



Degree Project

Level: BA Thesis

Generational Politics and Taiwan-U.S. Security Issues

How do the views of Taiwan's generations compare on the U.S. security commitment?

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摘要：

台灣的主權依然是現代最具爭議性的問題之一。至今，兩岸的意見分歧依舊存在。美國對這樣情況仍然積極地介，而且美國經常扮演在北京政府和台北之間的仲裁者角色。隨著台灣在八零年代末至九零年代初逐漸轉向自由民主，對這座島上的輿論研究也越來越多。先前的研究發現，人民支持哪一個黨派，支持獨立還是統一，影響著大眾對兩岸的輿論。然而，不同世代對於輿論影響的研究卻比較少。本文所探討的主題是建立在對台灣的 世代政治

（generational politics）的研究上。向台灣民眾進行問卷調查，以了解不同的世代對於台美安全關係法及其實施是否有不同的見解。從問卷調查分析結果來看，並未能發現世代的不同與美國對台灣安保做法的理解之間有顯著相關性。不過，世代政治有助於了解台灣人民對於在美國介入下兩岸關係的看法。

Abstract:

Sovereignty over Taiwan remains one of the most contentious issues of the modern era, and disagreements on both sides of the Taiwan Strait persist to this day. The United States continues to have an active interest in the situation, often playing the role of arbiter between the governments of Beijing and Taipei. With Taiwan's transition to a multi-party democracy in the late 80s and early 90s, there has been a growing body of research into public opinion on the island. Existing literature has found both party identification and independence/unification support to impact on public attitudes regarding cross-strait security issues. However, the impact of generation is comparatively under examined. The current study builds on recent research into Taiwan's generational politics. A questionnaire was distributed to members of the public in Taiwan to determine how attitudes vary by generation on the security commitment between the United States and Taiwan. An analysis of survey responses failed to establish a correlation between generation and attitudes towards U.S. support. Nevertheless, generational politics adds nuance to our understanding of public opinion in Taiwan concerning cross-strait relations.

Keywords: Taiwan (R.O.C.), Cross-Strait Relations, U.S. Security Commitment, Generational Politics.

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Introduction

The sovereignty of Taiwan remains one of the most precarious ongoing disputes of the 21st century. The People's Republic of China (PRC) views Taiwan as a breakaway province, with the ultimate aim of consolidating the island into its own territory. Meanwhile in Taiwan, democratisation throughout the 90s has brought calls for Taiwanese independence into the mainstream. The official stance of the United States is that it is a domestic issue which should be resolved peacefully between the governments of Taiwan and China. This balancing act between the three nations has remained largely peaceful for decades. However, it is the belief of many pundits that an escalation in tensions between Taiwan and China could draw the United States into an all-out conflict between the two superpowers (Bush, 2016).

In recent history, China has not only become America's largest economic rival, but also a major military competitor. This has led to the notion that the U.S. is a power in decline whilst China is on the rise becoming vogue in political circles. Despite the prospect of the Chinese economy drawing level with that of the United States in the next few decades, there remains a significant gap between the two nations in terms of their military and technology capabilities. Nevertheless, the rapid modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) could result in substantial losses to U.S. military forces seeking to assist Taiwan if Beijing were to attempt to invade the island.

The rise of China has generated renewed debate among U.S. foreign policy analysts concerning the strategic significance of Taiwan, with one side arguing that Washington should adjust its policy towards Taiwan, and the other calling for a downgrade on relations (Hu, 2016). With such a sharp divide in opinion among experts in the U.S., we can expect domestic public opinion to be even more deeply divergent. This paper will look at how attitudes vary between each political generation – that is, an age group with a distinct political consciousness – in Taiwan.

Definitions

For the sake of simplicity, the People's Republic of China (PRC) – or Mainland China – will be referred to as “China” throughout this paper. The Republic of China (ROC) will be called “Taiwan”. Likewise, the term “Chinese”

will be used to refer to the citizens of the PRC and “Taiwanese” will be used for the citizens of the ROC.

Background

The Republic of China and the U.S. have been close allies since the Second World War. After the ROC government retreated to Taiwan in 1949 having suffered defeat in the civil war, the U.S. continued to recognise it as the sole legal government of China. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the ROC and the United States signed the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty. Given the strategic importance of the Taiwan Strait in the Cold War, this made Taiwan a crucial link in the anti-communist alliance in East Asia. U.S.-Taiwan relations underwent a seismic shift in the 1970s with the warming of relations between the United States and the PRC following the Sino-Soviet Split. In 1979, the U.S. switched diplomatic relations from the ROC to the PRC. Shortly after, U.S. congress signed the Taiwan Relations Act, ensuring the continued importance of relations between the U.S. and Taiwan. (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the U.S., 2017)

To date, the Taiwan Relations Act provides the basis for U.S. military support of Taiwan. However, it is important to note that the United States does not officially commit to defending Taiwan, taking instead a policy of ambiguity. The absence of clarity over the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan can be traced to section 3 of the Taiwan Relations Act. The first part of this section states that “the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” (Taiwan Relations Act, 1971). This section of the TRA delineates in rather concrete terms that the U.S. is committed to selling arms to Taiwan. However, the third part of section 3 states that the U.S. president is to confer with congress over “any threat to the security or the social or economic system of the people on Taiwan and any danger to the interests of the United States arising therefrom.” In order to determine “appropriate action by the United States in response to any such danger.” (Taiwan Relations Act, 1971). There is no explicit statement to the effect that the United States will react with military force should Taiwan be attacked. As previously stated, this can be interpreted as a form of policy ambiguity in which the U.S. uses the inherent vagueness of the act to its advantage. While China are dissuaded from a forceful attempt at reunification by

the possibility of coming to blows with the U.S. military, Taiwan risks losing U.S. support if they attempt to break from the status quo. Essentially, the position of the United States keeps Beijing appeased by preventing Taiwan from declaring formal independence.

A major factor in the U.S. alliance with Taiwan is the geographic location of the island. Taiwan is often referred to as part of the first island chain – an archipelago surrounding continental East Asia. Taiwan stands in the way of China's naval expansion into the Western Pacific. Under Beijing's control, Chinese military operating out of Taiwan would become a greater security concern to neighbouring U.S. allies, such as Japan and the Philippines, and to the United States itself. The rise of the Chinese economy has already begun to draw countries into its sphere of regional influence, and the loss of Taiwan would have major repercussions for continued U.S. primacy in the Asia-Pacific.

Beyond Taiwan's strategic military position, successive U.S. administrations (notably the Bush administration) have been at pains to espouse their support for the spread of democracy and other fundamental U.S. values abroad. Taiwan is often referred to by U.S. leaders as a model example of a pro-Western democratic state in the Asia-Pacific. By this logic, the U.S. may seek to defend Taiwan.

Another point of consideration is the sale of arms to Taiwan. Hu (2016) suggests that if the U.S. were to abandon its commitment to Taiwan, "the obvious losers will be American arms producers, as Taiwan has been the world's second or third largest purchaser since the late 1980s." Not only do the arms producers benefit from this arrangement, the sale of arms to Taiwan helps to reduce the United States' trade deficit. While the U.S. provides military training and advice to Taiwan, and is the principle dealer of arms to the nation, it is questionable whether sales are adequate enough to meet the self-defence requirement stipulated in the Taiwan Relations Act. Arms deals are weighed carefully by Washington so as not to cause too much upset to China. The public in Taiwan are not naïve about this and tend to view arms sales with a certain amount of cynicism.

There also exists a high degree of uncertainty with the recently-elected Trump administration in the United States. In speeches made during the election campaign, Trump alluded to the low defence budgets of many of America's

strategic allies in East Asia. More recently, James Moriarty of the Taiwan Institute in Taiwan – the *de facto* U.S. embassy in Taiwan – encouraged Taiwan to reduce their dependence on the United States in order to engage with China’s expanding military (Taipei Times, 2017). At this early stage in the Trump administration, there is little of anything substantial to go by. An initial phone call between Tsai Ing-wen and Donald Trump followed by Twitter remarks by the U.S. president in which he questioned the One China principle generated international concern over Washington’s future course of action. However, the release of a \$1.4 billion arm’s package to Taiwan later in the year suggests little divergence from previous policy (Cole, 2017). Nevertheless, any shift in policy decisions regarding East Asia – and Taiwan in particular – could result in major tensions in trilateral relations between China, Taiwan and the United States.

Research Question

In the maelstrom of debate among experts and the media on the ‘Taiwan issue’, the attitudes of ordinary citizens are rarely heard. Yet it can be argued that the 23 million inhabitants of Taiwan, nearly 70% of whom identify as Taiwanese (Zhong, 2016), will have an instrumental part to play in determining the future of the island. According to Wang (2013, p. 94), “Since Taiwan is a democracy, the public’s belief regarding US support can influence how its elected leaders make policy decisions about China. It is thus imperative to study Taiwan’s public opinion on cross-strait security issues.”

The debate among scholars over the stability of public opinion and its interaction with policy has raged for decades. Much of the research in this area has looked at how domestic public opinion has an impact on a nation’s foreign policy (Holsti, 1992). However, the notion that another country’s foreign policy can have an impact on public opinion has been examined in less detail. Thus, the findings of the current study aim to contribute to this side of the discussion by looking at whether United States foreign policy towards Taiwan can shape Taiwanese public opinion.

Dependence on the military strength of the United States is vital to Taiwan’s defence policy. This is reflected by a strong belief among the Taiwanese public that the U.S. will assist Taiwan should a conflict occur between Taiwan and Mainland China (Benson & Niou, 2011; Wang, 2013). The purpose of this

research paper is to determine to what extent perceptions vary between Taiwan's generations regarding the role of the U.S. and its military in Taiwan-China relations. Thus the research question:

“Is there any difference in attitudes towards the U.S. security commitment among Taiwan's generations?”

By asking this question, it will be possible to establish if historical developments in Taiwanese society have caused a shift in thinking among younger people. Is there a consensus among generations when it comes to the U.S. security commitment? Or is there enough variation in attitudes to constitute a generation gap?

The following chapter will give an account of the existing literature on public perceptions of cross-strait relations.

Literature Review

To the best of the author's knowledge, previous studies with a particular relevance to the key issues highlighted in the current study are underwhelming. However, there exist a few studies that examine Taiwanese public opinion regarding the role that the U.S. plays in cross-strait issues. This section of the literature review will focus on the findings of these papers.

Niou (2004) found that Taiwanese people's views regarding whether the U.S. would be willing to defend Taiwan were supported by a strong correlation with their preference for independence from or unification with China. When asked whether respondents believed the U.S. would send troops in the event of China attacking due to a declaration of Taiwanese independence, it was found that those with unconditional support for independence were more likely to believe that the U.S. would defend Taiwan. Meanwhile, those who favoured unification with China were less optimistic about Taiwan's prospects in such a scenario.

In another study, Benson and Niou (2005) look at the relationship between the Taiwanese people's preference for independence from or reunification with China and how that is affected by attitudes towards the U.S. commitment to protect Taiwan and the perceived Chinese military threat. They found that 52.6% were not worried about the threat of China's military. When asked whether respondents worry about the U.S. committing to defend Taiwan, 54.1% said they weren't. Those who were less concerned about the U.S. commitment worried less about the China threat, whilst those who showed more concern were.

This is examined in further detail in an additional study. Wang (2013) analysed data from a 2011 Taiwan National Security Survey carried out by the Election Study Centre of the National Chengchi University to look into public opinion on selected issues concerning security across the Taiwan Strait; namely, confidence in U.S. commitment to intervene in the event of a Taiwan-China conflict; U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; cross-strait economic ties; and the potential for a peace agreement. The most salient aspect of this study for the current research being the first two issues.

In spite of deliberate policy ambiguity by the United States, an overwhelming majority of Taiwanese people were found to have a high level of confidence in the U.S. committing to defend Taiwan in the event of a cross-strait

conflict. 73.5% of respondents believed the U.S. would send troops if China attacked without being provoked. Even if Taiwan were to break with the status quo and declare *de jure* independence, 56.4% of those surveyed believed the U.S. would still intervene. It is also worth noting that the trend is consistent throughout surveys from previous years. (2013) explains these findings by looking at party identification among those surveyed: Pan-Green voters tend to show more confidence in U.S. support than Pan-Blue voters; likewise, Greens were found to have a higher disregard for the threat of conflict between Taiwan and China.

In terms of arms sales to Taiwan, the study found the majority of respondents do not believe that Taiwan has the military capability to defend against a Chinese attack. Rather than bolster self-defence, 68.4% of those surveyed preferred the adoption of more moderate policies to deal with China's military threat. A slight majority of 52.4% favoured a deal to reduce military spending if China were to remove missiles targeting Taiwan. When analysing this from the perspective of party identification it was found that more Blue supporters favoured such a deal than their Green counterparts.

The findings in this study offer valuable insight into people's attitudes to cross-strait relations in the context of party identification. However, there remain clear limitations to such an analysis. When you consider that voter turnout in the most recent general election in 2016 was around 66%, it can be argued that this model potentially fails to gauge the public sentiment of a large part of the non-partisan population.

Generational Politics

Previous research has shown party affiliation on the Green-Blue spectrum to be a key determining factor shaping people's opinion regarding U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and military support for Taiwan in the event of a conflict between China and Taiwan (Wang, 2013). Likewise, support for independence versus unification is another important consideration when analysing how Taiwanese perceive the role of the U.S. in defending Taiwan (Niou, 2004; Benson & Niou 2005). However, prior studies fail to give priority to the impact of generational difference on people's attitudes towards these issues.

In his seminal 1923 essay, "The Problem of Generations", Karl Mannheim (1952) defines a generation as a group of people of a similar age who have shared

experience of crucial historical events. Furthermore, Mannheim argues that these events ought to have occurred during the 'critical period' of an individual's formative years (between the ages of 18 to 25). Though it may be argued that political opinions are formed over the course of a lifetime, prior research lends weight to the claim that the basic structure of an individual's political opinion develops in early adulthood (see Alwin *et al.*, 1991).

Research into Taiwanese generational politics began only recently. Chang and Wang (2006) note that this is likely due to research into politically sensitive issues being discouraged prior to Taiwan's democratisation. However, in the past few decades a number of studies have begun to emerge on the attitudes held by different generations in Taiwan, particularly on the subject of ethnicity and national identity (see Chang & Wang, 2005; Rigger, 2006).

Following Mannheim's concept of a 'critical period' in which a political generation forms a world view in response to destabilising events that occur as a young adult, two prior studies chose to divide Taiwan into four age groups based on major events in the modern history of the island (Chang, et al, 2014; Rigger, 2006). The first generation were born on or before 1931 and were at least 18 by 1949; they experienced the nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan and conflict between ethnic groups, notably the 228 Incident. The second generation were born between 1932 and 1953, reaching their formative years between 1950 and 1971. They would have been at least 18 years old when the ROC withdrew from the UN Security Council in 1971 and were socialised by Taiwan's international isolation. The third generation were born between 1954 and 1968 and entered their formative years between 1972 and 1986. This group witnessed major growth in the Taiwanese economy. The fourth generation were born between 1969 and 1978 experienced their formative years after 1986. The major event witnessed by this generation was the establishment of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986 (Chang and Wang, 2005; Rigger, 2006).

Since these four groupings were conceived more than a decade ago, it is possible to imagine subsequent generational shifts that have occurred in the meantime. In a more recent study into the attitudes of different generations towards trade talks between Taiwan and China, Liu and Li (2017) formulate a fifth and sixth generation of Taiwanese. The fifth generation were born between 1979

and 1988 and their formative years were between 1997 and 2006. This generation experienced the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis in which China fired missiles into the Taiwan Strait prior to Taiwan's first direct presidential election. Most significantly, this generation witnessed the transfer of political power from the Koumintang (KMT) to the DPP with the election of Chen Shui-bian in 2000. The sixth generation were born after 1989, reaching their formative years after 2007. They witnessed the KMT's return to power in 2008 and the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between 2010 and 2013.

Beyond the impact of the aforementioned political events, Taiwan's fifth and sixth generation can be distinguished from previous generations in several other ways. Firstly, the younger generation have grown up in a democratic society. It is impossible for Taiwan's youth to fully appreciate the struggle for democracy of their parent's generation. A second important consideration is China's rise. The older generation witnessed the initial stages of China's market growth, whereas the younger generation are familiar only with the huge size of China's current economy. With Bilateral trade between Taiwan and China reaching \$198.31 billion in 2014 (China Daily, 2015), Taiwan's younger generation are keenly aware of the increasing interdependence of the two economies. At the same time, they feel threatened by China's military strength and the different political conditions on the mainland. This is reflected in previous studies of Taiwan's generations which demonstrate that compared with the older generation, younger Taiwanese view China both as a political threat and economic opportunity (Liu, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2014). A final noteworthy distinction is that Taiwan's youth have grown up in relative economic wealth compared with their predecessors. Subsequently, they are thought to favour values associated with post-materialism, such as freedom of expression and democracy, over physical and economic security (Inglehart, 1977). From these broader points alone, we can see that younger Taiwanese make for an interesting data group for comparison with their older counterparts. As Rigger (2016) puts it,

The Taiwan that today's young adults inhabit is utterly different from the one in which their parents grew up. Where their parents endured privation, they enjoy prosperity. Where their parents experienced political repression,

they participate in democracy. And where their parents saw danger across the Strait, they see opportunity. (p. 71)

Since the younger generations have come of age in such a dissimilar political, social and economic environment to their elders, it is reasonable to assume that there will be some variation in their thinking on cross-strait relations. With these assumptions in mind, the hypothesis put forth in this research paper is that generation – alongside party identification and positioning in the independence debate – will have a major impact on attitudes towards the U.S. security commitment. Notably, those members of the fifth and sixth generation who make up Taiwan's youth will demonstrate opinions which are distinct from the older generations. Thus it is reasonable to formulate the hypothesis:

Generational difference has an impact on attitudes of the Taiwan public to the U.S. security commitment.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine whether public opinion among the Taiwanese public on the role of the United States security commitment to Taiwan in cross-strait relations differs by generation.

Research Design

For this research, it was chosen to conduct a quantitative study. The reason why a quantitative study has been selected is that it is suitable for collecting rich data on public opinions, which can be useful for hypothesis testing to identify if genuine differences exist between groups. Further, it is often considered more objective than qualitative data (Denscombe, 2003). In order to find out the attitudes of Taiwanese towards U.S. military involvement in cross-strait affairs, a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed and distributed among the population over the course of a month. The main advantage to using a questionnaire is that it is a suitable method for collecting a large sum of data with little expenditure in terms of time and money (Denscombe, 2003). A major factor in choosing to employ a questionnaire to collect the data in the current study was that it will not be limited by language. As Mandarin Chinese is not the researcher's native language, questions can be prepared in advance and will not require face-to-face exchanges and possible miscommunication.

In this survey, respondents were asked to say whether they agree or disagree with a number of statements. In order to avoid overlooking certain collectively held opinions, a thorough reading of secondary data was conducted, as well as preliminary discussions with a number of people from the sample population prior to the writing of any questions.

The Questionnaire

The hypothesis of this research paper is that generational difference has an impact on attitudes to the U.S. security commitment. In this study, the dependent variable is attitude to the U.S. security commitment. The independent variable is generation.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions. Most importantly, respondents were asked to state their age. This was designed to measure the independent variable (generation). This part of the questionnaire also invited respondents to state their party identification and support for independence

or unification. These two questions were designed to measure the independent variables identified in the previous research (Niou, 2004; Benson & Niou 2005; Wang, 2013).

The main body of the questionnaire was made up of 14 Likert data items. These were employed to measure the dependent variable (attitudes to the U.S. security commitment). Respondents were provided with a statement and asked to give their opinion using a score from 1 to 5 (1 was strongly disagree, 3 was neither agree nor disagree, and 5 was strongly agree).

Questions were written in English and translated into Mandarin Chinese with the help of a native speaker. They were then formatted into Google Forms, which is an online tool for creating customisable surveys. The overall benefit of using Google Forms was that surveys are easily distributed from this platform; it is possible to send out surveys in an email, text message, in messenger apps, or as a hyperlink on social media websites.

Participants

For this thesis, questionnaires were collected from 127 individuals in Taiwan. The current study is limited by both time and resources and a sample of this size cannot be considered truly representative of the population of Taiwan, but it is hoped that it will still yield interesting results as a preliminary study. In order to make the research valid, it was imperative to ensure that data was obtained from an equal distribution of respondents in the different generational categories described in the theoretical framework. Since the first generation would be 86 and older at the time of conducting this study, many potential respondents will have passed away. Collecting data from the older generation of respondents is further complicated by the survey being conducted online. It is reasonable to assume that many older respondents have limited access to the Internet.

Sampling

In the initial stages, data was gathered mainly from acquaintances. As the number of Taiwanese acquaintances is limited, *snowball sampling* was used to gather a larger range of participants. Snowball sampling is where respondents refer other respondents to the researcher so as to build a larger and larger data sample, much like a snowball growing in size as it rolls (Denscombe, 2003, p. 16). There is also the potential to collect data via online social networking, though this sample

method isn't expected to have a very large response rate. In a sense, this could be considered *convenience sampling*; it is utilising the most convenient means to collect a data sample which wouldn't otherwise be immediately accessible to the researcher (Denscombe, 2003, p. 17). This method of sampling will be completely random, which can be both advantageous and disadvantageous – respondents are likely to come from a range of social backgrounds, but there is no way of verifying who exactly they are. Further, this form of sampling poses the risk that some respondents are less likely to answer survey questions seriously. Since the questions being asked could be considered sensitive in nature, there is the possibility that some respondents could give extreme or even malicious answers to some of the questions.

Whilst we don't know who the respondents will be from social network sites, the use of snowball sampling meant that a number of respondents were of similar ages and background. This may lend a biased outcome on results.

However, it should be noted that there remain clear limitations to this research design. One of the biggest challenges was collecting a truly representative sample from the different generations. It quickly became apparent that access to younger respondents was much easier than older respondents. As the questionnaire was distributed electronically, it automatically excluded members of the population who don't use or don't have access to the Internet. This meant that collecting data from older respondents, who are less likely to use the Internet, was very difficult.

Ethical Considerations

It is essential that any research meets certain ethical preconditions. Drew *et al.* (2007) describe the importance of “full disclosure and consent” in survey research. Respondents should be made fully aware of the purpose of the study and how their responses are to be used. Additionally, they should understand that their participation is voluntary. It is also important that respondents' privacy is protected; they should know that any information provided is anonymous and confidential (Bryman, 2015).

In light of the above, a cover letter was included with the questionnaire explaining the nature of the study and inviting respondents to participate. Since a number of the questions in the survey could be considered sensitive or

controversial, respondents were informed that their participation is entirely voluntary, and that they may stop participating at any time or leave any questions unanswered. In addition, respondents were notified that all data taken from this study is anonymous – respondents were not required to provide their name or any other identifiable data.

Data Analysis

Research Question:

Is there a statistically significant difference on attitudes to the U.S. security commitment by generation?

H₀: There is not a statistically significant difference on attitudes to the U.S. security commitment by generation.

H_a: There is a statistically significant difference on attitudes to the U.S. security commitment by generation.

To examine the research question, an Analysis of Variance (one way ANOVA) will be conducted to determine if there is a significant difference on the attitudes to the U.S. security commitment by generation. One way ANOVA is an appropriate statistical analysis when the purpose of research is to assess if mean differences exist on one continuous dependent variable by an independent variable with two or more discrete groups. The dependent variable in this analysis is attitude to the U.S. security commitment, and the discrete groups are Taiwan's political generations.

Additional analyses will use t-tests to compare the impact of party identification and independence/unification support on attitudes to the U.S. security commitment. The *t*-test will be two-tailed with the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true set at $p < 0.05$. This ensures a 95% certainty that the differences did not occur by chance.

Limitations

The principle limitation in this research is the limited sample size. A similar study incorporating more data would likely yield more accurate results. Other limitations are referred to at relevant points throughout the methodology and findings chapters.

The validity of a research paper depends on both the data being collected correctly and its appropriateness for answering the research question. An important

way of finding out if the right questions have been asked is to consider existing theories and knowledge on the topic (Denscombe, 2003). In designing the questionnaire utilised in the current research, many of the questions were based on previous surveys. The only aspect of the paper that could be considered truly experimental and not based on previous studies were the questions related to motivations for the U.S. security commitment.

Reliability can be understood as the extent to which a research instrument produces stable and consistent results. If there is a high degree of reliability, the research instrument is expected to produce similar results on different occasions (Denscombe, 2003). In order to test the reliability of the current study, a Cronbach's alpha was conducted on the 14 Likert data item with the resulting α coefficient of 0.71 (> 0.70), which indicates that the research is reliable.

Findings and Analysis

This chapter describes the analysis of the data followed by a discussion of the research findings.

Table 1

Number of Respondents by Generation

	No. of respondents
First generation (born on/before 1931)	0
Second generation (born 1932-1953)	17
Third generation (born 1954-1968)	23
Fourth generation (born 1969-1979)	27
Fifth generation (born 1979-1988)	38
Sixth generation (born on/after 1989)	22
Total:	127

A total of 127 questionnaires were received. Of the 127 respondents, there were 48 males and 79 females. Respondents were separated into age groups following the political generation model developed in previous research. By far the largest number of responses came from the fifth generation comprised of individuals born between 1979 and 1988. As anticipated, it was not possible to collect any data from the first generation of people born on or before 1931. The second generation also had a lower response rate. This was due in part to older respondents having limited access to the Internet, as the main method for collecting the data involved filling out the form online (Table 1).

Attitudes to the U.S. security commitment

The main body of the questionnaire was comprised of Likert items. Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with a number of statements related to the U.S. security commitment with Taiwan, results were then arranged into contingency tables to see how different generations responded.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of generational difference on each of the individual statements. Results show there

was not a significant effect of generational difference on statements related to the U.S. security commitment at the $p < .05$ level for the five generation groups. Taken together, these results suggest that there is not a substantial divide between generations when it comes to opinion on the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan.

Confidence in U.S. support

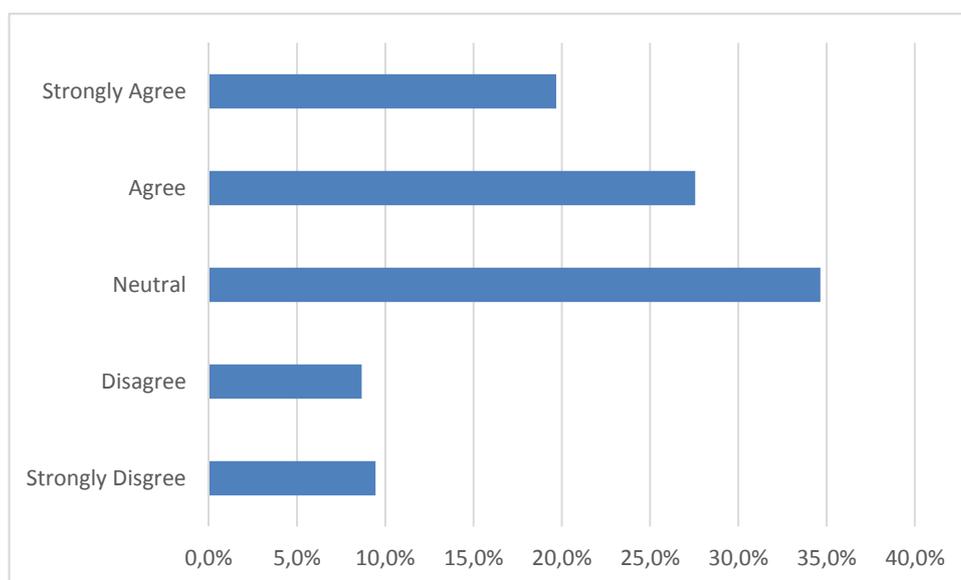
Policy ambiguity is an important feature of the security arrangement between Taiwan and the U.S. Lack of clarity over the strength of the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan in a cross-strait conflict influences elites in Beijing and Taipei to exercise caution. How does the public in Taiwan view the situation? To find out, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following three statements:

1. *The U.S. would send troops if China were to invade Taiwan.*
2. *The U.S. are likely to withdraw support for Taiwan in the future.*
3. *United States arms sales to Taiwan are of a sufficient quality to defend against a Chinese attack.*

A total of responses to the first statement from all generations are displayed below.

Graph 1

Total of Respondents' Confidence in U.S. Support



The majority of respondents (34.6%) stated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. However, if we aggregate both the 'agree' and

‘strongly agree’ options in the current study, we find that 47.2% of respondents are in agreement that the U.S. would send troops (Graph 1).

How did confidence levels vary by generation? Cross-tabulation reveals support for the statement across generations. However, whilst the the oldest surveyed respondents in the second generation demonstrated the most confidence in U.S. support, third generation respondents were the most likely to doubt that the U.S. would intervene on Taiwan’s behalf. Nevertheless, the opinion of each generation group did not differ to a huge extent. Statistical analysis revealed there were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,122) = 1.977, p = .102$). (Table 2).

Table 2

Generations and Confidence in U.S. support

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	5.9%	17.4%	11.1%	7.9%	4.5%
Disagree	0.0%	13.0%	11.1%	7.9%	9.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29.4%	43.5%	33.3%	26.3%	45.5%
Agree	29.4%	13.0%	25.9%	36.8%	27.3%
Strongly Agree	35.3%	13.0%	18.5%	21.1%	13.6%
ANOVA: $F(4, 122) = 1.976537, p = 0.102$					

Despite high levels of confidence among Taiwanese that the U.S. would support Taiwan if a conflict were to happen now, respondents were less optimistic about the island’s future prospects. When asked whether the U.S. are likely to withdraw support in the future, 32.3% of respondents agreed and 18.1% strongly agreed. By combining the two responses, that amounts to more than half of all respondents who feel Taiwan could lose America’s backing in the coming years. By comparison 31.5% were undecided and only 18.1% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 3

The U.S. are likely to withdraw support for Taiwan in the future

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	17.6%	21.7%	22.2%	5.3%	4.5%

Disagree	5.9%	0.0%	3.7%	7.9%	4.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	35.3%	43.5%	18.5%	31.6%	31.8%
Agree	11.8%	21.7%	37.0%	34.2%	50.0%
Strongly Agree	29.4%	13.0%	18.5%	21.1%	9.1%
ANOVA: $F(4, 122) = 0.863029, p = 0.488$					

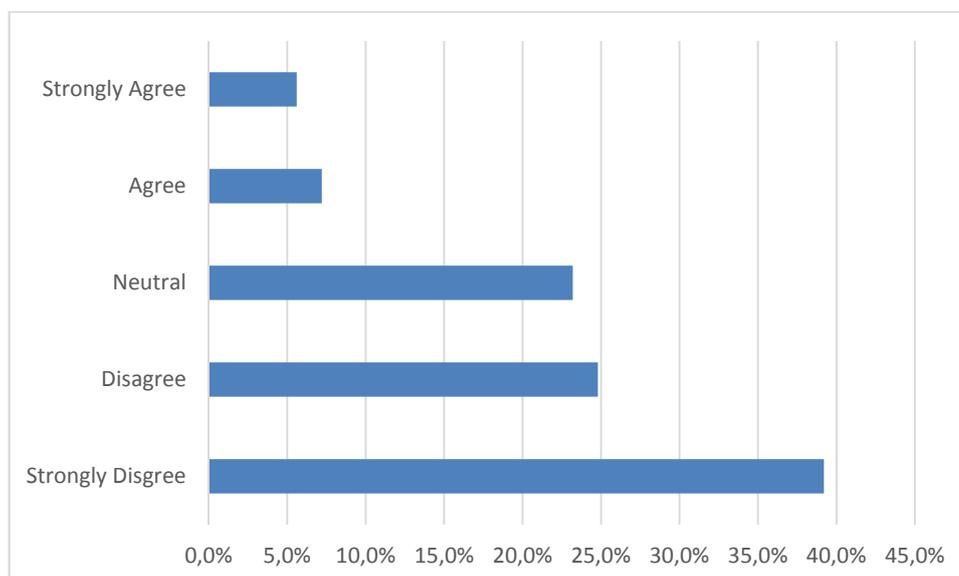
A comparison by generation reveals that Taiwanese youth in the fifth and sixth generations have the highest level of scepticism over the U.S. continuing to support Taiwan. However, like in the previous statement, there were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,122) = 0.863, p = .488$) (Table 3).

Whilst there is uncertainty over how strongly the U.S. would commit to defending Taiwan in a conflict with the PRC, the sale of arms to Taiwan are an ongoing arrangement. How do members of the public view arms deals between Taiwan and America?

When asked about arms sales to Taiwan, very few respondents feel that they are of sufficient quality to defend against an attack from China. By combining the strongly disagree and disagree ratings, it is revealed that 64% of respondents are unsatisfied with weapons sold to Taiwan (Graph 2).

Graph 2

United States arms sales to Taiwan are of a sufficient quality to defend against a Chinese attack



A cross-tabulation of the six generation categories shows that respondents older than 38 tend to be the most pessimistic about the quality of U.S. arms sales. Again, there were no statistically significant differences between group means for the third statement as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,120) = 1.672, p = .160$) (Table 4).

Table 4

Generations and attitudes towards quality of arms sales

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	35.3%	45.5%	51.9%	36.8%	23.8%
Disagree	41.2%	22.7%	14.8%	23.7%	28.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.5%	22.7%	25.9%	26.3%	14.3%
Agree	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%	5.3%	23.8%
Strongly Agree	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	7.9%	9.5%
	ANOVA: $F(4, 120) = 1.671890, p = 0.160$				

Why protect Taiwan?

In order to determine what Taiwanese perceive to be the rationale behind the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan, and whether there was any variation among generations in this regard, respondents were asked to give their opinion on the following four statements:

1. *By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to maintain political control over the region.*
2. *By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to protect fundamental values such as human rights, democracy and free markets.*
3. *By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to contain China.*
4. *By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to fulfil a moral obligation to a long-standing ally and friend.*

Overall results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5:

Motivations for U.S. security commitment to Taiwan.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

1. Political Control	11%	7.1%	22.8%	30.7%	28.3%
2. Democracy, human rights, free market	13.4%	19.7%	25.2%	26.0%	15.7%
3. Containing China	7.9%	6.3%	24.4%	31.5%	29.9%
4. Friend and ally	6.3%	21.3%	27.6%	25.2%	19.7%

By looking at the combined responses of the 127 questionnaires, we can see that respondents show the highest level of agreement with the first and third statement. Namely, the reasoning behind the U.S. protecting Taiwan is to maintain control over the region and to balance China's growing influence. From this, it is clear that people in Taiwan recognise the need for Washington's backing, but they take something of a practical approach as to why the commitment is in place.

How do the attitudes of different generations compare when looking at motivations behind the U.S. security commitment?

Table 6 shows the results for the first statement. Although respondents from each generation generally agreed with the statement, there is a higher level of polarisation among older respondents in the second and third generations, with around a quarter of respondents from these two generations expressing both strong agreement and strong disagreement.

Table 6

By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to maintain political control over the region

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	23.5%	26.1%	3.7%	7.9%	0.0%
Disagree	5.9%	4.3%	7.4%	7.9%	9.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29.4%	13.0%	29.6%	26.3%	13.6%
Agree	17.6%	30.4%	25.9%	26.3%	54.5%
Strongly Agree	23.5%	26.1%	33.3%	31.6%	22.7%
	ANOVA: $F(4, 122) = 1.506734, p = 0.204$				

Combining both the agree and strongly agree responses reveals a growing trend for suspicion of the U.S. from the second generation to the sixth. The

youngest respondents in the sixth generation are the least divided on this viewpoint. Results show that nearly 80% of those born after 1988 either agree or strongly agree that the U.S. is driven by a desire to maintain political control over the area. Nevertheless, statistical analysis reveals there to be no statistically significant differences between the means of each generation as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,122) = 1.506, p = .204$)

Table 7

By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to contain China

	Generation:				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	11.8%	21.7%	7.4%	2.6%	0%
Disagree	5.9%	4.3%	3.7%	10.5%	4.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17.6%	26.1%	29.6%	15.8%	36.4%
Agree	29.4%	26.1%	25.9%	36.8%	36.4%
Strongly Agree	35.3%	21.7%	33.3%	34.2%	22.7%
	ANOVA: $F(4, 122) = 1.232512, p = 0.300$				

Results for the third statement are displayed in table 7. A minority in the older generations tend to strongly disagree with the statement, including 21.7% of third generation respondents strongly disagreeing. However, findings indicate that there is general agreement across generations that the U.S. is motivated by a desire to contain China. This is supported by statistical analysis which showed there to be no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,122) = 1.233, p = .300$).

Future prospects

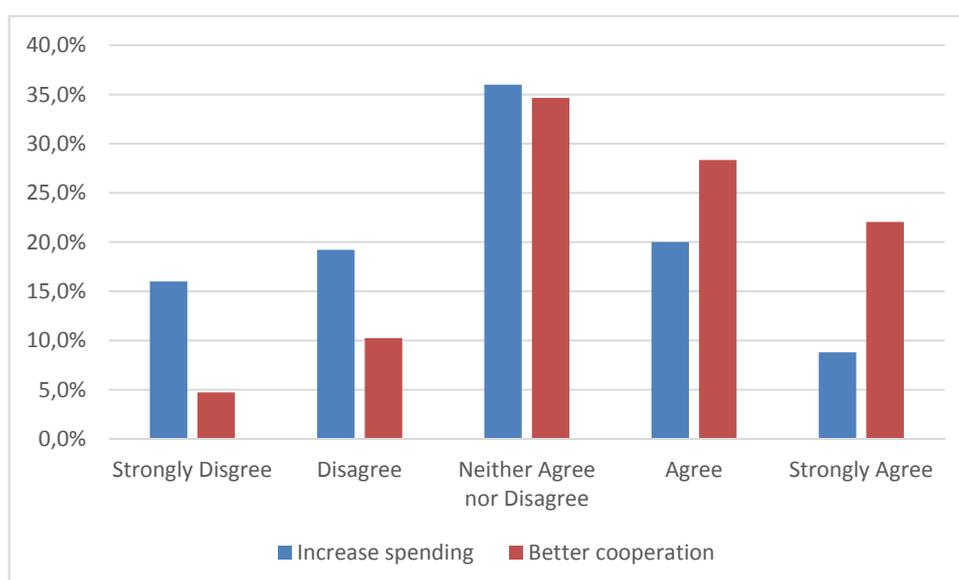
The current status quo in the Taiwan Strait hinges on the U.S. committing to defend Taiwan. However, respondents are doubtful about the continuation of this arrangement. With the substantial military imbalance between Taiwan and China, policy experts are divided on whether Taiwan should steer towards increasing their domestic defense budget or forming stronger bilateral ties with China. Public opinion in Taiwan is likely to impact on decisions made by officials in the near term. In order to gauge public sentiment in this regard, respondents were asked to state to what extent they agreed with the following two statements:

1. *Taiwan should increase military spending in the form of buying arms from the U.S. in order to protect itself.*
2. *Taiwan should aim for stronger cooperation with China in order to risk conflict.*

Although the majority of respondents gave neutral ratings to the statements, rather than increasing military spending, the Taiwanese public tend to favour cooperating with China to prevent a flare in relations (Graph 3).

Graph 3

Increase Military Spending vs. Strengthen Cooperation



Cross-tabulation indicates that the oldest respondents in the second and third generations are the least in favour of increasing military spending, whilst the youngest respondents tend to be the most undecided on this issue. Statistical analysis revealed there were no statistically significant differences between group means for this statement as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,120) = 0.559, p = .693$) (Table 8).

Table 8

Taiwan should increase military spending in the form of buying arms from the U.S. in order to protect itself

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	23.5%	27.3%	11.1%	16.2%	4.5%
Disagree	17.6%	22.7%	18.5%	16.2%	22.7%

Neither Agree nor Disagree	35.3%	22.7%	37.0%	40.5%	40.9%
Agree	11.8%	13.6%	22.2%	21.6%	27.3%
Strongly Agree	11.8%	13.6%	11.1%	5.4%	4.5%
	ANOVA: $F(4, 120) = 0.559152, p = 0.693$				

Rather than increasing military spending, the oldest respondents in the sixth generation tended to be the most in favour of aiming for better cooperation with China. Respondents in the sixth generation also tend to favour stronger cooperation with China. As for the previous statements, despite distinctions among the responses of each generation group there were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(4,122) = 1.449, p = .221$) (Table 9).

Table 9

Taiwan should aim for stronger cooperation with China in order to risk conflict

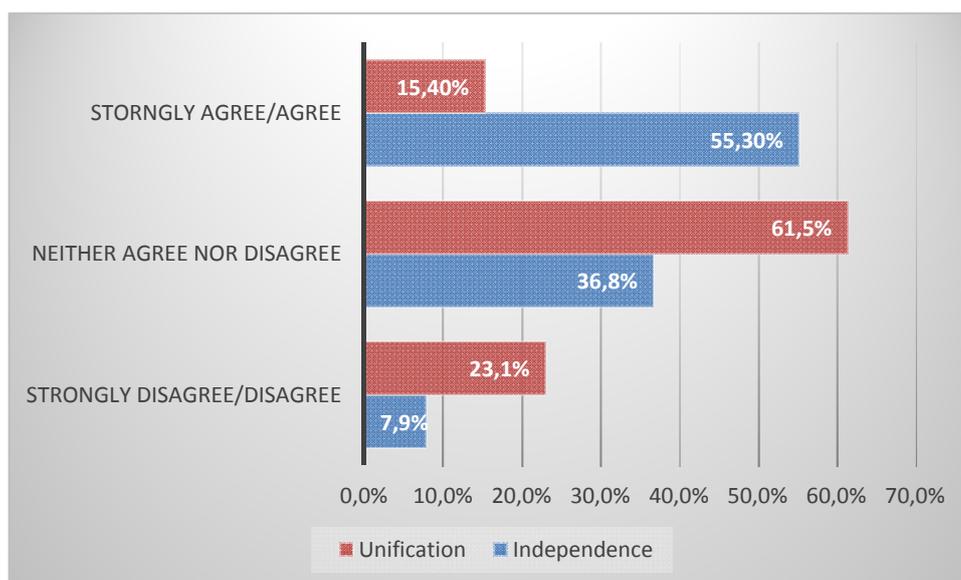
	Generation:				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	4.3%	3.7%	11.1%	2.6%	9.1%
Disagree	4.3%	7.4%	18.5%	21.1%	9.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.7%	40.7%	37.0%	31.6%	27.3%
Agree	26.1%	29.6%	22.2%	28.9%	36.4%
Strongly Agree	43.5%	18.5%	11.1%	15.8%	18.2%
	ANOVA: $F(4, 122) = 1.449147, p = 0.221$				

Additional Factors

Previous studies have found attitudes to the U.S. security commitment to be contingent on both party identification and preferences for independence or unification (Niou, 2004; Benson & Niou, 2005; Wang, 2013). This is corroborated by results found in the current study. By comparing support for independence or unification with responses to the statement ‘*The U.S. would send troops if China were to invade Taiwan*’, it is revealed that those who support independence are much more likely to disagree that the U.S. would send troops if China were to attack Taiwan (Graph 4).

Graph 4

Support for unification/independence and confidence in U.S. support

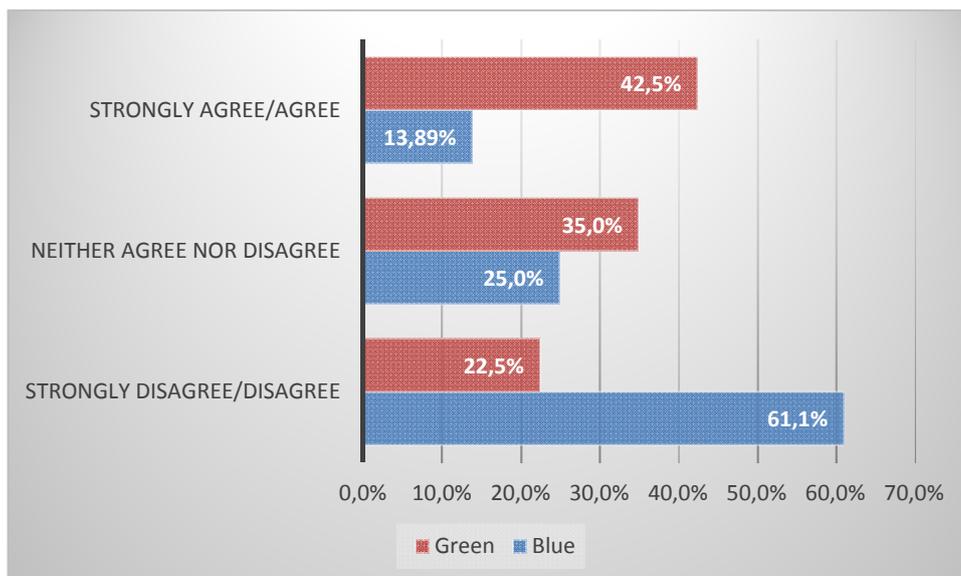


This is supported by statistical analysis: an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare confidence in U.S. support for the independence and unification preference conditions. There was a significant difference in the scores for independence ($M=3.6$, $SD=0.9$) and unification ($M=2.8$, $SD=1.2$) conditions; $t(16)=2.18$, $p = 0.04$. This suggest that preference for independence or unification has an effect on confidence in U.S. support. Specifically, support for independence results in higher confidence in U.S. support. However, where Wang (2013) found results for this statement to be contingent on party identification that was not shown to be the case in the current study.

Public support for increasing military spending was found to be contingent on party identification. Those who identify with the pan-Greens tend to favour increasing military spending, whilst those who identify with the pan-Blues tend to strongly reject the notion.

Graph 5

Party Preference and Increasing Military Spending

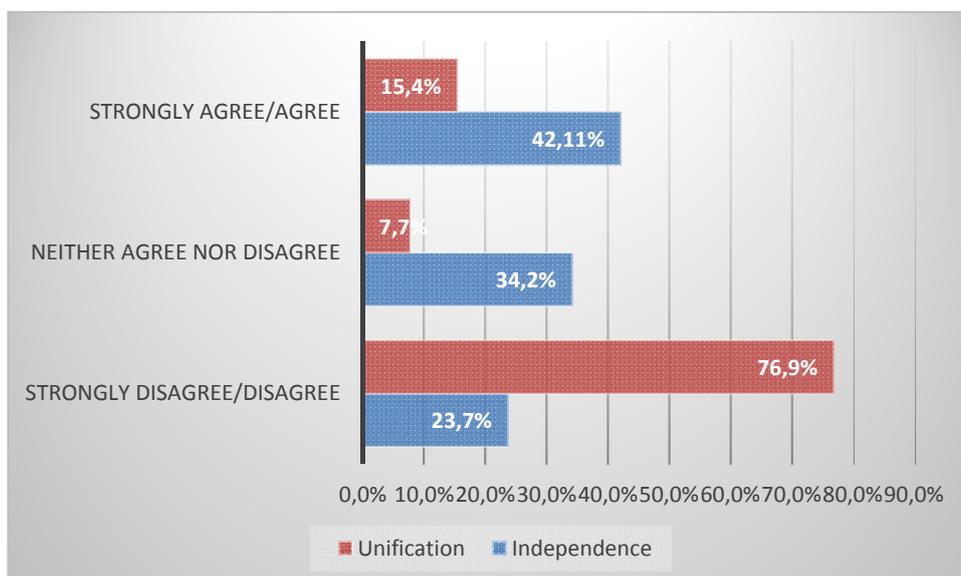


An independent-samples t-test was conducted on attitudes towards increasing military spending in the Blue and Green preference conditions. There was a significant difference in the scores for Blue ($M=2.2$, $SD=1.2$) and Green ($M=1.2$, $SD=3.2$) conditions; $t(73)=-3.8$, $p = 0.0003$. This suggests that party identification has an effect on support for increasing military spending.

A similar correlation was found when comparing support for independence or unification with attitudes towards increasing military spending. Whilst those who favour independence tended to agree with the statement, an overwhelming majority of 76.9% of respondents who favour unification opposed increasing spending (Graph 6).

Graph 6

Independence/Unification Preference and Increasing Military Spending

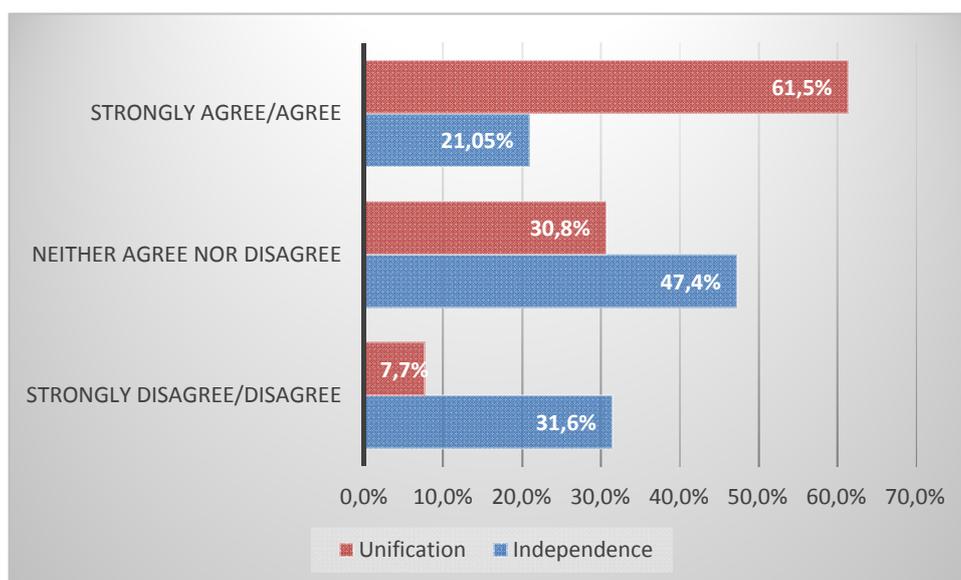


An independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference in the scores for independent ($M=3.3$, $SD=1.2$) and unification ($M=3.2$, $SD=1.4$) preference conditions; $t(18)=-2.6$, $p = 0.02$. This indicates that preference for independence or unification impacts on support for increasing military spending.

Unsurprisingly, those who support unification with China are largely in favour of greater cooperation with the superpower (Graph 7).

Graph 7

Independence/Unification Preference and Cooperation with China



An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare support for cooperation with China in independence and unification preference conditions. There was a significant difference in the scores for independence ($M=2.9$, $SD=1$) and unification ($M=2.8$, $SD=0.9$) conditions; $t(21)=-3$, $p = 0.01$. This suggest that preference for unification has an effect on support for cooperation with China. Specifically, those who support unification show a stronger desire for cooperation with the mainland.

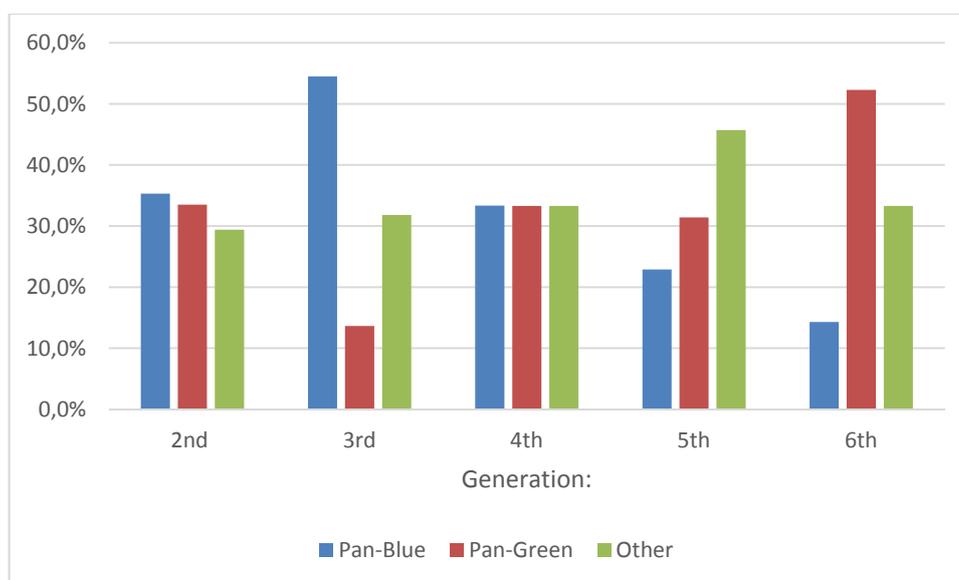
Generation Characteristics

The following is a description of Taiwan's political generations based on party identification, national identity and independence/unification preference. Respondents were asked which political party they felt closest to with the option of selecting from the six major political parties (KMT, DPP, New Party, Taiwan Solidarity Union, People First Party, New Power Party). Results were then totalled into the two major politics camps (Pan-Blue Coalition and Pan-Green Coalition).

Respondents were also given an ‘other’ option. If this option was selected, respondents were invited to write which alternative political party they felt closest to. Given this option a number of respondents wrote that they support an independent candidate or had no political affiliation (Graph 8).

Graph 8

Partisanship



The youngest respondents in the sixth generation showed the largest support for the Pan-Green coalition, whilst a majority of fifth generation respondents had no party preference. The fourth generation were equally split among Pan-Blue, Pan-Green and no party preference. The second and third generations showed the highest degree of support for the Pan-Blue camp. Notably, a large majority of 54.5% of third generation respondents said they felt closest to the Pan-Blue camp.

Table 10

National Identity

	Taiwanese	Chinese	Both Chinese and Taiwanese	Other
2nd generation	70.6%	0%	23.5%	5.9%
3rd generation	39.1%	0%	56.5%	4.3%
4th generation	63.1%	11.1%	22.2%	3.7%
5th generation	86.8%	0%	13.2%	0%
6th generation	90.9%	0%	4.5%	4.5%

With the exception of the third generation, the majority of respondents identified as Taiwanese. Particularly the younger respondents in the fifth and sixth

generations. The unusually high number of respondents in the third generation who identify as both Chinese and Taiwanese correlates with this sample group's majority support for the Pan-Blue Coalition.

To find out how respondents positioned themselves on the independence-unification spectrum, the following question was asked: *Taiwan independence is a controversial issue. Some people support Taiwan independence, others support unification with China. What is your view on this issue?*

Table 11

Independence vs. Unification

	<i>Generation:</i>				
	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Support Independence	11.8%	4.5%	3.8%	15.8%	4.5%
Support Independence	29.4%	4.5%	23.1%	21.1%	27.3%
Support Status Quo	47.1%	72.7%	57.7%	63.2%	63.6%
Support Unification	11.8%	4.5%	15.4%	0.0%	4.5%
Strongly Support Unification	0.0%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The results from this question vary little from previous research. There is a growing trend for support for independence, but most people favour a continuation of the status quo. Whilst people in the second generation tend to have strong Taiwanese self-identification, this generation also features a subgroup who favour unification with China. The fact that this generation contains some of Taiwanese identity politics more prominent figures, such as Ma Ying-jeou and Chen Shui-bian, provides further illustration of this generation's division. (Rigger, 2015).

Conclusion of Findings

The current study found the Taiwanese public to be confident in U.S. support. However, the third generation stood out as the most doubtful about the likelihood of a U.S. intervention. It was found that attitudes were contingent on where respondents stood in the independence/unification debate – supporters of unification were more likely to disagree that the U.S. would send troops. This helps to explain doubt among third generation respondents, as this generation contained the largest number of respondents in favour of unification.

Respondents did not feel that the U.S. would continue to back Taiwan indefinitely, 50.4% of all those surveyed felt the U.S. are likely to withdraw

support in the future. This sentiment was particularly strong among Taiwan's youth in the fifth and sixth generations.

When looking at what the public feel to be the motive behind the U.S. support, respondents sided most strongly with the notion that the U.S. is acting on a desire to control the region and contain China rather than protecting democracy or helping an ally. Again, the youth seemed to feel most keenly about this issue with findings showing the sixth generation to be almost unanimous that the U.S. seeks to control the region.

The results in this study indicate that Taiwanese favour better cooperation with the PRC over increasing spending. The oldest respondents tended to be the most opposed to increasing spending. Further analysis revealed Green supporters to be more in favour of increasing spending than Blues. Likewise, those who favour unification tended to reject further military spending, opting instead for better cooperation with the mainland. Interestingly, the youngest respondents in the sixth generation showed a high level of support for better cooperation with China despite demonstrating support for independence.

As mentioned, statistical analysis involving party identity and independence/preference often revealed a contingency on surveyed attitudes. However, analyses comparing generations did not show statistical significance. This suggest that there is not a substational divide between generations when it comes to opinion on the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan. However, it should be noted that the current study was limited in size. Future studies adopting a larger sampling pool may produce more accurate findings.

Discussion

In spite of the unclear message sent by Washington, the current study found the Taiwanese public to demonstrate a high degree of confidence that the U.S. would defend Taiwan if conflict were to occur with China. Nevertheless, the large portion of respondents who were undecided on this issue should not be ignored. Previous research by the National Chengchi University asked a similar question. However, respondents were only given the option of a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This method of enquiry found that 73.5% of respondents were confident that the U.S. would send troops (Wang, 2013). Would such a large majority display confidence in the U.S. given the choice of answering 'don't know'? From the current research, it seems unlikely.

Comparing the attitudes of the five generations involved in this study reveals little variation on this issue. In fact, confidence in U.S. support tends to be more contingent on where people position themselves in the independence debate: those who favour unification with China are shown to be significantly less confident in the U.S. than those who favour independence. Since the third generation showed the most sympathy for unification, this can help to explain why they are the most doubtful about the U.S. committing to defend Taiwan. Generational politics provides further explanation for this tendency among the third generation. They reached their formative years at a time when the economy was flourishing under the KMT government. Unlike previous generations, they had no living memory of the beginning of the White Terror and the February 28 Incident in which thousands died as a result of the unsteady transition to an ROC-governed Taiwan. People growing up in this generation will have been heavily influenced by the government agenda of the time. To them, unification with China meant 'recapturing the homeland'. By comparison, the second generation are the most confident in the U.S. protecting Taiwan. Beyond the fact that they have strong support for independence, a further explanation could be that the second generation experienced their formative years prior to the severing of UN recognition of the Republic of China and the establishment of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1971. Succeeding generations would have grown up with the current status quo, which is heavily influenced by U.S. policy ambiguity.

If the public in Taiwan are largely confident that the U.S. would come to Taiwan's aid in the current political environment, how can we explain the lack of confidence in Taiwan's future situation as a beneficiary to U.S. protection? As China's economy and military infrastructure continues to expand, it seems Taiwan's younger generations view the situation with a pragmatic, if not somewhat bleak, outlook. Generational politics may provide some insight into this trend: whilst the second generation grew up in isolation from China, the third generation faced a Chinese economy on the rise following reforms commencing in 1978. However, all subsequent generations experienced their formative years with the size of the Chinese economy an everyday reality – and none more so than the fifth and sixth generations. As Liu (2017) points out, there exists an interesting quandary in the current state of affairs. For young people in Taiwan just entering the job market, China represents both a military and political threat and an enticement in terms of economic opportunity.

Chinese military spending has risen rapidly since the 1990s. Today China's budget is second only to the United States (SIPRI, 2017). Much of China's military build-up has been focused on exerting pressure on Taiwan; with thousands of missiles trained on Taiwan (Bush, 2016), it is little wonder that Taiwanese people feel dwarfed by the threat of China. The current study found respondents to have little faith in Taiwan's ability to defend itself against an attack from China. Despite low levels of satisfaction with arms sales, the Taiwanese public are unclear on whether increasing defence spending would provide an effective remedy to the imbalance in military power across the strait. Rather than increasing spending, people from all generations were in agreement that better cooperation with China was essential in maintaining peace across the Taiwan Strait. Support for improving cross-strait ties was particularly strong among Taiwan's youngest generation. Since the critical period in this generation's political development coincided with the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, could this be a major contributing factor in how Taiwan's youth approach the situation? It can be argued that the youth of today are compelled to deeper introspection than ever before on Taiwan's position in the world. As they take up leadership roles in the near-future, their level-headedness and pragmatism will be crucial factors in ensuring peace in the Taiwan Strait.

Conclusion

The current study found there to be something of a consensus among Taiwan's generations concerning a number of issues related to the U.S. security commitment. It was found that members from each generation were confident in the U.S. committing to defend Taiwan in the current political environment. However, this confidence did not extend indefinitely, and respondents appeared doubtful about the U.S. maintaining support for Taiwan in the future. Respondents were also shown to prefer cooperation with the PRC rather than spending more on a domestic military budget. Contrary to expectations, respondents did not demonstrate remarkable differences in their opinion on these issues according to their generational group. Although there were dissimilarities in the attitudes of each generation, these were not significant enough to constitute a generation gap. Statistical analyses failed to reject the null hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is not a significant difference in attitudes to the U.S. security commitment by generation. Despite major political upheavels throughout Taiwan's recent history – such as the U.S. switching diplomatic relations from the the ROC to the PRC, China's abandonment of a planned economy, and Taiwan's transition to a democracy and the rise of Taiwanese identity – all of which have lead to the formation of Taiwan's six-generation political model, it can be argued that the basic nature of the United States security commitment has been little altered in the past 70 years. For that reason, it seems that Taiwan's generations stand together on issues pertinent to the security relationship between Taiwan and America. Nevertheless, whilst disagreements continue to exist between the governments of Beijing and Taipei, the balancing act in the Taiwan Strait remains as shaky as ever.

Hopefully this study will serve to complement ongoing and future research into public attitudes towards Taiwan security issues and cross-strait relations.

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Appendix 1 – Survey Questions

Demographics

1. Please select the age range that describes you:
 - 1) 86 or older 2) 85-64 3) 63-49 4) 48-38 5) 37-29 6) 28 or younger
2. Please state your age:
3. Please state you gender:
 - 1) Male 2) Female
4. Please state your highest level of completed education:
 - 1) Didn't graduate from high school 2) High school graduate 3) University Undergraduate 4) Master's graduate 5) PhD graduate
5. Please state your monthly income
 - 1) Less than 30,000 2) 30,000 – 50,000 3) 50,000 – 70,000 4) More than 70,000

Partisanship

1. Of the main political parties here, which party if any do you feel closest to?
 - 1) KMT 2) DPP 3) New Party 4) Taiwan Solidarity Union 5) People First Party 6) New Power Party 7) Other
2. If “other”, please state:

National Identity

1. I consider myself.....
 - 1) Taiwanese 2) Chinese 3) Both Chinese and Taiwanese 4) Other
2. If “other”, please state:

Independence/Unification

1. Taiwan independence is a controversial issue. Some people support Taiwan independence, others support unification with China. What is your view on this issue?

Strongly support Taiwan independence.....1

Support Taiwan independence.....	2
Support the status quo.....	3
Support unification.....	4
Strongly support unification.....	5

Psychological Involvement

1. How interested would you say you are in politics (and/or international affairs)?

Very interested.....	1
Somewhat interested.....	2
Not very interested.....	3
Not at all interested.....	4

2. Where do you get most of your information regarding cross-strait relations?

News outlets (Newspaper, TV, radio, online news).....	1
Family (parents, relatives, etc.).....	2
Friends and colleagues.....	3
Education.....	4
Other.....	5

3. Do you follow any news outlets on Facebook?

1) Yes

Please state:

2) No

4. Do you read any newspapers?

1) Yes

Please state:

2) No

5. Which TV news channel(s) do you usually watch at home?

1) Please state:

2) I don't watch TV news.

5. If you get information about cross-strait relations from any other sources, please state them here:

6. How often do you follow news about politics and international affairs?

Everyday.....	1
Several times a week.....	2
Once or twice a week.....	3

Not even once a week.....4

Practically never.....5

7. When you get together with family members or friends, how often do you discuss politics and/or international affairs?

Frequently.....1

Occasionally.....2

Rarely.....3

Never.....4

U.S. security commitment

Section 1:

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements.

1 is 'Strongly Disagree', 2 is 'Disagree', 3 is 'Undecided', 4 is 'Agree' and 5 is 'Strongly Agree'.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The U.S. would send troops if China were to invade Taiwan	1	2	3	4	5
2	The U.S. would send troops if China were to invade Taiwan in response to a declaration of Taiwan independence	1	2	3	4	5
3	By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to maintain political control over the region.	1	2	3	4	5
4	By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to protect fundamental values such as human rights, democracy and free markets.	1	2	3	4	5
5	By protecting Taiwan, the U.S. seeks to contain China.	1	2	3	4	5
6	By protecting Taiwan, the U.S.	1	2	3	4	5

	seeks to fulfil a moral obligation to a long-standing ally and friend.					
7	The U.S. are likely to withdraw support for Taiwan in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The U.S. has its own agenda when it comes to Taiwan-China relations.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 2:

Please state your level of agreement with the following statements.

1 is 'Strongly Disagree', 2 is 'Disagree', 3 is 'Undecided', 4 is 'Agree' and 5 is 'Strongly Agree'.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Taiwan would be able to defend itself in a conflict with China.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Overall, the sale of arms to Taiwan brings stability to Taiwan-China relations.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The United States profits from the situation on the Taiwan strait by selling arms to Taiwan.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Taiwan should increase military spending, in the form of buying arms from the U.S., in order to protect itself.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Taiwan should aim for stronger	1	2	3	4	5

	cooperation with China in order to risk conflict.					
6	United States arms sales to Taiwan are of a sufficient quality to defend against a Chinese attack	1	2	3	4	5