Public Support for the Use of Force in Non-Western and Non-Major Powers (NWNM): The Case of a China-Taiwan War

Abstract

Studies of public support for war among non-Western and non-major powers (NWNM) states are distinctive from US foreign military operations. First, these wars often intrude on subjects' direct livelihood. Second, great powers' intervention can drastically alter the outcome of these wars. These factors have not been examined extensively in the war support literature. We fill this gap by spearheading several hypotheses of war support unique to NWNM countries. Through an original and representative survey experiment on a hypothetical military conflict between China and Taiwan, our analysis yields that the information about the US coming to Taiwan's defense in an armed conflict with China drives up war support by around 7% among the citizenry, although such information does not make Taiwanese more tolerant of combat casualties. In addition, perception of military training increases public support for war significantly. The findings suggest the study of NWNM states could contribute to the war support literature from different perspectives.

Introduction

Studies of public support for the use of force are critical to both scholars and policymakers. Decades of research since the end of World War II has benefited us with indicators that shape public opinion and war, including, but not limited to, the principal policy objective of the mission (Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998), human and financial costs of war (Mueller 1971; Flores-Macias and Kreps 2008), support from allies and international organizations (Page and Bouton 2008; Holsti 2009, Appleby, Cizik, and Wright 2010), and partisan cues (Bernisky 2009).

Aside from its findings, this line of research line has its limitation – the cases and findings are primarily drawn from Western democracies (for notable exceptions, see Tanaka, Tago, and Gleditsch 2017; Tago 2005; Yeh and Wu 2021). The dearth of cases from non-Western and non-major powers (NWNM) is problematic, as most armed conflicts have happened between these states since World War II. The lack of research that focuses exclusively on these states limits the diversity and generalizability of existing findings and policy recommendations that could offer.

There are reasons to expect that citizens in NWNM states approach war support differently. First, war support is largely a foreign policy issue for the Western publics. When the American public forms their opinions about an armed conflict overseas, they operate with an assumption that the conflict will not hit home. The reverse tends to be the norm for citizens in NWNM states. Wars often directly intrude into their living space, if not originate from their neighborhood, and they or their family members must face the challenge head-on. In this regard, war support for NWNM is a matter of life and death, not choice (Yeh and Wu 2021). Relatedly,

since wars are close to home, citizens in NWNM states could perceive military training differently from their counterparts in Western democracies; they tend to withdraw war support when a conscription system is put in place (Wallace 2017; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011; Gartner 2008; Vasquez 2005; Moskos 1970). For publics in NWNM states, being prepared for war increases one's chances of survival on the battlefield. Last, compared to other major powers that are more capable of conducting military operations, many NWNM states often need to rely on involvement from external great powers during armed conflicts due to their inherent weaknesses. Thus, assistance from major powers should influence how citizens in NWNM states view the prospects for a conflict.

In this paper, we formulate hypotheses around the specific characteristics of NWNM states to examine their influence on war support. Due to the proximity to the battlefield, we argue that citizens who perceive their military training to be useful will increase their willingness to fight. We also contend that assistance from great powers could influence citizens' war attitudes. However, we have reasons to believe that the effects could go either way. Such information could provide the much-needed support NWNM states crave, but many citizens could oppose or become worried about the corresponding entanglement in other ongoing rivalries of that great power. We also argue that great power assistance will influence how citizens in NWNM states process battle deaths. For the latter two theoretical conjectures, we see our role as referees in assessing both possibilities without taking a stance.

We selected the potential armed conflict between Taiwan and China as our case. Experts on cross-Strait relations have cautioned that as tensions continue to rise, an armed conflict between both sides could take place in the near future. The case is emblematic of the larger NWNM cases in many ways. Taiwan is only around 100 miles away from China, so a war would

directly intrude into citizens' living space. The majority of the citizens in Taiwan were required to serve in the military until recently. Furthermore, the United States has been involved in cross-Strait conflicts numerous times in history and has been the island's security partner for decades. These factors help us examine our theoretical conjectures.

Examining war support in Taiwan, Yeh and Wu (2021) has found that existing correlates of war support in Western cases could be helpful for understanding public opinion on war in Taiwan. But its correlational design weakens the ability to make causal claims, as many key variables such as military experience and battle deaths were not included in their analysis. Their work also could not tell us how citizens in Taiwan would behave under different conditions. In this paper, we improve upon these weaknesses by relying on the experimental method to study how information about great power assistance, military training, and the number of casualties could influence war support in Taiwan.

Through an original and representative survey experiment of citizens in Taiwan, we find that citizens who perceive their military training to be useful are more supportive of fighting against China. We also find that learning about the US coming to help Taiwan militarily results in a dramatic increase of war support among citizens in Taiwan – the effect could be as large as seven percentage points, though such information does not make citizens more tolerant of battle deaths.

Despite the contributions, there are clear limitations to our work. Most notably, it is difficult to extrapolate the findings to other NWNM states with only one case. We envision our findings most applicable to NWNM states when a potential armed conflict will likely occur in the country and is seen as a matter of survival and necessity rather than simply one of foreign policy preference. Additionally, citizens responding to the war have a widely shared military

experience, and the conflict is likely to be involved with a major power.[1] That being said, we have demonstrated that war support research could benefit from this new line of inquiry on NWNM states. Our study also provides policy recommendations to policymakers. In an era where the US is confronting the rise of China in the Asia-Pacific region, understanding public opinion on war in Taiwan could reduce the uncertainties surrounding this potential conflict.

Public Support for War in NWNM States

Drawing mostly from the US and other Western states such as Italy (Herrmann, Isernia and Segatti 2009), Germany (Schoen 2007), Britain (Tomz and Weeks 2013), and Australia (Lis 2018), research on public support for the use of force has shed lights on the factors that could sway public opinion and war. For instance, these factors include battle deaths (Mueller 1971), principal policy objectives (Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998), endorsements from allies and international organizations (Rielly 1995; Kull 1995, Sobel 1997; Grieco et al. 2011), conscription and fiscal policies (Horowitz and Levendusky 2011; Flores-Macías and Kreps 2015), elite cues (Bernisky 2007; Baum and Groeling 2010), demographic factors such as gender (Conover and Sapiro 1993), education levels (Baum 2004; Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Conover and Sapiro 1993; Nincic 1997), and one's perception of success and the righteousness of the operations (Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler 2006).

Despite the contributions from this literature, our knowledge of public support for war in non-Western and non-major power states (NWNM) remain meager, with a few exceptions (Midford 2011; Tanaka, Tago, and Gleditsch 2017; Yeh and Wu 2021) in recent years. The

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[1] We thank reviewer2 for pointing this out.

dearth of studies focusing on NWNM states limits our ability to discuss conflicts in these countries, which is problematic, as most wars nowadays fall largely within them. All major wars since 1945 have often involved countries from the less developed parts of the world (e.g., the US–Vietnam conflict, 1954–1973, the first and second US–Iraq conflicts of 1991 and 2003, and the Iran–Iraq War, 1980–1988). The exclusion of this group of states leads war support scholars unequipped to address war support in these countries. The work by Yeh and Wu (2021) alleviates some concerns of generalizability as they find that some indicators of war support (e.g., principal policy objectives, multilateralism, ethnicity, partisanship, and education) could influence citizens of Taiwan in a war with China. But as we will elucidate below, applying indicators to a different context is not sufficient for improving an understanding of war support in NWNM states, which, for a variety of reasons, is a different question from the war support in Western states.

Why Is War Support for NWNM States Different?

War Often Hits Home

There are reasons to believe that war support is different for NWNM states. First, for citizens in this group of countries, conflicts often occur at home, not overseas. Unlike powerful states and their citizens that have the luxury of choosing the locus of military operations, citizens in weaker states must fight foreign aggression at home. Put differently, when the American public weighs in with opinions on an ongoing military conflict, the idea that such a war will hit home is unlikely to cross their mind. But for the public in NWNM states, war support is not a matter of choice but of necessity (Yeh and Wu 2021). Survival is at stake.

Research has shown that proximity to danger could influence one's attitude toward conflict, either psychically or mentally. For instance, Althaus, Bramlett, and Gimpel (2011) conclude that when a person or an acquaintance from their neighborhood is harmed in an armed conflict, their support for an ongoing conflict decreases. If just hearing that someone we know suffers from war could influence war support, it is logical to assume that the public will certainly, be influenced when they are embroiled in war.

The actions or preparations citizens take are crucial for understanding their war support. Here, the mentality toward military training is also different between citizens in Western democracies and those in NWNM states. Horowitz and Levendusky (2011) maintain that conscription often weakens war support among Americans. When more have served in the military, they often become more aware of the sacrifices and costs that might incur, making war less appealing to them. Realizing that their children or they themselves could be put in harm's way decrease appetite for the use of force (Gartner 2008; Vasquez 2005; Moskos 1970).

Citizens in NWNM states could regard military training very differently. They should be more likely to regard it as a survival tool, without which their chance of exiting a battlefield safely is greatly diminished. This mindset is especially critical when the result of a war in their living environment will decide if they could keep their freedom and way of life (Althusser 2006; Machiavelli 1985). To this day, many NWNM states such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Israel still require their citizens to go through mandatory military training. In short, the relationship between the perception of military training and war support is an important factor in understanding war support in NWNM states.

Support from Major Powers

Another reason that war support for NWNM states is different has to do with great power involvement. Unlike many Western powers that are militarily capable of conducting military operations on their own, many NWNM states often have to rely on great powers for protection or assistance in conflicts. Great power assistance is vital for them to fend off military threats (Waltz 1979; Labs 1992) and could often embolden their state resolve to act more aggressively. As Labs (1992) puts it, "…a Great Power ally will strengthen the weak state's tendency to balance" (p384). Such information also signals to the citizens in NWNM that a great power is willing to share the burden of military expenses (Labs 1992). These rationales should drive up war support. Being an ally with a great power also increases the opportunity to develop other alliances and receive political support and military assistance from other major partners (Shou and Brundtland 1971). In a nutshell, whereas support from allies can boost support among Americans, intervention by a great power can be a game-changer for NWNM states facing a conflict. These reasons suggest that information about great power assistance should drive up support for war among citizens in NWNM states, despite that the literature has yet been able to supply supportive evidence.

Historically, the US has played a critical military role in Asia. For instance, US security pledges to Japan and South Korea shape public opinion when tensions with China over territorial disputes arise as citizens believe that the American nuclear umbrella can deter China's hostile actions toward them (Komiya, Miyagawa, and Tago 2018). The US also diffused numerous confrontations between South Korea and Japan over their own territorial and historical disputes. The United States has also been the arbiter of cross-Strait relations, and its diplomatic and

military involvements successfully prevented both sides from escalating armed conflicts during the Korean War and all the three crises of the Taiwan Strait.

On the other hand, great power assistance can also draw pushback from the public. Citizens could consider having the potential of a great power intervening harmful to their security, as it could entangle their country in said great power's military adventures overseas (Tago 2009; 2014) or become an enemy of the great power's adversary. Citizens might also disapprove of the social unrest that an alliance with great power could bring to their own society. For instance, citizens in Okinawa, Japan, often accuse the US of endangering their personal safety and the natural environment (Chanlett-Avery and Konishi 2009). At times, the "Okinawa Effect" derails cooperation and trust in the US-Japan alliance (Envall and Ng 2015). US involvement in South Korea also draws discord from local citizens – rapes by US soldiers fuel anti-Americanism and call for the withdrawal of US troops (Kim 2004). Even in Taiwan, where the US does not have an active military presence,[2] there are still voices arguing that purchasing weapons from the US is wasting taxpayers' money (Chase 2008). Taken together, it remains an open inquiry as to whether great power assistance could increase public support for defense among citizens in NWNM states.

Influence of Great Power Assistance on Casualty Sensitivity

In the public support for war literature, the human cost of war has been established as a key factor in influencing public opinion. Examining polls during World War II and the Vietnam

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[2] Nevertheless, we do see the minimal marine presence in Taiwan Strait, especially during crises (e.g., The 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis).

War led Mueller to establish a negative correlation between battle deaths and war support (Mueller, 1971, 1973). Later work suggests more nuances that could moderate, or in some cases, nullify the effect of battle death on war support (e.g., Brody 1991; Gartner and Segura 1998).

The literature has yet to provide reasoning for how citizens in NWNM states view casualties. Essentially, there could be two competing schools of thought. The first argues that they should be casualty phobic. For example, surveying citizens in Israel, Hamanaka (2018) finds that simply mentioning the term "many casualties" dramatically decreased their support for an ongoing conflict with Hamas. Similarly, mentioning casualties to citizens in Japan led to an increase in support for withdrawing the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) (Komiya 2019). Like citizens in Western countries, the public in NWMN states could become war-shy when learning of battle deaths.

There are counterarguments. Several issues with the above studies lead us to challenge their findings. First, the Israeli study does not specify an exact number of casualties in the survey experiment, and such information and the way it is presented can significantly influence public opinion. For example, Gartner (2008) demonstrates that mentioning 100 casualties in an increasing fashion (from 5, 10, to 100) or a decreasing trend (from 100, 10, to 5) has divergent effects on war support. Thus, simply mentioning "many casualties" is an imprecise way to gauge public opinion. The issue with Komiya's study (2019) is that it does not include variables that could alter war support, such as international backing. In that experiment, the subjects only received information about Japan sending troops to South Sudan for a peacekeeping operation. The prompt did not contain information about assistance from other allies or international organizations, which could significantly influence the perception of casualties.

There are certain conditions under which citizens in NWNM states could become insensitive to casualties. In psychological research, researchers have developed a concept called "identity fusion" to describe the phenomenon when citizens develop closeness or "a visceral sense of oneness" with a group (Swann et al., 2014). Seeing others in their group as family would propel them to make unthinkable sacrifices compared to situations where those bonds are nonexistent. These sacrifices range from physically fighting, dying to defend their country (Gómez, Brooks, et al., 2011; Swann, Gómez, Seyle, Morales, & Huici, 2009), to committing suicides to save the lives of members of their country (Gómez, Brooks, et al., 2011; Swann, Gómez, Dovidio, Hart, & Jetten, 2010).

One of the ways that identity fusion could manifest is when citizens in one country start to develop a unique identity. For instance, public opinion polls in Taiwan have shown that citizens have gradually developed an independent identity from China. Since 1992, National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taiwan has surveyed citizens' identity in Taiwan. The respondents that identify themselves as "Taiwanese only" nearly quadrupled from 17.6% in 1992 to 64.3% in 2020, whereas identification with a sole Chinese identity shrank to only 2.7% in 2021. Seeing themselves as Taiwanese and Taiwanese only helps construct an environment where identity fusion can take place.

Public perception of combat casualties becomes murkier when we put great power assistance into consideration. Great power assistance could push their support in either direction. On the one hand, knowing a major power would share the burden of the conflict on a battlefield might boost the public's tolerance of battle deaths. The public could see the deaths as worthwhile costs to prevail in a conflict, especially when the great power itself has also sustained casualties. On the other hand, it is certainly possible that such information strengthens the propensity for the

NWNM publics to be sensitive to casualties. They might fear that great power assistance might also mean that they would also need to shoulder and become involved in other conflicts that the great power is waging, potentially resulting in more casualties among them. Clearly, how citizens in NWNM states react to battle deaths in light of great power assistance is an open inquiry.

Research Design

We select a Taiwan-China war as our case for several reasons. For starters, Taiwan is an NWNM state about 100 miles away from China, and China has not abandoned its intentions of using forces to "liberate" the island. Second, the possibility of a cross-Strait conflict has increased dramatically in the past two years (at least since 2019), as China has frequently used its fighter jets to intrude in Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) hundreds of times, prompting the Taiwan side to scramble their F-16s for a response. The geographic proximity suggests that an armed conflict with China will almost inevitably intrude into the public's living space in Taiwan. To prepare for the contingency of China's invasion, male citizens in Taiwan are required to serve in the military for a period from several months to two/three years.[3] Third, this case involves two great powers, China and the US, where the former has been claiming to "reunite" China by taking over Taiwan, and the latter has been Taiwan's long-time security partner and has offered an implicit promise to come to the island's assistance if China attacks

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[3] The conscription system has gradually been replaced by volunteer military system starting 2010 and as complete by 2016, but a four-month military training remains mandatory for all male citizens.

Taiwan.[4] As a result, a conflict between the Strait will surely involve the United States to a certain degree.

In the past two years, polls on public willingness for self-defense in Taiwan have started to draw more attention as China escalated its threats toward Taiwan. However, these polls overall suffer from two major weaknesses. First, since different agencies adopted relatively distinct question wordings and how the subjects answered the questions was inconsistent, the result varies greatly. For instance, in 2018, the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) asked: "[W]ould you fight for Taiwan if Taiwan formally announces independence and causes mainland China to use force against Taiwan?" where more than half of the respondents (57%) said, "Yes" on a "Yes-No" dichotomized response option. In contrast, the 2019 Taiwan National Security Survey (TNSS) asked: "what action would you take if the war breaks out between China and Taiwan?" where only a quarter of the respondents (25%) said they would "serve in the military" or "defend the country" in response to this open-ended question. Second, as shown in the TFD and TNSS surveys, these polls did not include key influential variables such as US assistance or were not consistent on the condition of the war (Taiwan declares independence), making it difficult to provide accurate policy implications and suggestions.

To remedy these weaknesses, we utilize an experimental survey design, commonly used in war support studies, to carve out specific scenarios to gauge public support for fighting a war

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[4] Although the US administration is required by the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with resources needed for defense and to have adequate responds to armed conflicts, the promise is still implicit. The US has followed a policy of "strategic ambiguity" which does not specify what action would be adopted when it comes to military intervention if China attacks Taiwan. In general, the US officials have reiterated their support to Taiwan. For example, on October, 2021, US President Biden said that US has "commitment" to defend Taiwan from Chinese attack. See the report from Politico, 10/21/21. https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/21/joe-biden-taiwan-chinese-attack-defend-516699. Accessed: 12/29/21.

with China. By including other demographic variables such as military experience and tolerance of battle deaths, we strengthen the internal validity of our results to avoid potential spurious effects that many polls on this topic suffer from. We focus on the following three case-specific hypotheses derived from our arguments: *H1) Taiwanese citizens who consider their military training useful will be more supportive of the use of force, H2) information about US military assistance should influence war support among the public in Taiwan, and H3) information about US military assistance will also influence how citizens in Taiwan react to casualties.* In the following, we detail our empirical strategy.

In-depth Interview and Pre-Registration

Before fielding our survey experiment, we conducted in-depth interviews to examine whether ordinary citizens in Taiwan could comprehend the questionnaire. This step helps us get rid of inappropriate and ineffective questions. From June 10-17, 2018, 6 Taiwanese citizens from various backgrounds were recruited through an online post. None of them studied political science, and all male subjects had served in the military. Table 1 provides basic information about the six subjects.[5]

[Table 1 about here]

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[5] The procedure of the in-depth interview is as follows: The subjects were asked to read each question first and reply immediately if he or she did not understand the description. Before reading the options, the subjects were asked to imagine his or her answer. After that, the subject checked if the answer appeared in the options. This procedure was repeated until the subject completed the whole questionnaire. It took about 45 minutes for each subject to complete the in-depth interview. After completion, subjects were compensated with NTD$500 (about USD $16). Fortunately, subjects in the in-depth interview understood most of the questions and options, and they did not feel any discomfort answering any of the questions.

After the in-depth interviews, the survey was pre-registered on the Evidence in

Governance and Politics website (EGAP, http://egap.org/, the project's registration link will be

provided once this manuscript is accepted) and Open Science Foundation (OSF, http://osf.io/, the

project's registration link will be provided once accepted). The pre-registration, completed

before June 28, 2018, included the survey, survey implementation procedure, the number of

subjects, and an analysis plan.

Data Collection and Experimental Design

During July 6-9, 2018, 1003 subjects were recruited through the PollcracyLab, an online

questionnaire platform housed at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. PollcracyLab's

subject frame relies on invitations to the representative telephone and face-to-face academic

surveys conducted by the National Chengchi University. Since National Chengchi University has

access to the Taiwanese government's household registration records, all Taiwanese citizens

have a non-zero probability of being invited to the survey, enhancing the sampling procedure's

representativeness. In a nutshell, compared to other self opted-in online platforms such as

Amazon's MTurk or Survey Sampling International, the PollcracyLab has the advantage of

recruiting from diverse and representative backgrounds. For our survey, subjects were invited by

an email from the PollcracyLab to participate in a survey titled "A Survey of Public Opinion and

Political Participation." They were informed that they could skip any question, and their

responses would be anonymous. Researchers only receive de-identified data from PollcracyLab.

In this experiment, subjects first answered a battery of questions on news consumption, political

interest, and partisanship before being randomly assigned to one of the four experimental groups.[6]

We design the background of the experiment based on some of the most common conflict scenarios in cross-Strait relations, that is, if an attack from China is the result of Taiwan declaring independence or maintaining the current status quo. China has proclaimed that Taiwan announcing independence will surely trigger a PLA attack. As tensions continue to rise across the Strait, keeping the status quo is no guarantee for peace as China might launch a surprise attack. The inclusion of both scenarios helps ensure that different onsets of war would not drive our results. We use US responses to cross-Strait conflict as our treatment for great power assistance. We choose the narratives of "the US will help defend Taiwan" and "the US will not help defend Taiwan" as they both are the most salient scenarios among the public in Taiwan.

After their treatment, subjects rated their level of willingness to fight China (from 0 to 10). Besides, they answered: "Is there a casualty threshold beyond which you will consider the conflict (with China) is not worth the trouble?" Modeled after Gelpi, Reifer, and Feavor (2006)'s work, subjects selected from 6 options: 1) 0 deaths; 2) 1 – 50 deaths; 3) 51 – 500 deaths; 4) 501–5,000 deaths; 5) 5,001–50,000 deaths; and 6) over 50,000 deaths. We also asked subjects several questions related to their military training experience. Afterward, the subjects were debriefed and compensated. The completion rate of the survey was high (99.8%).

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[6] The four specific group configurations are: A) Taiwan declared independence, China attacked Taiwan, and the US has declared it will help Taiwan (TW Ind. + US Help); B) Taiwan kept the status quo, China attacked Taiwan, and the US has declared it will help Taiwan (TW SQ + US Help); C) Taiwan declared independence, China attacked Taiwan, and the US has declared it will not help Taiwan (TW Ind. + US No Help); D) Taiwan kept the status quo, China attacked Taiwan, and the US declared it will not help Taiwan (TW SQ + US No Help).

Representativeness and Randomization Check

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2 illustrates the background information of our subjects. Compared to Taiwan's

population, our subjects were younger, more likely to be pan-green supporters (supporting the

pro-independence parties), male, and less likely to be non-partisan. Despite this result, our

subjects are nationally representative among those below 50 based on the PollcracyLab

establishment's report (Yu 2012). Subsequent randomization checks also showed that

respondents were evenly assigned to the treatment and control groups with respect to gender (p =

0.891), age (p = 0.072), level of education (p = 0.367), income (p = 0.772), partisanship (p =

0.150), and ethnicity (p=0.620).

Empirical Results

Perception of Military Training on War Support

[Table 3 about here]

To test our first hypothesis, we incorporate a series of variables related to respondents'

perception of military training. The variables included in the regression model are: learning

(whether they perceived their conscription experiences to be useful; four-point scale where 4 is

very useful and 1 not useful at all), boss (whether they had experienced a positive interaction

with their supervisors during the conscription; four-point scale where 4 is very positive and 1

indicates very negative), and four dummy variables indicating which military branch they served

in, including Army, Marines, Military Police, and Navy (Army is the reference group). In our

sample, only male respondents with military experience are included in the models; male

respondents without military experience (due to personal issues) were excluded, and none of the female respondents reported their military experience.[7]

We find support for the first hypothesis: when a citizen considers their military training useful, he would be more supportive of self-defense. In both models in Table 3, one unit increase in the perceived usefulness of military training will increase about 0.7 units of willingness to fight against China on the 0 to 10 scale. The results remain the same when other control variables are included.

Great Power Assistance on War Support

We also find support for the second hypothesis: *information about US military assistance would influence war support among the public in Taiwan*. Table 4 presents the raw average of the four experimental groups on the level of war support. ANOVA analysis shows that the mean values are significantly different across the groups, and post-hoc Tukey analysis reveals that the level of support in the two groups with the information about US military assistance is significantly higher than the two groups without (Tukey test p=0.06). Comparatively, whether Taiwan declared independence or not has no impact on the respondents' attitudes toward war support. It is worth noting that the measure of war support ranges from 0 to 10, and the effect of US help for both groups is nearly 1 unit, indicating a sizeable effect of such a treatment.

[Table 4 about here]

We use two OLS regressions to include possible confounds, and the results are shown in Table 5. Model 1 includes only the treatments of the experiment, and Model 2 adds in all the

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[7] In Taiwan, female citizens can serve in the volunteer armed force, and there are currently around 8,000 female soldiers in Taiwan. Unfortunately, this survey experiment failed to recruit any of them.

controls, including two party identification dummies, Pan-Blue (respondents who support

Kuomintang, the New Party, the People First Party; these parties are known for supporting

unification with China) and Pan-Green (respondents who support the Democratic Progressive

Party, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, and the New Power Party; these parties are known for

supporting independence for Taiwan), shengi (whether one of the respondents' parents were

from China after 1945), gender (Female), age, education, and income level.

The effect of the information of US military involvement is positively significant in both

Models 1 and 2. Information about US military assistance to Taiwan could, on average, lead to a

0.77-point increase among the public's willingness to fight China on a 0 to 10 scale, equivalent

to a 7% increase. Meanwhile, Taiwan declaring independence is non-significant in both models,

and controlling for confounds does not change our findings.[8]

[Table 5 about here]

To illustrate the effect of the two treatments, Figure 1 shows the simulation results based

on Model 2 in Table 5. The variance-covariance matrix was sampled 200 times and then was

used to estimate the variance of the effects of the two treatments, controlling all other variables

at the mean values. The error-bars show a 95% of the distribution of the simulations. The figure

indicates that US assistance increases Taiwanese citizens' willingness to fight against China's

invasion.

[Figure 1 about here]

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[8] Among the control variables, Pan-Green is positively and significantly correlated with the
willingness to fight, while shengi shows a negative correlation with the dependent variable. The
result is not surprising given the context of Taiwan politics, but it once again indicates the
dependent variable's validity.

Information of US Assistance on Taiwanese Casualty Tolerance

Table 6 presents several models examining the third hypothesis on the influence of

military assistance on casualty tolerance among citizens in Taiwan. The DV, casualty tolerance,

is coded from 1 (0 people) to 6 (more than 50000 people). Models 1 and 2 treat this variable as a

continuous variable and are estimated through OLS regression, while models 3 and 4 treat it as

ordinal and apply ordinal logistic models. The same set of control variables in Table 4 is

included. The result shows that US military assistance did not influence the public's perception

of battle deaths.

Table 7 shows the distribution of Taiwanese casualty tolerance by four experimental

groups. Although US involvement did not influence public perception of causality tolerance in

Taiwan, it creates a sizable change in higher casualties' tolerance. For example, in the scenario

where the US will assist when Taiwan proclaims independence, the percentage of the public

willing to sustain 500 and more casualties increased by 7%, compared to the same scenario

without US military assistance. Similarly, in the scenario where the US gets involved when

China breaks the status quo, the percentage of the public willing to sustain 500 and more

casualties increased by 3%, compared to the same scenario without US military assistance.

[Table 6 about here]

Additional post-hoc analyses shown in Table 7 below help us further evaluate if the

public in Taiwan is casualty phobic. The analysis shows that citizens in Taiwan do not show a

clear sign of casualty phobia, as the most selected category of acceptable battle deaths is over

50,000 deaths (32.2%). In other words, the public in Taiwan is willing to sustain a high level of

casualties before reducing war support. The public in Taiwan is, comparatively, less sensitive to

battle deaths when compared with their American counterparts: only 11% of the public chose 50,000 when support for the Iraq War was still high in 2003 (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2006).

But there is also evidence to suggest the contrary. In the same table, although the option of over 50,000 deaths is the most popular one (32%), another 20% of the respondents choose 0 death, meaning that a large segment of the population in Taiwan is averse to war casualties – they would not be able to tolerate any death in a war. Taken together, this finding confirms research that suggests battle deaths and war support does follow a linear relationship (Berinsky 2007).

[Table 7 about here]

Discussion and Conclusion

War support in NWNM states is a novel inquiry in the war support literature. Our experiment in Taiwan shows that unlike citizens in Western democracies, a positive perception of military training leads to higher war support among citizens. We also find evidence of the critical role a great power could play in shaping war support among the public in NWNM states. In the case of Taiwan, information about the United States coming to help Taiwan in a war with China boost war support to a great extent, although such information does not motivate the public to accept a higher level of battle deaths. Our work demonstrates that studying war support in NWNM states is a promising venue as it could yield innovative findings and contribute to the diversity of the literature.

Despite the theoretical and empirical contributions, our study has clear limitations. While we maintain that the reasons that make NWNM cases from traditional war support cases – proximity to war and great power assistance – are common, our hypotheses and finings drawing from one country and one conflict scenario should be taken with a grain of salt when thinking

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about other NWNM cases. Let us be clear about our contributions. We are not providing a general framework for how citizens in NWNM cases would react in terms of war support. Instead, through the case of Taiwan, we suggest that NWNM states are worth studying, considering the different contexts and backgrounds they have to offer. Now that we have established the value of such an investigation, scholars should have more confidence in broadening the scope to include more countries and other nuances that might also play a role in the war support literature.

Our findings speak to existing war support literature in a number of ways. First, contrary to the conventional wisdom that conscription reduces war support (Wallace 2017; Horowitz and Levendusky 2011; Gartner 2008; Vasquez 2005; Moskos 1970), we find that it is possible that some citizens in NWNM states might approach mandatory military training in a positive light when it well-prepares them for combat. Second, our findings raise a number of questions regarding casualty sensitivity. Although we have primitive evidence suggesting that citizens in Taiwan could be tolerant of high casualties, we find that a significant portion of respondents considered only zero battle death to be acceptable in our survey. Clearly, it takes further research to tease out the mechanisms and conditions for casualty sensitivity among the citizens in NWNM states.

Our findings also allow us to think about alliances differently during the onset of war. For Western cases, assistance from allies and international organizations boost war support for reasons such as increasing the legitimacy of the operations and burden-sharing the costs involved (Chapman 2007; Page and Bouton 2008; Holsti 2009). For NWNM states, the involvement of allies, especially great powers, can be for other reasons such as offering protection, as in the

cases of Taiwan. Future research could design experiments to ascertain which explanation holds the most power in explaining war support in NWNM states.

Lastly, our research also generates two critical policy implications. For US-Taiwan relations, our study comports with the conventional wisdom that the US promise to help defend Taiwan should increase war support among citizens in Taiwan – it is the most important factor for keeping China at bay. Our study also suggests that Taiwan could further increase its deterrence against Chinese invasion by committing to military programs that are deemed valuable and effective among citizens.

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Table 1. Background of subjects participated in the in-depth interview				
Subject No.	Gender	Age	Degree	Major	Political Orientation
1	Male	28	College	Library	Pan-Green
2	Male	35	College	Law	None
3	Male	41	Master	Electrical Engineering	Pan-Green
4	Female	24	2yr College	Accounting	Pan-blue
5	Female	31	Master	Physical Health	Pan-Green
6	Female	58	PhD	Computer Science	Pan-blue

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of the PollcracyLab subject

Gender	Male	543 (54.3%)
	Female	458 (45.8%)
Age	20~29	184 (18.4%)
	30~39	326 (32.6%)
	40~49	274 (27.4%)
	50~59	150 (15.0%)
	60 up	65 (6.5%)
Education	Elementary or None	3 (0.3%)
	Middle School	4 (0.4%)
	Senior High	124 (12.4%)
	Junior College	182 (18.2%)
	College and up	688 (68.8%)
Monthly Family Income	Below NTD $20,000	45 (4.5%)
	$20,000~$50,000	223 (22.3%)
	$50,000~$80,000	347 (34.7%)
	$80,000~$150,000	286 (28.6%)
	$150,000 and above	90 (9.0%)
Party Identity	Pan-Blue	394 (39.4%)
	Pan-Green	483 (48.3%)
	None	124 (12.4%)
Ethnicity (Father's origin)	Mainlander	144 (14.4%)
	Non-mainlander	857 (85.7%)
National Identity	Exclusive Taiwanese	522 (52.2%)
	ID	450 (45.0%)
	Dual ID	

Table 3: War Support and Conscription (only those who have served in the military, n = 436)

War Support	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.
Independence	0.139	(0.388)	0.106	(0.381)
US Involvement	0.952***	(0.389)	0.829***	(0.380)
Learning	0.678***	(0.156)	0.766***	(0.154)
Boss	-0.299**	(0.160)	-0.181	(0.159)
(Base: Army)				
Airforce	1.405***	(0.625)	1.077**	(0.612)
Marines	1.101	(0.814)	0.469	(0.804)
Military Police	0.770	(0.710)	0.532	(0.688)
Navy	0.397	(0.844)	0.051	(0.815)
Pan-Blue			0.454	(0.639)
Pan-Green			1.965***	(0.625)
Ethnicity			-1.810***	(0.571)
Age			-0.343**	(0.176)
Education			-0.130	(0.266)
Income			0.385**	(0.197)
Constant	3.794***	(0.356)	3.269***	(1.553)
N		407		401
R^2	0.008		0.163	

Note. Coefficients are generated through the OLS regression models with respect to the 11-point scale war support variable. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Model 1 = War Support with Treatments and Military Experience. Model 2 = War Support with Treatments and Control Variables.

Table 4. Level of war support across experimental groups

Willingness to fight against the invasion of China (0 – 10)	If Taiwan declared independence	If Taiwan maintained the status quo
If US will send troops to help defend Taiwan	4.76[a] (n = 237)	4.75[a] (n = 245)
If US will not send troops to help Taiwan	4.09[b] (n = 253)	3.94[b] (n = 264)
1. ANOVA test p = 0.016 2. Group a and b significantly different in Tukey test (p=0.06)		

Table 5: Great Power Assistance on War Support

War Support	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.
Independence	0.118	(0.249)	0.046	(0.243)
US Involvement	0.797***	(0.249)	0.795***	(0.242)
Pan-Blue			-0.069	(0.402)
Pan-Green			1.262***	(0.388)
Shengi (Ethnicity)			-1.106***	(0.364)
Gender (Female)			-0.790***	(0.244)
Age			-0.208*	(0.110)
Education			-0.170	(0.176)
Income			0.111	(0.123)
Constant	3.976***	(0.211)	5.702***	(1.070)
N		888		879
R^2	0.009		0.068	

Note. Coefficients are generated through the OLS regression models with respect to the 11-point scale war support variable. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Model 1 = War Support with Treatments. Model 2 = War Support with Treatments and Control Variables.

Table 6: Great Power Assistance on Casualty Tolerance

Casualty Tolerance	Model 1 OLS		Model 2 OLS		Model 3 Ordinal		Model 4 Ordinal	
	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.
Independence	0.119	(0.136)	0.078	(0.133)	0.098	(0.122)	0.048	(0.124)
US Involvement	0.142	(0.136)	0.137	(0.132)	0.118	(0.122)	0.132	(0.124)
Pan-Blue			0.258	(0.220)			0.223	(0.209)
Pan-Green			0.926***	(0.212)			0.853***	(0.202)
Shengi			-0.543***	(0.197)			-0.500***	(0.181)
Gender			-0.457***	(0.133)			-0.423***	(0.126)
Age			-0.131**	(0.060)			-0.128**	(0.058)
Education			0.032	(0.097)			0.031	(0.092)
Income			0.045	(0.067)			0.054	(0.063)
N	852		848		852		848	

Note. Coefficients of Model 1 and 2 are generated through the OLS regression models while Model 3 and 4 are estimated through ordinal logistic regression models. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 7: Distribution f Selecting Casualty Categories in Different Groups

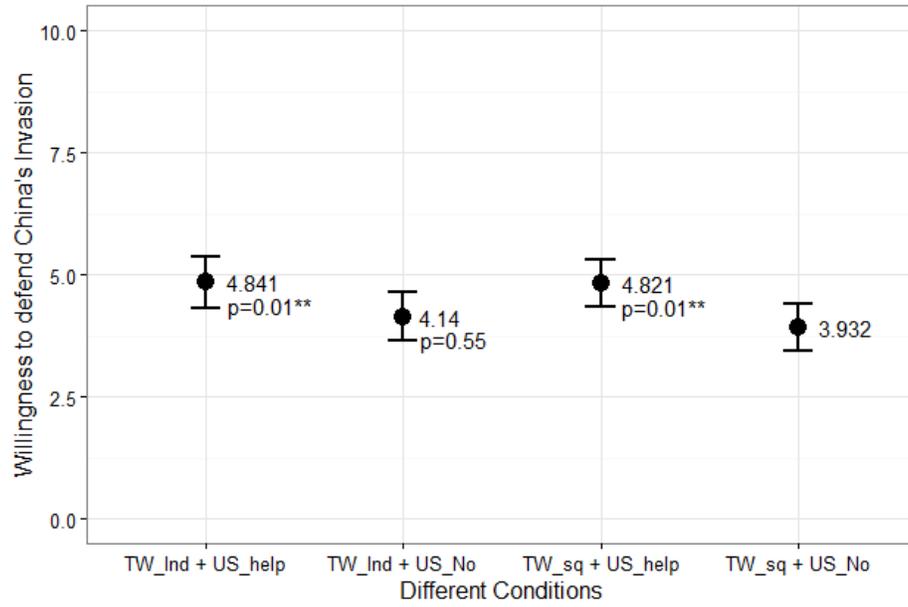| Percentage	TW Ind. + US Help	TW Ind. + US No Help	TW SQ + US Help	TW SQ + US No Help
0 Casuality	0.21	0.19	0.20	0.23
1-50 Casualties	0.13	0.19	0.13	0.15
51-500 Casualties	0.04	0.09	0.10	0.09
501-5000 Casualties	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.13
5001-50000 Casualties	0.13	0.10	0.10	0.09
>50000 Casualties	0.35	0.32	0.35	0.32

Figure 1. Simulation results based on Model 2 in Table 4