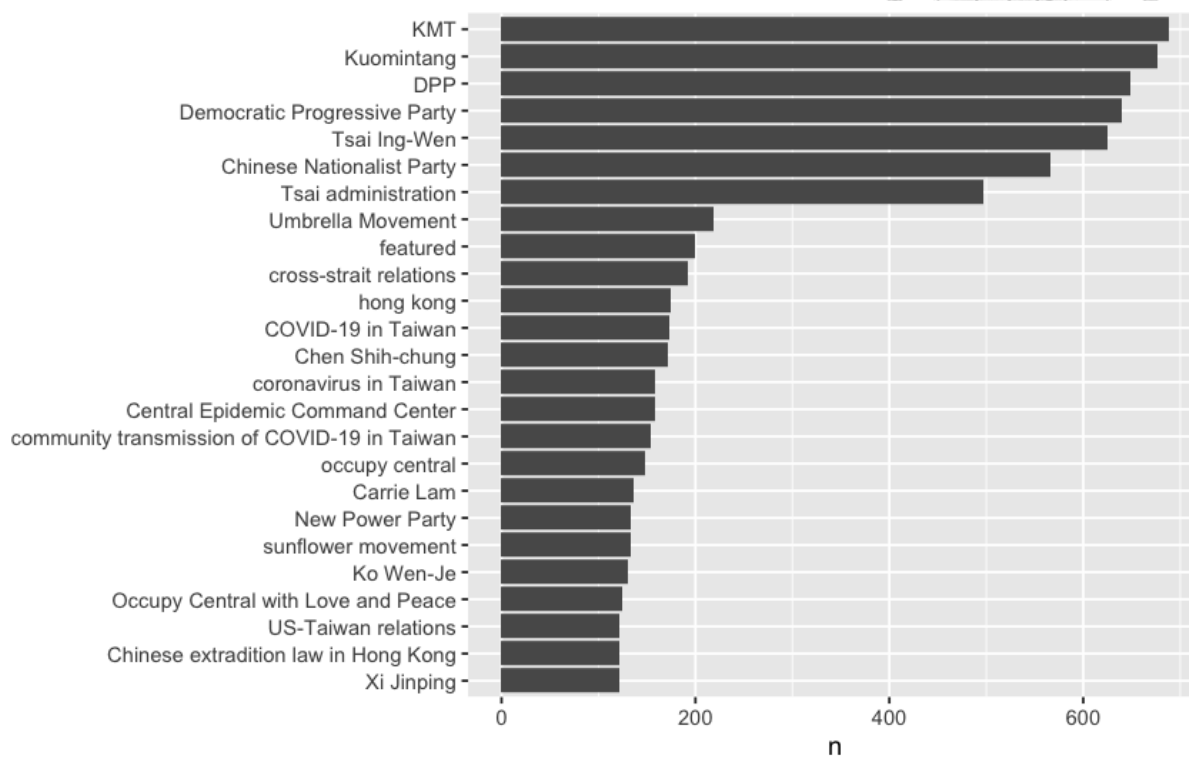
As the Founder of New Bloom has mentioned in the interview, the beginning of New Bloom was inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement. Following the movement happened in the U.S. in 2011, a lot of publications rose up, such as Jacobin Magazine or M Plus One or the New in Korea. New Bloom, under the influence of the movement and the leftist media founded at that time, wanted to become part of the discourse after Sunflower Movement.

However, what New Bloom wanted to achieve all the time is to put the local issue of the local in the global context— on the “About” page of them, is to: *“What is not attempted is to put the international in touch with the local. However, as we see it, the local problems of Taiwan, much less any other country in the Asia Pacific region, cannot be resolved except internationally.”* (New Bloom, 2014). In other words, put the local issues of Taiwan under the lens of leftists.

Before the emergence of New Bloom, many international English media outlets merely mechanically reported on Taiwan, essentially replicating what foreign sources had already covered. In many cases, such a writing approach resulted in a time lag. The significance of New Bloom lies in its aim to facilitate communication between both sides by placing seemingly localized issues within a broader global context.

Firstly, all New Bloom articles are tagged with one or more categories. The statistics of all the article tags are as follows (Figure 1):

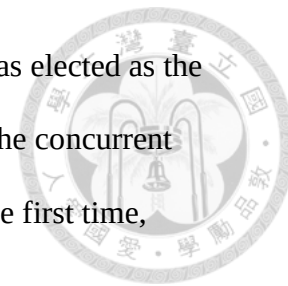
Figure 1 *Number of tags from all articles that New Bloom has ever published*



From the above figure (Figure 1), it is evident that the top two most frequently used tags in New Bloom articles are related to the Kuomintang (KMT), also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party, which is one of the major political parties in Taiwan. The Kuomintang came to Taiwan from China in 1949 and ruled the island for several decades, including the end of martial law in the 1990s. In contemporary Taiwanese politics, the KMT tends to have a more pro-China stance and adopts relatively conservative positions on social issues.

In 2000, Taiwan witnessed its first peaceful transfer of power with the election of Chen Shui-bian from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as the President of the Republic of China, ending the Kuomintang's 55-year-long monopoly on power. In 2008, the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the President, marking the second peaceful transition of power. The KMT remained the majority party in the legislature during both

presidential elections. However, in 2016, Tsai Ing-wen from the DPP was elected as the President, initiating the third political transition in Taiwan's history. In the concurrent legislative elections, the DPP secured a majority in the parliament for the first time, granting them full control over the government.



Therefore, it is not surprising that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) follows closely as the third most frequent tag. In Taiwanese politics, the DPP tends to support Taiwan's sovereignty and the principle of democratic self-determination. The fifth-ranking tag is Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen. Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016 and is set to step down in 2024. The seventh-ranking tag, Tsai Administration, refers to the period of her governance.

Following the tags related to Taiwanese politics, we see the Umbrella Movement, which occurred in Hong Kong in September 2014. This social and political movement aimed to achieve universal suffrage and involved protesters occupying key areas in Hong Kong, including Admiralty, Causeway Bay, Mong Kok, and Tsim Sha Tsui, for 79 days. The movement was seen as influenced by the Occupy Central movement in Hong Kong that started in March 2013, also known as Occupy Central with Love and Peace, as well as the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan in March 2014. These protests gained significant international attention at the time, and New Bloom reported on the Hong Kong social movement on-site.

In the list of article tags, we also observe the appearance of Carrie Lam, the former Chief Executive of Hong Kong, who served from 2017 to 2022, as well as the tag "Chinese extradition law in Hong Kong," also known as the Hong Kong extradition bill. In 2019, Hong Kong experienced a series of protests initiated by concerns among the public regarding the potential impact of the Extradition Law Amendment Bill on Hong Kong's

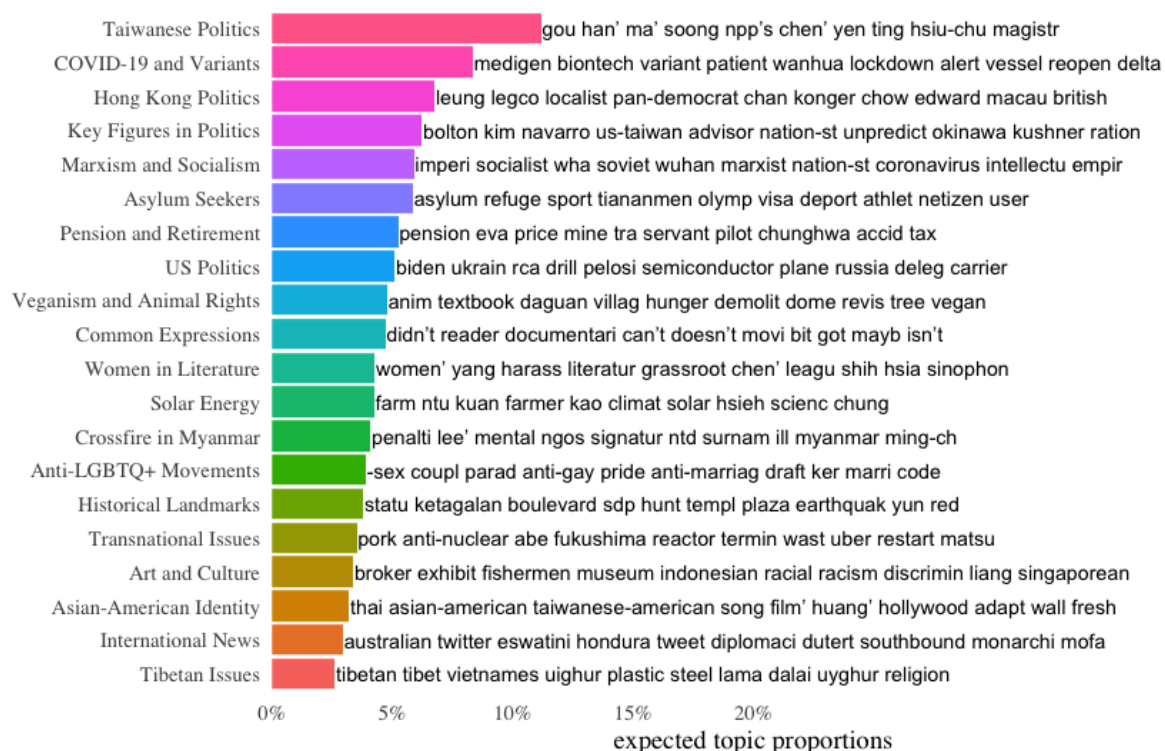
judicial independence, as stipulated in the "One Country, Two Systems" framework and the Basic Law, as well as concerns about further erosion of human rights. The protests reached their peak in June that year, with over a million citizens participating in demonstrations.

Another group of keywords that appear in the article tags list is "COVID-19 in Taiwan," "Coronavirus in Taiwan," and the former Minister of Health and Welfare of Taiwan, Chen Shih-chung. It reflects the coverage of the pandemic and the government's response, with the Central Epidemic Command Center, which held daily press conferences, being tagged as well. The focus on "Community Transmission of COVID-19 in Taiwan" also indicates the public's attention during that period.

Lastly, concerning international politics, the tags "Cross-strait relations" and "US-Taiwan relations" indicate that New Bloom covers topics related to Taiwan's political relationships with other countries.

If we analyze the content of New Bloom using a different approach, such as topic modeling, we may obtain different results. Here, I used R to create a corpus and apply STM (Structural Topic Modeling) to analyze the main topics within all the texts published by New Bloom. Additionally, I instructed ChatGPT to provide a breakdown analysis of the top words generated by STM for each identified topic. The result is shown below (Figure 2):

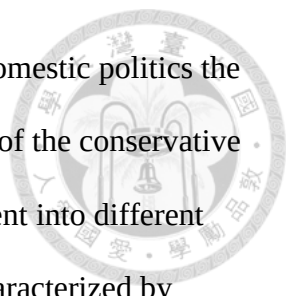
Figure 2 *The topics of all articles that New Bloom has ever published, calculated by topic modeling in R*



4-1-1. Taiwan Domestic Politics

First, we analyze the highest proportion topic in all the articles, which is Taiwan's domestic politics. In the keywords identified by topic modeling, we can recognize several key political figures in Taiwan, including Terry Gou (gou), Han Kuo-yu (han), Ma Ying-jeou (ma), Yen Ching-piao (yen), Ting Shou-chung (ting), and Hung Hsiu-chu (hsiu-chu). Additionally, we see the emergence of the New Power Party (NPP), which rose to prominence after the Sunflower Movement.

Interestingly, all of the aforementioned political figures belong to the conservative Kuomintang (KMT) party, also known as the Pan-blue camp in Taiwan. This aligns with the previous analysis of the most common tags in the articles, where Kuomintang ranked first or second.



Why is the content related to conservative politicians in Taiwan's domestic politics the most prominent in this topic? One major reason is the need for criticism of the conservative camp that has been in power in the past. If we divide New Bloom's content into different periods, we can observe that after the Sunflower Movement, a period characterized by conservative party rule, Taiwan experienced several social movements. For example, the occupation of the Ministry of Education was a student and social movement against the historical curriculum adjustments influenced by the Kuomintang's historical perspectives. This period, as described by Brian Hioe, the founder of New Bloom and a major contributor to its content, was marked by a "sense of crisis." Therefore, it is not surprising that during that time, there were many articles discussing the political responses of the ruling conservative camp.

Furthermore, as a left-wing media outlet, New Bloom naturally reports on how the conservative camp responds to political and social issues in Taiwan's pursuit of democracy. For example, key topics include the stance of Taiwan's domestic politicians on the issue of reunification versus independence, as well as public sentiment. These are the contents that New Bloom considers important to translate and inform the English-speaking world based on past interviews.

4-1-2. COVID-19 and Variants

Next, the second-highest proportion topic is related to COVID-19, which broke out in 2019. In the extracted topics, we can observe keywords related to the pandemic, such as vaccines (medigen, biotech), the delta variant, and the development of the COVID-19 situation in Taiwan (variants, patients, lockdown, reopen), including the Wanhua area, where the first wave of the outbreak occurred.

It is worth mentioning that when COVID-19 first entered Taiwan in 2021, Taiwan's successful containment of the virus resulted in a different trajectory compared to the global pandemic peak. Taiwan was caught off guard and began holding daily press conferences on the situation. However, due to limited resources, there was hardly any English translation of the daily press conferences and related information.

During that time, New Bloom played a role in disseminating information about the pandemic between Taiwan and the international community. Brian, the founder, published an average of 2,000 to 3,000 reports daily during the 100-day period of the pandemic, providing almost verbatim coverage of the daily announcements of the pandemic situation. Therefore, we can say that during that time, New Bloom served as a traditional news media outlet, bridging the gap in disseminating critical information concerning people's lives.

4-1-3. Hong Kong Politics

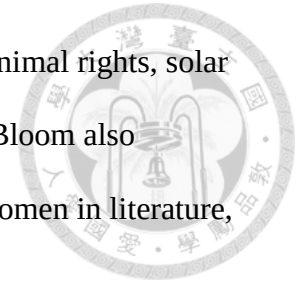
In the context of Hong Kong politics, we can observe several keywords clearly related to Hong Kong's social movements. For example, we see the mention of figures like Edward Leung, a Hong Kong politician and activist who was the former spokesperson of Hong Kong Indigenous, a localist group. The social movements in Hong Kong pursuing democracy, such as localism and pan-democracy, are also evident.

In 2019, New Bloom reported on the situation in Hong Kong, further deepening its connections with figures in Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp, including left-wing media Lausan, established by the diaspora after the Umbrella Movement.

4-1-4. Social Issues in Taiwan

Moving on, we analyze the topics frequently reported by New Bloom, which can be broadly categorized as various social issues in Taiwan. Among the extracted topics, we see

themes such as asylum seekers, pension and retirement, veganism and animal rights, solar energy, and more. On the other hand, as a left-wing media outlet, New Bloom also expresses views on abstract topics, including Marxism and socialism, women in literature, art and culture, and others.



4-1-5. Transnational Issues and Others

Finally, as a transnational media outlet with many members from Asian diasporas, New Bloom naturally covers topics related to the United States. We can observe keywords such as US-Taiwan relations, US politics, Asian-American identity in the topic list. As a left-wing media outlet, New Bloom often takes a critical perspective on US-related issues, particularly viewing the US as part of imperialism and colonialism.

It is worth mentioning that several interviewees have highlighted the corrective function of New Bloom as an English-language mainstream media outlet in Taiwan. For instance, Brian Hioe mentioned that his intention is to engage with intellectuals in the US, particularly think tank researchers involved in Taiwan studies and policymakers shaping Taiwan-related policies. This also influences New Bloom's narrative strategy, as we can see in the following example:

“There's a case in which they reported that Taiwan was constructing a military base in Africa on the basis of a French website, and that French website basically did not exist. It had all these broken links. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs then had to come out and issue a disavowal of that. That kind of thing is dangerous because it creates misperceptions.

If, for example, a foreign actor such as China or the US acts on the basis of these things are not happening in the world, that can be very dangerous. I think that's part of what we're responding to. I think that also involves that, as time went on, it became part of New Bloom's agenda to fight this disformation, which can also originate from English-language media on Taiwan.” (Brian Hioe, 2023)

Therefore, we can see that New Bloom's role goes beyond providing balanced and equitable information among international actors, it also includes the correction of false information. Returning to the concept of "transnational information politics" mentioned earlier (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Ron et al., 2005; Thörn, 2007; Huang, 2014; Alvarez et al., 2018), we can observe that New Bloom plays a part in representing one side of the information struggle in the examples discussed.

4-1-6. Number of articles published by New Bloom each month

If we examine the number of articles published by New Bloom over the years on a monthly basis, in other words, if we analyze the past articles released by New Bloom over time, what results can be obtained? I conducted an analysis using the date data of all articles published by New Bloom (N = 3,059) that I retrieved with R. As mentioned in the earlier sections, the earliest article in my research timeframe was published on July 4, 2014, while the latest article was published on June 26, 2023. Using R's *ggplot2* package, I created a bar chart displaying the number of articles published by New Bloom per month, and the resulting graph is presented below (Figure 3 & Table 2):

Figure 3 *Number of articles published by New Bloom each month*

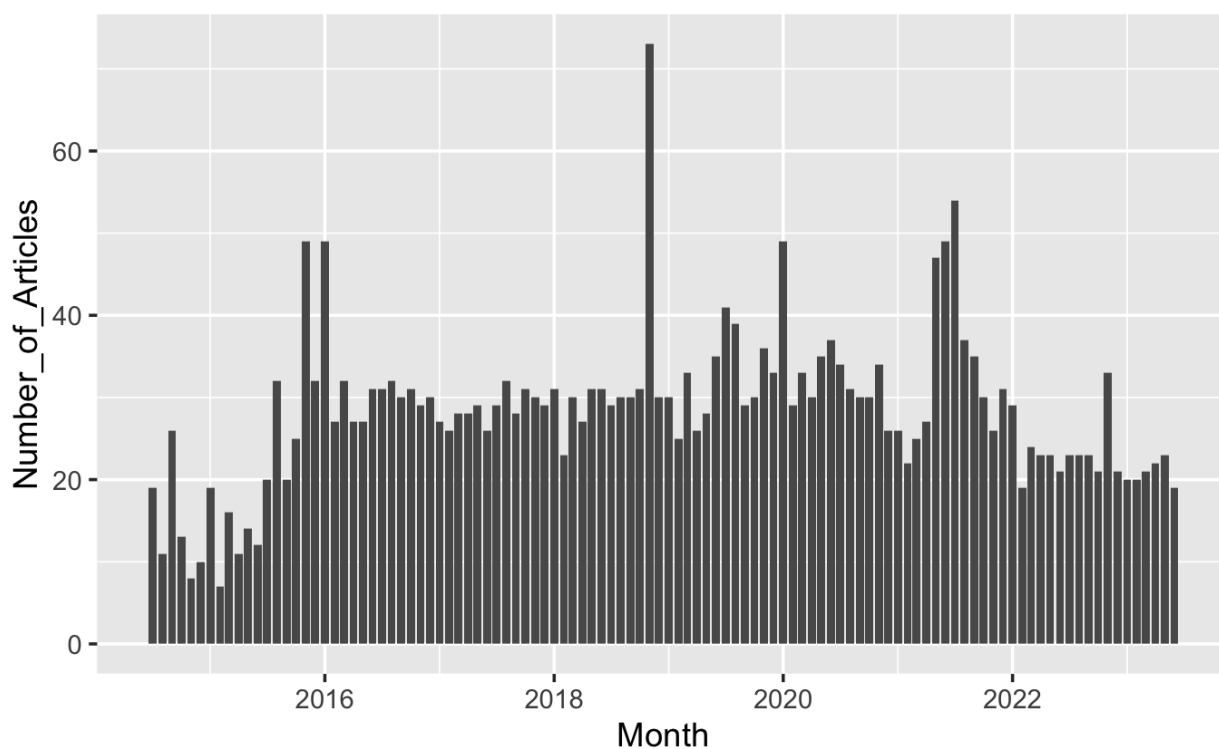


Table 2 *Number of articles published by New Bloom each month*

Year/Month	Number of articles
2018/11	73
2021/07	54
2015/11	49
2016/01	49
2020/01	49
2021/06	49
2021/05	47

Firstly, we can observe that the month with the highest number of articles published over the years was November 2018, with 73 articles, followed by July 2021 with 54 articles. Following closely in third place are November 2015, January 2016, January 2020, and June 2021, each with 49 articles. In comparison to the monthly average of 28.32 articles, let's analyze the possible implications behind New Bloom's publication patterns in various months.

Starting with November 2018, we can note that the societal context at that time was Taiwan's elections held at the end of that month. New Bloom had announced in mid-November that they would be conducting a series of election-related special reports, including interviews with independent city councilor candidates, constituting the "special 2018 election coverage."

In this series of election-focused reports, we can observe a motivation to communicate with Taiwan's local voters. The thirteen articles dedicated to small parties or independent candidates feature bilingual content in both Chinese and English, which contributed to a significant portion of the article publication count (26 articles). However, a more detailed examination of the content published during that month requires us to consider the temporal and spatial context of that period.

Firstly, on November 24, 2018, the nine-in-one local elections were held in Taiwan. In this complex election process, individuals with voting rights in Taiwan had to participate in two types of voting: (1) local elections involving the selection of nine local governmental positions, and (2) referendums on ten different topics. In the local elections, voters selected mayors, city councilors, village chiefs, town mayors, town council members, and representatives of mountain indigenous districts. On the referendum front, the topics included same-sex marriage, energy-related issues, nuclear energy issues, and the renaming

of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. This election marked Taiwan's first nationwide election after President Tsai Ing-wen's election in 2016. The societal stance was highly divided on the referendum issues, making it, to many observers, the first "mid-term exam" for Tsai's administration.



During that time, the issues represented by the major referendums were not only characterized by polarized opinions in public polls, but ideological camps also actively organized large-scale protests to express support for specific positions. Additionally, the China factor was a latent theme. Candidates like Han Kuo-yu, who leaned towards China, running for mayor of Kaohsiung, and Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-Je, who was aligning with Pan-blue, contributed to the perception of the election as a statement on China-Taiwan relations. A closer examination of the articles published in November 2018 reveals New Bloom's focus on providing information and political commentaries in the run-up to the elections. Apart from the political events and social issues of that month, New Bloom published several political commentaries attempting to elucidate potential changes in the political landscape if the conservative camp were to win the elections.

After experiencing a strong victory by the conservative camp in the local elections, along with the failure to advance LGBTQ+ rights through the referendums, New Bloom published multiple political commentaries that underscored its role as a left-leaning critique of conservative forces. Examples include pieces that analyzed the reasons behind the failure of the LGBTQ+ referendum and redefined alliance strategies ("Mobilizing Crisis, Material Inequality, And Ideological Splits"), a left-leaning critique, and articles analyzing the election results within the context of the two-party system and the internal dynamics of the Democratic Progressive Party ("Why Did The DPP Do So Poorly In 2018 Local Elections?"). Another commentary, "Conservative Forces On The Rise In Taiwan After

Progressive Civil Society's Defeat In 2018 Elections," introduced the two conservative forces that secured victory in the elections: the Christian Alliance in opposition to same-sex marriage and the Kuomintang's campaign for the referendum they supported. Through these political commentaries, it becomes evident that New Bloom aimed to introduce the dynamics and interconnected historical context behind the issues to a broader readership, primarily in the English-speaking world.

The quantity of articles published by New Bloom is evidently correlated with significant political events within Taiwan, particularly elections. If we revisit the third-highest month of article publication, January 2020 (N = 49), it can be linked to the Presidential elections and Legislative Yuan election held on January 11th of that year. In this 2020 election, even though New Bloom did not extensively interview candidates as it did in the 2018 elections, the platform still conducted interviews with several legislative candidates. These included Chiu Wei-jie (邱威傑), known as Froggy Chiu (呱吉), a Youtuber-turned-politician, Hsieh Pei-fen (謝佩芬), a DPP candidate with a background as a U.S. lawyer, two candidates from the Taiwan Statebuilding Party, Yan Ming-wei (顏銘緯) and Chen Bo-wei (陳柏惟), who advocate for Taiwanese independence, and Puma Shen (沈伯洋), a think-tank researcher who was not a legislative candidate but was interviewed regarding an important election theme: information warfare and the role of fake news and disinformation in elections.

From the list of interviews mentioned above, it becomes apparent that New Bloom consistently focuses not only on political figures sharing a similar ideological inclination towards the left of the political spectrum but also individuals with distinct perspectives on societal issues. Moreover, the commonalities among the candidates interviewed by New

Bloom reveal certain characteristics: most lack significant party resources and often approach their candidacies with idealism and independence. I believe this demonstrates that New Bloom, as an alternative media outlet, aspires to secure more media exposure for candidates who are resource-deprived or marginalized. From another perspective, the extensive political commentary "Whither The Pan-green Camp And Third Force In 2020 Elections?" that New Bloom published after the 2020 elections regarding the Third Force suggests that the platform is not solely focused on marginalized groups. Instead, as the discourse around "new politics" gains momentum, New Bloom analyzes and depicts the prominent actors and alliances within this evolving political landscape. In this sense, New Bloom is not an outsider to Taiwan's political arena but rather embeds its critique within it, portraying the dynamics of Taiwanese politics.

The final period of article publication closely related to elections was the presidential election held on January 16, 2016. In this election, the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Tsai Ing-wen defeated the Kuomintang (KMT) candidate to become president. During this time, there were numerous articles revolving around this election. Upon reviewing the articles published in 2016 concerning the election, a distinct difference becomes evident—despite having similar or close quantities to the subsequent two elections (2018 and 2020, excluding the part translated from Chinese in the 2020 election articles), I believe there are at least two significant differences in terms of the themes and content of New Bloom's 2016 election articles compared to the subsequent two.

Firstly, during this election, or this period, New Bloom evidently exhibited more diversity in its themes and angles. Alongside basic articles common to each election, such as reporting on candidate policies and political developments, election debates, and analyzing the political aesthetics of different parties' campaigns, during this period, New

Bloom published many articles more openly from a leftist perspective. These included discussions about what constitutes "leftism" and "independence," particularly in the context of the elections, as well as articles such as "Leftism First Or Independence First In 2016 Elections?" and in-depth discussions about "leftist independence" and "decolonization" like "勇武 E 台灣郎，再加點油". In the reporting of the later two elections, there was less direct discussion about ideology and a stronger tendency toward factual information.

Secondly, the role played by New Bloom was quite distinct. Naturally, there were more authors contributing during this period, but the tone during this time resembled that of a university publication or the left-leaning independent media associated with the post-Occupy Wall Street movement, which New Bloom initially sought to emulate. The platform more boldly presented its ideological stance and unreservedly introduced concepts such as "Marxism" and "socialism." Compared to later reporting, which took on a more distanced tone and focused on factual information, the content produced by New Bloom during this period was closer in style to other profit-driven media. As information obtained from qualitative interviews conducted in this study suggests, this might be attributed to their later adoption of a more professional self-perception, thereby leading to the stylistic differences observed across different periods.

As for the months with the second, third (tied with January 2016 and January 2020), and fourth highest article publication counts, they are July 2021 (N = 54), June 2021 (N = 49), and May 2021 (N = 47), respectively, which can be linked to the theme of the COVID-19 outbreak in Taiwan.

If we revisit one of the important topics of New Bloom's writings outlined in the previous sections - COVID-19, here we review the chronology of COVID-19 events.

Initially, on January 20, 2020, the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC) was established, and in the same month, the city of Wuhan in China announced a lockdown, marking the first international recognition of the seriousness of COVID-19. However, according to New Bloom's website tag "COVID-19 updates," the earliest article can be traced back to March 31, 2020, a time when Taiwan was still relatively unaffected by the severe global pandemic situation. The content primarily focused on responses to the coronavirus in both America and Taiwan. It wasn't until May 4, 2021, when Taiwan experienced the China airline pilots cluster breakouts. Subsequently, on May 15, 2021, domestic cases surged to 180 cases overnight, leading to the announcement of a level three alert status for Taipei and New Taipei City.

As mentioned in the previous section, New Bloom published daily posts about COVID-19 for over 100 consecutive days between May and July 2021. According to a Facebook post by New Bloom's founder Brian Hioe, New Bloom published between 150,000 and 200,000 words of daily updates, along with live-tweets. This scale of content publication explains why there was a higher number of articles published in the months between May and July 2021. It further underscores New Bloom's role as an information bridge and corrector, as discussed earlier.

Next, we will analyze the audience of New Bloom on Twitter to further explore the profile of New Bloom's audience.

4-2. Audience Location & Following Network Analysis

In response to our second research question (RQ2): What kind of community does New Bloom create? Is it a transnational community, or is it limited to local readers in Taiwan?

Firstly, in this section, we will discuss the geographical location information of New Bloom's Twitter followers. Among the 10,402 Twitter followers of New Bloom, a total of 5,890 users provided public geolocation information in their profiles (56.6%). The distribution of these followers' geographical locations is shown in the following table (Table 3) and graphic (Figure 4):

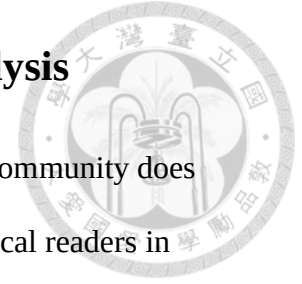
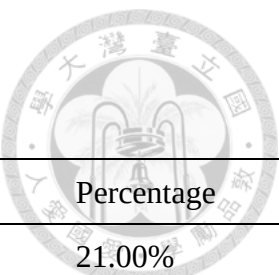
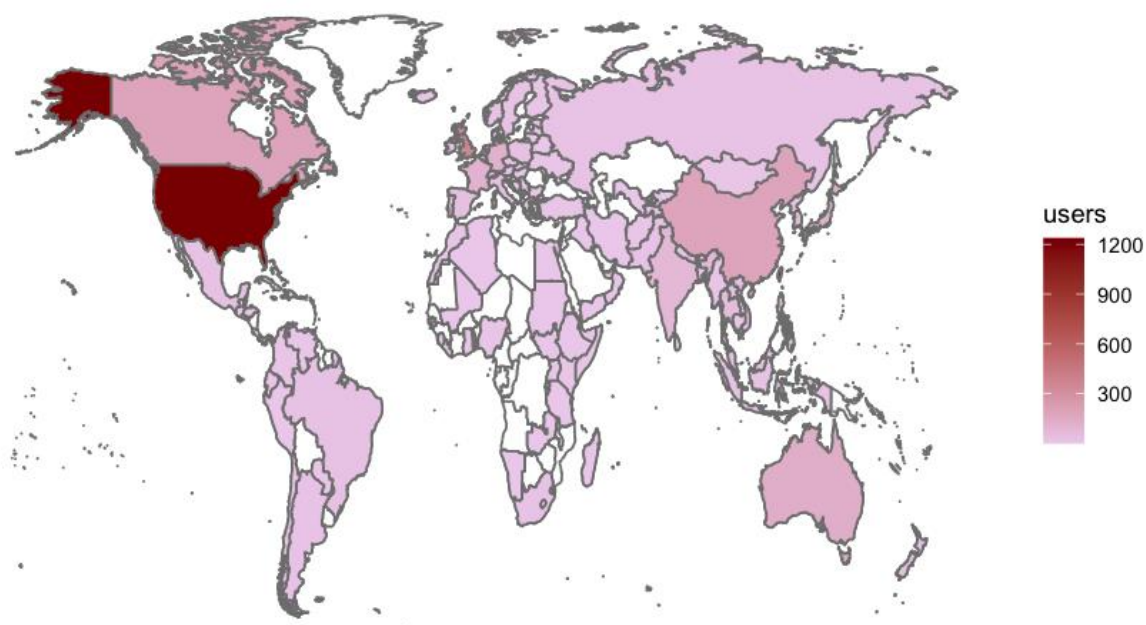


Table 3 *User Location Distribution*



No.	Country	Count	Percentage
1	USA	1,237	21.00%
2	Taiwan	1,040	17.65%
3	UK	354	6.01%
4	Hong Kong	224	3.80%
5	Canada	187	3.17%
6	China	177	3.00%
7	Australia	126	2.13%
8	Japan	119	2.02%
9	Germany	113	1.91%
10	France	102	1.73%
11	Singapore	87	1.47%
12	India	74	1.25%
13	South Korea	47	0.79%
14	Thailand	46	0.78%
15	Netherlands	41	0.69%

Figure 4 *Numbers of New Bloom followers from different countries*
Map



If we analyze the community data of New Bloom's Twitter followers based on the collected information from their profiles ($n=10,657$) and visualize it on a world map, we can observe that New Bloom's Twitter followers are distributed across various locations worldwide. Upon further examination of the data, it is surprising to find that the largest number of followers is from the United States ($n=1,237$), followed by Taiwan ($n=1,040$), and then readers from the United Kingdom ($n=354$).

Furthermore, in terms of the distribution of follower counts, the fourth-largest group of readers comes from Hong Kong (224), followed by Canada (187). Subsequently, we have China (177), Australia (126), Japan (119), Germany (113), France (102), and Singapore (87).

Having gained insights into the geographical information of these followers, we can conclude that New Bloom has indeed formed an audience image that spans across different locations worldwide. Assuming that the follower relationships on Twitter represent weak ties, we can then ask whether these readers have formed a specific network among themselves. The following figure (Figure 5) illustrates the mutual follower relationships among all of New Bloom's Twitter followers (n=10,657):

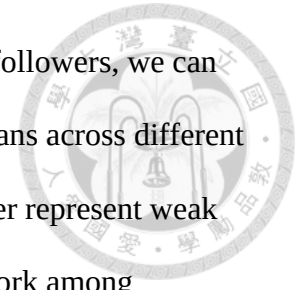
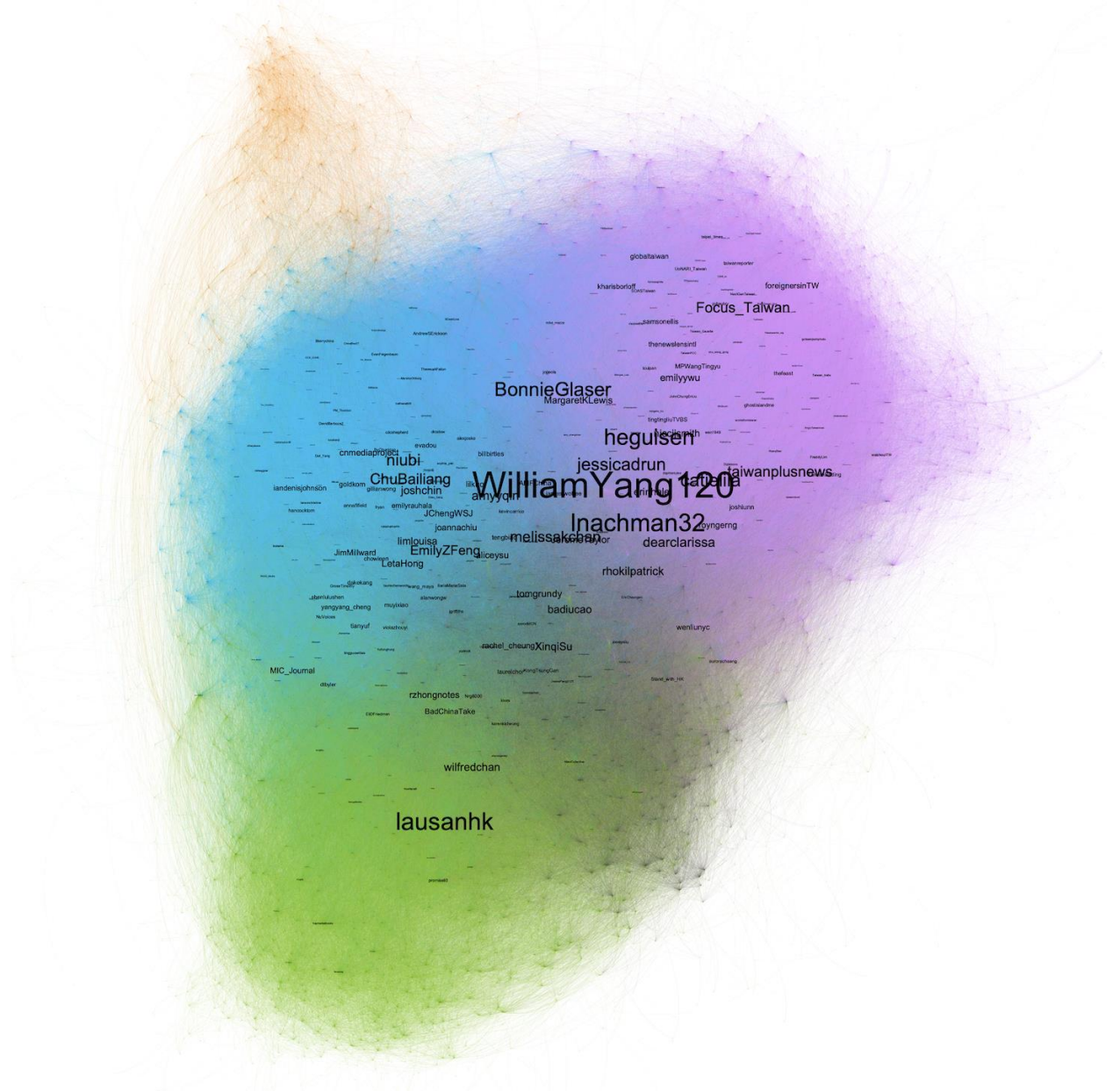


Figure 5 *The following network of all New Bloom Twitter followers*



Upon further examination of the above figure (Figure 5), three major communities can be identified. The pink-colored community represents the Taiwan community. Among them, the main account nodes with the most followers include William Yang, a correspondent for Deutsche Welle and the current president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Taiwan (TFCC) (@WilliamYang); Bonnie Glaser, the director of the Asia Program

at the German Marshall Fund (GMF); Lev Nachman, an assistant professor at the College of International Studies, National Chengchi University, a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Irvine, and a Taiwan expert (@lnachman32); Chris Horton, a freelance journalist formerly based in Taiwan and currently contributing to The New York Times, as well as the vice president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Taiwan (@heguisen); and Maggie Lewis, a professor at Seton Hall University School of Law and an expert in Taiwan studies and legal issues in Taiwan.

Next, looking at the second highest-density green community, the account with the most followers and at the center is the left-wing independent media outlet Lausan (@lausanhk) from Hong Kong's local and transnational diaspora community. Following that are Wilfred Chan, a former reporter for Lausan and a contributor to The Guardian US (@wilfredchan); Jake Eberts, a former freelance writer on US-China relations (@jeeeberts); and Xinqi Su, a journalist with Agence France-Presse (AFP) based in Hong Kong (@XinqiSu). It can be inferred that this community consists of foreign media journalists who have reported on Hong Kong-related issues or have focused on writing about US-China relations.

The connection between New Bloom and the alternative media outlet Lausan in Hong Kong can be traced back to October 2020 when New Bloom, Lausan, and New Naratif jointly organized an online symposium titled "Transnationally Asian." New Naratif, a Malaysian-based online journalism platform and alternative media, has attracted audiences not only from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and North America but also from Southeast Asia who are concerned about Asian democracy.

In fact, there are many similarities between New Bloom and left-wing media outlets in East Asia. Firstly, in terms of their membership composition, these alternative media

outlets are founded by individuals who have received education overseas and returned to their home countries. Examples include Mekong Review, a Southeast Asian magazine based in Singapore known for its political and literary commentaries, and New Naratif, which focuses on Southeast Asian democracy and culture and is currently based in Malaysia.

The blue community, on the other hand, is led by Chua Bailiang, a longtime New York Times correspondent in China (@ChuBailiang), followed by Emily Feng, a Chinese-American journalist with National Public Radio (NPR) (@EmilyZFeng); Melissa Chan, a Hong Kong-born American journalist who has worked for various English-language international media outlets, including Deutsche Welle (@melissakchan); and Bill Bishop, the publisher of the Sinocism China Newsletter (@niubi). It can be inferred that this community consists of news professionals and intellectuals primarily based in the United States.

In conclusion, returning to research question two, it is evident that New Bloom's readers are not only geographically diverse but also come from a wide range of professional backgrounds. This indicates that New Bloom has indeed created a transnational intellectual community. Several interviewees also discussed a more diverse audience. According to their observations, New Bloom's readers mostly consist of foreigners in Taiwan or diasporic Taiwanese who have returned to Taiwan.

It is worth mentioning that the members of New Bloom perceive similarities in content production with the aforementioned alternative media outlets in East Asia, and they are highly self-aware. In interviews, New Bloom interviewees mentioned being influenced not only by post-Occupy Wall Street publications such as Jacobin magazine and The New Inquiry but also stated that they initially focused more on commentary but gradually shifted

toward news-focused content over time. Interestingly, when interviewed, Brian Hioe, the founder of New Bloom, compared New Bloom to traditional leftist print newspapers:



“We're probably very different from that, because those are much more heavy on ideology. And news events just use this kind of way to discuss ideology... [...] I mean, it sometimes seems like the news clips [of those leftist newspaper] are more like integrating news into ideology. We try to draw the ideology out of the news rather than vice versa. Subsuming news into ideology.” (Brian Hioe, 2023)

In other words, apart from having action networks with these alternative media outlets in Southeast Asia, another form of abstract connection lies in the alignment of news production perspectives.

To further examine what topics the followers retweet on Twitter, I analyzed all the retweeted tweets of New Bloom in the past (N=46141) and compiled them into a word cloud using R:.

Table 4 *The compilation of theme hashtags used in retweeted tweets by New Bloom*

Hashtag	Frequency
#taiwan	1,362
#china	307
#hongkong	208
#usa	110
#hanrecall	107
#ccp	91



#marriageequality	84
#lgbt	83
#taipei	79
#milkteaalliance	73
#taiwanese	70
#taiwanelection	69
#taiwan2016	67
#transnationallyasian	63

The compilation results are described in the table above (Table 4): Several clusters can be observed. Firstly, New Bloom's readers are most concerned about topics related to "Taiwan." This includes Taiwan identity (#Taiwan) as well as specific social issues in Taiwan such as LGBTQ and same-sex marriage. Additionally, there are topic labels related to Taiwan politics, such as elections and the accountability of former Kaohsiung mayor Han Kuo-yu (#hanrecall).

Furthermore, New Bloom's readers are interested in topics related to "Pan-Asia." This includes China (#China), Hong Kong (#HongKong), past action hashtags that connected democratic countries in Asia, such as the "Milk Tea Alliance" (#Milkteaalliance), and even hashtags that aim to unite dissenting activists across Asia, such as "#transnationallyasian."

In summary, based on our analysis of New Bloom's Twitter data, it is evident that New Bloom has indeed formed a transnational information dissemination network and has created specific communities. In the next section, we will further discuss the impact of New Bloom at different level.

4-3. The Impacts of New Bloom on Different Levels



In response to the third research question (RQ3), *what impacts does New Bloom have on different level?* I will discuss this from several perspectives, focusing on its role as a community and public practice space.

Firstly, as New Bloom is one of the few English-language media outlets that consistently produces content, many interviewees have mentioned that when searching for news and information related to Taiwan on the internet, the first result they often encounter is New Bloom's website or social media. Jennifer (pseudonym), who has been following New Bloom online since 2016 and joined the New Bloom team in 2023, stated:

“It was the best way for me at the time to understand and learn about Taiwan. But I also had a particular kind of politics, which is more left leaning, and more critical. And so a lot of the mainstream English language news sites, you can read it, but it doesn't feel like you're really gaining much, like more critical knowledge.

And so when I found this New Bloom site, it just felt so like, wow, like this exists, you know, it's really nice that there's writing about Taiwan in a more leftist or critical view, where you're able to be aware of Taiwan's position in the world, and criticizing all the empires, whether it's US or China. So it's not like taking sides per se, but it's recognizing, it's just like a more critical view of international politics, which is something I really appreciated.” (Jennifer, 2023)

Coincidentally, many interviewees expressed during the interviews that New Bloom was their first gateway to understanding Taiwan. These interviewees may be Taiwanese

diaspora, individuals seeking identity and connections with Taiwan's past, or simply foreigners. They mentioned that New Bloom not only broadened their perspectives but also played a crucial role in addressing the information asymmetry regarding Taiwan on the international stage. More importantly, New Bloom presented a discourse with a left-wing perspective, emphasizing Taiwan's subjectivity.

Furthermore, as an alternative media comprised of the diaspora, New Bloom was seen by many interviewees as playing a significant role in shaping their sense of identity.

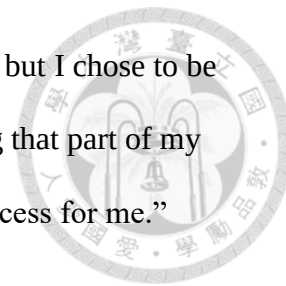
For instance, after New Bloom began operating physical spaces, it has organized events such as Taiwan history reading groups primarily conducted in English, as well as reading sessions centered on Taiwanese Hokkien, also predominantly in English, with a focus on strengthening Taiwanese awareness. According to interviews, these initiatives initially targeted audiences comprising Taiwanese-Americans or the Taiwanese diaspora. Through these activities, New Bloom aims to foster a greater understanding of history and language, along with physical dialogues, in order to facilitate the exploration, deepening, and even creation of identities.

In other words, New Bloom not only functioned as a traditional news-producing media but also, due to its distinct ideological stance, it fostered an active community through news production, physical gatherings, and events. Aurora Chang, a core member of New Bloom who has lived in South Africa, Singapore, and the UK, stated:

“I think being part of New Bloom has solidified my personal politics as well. I'm clearer about my personal identity and sense of national belonging and political ideology right now.

it feels like I chose to be Taiwanese. I was born Taiwanese, but I chose to be Taiwanese as well. It was a conscious effort for me in embracing that part of my identity. New Bloom has been part of that identity formation process for me.”

(Aurora Chang, 2023)



Therefore, in response to the literature review chapter, we can say that New Bloom, as a counterpublic, not only possesses the inward-oriented goals of invention, elaboration, and formation of alternative identities as pointed out by Toepfl and Piwoni (2018), but also the outward-oriented goals of challenging mainstream consciousness structures and disseminating dissenting discourses. In essence, the former's definition involves the creation of a secure space capable of shaping and disseminating alternative identities and needs. Conversely, the latter's definition pertains to the generation of a resistant discourse known as "counterpublicity" through a rupture with the structures of mainstream consensus. (Toepfl & Piwoni, 2018)

A notable case illustrating how New Bloom achieves its inward-oriented goals can be seen in the following direct quotation. In 2022, New Bloom's physical space, Daybreak Cafe, hosted a talk on the "Milk Tea Alliance." This concept emerged in 2019 as an online community uniting Hong Kong, Myanmar, Thailand, and Taiwan in their resistance against authoritarianism and the deepening of democracy. During this panel discussion, an audience member from Thailand was present, and the speaker was Aurora, a member of New Bloom, who recollects:

“One thing that really stood out from that event was that I cried, actually, during the panel. Because at one point, a Thai girl, during the Q&A, she raised her hand and started thanking us for putting this together.

She started crying, and so I started crying. Because politics are fundamentally about people, right? I think it’s very difficult to look at political things without also being emotionally engaged.

That, to me, was a really good example of how politics moves people. It was very touching. It was kind of sad. She thanked us for providing a space to be talking about this, because it’s not really safe, necessarily, to do this in Thailand anymore. That’s really sad. But I’m also happy that we could bring people together for that.”
(Aurora Chang, 2023)

V. Discussion

5-1. The role of New Bloom in the media environment of Taiwan

In the previous sections, through the analysis of New Bloom’s content production and their audience analysis, we can discern the role of New Bloom in the international media context. As a Taiwan-based alternative media with English as its primary language of publication, New Bloom not only presents news and reports on Taiwan from a local perspective but also with a left-leaning stance, declaring to the English-speaking world the events unfolding in Taiwan. Through the selection and framing of issues, New Bloom

consciously seeks to establish connections with the global left and alternative media communities.



However, when placing New Bloom within the media landscape of Taiwan, how do we define the role it plays? We can discuss this from three dimensions. First, in comparison to international media based in Taiwan, which are headquartered in North America or other locations and cater to a global audience. Second, in comparison to Taiwanese media based in Taiwan but employing English in their content production. Third, we can compare New Bloom to Taiwanese media that primarily publish in Chinese but self-identify as left-leaning in their issue selection.

5-1-1. The International Media outlets in Taiwan versus New Bloom

First, let's compare New Bloom with international media based in Taiwan. In Taiwan, there are international media outlets such as The New York Times, Bloomberg, and Deutsche Welle that have been engaged in content production for a long time. These media organizations, headquartered in Europe or Germany, have dedicated journalists stationed in Asia to cover topics related to Taiwan, China, or East Asia. However, New Bloom differs from these international media outlets in the following three aspects.

In terms of resources and manpower, these international media outlets have two different models. One model is that they have an entire bureau or office in Taiwan, while the other model is that they hire one or two freelancers locally. New Bloom, due to limited manpower and financial resources, does not fall into either of these models.

Secondly, in terms of the timing of news content publication, the hired personnel of these international media outlets may face two factors: language barriers and journalists not residing in Taiwan. This may result in a time lag between the occurrence of news events

and their reporting by these international media outlets. In contrast, because New Bloom's writers are bilingual, their language advantage allows them to directly access the latest information from Taiwanese media or conduct interviews with experts and parties involved in Chinese and translate it into English. Furthermore, New Bloom's writers reside in Taiwan, eliminating any physical distance barriers that may cause time delays.

For example, during the “#MeToo in Taiwan” movement in June to July 2023, New Bloom immediately reported the latest developments in Taiwan at the time of the event and continued to follow up. However, in comparison, international media outlets exposed relevant reports on the event almost a month after its occurrence.

Lastly, in terms of content selection, New Bloom's produced content can include more details and even critical perspectives. Due to cost considerations or other factors, many journalists from international media outlets do not reside in Taiwan (they may be based in China). On the one hand, because the coverage of Taiwan by international media is limited by the choices made by the editorial team, many reports on Taiwan by international media may not encompass all the details. On the other hand, since journalism heavily relies on personal networks, these journalists may sometimes have difficulty finding experts or key stakeholders within the Taiwanese circle for interviews. As Brian mentioned in an interview:

“We try to be more detailed. We have no life limits because we can control it. We run it ourselves. And we usually have a more insider perspective because, we are talking news. A lot of people in the organization are involved in activism or academics, and they speak with more expertise on it than I think a reporter that was

usually based in China that came over in the past few years can't.” (Brian Hioe, 2023)



Therefore, in reporting on Taiwan's issues, we can observe that, compared to these international media outlets, New Bloom as an independent media platform has more news autonomy and room for exploration.

5-1-2. The English Media in Taiwan versus New Bloom

Next, if we compare New Bloom with English-language media based in Taiwan that utilize English in content production, we can examine them from three different dimensions: purpose and organizational operations, content and political perspectives, and distribution mediums.

Firstly, these English-language media outlets based in Taiwan differ from New Bloom in terms of their purpose and organizational operations. Those media outlets are usually the English language section of a larger Chinese language outlet. For example, Focus Taiwan belongs to CNA Taiwan (Central News Agency). Taipei Times is under Liberty Times, one of the top three newspapers in Taiwan. Additionally, Taiwan News is independently owned, but it is owned by I-Mei Foods, a Taiwanese food company that is also a well-known consumer brand and a major milk processor in Taiwan. In terms of organizational operations, these larger entities typically have several to dozens of times more manpower compared to New Bloom, and they have more abundant resources to publish multiple news articles per day.

Secondly, when comparing these English-language media outlets with New Bloom in terms of political perspectives, these English-language media outlets usually present more

neutral viewpoints and often focus on delivering immediate news information. On the other hand, some interviewees perceive these English-language media outlets in Taiwan as platforms for the voices of the wealthy or as vehicles to promote specific perspectives. In contrast, New Bloom has had a distinct left-wing orientation since its inception, allowing it to produce more critical perspectives.

Lastly, in terms of distribution mediums, Focus Taiwan and NewsLens International have been purely online digital media outlets since their establishment. Taiwan News started as a print media outlet and later transitioned into a purely online digital media format. Taipei Times, on the other hand, remains a newspaper in print format. Taiwan Plus, for example, initially began as an international television channel based in Taiwan but later shifted to a streaming service. In comparison, New Bloom has always been a digital native media platform, starting with its website as the primary medium.

Despite these English-language media outlets in Taiwan struggling to generate significant profits due to the limited market size that can support English publications, New Bloom fundamentally differs from them in the aforementioned aspects.

5-1-3. The Mandarin Alternative Media in Taiwan versus New Bloom

Lastly, in comparison to many independent media outlets in Taiwan, we can examine New Bloom along two dimensions: scale and operations, and ideological stance. Although these independent media outlets in Taiwan primarily publish in Mandarin, there are still some points of comparison.

In terms of scale and operations, New Bloom is actually closer to Taiwan's civil media, such as Civilmedia @Taiwan (Citizen Action Audiovisual Documentation Database). In terms of human resources, aside from the possibility of publishing news

without a professional background or non-full-time news workers, New Bloom's scale of publishing, with one or a few articles per day, is more similar to Taiwan's Civil Media. In Taiwan, due to its unique historical conditions and media environment, civil media often serve as correctives to mainstream media discourse or fill the gaps that mainstream media fail to cover (Kuan, 2011). In this sense, New Bloom resembles Taiwan's Civil Media.

In terms of ideological stance, New Bloom shares similarities with two left-wing media outlets in Taiwan, namely Cooloud and Focus News Agency Taiwan, founded by one of the co-founders of Cooloud. New Bloom aligns closely with these two left-wing media outlets in terms of topic selection, often choosing to report on social movements that receive less attention from mainstream media and standing with marginalized groups.

In addition to the language of publication, New Bloom fundamentally differs from the aforementioned media outlets. Unlike Civilmedia @Taiwan, which primarily uses video and audio as the main medium, especially recordings of social movement footage captured by citizens using various digital devices, New Bloom predominantly relies on text-based content for publication. In comparison to the left-wing alternative media Cooloud, which is often associated with a pro-unification stance, New Bloom has had a distinct pro-Taiwan orientation from the beginning. On the other hand, Focus News Agency Taiwan and New Bloom are more similar, as both produce commentaries and news articles.

To summarize this section, we have compared New Bloom with international media based in Taiwan, English-language media in Taiwan, and left-wing media in Taiwan along three dimensions. We have identified similarities and differences between New Bloom and these media outlets. In the next section, we will discuss the changes in New Bloom's goals over time.

5-2. The purpose of New Bloom over the scale of time

Initially, New Bloom emerged after the Sunflower Movement because there were not many English-language media outlets that provided coverage on Taiwan with a left-leaning perspective. As stated by founder Brian Hioe, the primary goal was simply to inform the English-speaking world about what was happening in Taiwan. Over time, although the content of New Bloom shifted from political commentary to more neutral news reporting, its pro-Taiwan stance remained unchanged.

If we examine the timeline, New Bloom had a very active period from 2014 to 2016. During that time, international media showed limited interest in Taiwan. As mentioned by Brian in an interview, news about a missing Malaysian plane received far more coverage than major events happening in Taiwan. Then, in 2014, international media focused more on the social movement in Hong Kong than on Taiwan's Sunflower Movement.

However, as time passed, especially starting in 2018, New Bloom began to attract more international attention. Their professionalism was increasingly recognized, and many international journalists started coming to Taiwan. Despite a relatively inactive period in Taiwan's social movements, as many activists transitioned into political parties or government agencies, New Bloom gained international attention when they went to Hong Kong in 2019.

On the other hand, as New Bloom's reach extended to physical spaces, their media for connecting with the public also underwent changes.

In their early attempts, in 2019, New Bloom organized parties at Ivy Palace and other alternative spaces in Taipei. That same year, they operated a physical space on Guiyang Street in Taipei's Wanhua district, which eventually failed. From 2020 to 2021, New Bloom

collaborated with another team to manage Tacheles Spaces, and in 2022, they started independently operating Daybreak Cafe.

The operation of Daybreak Cafe has also influenced the identity of New Bloom. In conclusion, we can say that New Bloom is not only a left-wing alternative media outlet but also a community that shapes identity and creates transnational networks of activists.

Returning to the title of this paper, "Relocating Taiwan," what does it signify?

Synthesizing the arguments presented in this paper, firstly, the primary implication is that New Bloom attempts to reposition Taiwan-centric discourse in a broader geopolitical, East Asian, and international historical-cultural context, as well as in abstract theories, through multilingual narratives. The goal is not only to make Taiwan visible to the world but also to allow the global community to understand the authentic perspectives of Taiwan's local communities.

It seeks to connect seemingly localized issues to broader contexts, especially in the ultimate concern of New Bloom—to link ideological and discursive elements to international issues. New Bloom's efforts involve redefining issues and political processes. Whether critiquing imperial expansion, authoritarian regimes, colonialism, capitalism, or patriarchal societies, New Bloom's efforts extend beyond mere journalistic reporting. Through the reframing of issues, it seamlessly integrates ideological concerns into its news coverage.

On the other hand, as previously mentioned in an article published in the Columbia Journalism Review, Kim, the author, remarked on the comparison between New Bloom, alongside those from two other alternative media outlets in Southeast Asia, Lausan and New Naratif. Kim stated, "...*The search for space seemed metaphorical: New Bloom,*

Lausan, and New Naratif are attempts to locate an alternative for those most obviously stuck between the US and China." (Kim, 2020).

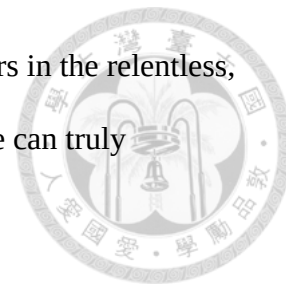
The second layer of meaning is that, though New Bloom is based in Taiwan, it endeavors to create a transnational community. From the research findings presented in this paper, whether it is the geographic distribution of New Bloom's Twitter followers or the social relations established through mutual followings on social media, three primary transnational communities are evident: the intellectual community in Taiwan, the diaspora community in Hong Kong, and the intellectual community in the United States. They are interconnected, forming a social network for transnational information exchange and connection. Thus, despite New Bloom's physical location in Taipei, its influence surpasses geographical boundaries.

The third layer of meaning lies in New Bloom's attempt to redefine "Taiwanese" and reinvent identity. Let me quote a statement from New Bloom's Founding member, Symin Chan:

"I feel that due to Taiwan's complex history and ongoing issues that are yet to be defined, many people fall through the cracks when the boundaries are not clearly defined. They find themselves on the fringes or outside of mainstream labels, just like some groups in Taiwan we talked about earlier. Their identities have not stabilized to the point where they have confidence in it, and New Bloom catches those uncharted places.

So, why create transnational connections, why have physical spaces, or why are New Bloom's articles so hard to categorize—there are too many things to talk about. Does the unity connecting these articles or members exist? Yes, but that unity is not yet positioned." (Symin Chan, 2023)

If historical processes arise from conflicts and self-definition occurs in the relentless, struggling, unending, and repeatedly boundary-defining actions, then we can truly recognize who we are.



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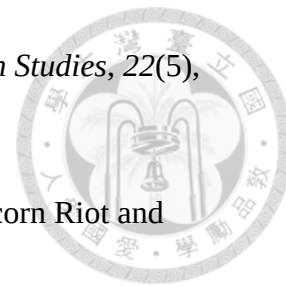
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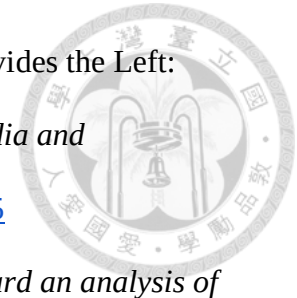
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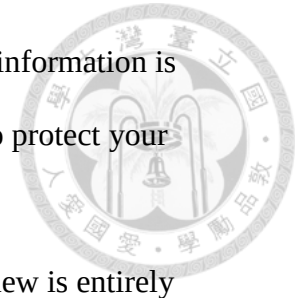
Appendix

Pre-Interview Statement: Ensuring Confidentiality and Privacy Protection

Before commencing the interview, we would like to provide you with a formal statement to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the purpose of the interview, confidentiality, and privacy protection. Please note the following:

- Purpose: This interview is conducted as part of my Master's thesis research at the Graduate Institute of Journalism, National Taiwan University. The study aims to explore New Bloom as a case study of alternative media. Your participation will contribute to enriching our understanding of this topic.
- Confidentiality: We will treat the contents of your interview with strict confidentiality and solely utilize them for research purposes related to my Master's thesis. Any reports, publications, or public presentations utilizing the interview

content will be anonymized to ensure no personally identifiable information is disclosed. Appropriate security measures will be implemented to protect your personal data.

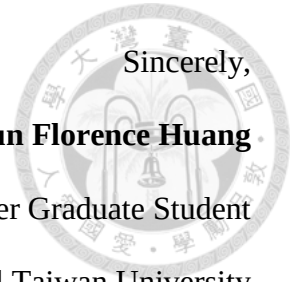


- **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw or decline to answer any questions at any time without providing an explanation. Your decision will not have any negative implications on your current or future relationship with us or the Graduate Institute of Journalism, National Taiwan University.

- **Anonymity:** You have the option to remain anonymous, providing only basic demographic information, such as age, gender, and education level. If you choose to provide more specific identity information, we will respect your wishes and ensure the proper protection of your personal privacy.

- **Academic Research:** This research adheres to ethical principles and guidelines. It constitutes part of my Master's thesis, supervised by Professor Adrian Rauchfleisch (Associate Professor in the Graduate Institute of Journalism, NTU). Anonymized research findings will be used for academic purposes, such as completing the Master's thesis, and may be disseminated through academic publications, reports, or conference presentations, aiming to advance scholarly knowledge and understanding.

If you agree to participate in the interview after fully comprehending the aforementioned points, please provide explicit consent. We will make every effort to ensure your trust and comfort during the interview process. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you very much for your participation!



Sincerely,

Yi-Hsun Florence Huang

Master Graduate Student

Graduate Institute of Journalism, National Taiwan University

Advisor: Dr. Adrian Rauchfleisch

Research Interview Questions



Basic Information

1. Could you kindly provide a concise self-introduction, including your age, profession, and the role you undertake within the New Bloom team?
2. Have you ever resided outside of Taiwan? If so, could you please elaborate on your experiences?
3. (For those who have contributed to New Bloom's business) What impelled your decision to join the New Bloom team?
4. What do you consider to be the mission and vision/objectives of New Bloom?
5. In your opinion, what are the potential implications of New Bloom within the media landscape in Taiwan? This could include aspects related to content production, ideology, and the activities it engages with.
6. Building upon the previous question, what are the potential implications of placing New Bloom within the international media landscape?

New Bloom in Online Spaces

7. Have you engaged in any form of interaction with New Bloom's online accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.? If so, could you please provide a description of the nature of your interactions?
8. Have you interacted with other individuals within New Bloom's online space? How was your experience?
9. What are your perspectives regarding New Bloom's online presence and image?



For individuals with prior article writing experience

10. What genres or topics did you previously cover in your articles?

What motivated your writing endeavors during that time?

11. During the process of crafting articles, do you envision specific target audiences or dialogue participants?

12. In your past publications, what kind of reactions did you receive?

13. Building upon the previous question, were there any negative reactions or feedback received?

14. From your personal standpoint, what does New Bloom signify, and what significance does it hold for you?

For those who have physically visited New Bloom's physical place (Daybreak Cafe)

15. How would you characterize the physical space/ environment of New Bloom?

16. Have you participated in any discussions pertaining to politics and social movements within the physical space of New Bloom?

17. How do you perceive New Bloom? Do you view it primarily as an alternative media platform, or do you consider its physical space to be more significant?

18. Lastly, since your involvement with New Bloom, have you personally experienced any changes?

訪談前聲明：關於本訪談的目的、安全性等注意事項



在正式開始訪談之前，我們希望向您提供一份正式聲明，以確保您對訪談的目的、保密性和隱私保護有清楚的理解。請閱讀以下事項：

1. 目的：此次訪談是國立臺灣大學新聞研究所的黃逸薰（Yi-Hsun Florence Huang）進行中碩士論文研究的一部分。該研究旨在探討作為另類媒體的《破土》(New Bloom)。您的參與將有助於增進我們對於該主題的理解。
2. 保密性：我們將嚴格保密您的訪談內容，僅用於與黃逸薰的碩士論文研究相關的研究目的。任何使用訪談內容的報告、發表或公開形式都將匿名進行，不會透露任何可識別您個人身份的信息。我們將採取適當的安全措施，保護您的個人資料。
3. 自願參與：您完全自願參與此次訪談，您有權隨時退出或拒絕回答任何問題，而無需提供解釋。您的決定不會對您現在或未來與我們或國立臺灣大學新聞研究所的關係產生任何負面影響。
4. 匿名性：您可以選擇保持匿名，僅提供基本的人口學敘述，如年齡、性別和教育程度等。如果您選擇提供更具體的身份資訊，我們將尊重您的意願，確保妥善保護您的個人隱私。
5. 學術研究：此研究遵守倫理原則和指引。該研究是黃逸薰的碩士論文研究，由劉好迪（Adrian Rauchfleisch）教授指導。研究結果將用於學術目的，如完成碩士論文，並可能在將來通過學術出版物、報告或會議演講等形式發表，以促進學術知識和理解。

如果您在完全理解上述事項後同意參與訪談，請以口頭提供明確的同意聲明。
我們將盡力確保訪談過程中您的信任和舒適。如果您有任何疑問或需要進一步解釋，請隨時與我們聯繫。非常感謝您的參與！



黃逸薰 敬上

碩士研究生

國立臺灣大學社會科學院新聞研究所

指導教授：劉好迪 (Dr. Adrian Rauchfleisch)

訪談問題：碩士論文——另類媒體《破土》



1. 請您簡要介紹一下自己，包括您的年齡、職業，以及在《破土》團隊中扮演的角色？

2. 您曾經在臺灣以外的地方居住過嗎？如果有的話，能否請您詳細描述一下您的經驗？

3. （給《破土》的成員）您加入《破土》的動機是什麼？

4. 您認為《破土》的使命和目標是什麼？

5. 您認為《破土》放在臺灣的媒體環境中，有什麼可能的意涵？例如從生產的內文、意識型態與從事的事情上來看。

6. 承上題，若將《破土》放在國際的媒體環境中，有什麼可能的意涵？

《破土》在網路空間中的存在

7. 您是否與《破土》的網路帳號（如 Facebook、Twitter、Instagram 等）進行過互動？如果是，能否請您描述一下互動的性質？

8. 您是否與《破土》的網路空間中的其他人進行過互動？請分享一下您的經驗。

對於具有撰寫文章經驗的人

9. 您過去撰寫過哪些類型或主題的文章？當時撰寫的動機是什麼？

10. 在撰寫文章的過程中，您是否有想像特定的目標受眾或談話對象嗎？

11. 過去在您的文章發佈後，您有接受到了什麼樣的反應嗎？

12. 承上題，是否有任何負面的反應或回饋？



13. 從您個人的角度來看，《破土》對您來說意味著什麼？它對您具有何種重要性？

14. 您對《破土》在網路上的存在和形象有什麼看法？
對於曾經實際造訪《破土》實體空間「破曉咖啡」（Daybreak café）的人

15. 您如何描述《破土》的實體環境？

16. 您是否在《破土》的實體空間中參與過與政治和社會運動相關的討論？

17. 您是如何看待《破土》？對您來說，《破土》更像個另類媒體，或者對您來說實體空間更為重要？

18. 最後，從您參與《破土》以來，您個人有沒有經歷過任何變化？