THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF PUBLIC OPINION IN A VULNERABLE DEMOCRACY: THE TAIWANESE CASE

by

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Dedicated to Wei-Hsin Liu, Boba Wu, and my family members in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the intersection of foreign policy, public opinion, and domestic politics in Taiwan, a relatively young democracy under persistent threat. It examines the influence of a variety of internal political forces on Taiwanese foreign policy and employs various methodologies. The dissertation contributes to the scant literature of weak state political behavior in political science. It sheds light on the nuances missing in research that focuses on major powers. Substantively, it integrates a variety of subfields including international relations, public opinion, public support for war, and Taiwan studies.

Drawing from original surveys of activists and elites, the first study examines how public opinion on the Sunflower Movement, a nationwide movement led mostly by students, shaped the decisions of political leaders who were negotiating a major trade pact with China. The central finding from this case is that in some circumstances, public opinion could outweigh the importance of political factors such as elite rivalry in influencing the decision-making of political elites. The second study analyzes mass opinions regarding a hypothetical armed conflict with China. I find that generations, neglected in existing war support literature, play an essential role in shaping popular support for this conflict. Finally, I develop a novel theory of diversionary foreign policy pursued by asymmetrically weak states. Here, I show how Taiwanese leaders use aggressive foreign policy toward China to divert from domestic problems and garner public support. The major theoretical claims are that weak state leaders, for various reasons, often would use different types of diversionary tactics compared to their counterparts in major powers.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Economist (2021) recently called Taiwan “the most dangerous place on Earth.” As China's People's Liberation Army continues to improve, existing security guarantee from the US to support Taiwan in a military conflict could be jeopardized. Sino-US relations have become more strained during the global pandemic, and the tensions might lead Beijing to believe that taking Taiwan back could strengthen its position in this hegemonic competition. This pessimistic view led experts interviewed in the report to predict that an invasion of Taiwan by China could happen before 2027.

On the question of whether China would really invade Taiwan in the near future, much ink has been spent on investigating into numerous angles. But much has been said about Taiwan. Despite being clearly a weak state in this trio, Taiwan does have active agency to pursue foreign policy that fits its national interests. In history, actions from leaders in Taiwan often propel reactions from both Beijing and Washington. Thus, a complete analysis of a Sino-US conflict should not exclude Taiwan.

What should a weak state like Taiwan do to avoid war? Theories of international relations would give the following suggestions: realists would examine the configuration of power across the three parties and give recommendations to Taiwan to balance or bandwagon accordingly; liberals would encourage Taiwan to continue to trade with China to benefit from the pacifying effects of economic integration; constructivists would want Taiwan to gradually modify its threat perception toward China by forming a new identity based on trust.

Advice from systemic theories will do little to assure those petrified of a war in Taiwan. First, balancing with the US by taking actions such as increasing military spending dramatically

could further irritate China to initiate a preventive war; bandwagoning with China could alienate Taiwan's relations with the US, Taiwan's major security partner and supplier of arms for decades. There is also no guarantee that bandwagoning would reduce Chinese desire to annex Taiwan. A weaker Taiwan might even increase such a possibility. Suggestions from liberalism do not bode well, either, as trade and investment with China during the past two decades have not led China to renounce its threats to use force against Taiwan. China even encourages Taiwanese businesses invested in China to promote pro-unification messages in Taiwan (Schubert, 2013). Last, constructivists' advice also seems impractical, as more citizens in Taiwan nowadays eschew a dual identity of "Chinese" and "Taiwanese" to favor a "Taiwanese" only identity.

If structural theories are limited, then it might be helpful to open the black box of "Taiwan" to investigate into the domestic factors and processes that influence its foreign policy. Shifting from the systemic structure of the trilateral relationship to domestic politics in Taiwan, I argue, would yield unique insights of this potential conflict. Thus, this dissertation explores various domestic factors and their influence on Taiwan's foreign policy. I am especially interested in the role of public opinion. Specifically, I study the nexus of public opinion and foreign policy to study how leaders and citizens in Taiwan could be influenced by public opinion and major historical events in their foreign policy decision-making process.

Theoretically, the dissertation demonstrates the potential that a weak state like Taiwan could contribute to international relations scholarship. To this day, much of what we know about domestic politics and conflict comes from cross-national studies and it is unclear if such knowledge could be applicable to weak states as they operate with different assumptions and contexts. Thus, reexamining some of the long-standing topics in a context of a weak state like Taiwan could benefit us with nuances and increase the diversity in the literature. To achieve this goal, I select three research topics examined often with major powers: social movements, public

support for war, and diversionary theory of war. In the following, I provide an overview of each chapter and explain how each of them makes a unique contribution to understanding not only this potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait but also our knowledge of international relations literature.

1.2 Chapter Overview

1.2.1 Chapter Two: How Public Opinion Influenced Taiwan's Sunflower Movement?

The 2014 Sunflower Movement was a student-led social movement that occupied Taiwan's Congress for 23 days to protest against a comprehensive trade pact with China. The movement was a success, as it stopped the verification process of the trade pact indefinitely. Whereas many attributes the success of the movement to an alliance between political elites and the movement based on an existing elite rift (Ho, 2015), I argue that changing public opinion is the more important driver behind the alliance. With original data from interviews with political elites, their staff members, and activists in Taiwan, in addition to secondary information, I confirm public opinion to be the major reason for the political alliance.

A theoretical contribution from this study is that while existing studies have demonstrated that clear public support could often lead to changes in legislations and policies, the relationship between public opinion and social movements is rarely explored. This case of the Sunflower Movement suggests that public opinion is a critical factor for the movement's success. Supportive public opinion could help social movements achieve their political goals by forming political alliances with elites that the movement alone could not achieve naturally. But public opinion is in fact a double-edged sword for activists. Public enthusiasm for social issues is often transient, so activists need to pay attention to the fluctuations of public opinion to increase their movement's impact.

Another implication from this study is that social movements in major powers often amount to policy changes at the domestic level, but for a weak state like Taiwan, a movement could reshape its foreign relations. This study reveals that a social movement and the ensuing consensus among citizens could be a foreign policy tool for weak states. Thus, strong movements could enhance the negotiating position of a weak state in their interactions with other countries. Due to their lack of military and economic prowess to advance their goals in international politics, leaders in weak states could use social movements to buttress their position in negotiations. In the case of cross-Strait relations, the Sunflower Movement forced China to abandon the proposal of the trade pact and look for other alternatives.

1.2.2 Chapter Three: Generations and War Support in Taiwan

This paper tackles the question of public attitudes toward self-defense among the public in Taiwan in a potential war with China. Theoretically, it helps answer the question of whether generation-specific experiences influence one's subsequent war attitudes. Building on theories and studies of generations, I argue that citizens formulate their political attitudes based on major events in their adolescence. Thus, different generations would possess distinct attitudes toward support for military conflicts based on their divergent prior experience.

Taiwan is a valuable case for studying war support on two fronts. First, apart from traditional war support cases of Western countries that evaluate the use of force as an option, the public in Taiwan considers war support not as a choice, but a necessity (Yeh & Wu, 2020). An armed conflict China will almost certainly occur on Taiwanese soil, directly impacting the lives of all Taiwanese citizens. This is a common characteristic of many weak states that existing war support literature has not yet grasped.

The case of Taiwan has a second advantage. When thinking about war support, many in the US operate with an assumption that the US is constantly engaged in an armed conflict or is preparing for an upcoming conflict. This makes it difficult for scholars to tease out the impact of a specific conflict on a generation and how it influences their support for future military operations. The history of Taiwan is helpful here. The most recent armed combat that resulted in battle deaths between Taiwan and China occurred nearly six decades ago, so it is feasible to study generational differences based on their experience with an armed conflict and other major foreign policy events.

I use Duke University's Taiwan National Security Surveys (TNSS) from 2002 to 2019 to analyze Taiwanese citizens' attitudes toward self-defense in a hypothetical armed conflict with China. I find support for several hypotheses of generational difference. Specifically, citizens that have been through armed conflicts with China were found to be more supportive of a conflict against China by 14% than those that had not experienced an armed conflict. In addition to fighting on the battlefield, hostiles toward China as a result of international isolation by the Communist party also made citizens to be more supportive of a conflict against China. This study suggests that generations and their defining events do shape public support for use of force.

1.2.3 Chapter Four: Diversionary Behavior of Weak States

This paper begins with an empirical puzzle. Why did the former president of Taiwan, Chen Shui Bian, start resorting to rhetoric blaming China and pursuing Taiwan's independence from the beginning of 2006, but not before since he began his presidency in 2000. Before 2006, Chen's rhetoric toward China was reserved with pledges to avoid pursuing Taiwan's independence, whereas in his New Year's speech in 2006, Chen openly encouraged the civil society to come up with a new constitution for Taiwan for a referendum in 2007. Chen's change of attitude was surprising to many observers of Taiwanese politics.

Grounded in theories of diversionary foreign policy, I argue that Chen employed diversionary foreign policy to use offensive language aimed at a foreign opponent (Carter, 2020). Chen's statement is a clear example as he blamed China's military aggression and used Taiwan's independence to rally support from the public. Chen's political situation in his second term also closely mirrored that of a beleaguered president. His second term was filled with scandals involving high officials, his son-in-law, his wife and eventually himself. Chen also faced internal opposition trying to remove him as the head of the state. These circumstances motivated him to use diversionary behavior to save his political career.

The paper studies the conditions under which Chen resorted to diversionary foreign policy. After examining several hypotheses related to political opposition and pressure from a major power such as the United States, I found that internal opposition alone did not motivate Chen to adopt diversionary behavior. Only after a major electoral defeat led to dwindling public support and internal opposition did Chen choose to do so. Additionally, pressure from the United States did not change Chen's behavior.

1.3 Conclusion

Overall, this dissertation centers around the impact of public opinion on foreign policy in a weak state like Taiwan. The three chapters demonstrate that, even for topics that have received much attention, weak states could move the frontier forward by introducing nuances previously ignored. Thus, this dissertation should be seen as an effort to focus more on weak states and their potential contribution to international relations literature. In addition to incorporating other weak states to see if similar findings on the three topics could be reached, future weak state research should examine other topics.

With respect to the literature on weak state foreign policy, my dissertation also helps raise a few points. First, contrary to existing knowledge that suggests weak states are less likely to engage in risky behaviors or conformational foreign policy, my diversionary paper suggests that when domestic pressure runs high, weak state leaders could resort to risky foreign policy that might bring negative consequences to their foreign relations such as endangering their relations with major powers. Thus, my study echoes previous ones, including Elman (1995), de Carvalho and Neumann (2015), and Steinsson (2017) that challenge this conventional wisdom.

On the question of whether weak states are more likely to balance (Labs, 1992; Waltz, 1979) or bandwagon (Walt, 1987; Levy, 1989), this dissertation shows that the context in which weak states make their foreign policy matters. In the case of Taiwan, situated in a power competition between two major powers of the United States and China, the choice is complicated. In the case of Chen's presidency, he chose a more neutral stance from both major powers before 2006, and with his aggressive foreign policy toward China, he clearly leaned toward balancing after 2006. However, as a small state leader, Chen was impervious to US pressure. Taken together, we need more theories to explain the interactions between domestic politics and international conditions in explaining weak state behaviors.

Relatedly, my dissertation shows that different segments of the population in Taiwan are more supportive of a military action against China. This echoes another study that reveals the willingness to go to war with China among citizens in Taiwan is close to 40% under certain conditions (Wu et al., 2021). These finding suggests that in addition to reasons such as political bias (Jackson & Morelli, 2007), citizens in weak states are willing to engage in a conflict that many thinks or know that they are likely to lose. In the case of Taiwan, many are aware of China's clear advantage in military capability, but it clearly does not dissuade citizens from going to war.

On a different note, some might even argue that it might be premature to argue that Taiwan would lose to China in a military conflict, even without assistance from the United States (e.g., Greer, 2018). Studies have shown that weak states often perform better than expected in conflict because they may be willing to allocate more resources to prepare for a conflict (Habeeb, 1988). Research by Arreguin-Toft (2001) shows that weak countries outperform larger countries in conflicts since 1950s. Thus, Taiwan is not necessarily in a disadvantageous position against China in a conflict.

The dissertation also provides policy implications. First, the international society could be reassured that for a weak state like Taiwan, voluntary initiation of an armed conflict against China is unlikely. To ameliorate domestic pressure, leaders of Taiwan might use diversionary foreign policy to divert public criticisms, but the likelihood that the aggressive foreign policy would turn into actual use of force is slim. What is more likely is that leaders in Taiwan could offset pressure from China by supporting social movements and use it as a foreign policy tool.

Thus, for the potential conflict across the Strait, this dissertation offers soothing news. Both Washington and Beijing could feel confident that a conflict across the Strait is unlikely to materialize in the near future, at least from the side of Taiwan. The result is a combination of two countervailing forces. On the one hand, while the older generations in Taiwan are supportive of going to war with China, their enthusiasm will likely to be hampered by many factors (i.e., they might be physically limited to fight on the battlefield). The younger generations, though harboring hostilities toward China, still depend on it for their economic benefits. Thus, as Taiwan and China continue to increase in commerce and trade, I see little reasons to suggest that a war will be on the horizon.

CHAPTER 2. HOW PUBLIC OPINION SHAPES TAIWAN'S SUNFLOWER MOVEMENT1

2.1 Introduction

On the evening of March 18, 2014, Taiwanese university students and NGO workers stormed the assembly hall of Taiwan's Legislature. Their occupation of Taiwan's capitol initiated a 24-day social movement — the Sunflower Movement. The protest was a desperate attempt to block the opaque review and ratification process of the Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement (CSSTA) with China. When the movement ended, it successfully postponed the verification process of the trade pact indefinitely.

Observers do not dispute the social movement's influence in this case (Rowen, 2015). What is disputed is the mechanism, the causal pathway, by which the social movement exerted its effect. *How* did the movement succeed in influencing public policy? Since most participants were students and NGO members, they had limited financial and political resources to influence policy change. Therefore, many believe the movement achieved its success in blocking the ratification through the assistance of political allies external to the movement. In fact, previous work has offered some evidence supporting the argument that an alliance with political elites often helps social movements achieve policy goals (Giugni & Passy, 1998).

The dispute centers on what drives these important alliances. In the case of the Sunflower Movement, the emerging consensus in the literature argues that movement activists utilized a rivalry between top leaders of the then-incumbent party — the Kuomintang (KMT) to leverage influence. Ho argues: "In fact, it was largely due to the personal rivalry between Ma Ying-jeou

[1] This paper is published in the *Journal of East Asian Studies* in 2019 (full citation: Wu, C. (2019). How Public Opinion Shapes Taiwan's Sunflower Movement. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *19(3)*, 289-307.

(Taiwan's ex-President) and Wang Jin-pyng (ex-President of Taiwan's Congress) that protesters were able to take hold of the plenary conference chamber on March 18 and also conclude their protest with a claim of success on April 10" (Ho, 2015, 92).

While the elite-rivalry argument is widely shared, it neglects the influence of public opinion in the movement's success. Since the movement received substantial public support from the beginning, the voice of the public could also force decisionmakers to comply with the public's policy preferences. Although Ho included poll results of public support and disapproval of the movement, the mechanisms by which public opinion could influence policymakers is not his focus. Thus, there is still a possibility that the elite alliance with activists that he identifies as important for the movement's success could be driven by public opinion. I argue that more careful specification of this mechanism better shows the influence of public opinion. Thus, this paper reexamines the Sunflower Movement with an eye to offering a more specific account of how social movements can work through public opinion to affect public policy.

I present original data from interviews conducted in Taiwan regarding critical decisions made by political leaders, especially the ex-President of Taiwan's Legislature, Wang Jin-pyng, and secondary information from newspapers and reports. I conclude that public opinion, as opposed to the Ma-Wang elite rivalry, was the major reason for the emergence of the elite alliance and subsequent success of the Sunflower Movement. Public opinion helped shape Wang's critical decisions throughout the movement: whether to eject activists with police force from the legislature and announce the decision to postpone the verification process. The former helped the movement gained momentum, whereas the latter enabled the movement to achieve their political goal of blocking the trade pact.

Elite rivalry is an insufficient explanation for the alliance for two reasons: 1) the unpredictability of social movement outcome, and 2) the risks of following the path guided by the

personal rivalry. When the Sunflower Movement first started, few, including Wang, knew how it would develop. It was unlikely that Wang would swiftly decide to ally with activists solely based on his personal rivalry with Ma, without assessing public support for the movement. Additionally, blindly following the steps as guided by elite rivalry to thwart Ma's plan to pass the trade pact could bring political risk to Wang. Despite his personal rivalry with Ma, Wang still had many supporters inside his own party. Deviating from the party's default stance to support the movement, just for weakening Ma's political power, could alienate his supporters inside the party. In short, attributing Wang's elite alliance to elite rivalry incorrectly amplifies its role in the movement's success. As a seasoned politician, Wang made his decisions by learning about public opinion before deciding his own position with respect to the movement.

This study contributes to our understandings of the conditions under which social movements can make an impact on policy. It shows that the voices of the masses can be more important than political factors such as elite rivalry in elite decision-making. Broadly, this paper expands a growing body of literature that challenge social movement models that focus mostly on political or intra-legislative factors, to the exclusion of public opinion, as their main variable of interest in explaining movement outcomes (Burstein, 1998; Manza & Brooks, 2012). As demonstrated, without evaluating the influence of public opinion, those storyline behind those studies may have been oversimplified.

2.2 Mediators of Social Movement Success

Although several factors, such as mobilizing structures and framing of a movement, have been found to influence a movement's outcomes (Gamson, 1975; McCarthy & Zald 1977; Snow et al., 1986; Tarrow, 1994; McAdam et al., 1996), there has been a growing interest in understanding how alliance with political elites helps social movements achieve their goals.

Scholars working on this strand of research take the assumption that movements alone cannot realize their political objectives. Instead, their policy successes are often mediated by factors external to the movement itself, such as internal division among political leaders or public opinion. These factors form the basis for an alliance between elites and social movements. Research shows that when movements have institutional actors as allies on their side, they are often more likely to achieve their policy goals (Amenta et al., 1992).

There is an ongoing debate, however, as to which external factors (elite rivalry or public opinion) carry the most significance for the emergence of elite alliances so critical to movement success: what makes these elites receptive to social movement demands? Scholars focusing on elite rivalry argue that when elites are fractured, have a personal rivalry, or have second thoughts about current political institutions, instabilities arise (Field et al., 1976). Alliance with social movement could serve to check the political opponent's power. As a result, movements are more likely to succeed when there exists disagreement within a political party, resulting in political alliance with the movement (Burton, 1977; Amenta et al., 1992; Amenta et al., 1999; Amenta et al., 2005; Ho, 2015).

Ho builds his explanation of Sunflower Movement's success on this idea. In addition to other important factors responsible for the movement's success (e.g. support from the opposition party, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the urgency the activists felt about the bill passing and the radical way of protest by occupying the legislature), he argues that the internal split within the incumbent party between top two leaders was the major reason for social movement success: "In fact, it was largely due to the personal rivalry between Ma Ying-jeou and Wang Jin-pyng that protesters were able to take hold of the plenary conference chamber on March 18 and also conclude their protest with a claim of success on April 10" (Ho, 2015, 92). In other words, elite rivalry led Wang to become an ally to the movement and helped it achieve success.

Ho's explanations, however, do not give enough credit to the role that public opinion played in the movement. Since the movement carried broad public support from the beginning, the alliance between elites and the movements could also be sparked by supportive public opinion. Studies show public opinion can motivate politicians to align with social movements. Leaders pay attention to public opinion to ensure political survival. In practice, public opinion has been found to influence a wide spectrum of issues—foreign policy, military spending, immigration policy, and women's equality (Burstein & Freudenburg, 1978; Page & Shapiro, 1983; Burstein, 2003; Gelpi et al., 2006; Costain & Majstorovic, 1994; Hartley & Russett, 1992). Burstein, an expert on how public opinion influences social movements, summarizes the impact of public opinion on social movement outcome succinctly: the occurrence of a social movement moves public opinion, which then leads to a change in legislation (Burstein, 1999).

Public opinion studies also refute the argument that public opinion can easily be manipulated by political elites. In fact, the causal chain seems to work the other way around. Politicians are influential only if they agree with the public; when they disagree, the public has the say on policy (Burstein, 2003), or as Stimson et al. (1995) state, when public sentiment shifts, political actors often sense the shift and their policy behavior accordingly. Even institutions set up to manipulate public opinion in democracies often have the inadvertent effect of leading leaders to comply with public opinion (Jacobs, 1992).

But, under what circumstance is public opinion most influential on policy? Studies also points out that *salience* of an issue determines the impact of public opinion. A salient issue is more likely to attract the public's limited attention. After an issue receives public attention, citizens still need to form a clear stance for public opinion to be effective. It is when the public expresses a clear position on a salient issue that leaders are propelled to adhere to their voice (Burstein, 2003).

The effect of public opinion on policy, however, takes time to materialize. Even in established democracies such as the United States, public opinion takes years, if not decades, to be reflected in legislation and subsequent policies. For example, although the public in the US expressed support for gay rights policies as early as late 1990s (Brewer, 2003), it was not until recently, almost 20 years later, that basic human rights such as marriage is protected among members in the group.

There are several reasons to expect that public opinion, could in fact, move public policy faster in emerging democracies. Despite having political identification as voters in established democracies, attitudes on social issues tend to be volatile and are often influenced by political events in young democracies (McCann & Lawson, 2003; Baker et al., 2016). In order to secure their political interests, elites in emerging democracies are motivated to 1) be more sensitive and responsive to information and polls, and 2) react more quickly than their counterparts in established democracies to win popular support.

In the case of an emerging democracy like Taiwan, there are numerous instances that the government respond to social protests and their requests rather quickly. For example, in 1990, when Taiwan was transitioning from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one, students from universities initiated the Wild Lily Movement to call for a more rapid political reform. The movement attracted high public attention. Rather than neglecting the development of the movement, the then President, Lee Tung-Hui, swiftly met with the student representatives and promised to enforce their suggestions, ending the protest in less than a week (Wright, 1999). A major reason why Lee reacted quickly is the worry that delay in responding to social movements

could endanger the stabilities of the civil society and regime and brought negative electoral consequences to upcoming elections.[2]

In short, our discussions of elite rivalry and public opinion leave us with two views of the formation of political alliances with social movements. The elite rivalry school argues that an internal split between the incumbent party, resulting from a personal rivalry between top leaders, motivate politicians to side with the movement, while I argue that the voice of the people, when salient, can lead to a quick political response from relevant political elites in an emerging democracy like Taiwan. The contextualized hypotheses with the Sunflower Movement are as follow:

Elite rivalry: *if an elite disunity exists within the Kuomintang party (KMT), it would motivate some leaders within the party to take a favorable stance toward the movement*.

Public opinion: *if the public considers the protest and the occupation of the legislative hall to be a salient issue, with most of the population supporting the activists, then politicians will respond to the public's preferences and support the movement.*

[2] In addition to public opinion, there are also political factors in the background that might influence the outcome of the Wild Lily Movement. It was an era of democratization in Taiwan, as political opposition parties were newly legalized. As the leader of the KMT, Lee Tung-hui carried out political reforms such as promoting "Taiwanization" of the KMT leadership and reform of the National Assembly and met opposition from hard-liners inside the party. The public in Taiwan at that time was in favor political reform. As a result, when the assembly members attempted to increase their political power, it triggered the student movement. Some argue that it is possible that the movement was successful because it strengthened the stance of the reformists inside the KMT (Wright, 1999). However, as in the Sunflower movement, such a viewpoint also neglects the role that public opinion played.

2.3 Research Design

2.3.1 Methods

Testing the above hypotheses requires information about public opinion, elite rivalry within the incumbent party and the decisions key political leaders made throughout the movement. The short duration of the movement enables an in-depth tracing of all major events and decisions made by political leaders. Process-tracing has been a commonly used method in qualitative research, as it enables researchers to track events as they unfold to increase claims on causality (Collier, 2011).

I collect sources of evidence from published accounts, mostly from newspapers and reports of the movement. However, secondary source is limited in providing evidence to assess the chains of causality for some critical decisions politicians made during the movement, for example, Wang's critical decisions throughout the movement.[3] To understand the decision-making process of Wang, between May and June 2016, I conducted in-depth interviews with political elites and their staff members in Taiwan. My interviewees include several legislators from major political parties, such as the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a new rising party formed after the Sunflower Movement, the New Power Party (NPP), and their staff members (For information about interviewees, consult the Appendix). All my interviewees were to some extent — some directly while others in only an ancillary manner — involved in Wang's decision-making process throughout the development of the movement. Their knowledge of the norms,

[3] In this paper, I assume Wang's political motivations, as most politicians, are rational and seek to maximize his political interests and opportunities for winning elections. In other words, when making political decisions, Wang might be influenced by emotions, but his ultimate decisions are based on weighing the pros and cons of each option to ensure his political interests. Wang has been a key figure in Taiwan's politics for decade and has earned a reputation of being a practical and steadfast politician.

rules and networks within the legislature makes them the most appropriate interlocutors to weigh in on the decision-making of Wang during the movement. Semi-structured interviews were tailored to reconstruct the process of Wang's decisions, with emphasis on the relative importance of elite rivalry or public opinion. To corroborate my understandings of the events during the movement, I interviewed several activists involved in the movement.

2.3.2 Issue Salience

For measuring issue salience, I follow Epstein and Segal's (2000) method of focusing on the coverage given to an issue daily by the media. In their study of US Supreme Court, they tallied the number of judges appearing on the front page of *The New York Time*. I apply the method to gauge Sunflower Movement 's salience among the public. Similarly, I record the frequency with which the movement appeared on the front page of major newspapers across different political ideologies in Taiwan, including the *Taipei Times*, *The Liberty Times*, *Apple Daily*, *The China Times,* and *The United Daily News*. Frequent coverage on the front-page serve as evidence of salience of the movement.

2.3.3 Public Support for Occupation, Trade Pact, Political Party and the President

I examine four strands of public opinion. First, public support for the movement is measured by the percentage of approval and disapproval for the activist's occupation of the legislature. Additionally, I examine three other key pieces of public opinion: support for the trade pact, approval rate for President Ma, and the then incumbent Kuomintang party.

Since systematic and continuous polls by the Taiwanese government or academic institutions during the protest period do not exist, I rely on various sources as best estimates of public opinion during the movement. Polls reported below come from major TV stations such as

Television Broadcasts Satellite (TVBS), government agencies, and research institutions in Taiwan. The polls by newspapers agencies are trustworthy for several reasons. First, the newspapers and TV stations where I draw polls from have a public opinion poll center to conduct polls regularly. They release their survey methodology along with their polls to increase the reliability of their results. Potential partisan bias is also reduced by including polls from different TV stations and newspapers.

2.3.4 Political Allies and Elite Disunity

Political allies are political players whose actions help social movements achieve their political objective, whether they are sympathetic with the movement or not.[4] Thus, I focus on political leaders who actions assisted the Sunflower movement in achieving their political objective. However, more emphasis will be put on KMT leaders for various reasons. First, DPP politicians were supportive of the movements and student organizers from the beginning, making them default allies of the movement. However, compared to the KMT, DPP in 2014 was a minority party. Although it could stall the verification process of the trade pact, it did not have enough seats for a countering bill. Before the movement started, DPP legislators had been protesting the verification process for months, but their efforts did not stop the bill from moving along the verification process by the KMT.

[4] Extant social movement literature defines political allies as politicians who are sympathetic with social movements (e.g., Giugni, 1998; Kriesi et al., 1995; Poloni-Staudinger & Ortbals, 2011). However, this definition is problematic in the Sunflower movement's case because it is difficult to ascertain sympathy of political elites. Throughout the movement, Wang never expressed clear sympathy for the protest. Additionally, even if Wang was regarded as being sympathetic with the social movements, it does not mean that he will help the movement if doing so jeopardize his political interests. As a result, I adopt a revised definition of political allies to refer to political leaders whose actions help the movement move closer to their political goal, whether they are sympathetic with the movement or not.

Unlike the DPP, KMT held over half of the seats in the legislature during the movement, including the president. Their advantageous position in the legislature gave them more influence than the DPP on the movement's outcome. Additionally, KMT was opposed to the movement from the beginning. As a result, tracing if responses to the movement among key KMT leader changed throughout the movement offer more insights into the impact of political alliance, as those alliance might bring changes to the prospect of the verification of the bill. Powerful allies are politicians who hold a leadership position in the legislative or executive arena during the moment, such as the President, Vice President, the President and Vice President of the Legislature, the leader of the Executive Yuan, and the Party Whip. To capture arguments about elite disunity, I focus on the fragmented leadership inside the KMT, or often known as the Ma-Wang rivalry. Specifically, I analyze the impact of the Ma-Wang rivalry to see what influence that could have on the movement's outcome.

2.4 How Public Opinion Shapes Movement Outcome

The president of the legislature, Wang, has been considered by many as the most critical elite ally with the movement. But the alliance between Wang and the social movement did not come naturally. As a KMT leader, Wang's default position was to oppose to the movement. However, throughout the course of the movement, Wang shifted his stance gradually from observing to passively tolerating to finally allying with the movement. Several days before the movement ended, he made a tide-turning announcement in which he promised that he would not hold more inter-party meetings on the trade agreement until a legal mechanism for conducting reviews of legislation concerning cross-Strait relations — a critical element of the movement's requests — was set in place to monitor the process.

Given both parties' polemic views on the legislation at that time, a legal mechanism that both parties could agree would take a long time to form. As a result, Wang's statement helped the activists achieve their goals successfully, as the prospects of the bill's verification were greatly reduced. Unsurprisingly, after Wang's announcement, the leaders of the movement announced their decision to exit the legislature two days later, claiming that they had achieved a temporary political goal. Wang's speech surprised many inside his party, including the President. The KMT Deputy Secretary commented on the effect of Wang's speech bluntly — many felt "betrayed and sold out" (Hsiao, 2014).

What was the rationale behind Wang's alliance with the movement? The conventional wisdom points to an existing elite rivalry between top leaders in the KMT (Ho, 2015). The rivalry between Wang and the ex-President went back to 2005, when they both were eyeing for the leadership of the party. In 2013, President Ma, as the chairperson of the KMT, accused Wang of influence-peddling and in an internal party meeting, suggested the nullification of his membership as the punishment while Wang was attending his daughter's wedding in Malaysia (Wan, 2013; Matsuda, 2015). Upon returning to Taiwan, Wang took legal steps to ensure his political rights and position as the head of Congress. Arguably, the bad history between Ma and Wang could motivate Wang to help the activists to sabotage Ma's political power.

There are several flaws with this explanation. First, it neglects the role of public opinion throughout the movement. The public was supportive of the movement since its inception. The salience of the movement is evidenced by the frequent coverage of the protest throughout the 24 days of protests: it appeared on the front page *every day* for every major newspaper: *Apple Daily, The Liberty Times, The Taipei Times, The China Times*, and *The United Daily News*.

Figure 2.1 reported public support for the occupation of the legislature on twelve time points throughout the protest period from March to April 2014. The movement received high

support from the beginning. Public support took a deep dive in early April most likely because a nationwide rally on March 30 did not win any significant compromise from the government, casting a negative outlook for the prospect of the movement. A poll conducted several days after the March 30 rally revealed that over half (56%) of respondents suggested the activists leave the legislature (TVBS, 2014b). The decline in public support for the movement was reversed again in early April. Support for the movement recovered likely due to the appearance of a countermovement using threats of violence against unarmed activists, triggering sympathy for the movement. In addition, the public began to learn about negotiations across parties that could potentially help the movement achieve its goal. The public was hopeful again that the movement could succeed in their political goal.

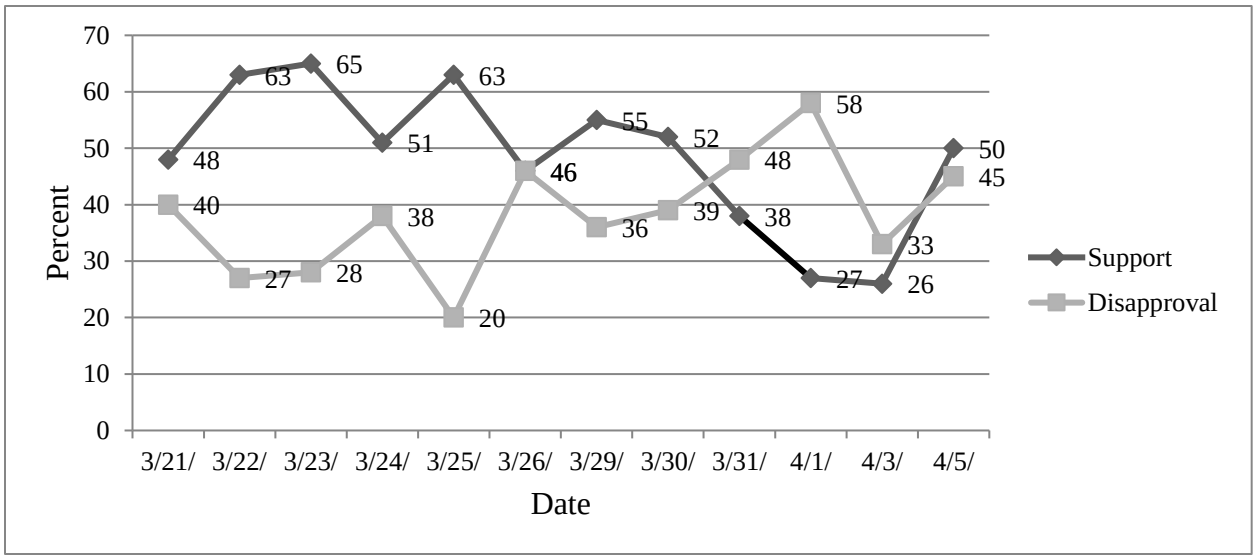

Figure 2.1 Public Support for Occupation of Taiwan's Legislature in 2014 (Source: TVBS, Next TV, Business Today, TISR, China Times, Taiwan Brain Trust, Apple Daily, National Development Council.)

In addition to public support for the occupation, Figure 2.2 reported public support for the trade pact and it showed that disapproval of signing the trade pact was consistently higher than support of it since the movement began. Public opinion on the trade pact did not fluctuate as much as support for the occupation, meaning that the public did differentiate between their viewpoint on the trade pact and their preference for the movement, which seemed to be influenced more by events that happened throughout the movement.

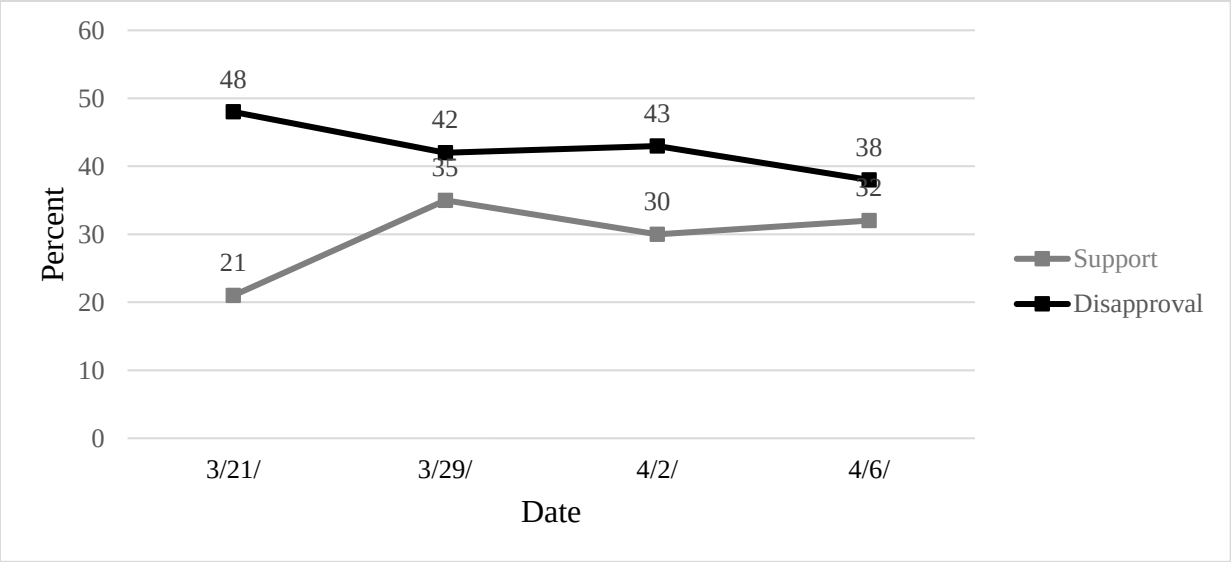

Figure 2.2 Public Support for Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement (Source: TVBS)

2.5 Evidence from Interview with Elites and Activists in Taiwan

The poll on public support for the occupation and signing the trade pact show that the movement did receive enough support to trigger an alliance with political elites, but the mechanism with which the alliance came into existence is unclear. To understand how public opinion influence movement outcome and elite's decision-making, I conducted interviews with political elites and their staff members directly or indirectly involved in the movement. Overall, all my interviewees consider public opinion to be the most important factor in Wang's decision-making process

throughout the movement. They argue that Wang was mindful of public opinion on the occupation of the legislature since the movement's inception.

Specifically, public opinion motivated Wang to make two critical decisions benefitting the movement throughout the movement: the decision not to evict the activists from legislature and the announcement to discontinue the verification process. Both decisions are surprising because they deviate from the default decisions that Wang was expected to make as a KMT elite. However, clear trends in public opinion changed his mind as the movement progressed.

First Critical Decision: Not to Eject Activists with Police Force

During the first several days of the movement, Wang faced a critical decision as to whether he should eject activists with police force and restore order to the legislature. According to my interviewees, as president of the legislature, Wang felt pressure from his party to do so (Anonymous, 2016). Rather than complying with this decision, Wang was missing from the public in the first two days, even when the activists were fending off attempts from police to remove them and calling for Wang to stop the police actions. Reflecting on his reticence: my interviewees point out that Wang was assessing initial public response to the movement:

> "…in the first nearly 48 hours, Wang made no comments with respect to his positions to the movement. Why? Because he was observing the tide of public opinion to determine his responses to the movement. As it became clear that the movement had high public support, Wang started to consider what decisions should be taken to respond to the movement in a way that could fit his political interests. He knew that if he made a hasty decision without taking the public into considerations, he may be held responsible by the public and faced politically consequences" (Anonymous, 2016).

After taking in the first several polls of the movement, Wang made an announcement on the evening of March 20st, three days after the initial occupation started, that he "would not consider having them (activists) removed by force" (Shih et al., 2014). Wang's announcement ran

counter to the expectations of many within his party, as they had expected he to follow the party line of ousting protestors with police force. Public opinion helped Wang to plan his actions to reduce negative consequences from his political decisions.

2.5.1 Second Critical Decision: Announcement to Discontinue the Verification Process

The effect of public opinion on elite decision-making is evident even when it turned against the movement. The second decision came at a time when support for the movement has plummeted. If high support for the occupation motivated Wang to side with the movement by not evicting the students, then dropped support should prevent Wang from further supporting the movement. However, Wang's announcement was seen as supporting the movement and helping it succeed. How do we make sense of it?

As in the first decision, Wang's decision-making is constrained by his political environment. Wang learned that support dropped at the end of March due to the impasse between the movement and the government. He was aware that the public grew impatient about the dysfunctional legislature, and he, as president of the legislature, might have to pay a political price for the continuing impasse. Wang also could not count on the movement dissipating itself, as leaders of the movement had no plans to end the movement when the support lowered (Shih, 2014). Commenting on Wang's political environment, my interviews noted, "Wang understood the mass had turned from supporting to disapproving the movement and he needed to bring an end to it (the movement). He also knew that, if the impasse between the activists and the government continued, he would be the target of criticism and might lose his position as president of the legislature" (Anonymous, 2016).

Although Wang knew that he had to find a way to end the movement, there were not many viable options. Before making the announcement, Wang had failed six consecutive attempts to

reach a compromise between major political parties. He also could not change the prevailing KMT consensus that the movement should end, and the verification process should continue. KMT leaders, such as the ex-President, remained adamant in their support for the trade deal.

Removal of activists by police or military force is a common tactic by the KMT government to deal with the activists, but the Sunflower movement is different from other social movements with its high public support. Wang also knew that such a tactic would not work. Several days after the occupation started, the government used police force to crack down on protestors attempting to occupy another government agency, resulting in over 100 injured protestors and public uproar. The public also was unsupportive of using similar tactics: only 39% of the public supported Wang using similar tactics to end the movement (TVBS, 2014b). Wang was careful not to make the same mistake.

Mindful of these constraints, Wang came up with a decision to ensure his political interests, without complying with the activists to the full extent, by halting the verification process. The announcement is ingenious as it offered political benefits to different parties. For the KMT, Wang's decision was unsatisfying, but it did not rule out the possibility that the verification process could be revived. For the activists, the announcement gave them a political victory for securing a substantial policy concession from the government. For the public, the announcement and the end of the movement meant that order would be restored in the legislature. For Wang, this decision allowed him to be the matchmaker between the government and activists and secured his political interests.[5]

[5] In addition to public opinion, there were political players that helped Wang reach this announcement, including leaders of the DPP, including Chairman Su Tseng-chang, secretary-general Lin Hsi-yao, DPP Legislator Tuan Yi-kang, and DPP's party whip, Ker Chien-ming. The chairperson of Foxconn, Terry Guo, was also extensively involved in the negotiation process as he helped brokered an agreement between Wang's supporters inside the KMT and DPP to support Wang's proposal (Wang, 2014).

In both critical decisions throughout the movement, public opinion shaped Wang's considerations of political interests. As Wang might have anticipated, his decision to alleviate public anxiety of the stalled situation between the government and the social protest won public support: 65% of respondents supported his proposal (TVBS, 2014c).

2.5.2 Why Elite Rivalry Was Not the Most Important Factor

The importance of elite rivalry is more restricted than previously thought. As public opinion guided Wang in the critical decisions, elite rivalry operated only as a part of the broad political context that Wang had to consider throughout the movement. Elite rivalry closed some doors to solving the political crisis, such as the possibility of collaborating with the ex-president on this issue, but it was not the main reason behind Wang's decision-making. In fact, the impact of elite rivalry on Wang's is exaggerated for two reasons: the unpredictability of social movement outcomes and the risks associated with following the path as guided by elite rivalry.

When social movements start, few would know how a movement would develop. The Sunflower movement is no exception. My interviewees noted that at the early stages, few politicians, including Wang, would know how it would develop. In this situation, any misstep aimed at reducing the ex-President's political power due to elite rivalry by allying with the movement could easily backfire and hurt Wang's political interests. Retrospectively, Wang's plan worked in reducing Ma's political power. However, it would be possible to imagine other scenarios that hurt Wang's political interests. For example, if the movement received little public support, then Wang's decisions for the alliance would be seen as creating chaos and wasting public budget in the legislature. In a different scenario, Ma could find ways to sabotage Wang's efforts by working out a solution with activists without Wang. In short, as a seasoned politician, it is unlikely

that Wang would make decisions solely based on elite rivalry, not knowing if the movement could succeed based on public opinion.

In addition to the unpredictability of movement outcome, relying on elite rivalry could trigger other risky consequences for Wang. Most importantly, putting his rivalry with Ma as a basis for supporting the movement will alienate Wang from peers in his party and would create more enemies inside his own party. As my interviews illustrate:

"It (elite rivalry) is not the reason that Wang made such a decision because it entails too much political risks. Wang analyzes the situation rationally. He knew that most in his party wanted to push for ratification, not just Ma. So, choosing the activist side would mean turning back on his comrades, especially since many of them in the party, like Wang, are more pro-Taiwan. Wang would not abandon his base in the KMT just to get back at Ma. He made that decision (announcement) because he had to — the public wanted him to end the movement" (Anonymous, 2016).

In addition to the above reasons, Wang had little reasons to sabotage Ma's political power, as the ex-President was already encountering challenges of his low approval rate. Ma's approval rate has been declining since the beginning of his second term. At the time of the protest, his approval rate was only 12.3% (TISR, 2014). A major reason for Ma's low approval rate can be attributed to his negligence on social issues (Ho, 2014). Ma's negligence on social issues influenced how activists conduct protests. The repeated nonresponse from government motivated activists to employ a more radical approach to gain public attention to pressure the government such as lying on the rail to block a train from coming to the station or fasting for a prolonged period until passing out.

Protest on the trade pact followed a similar path. Before the occupation of the legislature, many NGOs and social groups had been calling for more careful review of the trade pact to deal

with potential negative consequences. When Ma did not respond, the activists decided to take a more radical protest method. The protest is salient also because the public in Taiwan has been concerned and anxious about his proposals for economic cooperation and integration across the Strait. The trade pact is especially sensitive because it requires Taiwan to open its market for Chinese investment. The public's grave concern is evidenced by a poll, conducted several days after the occupation started, that 63% of respondents think the government should revoke the trade agreement and restart the negotiation with China. However, Ma remained adamant in pushing for the verification of the trade pact, and his approval rate dropped another 7% during the movement (TVBS, 2014d).

2.5.3 Why only Wang Reacted to Public Opinion, but not Ma?

If public opinion is influential, then why Wang is the only person within in ruling party that changed according to the shift of public opinion? The major reason has to do with Ma's tight control of the KMT. Despite earlier opposition, Ma won a reelection of the chairmanship in 2013, carrying 92 percent of votes and solidifying his power in the party. As the chairperson of the party, Ma wielded power to assign members to positions in local government and recommended them for participation in legislative elections. As a result, KMT members would not want to oppose Ma for securing political benefits (Chung, 2013). Since Ma was still the chairperson of the KMT when the movement took place in 2014, it is logical that few members, if any, would come out and oppose his stance on the movement as they prepared for an upcoming legislative election at the end of 2014.

It then begs the question why Ma insisted on promoting the unpopular free-trade agreement in 2014 when his personal approval dropped precipitously. Figure 2.3 presents public support for different parties in Taiwan. In 2008, when Ma was first elected president, the KMT enjoyed a wide

margin of nearly 15 percent over the DPP. However, ever since Ma came into the office, the margin gradually decreased. Before the movement occurred, support for the DPP has already passed that for the KMT.

Ma's insistence on passing the trade pact has a lot to with his objective as a second-term president. Shortly after winning the reelection, Ma commented that achieving a historical legacy is his top priority and working toward a closer relationship with China is the core of his goal. Many China observers noted that Ma wanted the trade deal to pass as it would pave his way for a historical meeting with Xi Jinping (Economist, 2014; Matsuda, 2015). It is thus of little surprise, that Ma remained intransigent in his opposition to the movement as it thwarted his goal of achieving such a legacy. Ma's decision came with a political price. Support for the KMT took another hit, reaching its nadir in the past ten years in 2016, and ultimately the party lost the presidency to the DPP.

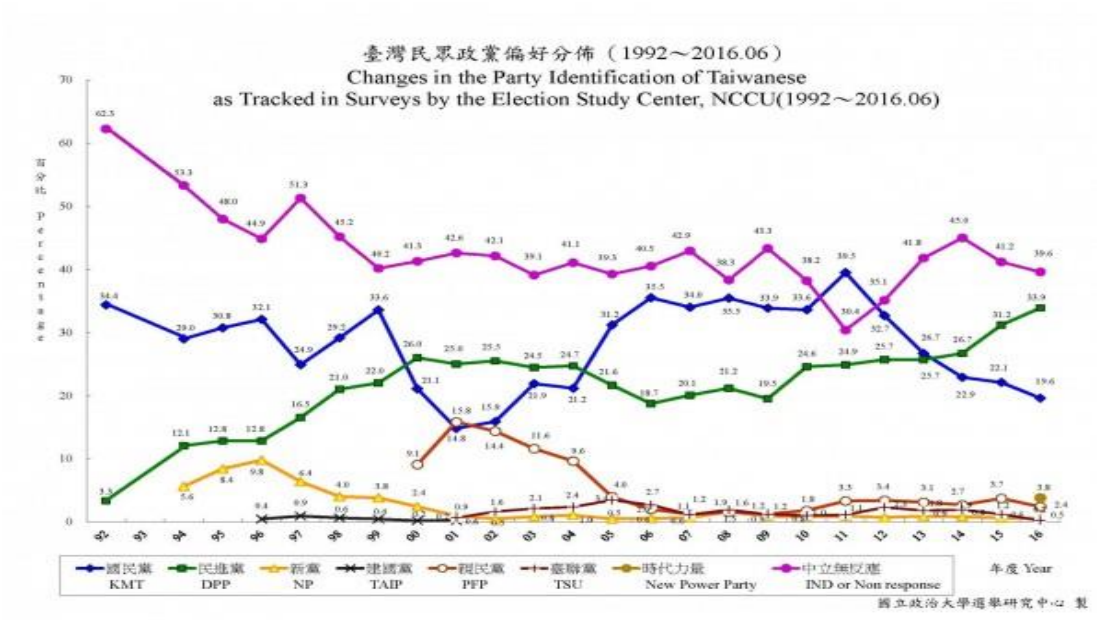

Figure 2.3 Public Support for Political Parties in Taiwan
(Source: Election Study Center, National ChengChi University)

2.5.4 Why Public Opinion Was Not Related to the Elite Rivalry

Critics of the public opinion hypothesis could argue that since the Ma-Wang rivalry exists before supportive public opinion emerged for the movement, public opinion could be attributed to the rivalry. There is little evidence to suggest that. Although the Ma-Wang rivalry started years before the protest, the rivalry did not influence public perception of the trade pact. If the rivalry had any impact on public view of the trade pact, then we should see that the public took a clear stance on it. However, a poll (TVBS, 2014a) one year before the protest revealed that most citizens (85%) were unclear of the content of the trade pact and did not have a strong stance on it (32% support versus 43% oppose). Public disinterest in the trade pact changed only after the movement began. Not only did the public show an increase in understanding of the trade pact, they also formed a clearer stance (TVBS, 2014b). As a result, the protest outweighs the impact of the existing elite rivalry.

2.5.5 Political Alliance Would not Exist Without Supportive Public Opinion

Lastly, a counterfactual could help us understand the importance of public opinion for Wang's political calculus. Let us imagine a scenario in which the Ma-Wang rivalry still exist, but public support for the occupation was low. Could Wang still support the movement? Unlikely. The option to support the movement had no political benefits for Wang. It would set him up against the public, his peers inside his party, especially the President. Wang would end up finding his political power reduced. In fact, low support for the occupation in fact did motivate Wang to end the movement.

This shows that supportive public opinion drove the political alliance, not Wang's rivalry with Ma. If the public did not support the movement, then Wang would not support it, either, regardless of his personal rivalry with Ma. Throughout the movement, Wang operated from a

position that he paid close attention to public opinion before deciding his responses. Elite rivalry does exist but had little effect on his decisions.

2.6 Implications and Conclusion

This paper argues that public opinion, instead of elite rivalry, is the driving mechanism for the emergence of public alliance between political elites and the Sunflower movement. My interviews with elites and activists in Taiwan confirm the critical role of public opinion in influencing decision-making. Public opinion provides elites with information about the preferences of the public to reduce potential negative repercussions of decisions. Throughout the movement, Wang adapted strategically to the ebbs and flows of public opinion on the occupation of the legislature. On the contrary, elite rivalry is not as important as previously thought due to 1) the unpredictably of social movement outcome, and 2) the risks of alienating elite from his peers inside the party.

This case has several contributions. First, it adds to the literature that argues public opinion help drive policy change (e.g., Agnone, 2007; Soroka & Wlezien, 2010; Dür & Mateo 2014). More importantly, the paper reveals the mechanism with which public opinion influence public policy: by shaping elite decision making and forming alliance with social activists. Additionally, this study suggests that when social movements studies do not take public opinion into account, it could misattribute the underlying cause of movement success. In the case of the Sunflower movement, neglecting public opinion incorrectly amplify the effect of elite rivalry as the source of elite alliance. As a result, this paper echoes efforts to broaden the theoretical framework of political opportunity structure to understand social movement (Manza & Brooks 2012).

Despite of its findings, several caveats should be noted when thinking about generalizing the role of public opinion to other social movements. First, the tactic of the movement to occupy

the legislature is not common in protest. The occupation of the legislature can be categorized as disruptive, and studies show that disruptive tactics often correlate with movement success (Cress & Snow 2000). But such tactics often hurt a movement's chance of succeeding as it invites government to respond harshly (Schumaker, 1978).

Secondly, the issue that the Sunflower movement focused on is salient. Many social movements focus on other topics, such as environmental preservation, renewable energy, wage for factory workers, receive much less attention. The salience adds to the momentum of the movement. Lastly, the low popularity of the ex-President in Taiwan adds to the advantage of the movement. If the President had a much higher popularity and greater control of the legislative body, then the movement would be less likely to succeed.

Despite of these boundary conditions, evidence that public opinion could help social activists by building elite alliance has begun to emerge. For example, Dür & Mateo (2014) finds that a small group of citizens successfully blocked the verification of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) pact in Europe. Like those in the Sunflower movement, the activists had few resources, and their success is attributed to the high salience of the topic and supportive public opinion. The similar characteristics between this case and the Sunflower movement increase our confidence on the generalizability of findings.

From the case of Sunflower movement, an implication for social activists is that, public opinion is a double-edged sword. Supportive public opinion help prolonged the Sunflower movement and offered political leverage to activists that they otherwise would not have. However, when the public's enthusiasm wore out, activists found it difficult to continue their protest as elites had reasons to bring an end to the protest. In this case, declining public support coincided with a political context that offered a solution in the movement's favor.

CHAPTER 3. GENERATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF FORCE: THE CASE OF TAIWAN

3.1 Introduction

Research on public support for the use of force has largely neglected a crucial question – does generation-specific experiences influence one's attitude toward subsequent military operations? For instance, do generations that experience a war and other formative events exhibit different attitudes toward future conflicts compared to other generations?

Wilcox et al.'s (1993) study is one of the few that directly tackles this question. They hypothesize that conflict experience should determine generational attitudes toward war in the future because each generation tends to learn different lessons from conflicts. As a result, they argue that war support should be higher for the WWII generation but lower for the Vietnam War generation. But they did not find much support in their analysis. The Vietnam War generation turned out to be more hawkish than the WWII generation. Aside from this study, we have rather limited knowledge of the impact of generation on war support, although many would argue that a similar effect could occur for generations that came of age during the Iraq war (*generations divide over military action in Iraq*, 2002).

This paper revisits the issue of generational effect on war support and extends Wilcox et al.'s (1993) work in two ways. First, as opposed to focusing on polls months prior to the Persian Gulf War, this study draws from surveys of a hypothetical armed conflict between Taiwan and China for the past two decades. The wider timeframe increases the possibility of observing generational differences.

The second improvement comes from focusing on the case of a potential war between Taiwan and China. The case helps moves the topic of war support to a cross-national context, as

most of them now still predominately rely on Western contexts, with only a few exceptions (e.g., Tanaka et al., 2017; Yeh & Wu, 2020). In doing so, this case provides a new context that existing cases have not. Although citizens in the United States can express their opinions about foreign conflicts and adversaries that they personally would not been involved in when thinking about war support, citizens in Taiwan do not have this luxury. The threat of a Chinese invasion is real and ever-growing. For instance, to deter Taiwan from pursuing independence, China shot missiles into the Taiwan Strait in 1996 and has never relinquished the use of force to "liberate" Taiwan. Thus, a war with China is always looming in the back of the minds of citizens in Taiwan, making it a war not of choice but of necessity (Yeh & Wu, 2020).

Existing studies of Taiwan have shown generational differences on a wide range of topics such as identity, voting, and political attitudes (Chang & Wang, 2005; Liu & Yi, 2017; Wong et al., 2019; Wu & Lin, 2019), but have not been used to examine foreign policy, especially on war support. There are several empirical questions surrounding studying generations in Taiwan. First, does conflict experience influence subsequent support for future warfare? Relatedly, does incurring battle deaths influence attitudes? Since not every generation in Taiwan has conflict experience with China, and not every conflict result in casualties, it remains an open question to see if these factors shape war attitudes. Third, as nationalism continue to rise in Taiwan, it will be interesting to examine if growing anti-China sentiments would motivate the youngest generation to be more supportive of the use of force against China. To answer these questions, I use an open-ended question embedded in Taiwan National Security Survey (TNSS) that asked what each individual would do in a case of a cross-Strait conflict, as opposed to the traditional war support measure that gauges public willingness to support a military operation overseas. In the following, I take stock of existing findings from theories of generation before providing contextualized hypotheses in the case of Taiwan.

3.2 Theories of Generation

There is a rich literature on public support for the use of force overseas. Numerous factors have been found to influence war support, including casualties (Mueller, 1971), the objective of military mission (Jentleson, 1992; Jentleson & Britton, 1998), approval from allies and international organizations (Kull, 1995; Rielly, 1995; Sobel, 1997; Grieco et al., 2011), gender (Conover & Sapiro, 1993), education levels (Conover & Sapiro, 1993; Nincic, 1997; Brewer & Steenbergen, 2002; Baum, 2004), perception of success of the operations (Gelpi et al., 2006), and opinions of political leaders (Bernisky, 2007; Baum & Groeling, 2010). Despite these important factors, research on war support has largely neglected the impact of generational differences.

The generation thesis argues that people belonging to the same cohort tend to formulate a generational identity based on their shared experience of salient events in their formative years (Klecka, 1971; Mannheim, 1972; Butler & Stokes, 1974; Riley, 1987; Osborne et al., 2011; Edmunds & Turner, 2002). Scholars of generational theory consider one's adolescence and pre-adult times to be critical in shaping their political attitudes (Sears & Valentino, 1997; Jennings and Niemi, 1981; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Schuman & Corning, 2000).

The focus on adolescence is because this is when people become cognitively capable of understanding social and political events (Adelson & O'Neil, 1966), but still remain impressionable by them to form their political worldview (Schuman & Scott, 1989). When citizens are asked to rate events that happened during their adolescence as most important (Corning, 2010; Jennings & Zhang, 2005; Schuman & Rodgers, 2004), citizens from different generations select different events as most salient (Schuman & Scott, 1989; Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Wertsch, 2002), testifying to the existence of generational differences.

Theories of generations have been applied to various topics. On views of economic integration, Coenders and Sheepers (2008) find that unemployment increases a generation's level

of resistance to foreigner's social integration. Similarly, Giuliano and Spilimbergo's (2009) study shows that changes in one's economic condition during their adolescence could affect their trust in government and views of income inequality. Other studies find that individuals who were adolescents in the 1960s turned out to be more liberal on political issues (e.g., Davis, 2004).

It is fair to say that there has not been a consensus on the effect of generation on war support. When thinking about the WWII and the Vietnam War generations, some hypothesize that the WWII generation should be more supportive of an interventionist and aggressive foreign policy after learning that appeasement and isolationism helped pave the way for Hitler's rise and subsequent challenges to American power by the Soviet Union (Wilcox et al., 1993). In contrast, living through the Vietnam War should make a generation eschew entanglements and over-commitments of US forces worldwide. However, Wilcox et al. (1993) did not find any support for either hypothesis. In fact, a reversal of the patterns was found – the WWII generation was less supportive of the Gulf War, while the Vietnam War generation was the opposite.

Additionally, polls conducted among Americans across three decades during the Cold War and after the Cold War showed little evidence of generational differences for support of the use of force (Mayers, 1992). For instance, they did not find major differences across different generations in their support for US involvement in Bosnia. Citizens from different generations also showed similar level of support for the Gulf War (Holsti, 2004). At best, even if generational differences were found, they often did not match to previously defined generations.

Despite the above findings, there are other studies testifying to the existence of generational effect. Schuman and Rieger (1992) found that citizens from older generations were more likely to draw historical analogies between Hussein's Iraq and Hitler's Germany. In another example, those from the Vietnam War generation were also more likely to consider the Vietnam War to be similar to the Iraq War (Schuman & Corning, 2006). In short, the debate on the existence of generational

effect on war support has not been definitive. In the following, I examine different generations in Taiwan and their views of war support.

3.3 Generations in Taiwan

Existing work on generations in Taiwan has resulted in several findings (Chang & Wang, 2005; Rigger, 2006; Le Pesant, 2011 Liu & Li, 2017). First, generation is a good predictor of identity. While younger generations are more likely to hold a Taiwanese identity, older generations are more likely to consider themselves as Chinese. This difference also leads to different views of cross-Strait relations – younger citizens favor proclaiming independence rather than unification with China (Chang & Wang, 2005) and are more likely to view China as an "enemy" (Liu & Yi, 2017). But current work on generations in Taiwan has not explored issues related to war support.

To study the effect of generations and their influence on attitudes toward a potential conflict across the Strait, I break down the Taiwanese population into four generations (Chang & Wang, 2005, Rigger, 2006, Liu & Yi, 2017, Huang, 2019). In doing so, I build on existing work, and assume that a citizen would have been at least 10 years old when a defining event occurred.[6]

[6] Generation scholars often used the period of 10-18 to mark different generations (e.g., Sears & Valentino, 1997; Dalton, 1977). Some use the assumption that a person would be around 18 when a formative event took place (Chang & Wang, 2005), whereas other disregard such assumptions and design generations around key political events (Wu & Lin, 2019) or responses from focus groups (Shelley, 2006). Most would agree that the demarcation of generation is arbitrary (Liu, 1996). In this paper, I design generations surrounding major international events that happen to citizens of Taiwan. I also rely on an assumption that a citizen of 10 years old would be influenced by major historical events. Granted that each individual citizen in each generation could experience a different event, he/she is socialized within the same generation to pick up traits that influence the entire generation's view of war support. There is also no clear reason to point out that whether experiencing multiple events could create systematic differences in war attitudes. These two considerations lead me to design the four generations. To account for the potential influence of different age cutpoints on results, I also use different age cut points as robustness checks.

The construction of the generations is supported by historical events to specify the shared and common historical events that citizens experience in each generation. The first generation includes citizens born before 1949, and the defining events are the First and the Second Taiwan Strait Crises.[7] The second generation includes citizens born between 1949 and 1969, and the defining events are Taiwan leaving the United Nations in 1971 and the end of diplomatic ties with the United States in 1979. Citizens born between 1970 and 1986 belong to the third generation, and the defining themes and events are rapid improvements of economic conditions and living conditions and the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996. Last, those born after 1986 are put in the fourth generation, and the defining themes are the rise of anti-China sentiments, growing economic dependence on China and the cancellation of mandatory conscription. The following table summarizes each generation and their unique experiences.

Table 3.1 Four Generations and Major Events

Generation	I (Born < 1949)	II (1949 -1969)	III (1970 - 1986)	IV (>1986)
Key Experiences	First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises (1954-55; 1958)	Taiwan leaving the UN (1971); US-Taiwan ended ties (1979)	Political and Economic Development; Third Taiwan Strait Crisis (1995-1996)	Democratic Consolidation; Cancellation of Mandatory Conscription

[7] Due to lack of data on senior citizens (people born after the 1930s will enter their 70s when the surveys started), I do not include those born before 1930.

3.3.1 First Generation

Citizens in first generation were born before 1949, so they would be at least 10 years old in 1958 when major events occur. Historians often agree that the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises, in 1954-55, and 1958, respectively, are the most important events for citizens in this generation (Gordon, 1985). Both crises are defining events for citizens in this generation as together, they incurred more than 1,000 battle deaths on the side of Taiwan.

The traumatic experiences from wars forced citizens to rely on government for their security and safety, as they were constantly petrified of surprise attacks from China. The trepidation offers unique advantages for the government to advance their political goals – with omnipresent anti-China propaganda and indoctrination – to nurture a citizenry hostile toward China. The memories of the conflict, combined with their education and negative views of China should make citizens in this generation to be more supportive of a conflict between Taiwan and China.

The First Strait Crisis began on September 3rd, 1954, when Mao launched a massive shelling of Taiwan's offshore island, Quemoy. Mao wanted to initiate a conflict as he worried that it would be too late to retake Taiwan if a mutual defense pact between Taiwan and the United States was finalized. Subsequent amphibious attacks inflicted hundreds of casualties on Taiwanese forces. The US was surprised by Mao's actions, as it made clear in many instances that it would come to Taiwan's defense in a conflict (Stolper, 1985).

After the conflict started, the government in Taiwan was also surprised as the US changed its policy and decided not to help defend Taiwan's offshore island under Chinese attack. The US was worried that defending an offshore island of Taiwan would put US troops in close contact with the PLA, and the conflict could escalate to involve the Soviet Union. To bring an end to the crisis, the US speedily concluded the security treaty with Taiwan, which, along with a resolution

passed by the US Congress to defend the offshore islands, finally motivated China to come back to the negotiating table (Matsumoto, 2012), ending the crisis in 1955.

Clearly, the first crisis did not resolve the animosity between Taiwan and China. The second Taiwan Strait Crisis began just after three years. On August 23rd, 1958, the PRC military started shelling Kinmen's, an offshore island of Taiwan, key military infrastructure. The exchange of fire resulted in around 600 deaths on the Taiwan side, including several high-profile military personnel (Pike, 2011). Another attack led to 208 deaths in the Taiwanese Navy (Pang & Jin, 2003).

Afraid that the conflict would escalate, president Eisenhower and secretary Dulles affirmed US commitment to defend Taiwan. Soon, the US started escorting Taiwanese supply ships to offshore Islands and helped Taiwan prepare for future attacks. A month after the initial attacks, intense pressure from the US forced China to suspend the bombardment for a week. The cease-fire eventually defused the crisis as the PRC transitioned to a new pattern of only bombing on certain days in a month (Cheng, 2003).

Prior to the two crises, the Kuomintang (KMT) regime had just lost the civil war to the communist party and retreated to the island of Taiwan. Upon its arrival, the regime did not abandon their aspirations to retake the mainland. To achieve their goals, the KMT leaders began a propaganda campaign to shore up anti-communism (Kao, 2012). For instance, citizens were exposed to endless radio warfare, solidifying anti-communist ideologies (Rawnsley, 1999). In addition to indoctrinating the public with anti-China ideologies, the KMT also dealt with dissidents harshly – close to 100,000 citizens were imprisoned or even executed between 1949 and 1955 (Mendal, 1970). KMT's efforts to stir up anti-communism among the public also reflected in its education policy. The regime transformed the school system into a "symbolic battlefield" (Paquette, 1991; Tsai, 2002). In designing the national curriculum, authorities were told to

highlight negative effects of communism to assist the government's policy (Tsai, 2002). As a result, Taiwanese' identity formation gave in to KMT's tight control and propaganda (Rigger, 2011).

3.3.2 Second Generation

The second generation is composed of citizens born between 1949 and 1969. This is a generation that experienced isolation from the international society, beginning with Taiwan's leaving the UN in early 1970s and culminating in the ending of diplomatic ties with the United States in 1979. The international isolation brought many hardships to the economic well-being of citizens, dimming their economic outlook. Citizens in this generation also received anti-communism education like those in the first generation. Thus, the combination of diplomatic and economic difficulties resulted in a generation hostile toward China and should be supportive of a conflict against China.

During this era, China's effort at isolating Taiwan started to pay off. For instance, when France switched their diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, many other countries followed suit in the next several years. By 1970, Chinese lobbying has led over half of the members in the United Nations to change their recognition to Beijing as the sole representative government of China (Chiang, 2018). Things turned sharply downward for Taiwan, in 1971, US proposal to include Taiwan and China both in the United Nations failed. After a vote by the majority of member states, Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations.

Among all the former allies, what worried Taipei the most was that it could lose Washington to Beijing. Though the US reiterated its commitment to Taiwan's security, subsequent US actions only worsened Taipei's fears: the number of American military personnel was halved, and two squadrons of F-4 Phantom jet fighters were removed (Bellows, 1976). Eventually, US-Taiwan relations came to an abrupt stop in 1979, when US decided to end official ties with Taiwan.

The news provoked a strong reaction among citizens in Taiwan. The visit by US representative to Taipei to communicate this decision encountered a group of angry protestors, wielding baseball clubs to shatter windows of the cars in which US officials sat. Police officers attempting to protect the guests were also attacked (Jacobs, 1980).

Clearly, the dramatic change in the international environment influenced the psyche of the generation. The psychological horror of international isolation turned into exasperation and anger. The public was worried that international isolation could influence their economic situation negatively. A 1972 pew survey revealed that more than 40% of respondents were dissatisfied with their economic condition, and close to half of respondents said they were pessimistic about the prospects of their lives (Mitchell, 1972). Meanwhile, school education in Taiwan continued to instill anti-Chinese sentiments (Wilson, 1970), which made them hostile and reluctant to have more interactions with China (Rigger, 2015). Taking account of these reasons, this generation would be supportive of a conflict against China.

3.3.3 Third Generation

Citizens born between 1970 and 1986 belong to the third generation. This is the era of Taiwan's rapid economic and political development. Quality of life improved dramatically for citizens and the KMT regime also relaxed draconian political control. These changes give birth to a generation more inwardly looking to focus on improving their economic conditions rather than animosities toward China (Bellows, 1976). The focus on economic development and improving their economic condition led this generation to be flexible and pragmatic (Rigger, 2006). Although there was a Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, for several reasons, the event did not change the generation's attitude toward China. A 1995 survey indicated that only 33% of college students

were willing to engage in a conflict with China to defend Taiwan (Roy, 2000). Taken together, citizens in this generation should become less supportive of a conflict with China.

In terms of political development, realizing that taking China back is a lost cause forced the KMT regime to transform from a hard-authoritarian regime to a soft-authoritarian one (Jeon, 1994). To restore the party's popularity among the public, the regime started to shift their attention to Taiwan's political development. The government started to tolerate criticisms and large social gatherings (Jacobs, 1979), resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of social movements. The persistence of dissent from activists and citizens eventually led the KMT to lift the martial law in 1987, sparking a period of multi-party competition. Activists started to organize political parties to take power from the KMT in elections. As more citizens got involved in politics, many of them eventually became key leaders in the government (Rigger, 2006).

What accompanied democratization was rapid economic development. Economic analyses during this era revealed a story of Taiwan's economic miracle. The country maintained an average GDP growth of 9%, raising per capita income to around $3,000 in 1984. In addition to GDP growth, the momentum for economic growth was sustained by expansion of different economic sectors, especially in industry and services, and a steady increase in population (Myers, 1984). In short, these economic and political developments cultivated a generation satisfied with their living condition and not preoccupied with the bad history with China.

This generation, however, is not free from conflict with China. The 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis began from an invitation. The then president of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui, accepted an invitation to give a public speech at his alma mater, Cornell University. China lodged serious complaints about Lee's visit and received reassurance from the US that he would not be given a visa. Lee did. Taiwan worked assiduously with lobbyist Cassidy to persuade the Congress to give

Lee a visa for his trip. Lee became the first president of Taiwan to set foot on continental US since both sides ended official ties (Sciolino, 1996).

China was furious and subsequent developments triggered what is commonly known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. Starting on July 7, 1995, the PLA began conducting missiles tests and a series of military exercises involving multiple branches within the PLA (Scobell, 2000). After several months, as Taiwan was getting ready for the 1996 presidential election, China acted again. In March 1996, China fired several missiles that landed into waters close to two of Taiwan's major cities. As missiles descended, rumors started to float that China would launch an attack on Taiwan in the next 24 hours, hoping to bring the island into a halt. Panic ensued as citizens flocked to purchase daily necessities. Many more rushed to banks to purchase foreign capital and to airports for leaving the country. The stock market tanked as citizens were busy selling their assets (Su, 2003; Garver, 2016).

There are, however, several reasons to believe this crisis did not dramatically change citizens' attitudes toward China. First, despite the intense pressure the public experienced during the crisis, the government dealt with it quite effectively. Before China fired the missiles, Lee Tung-hui and other officials visited offshore military bases to oversee military preparation and told local civilians that the government was prepared for all contingencies. The government quelled the public's fears of an actual conflict by calling China's bluff before the missile were fired. In a public speech, Lee told the public that the missiles were "unarmed warheads" – China had no real intentions to start a war (Yu, 2009).

In addition, various government agencies repeatedly assured the public that there was an abundant supply of food and fuel. The government also saved the stock market quickly, pumping in $1 billion and announced that more liquidity was on the way. Thanks to the government's efforts, the crisis turned out to be a temporary event that had limited influence on the public's daily life

(Su, 2006). Polls during the crisis showed that the public did not believe that both sides would actually go to war. A poll revealed that only less than a third of the population believed that China would invade Taiwan (Yu, 1997). In a nutshell, China's goal of intimidating the public away into submission failed.

In short, the political freedom and economic development cultivated a pragmatic worldview of citizens of this generation. Such a flexible attitude shaped how they react to a potential armed conflict across the Strait. Unlike the first and second generations, who were instructed by the KMT to view China as the enemy that should be decimated, citizens in the third generation are unencumbered by those ideologies. In fact, because they do not have high hostilities toward China compared to other generations, they might even welcome closer cross-Strait economic cooperation and integration. Thus, I argue that this generation's support for an armed conflict with China will be low.

3.3.4 Fourth Generation

The fourth generation includes those born after 1987. This generation enjoys the fruits of Taiwan's democratic consolidation. Meanwhile, they constantly feel China's attempts at isolating Taiwan from the international society, which triggers anti-China sentiments among this generation. However, the animosity would not lead to an increase in support for an armed conflict with China, as many in this generation are dependent on China for their economic well-being and do not receive military training as their predecessors for a conflict with China.

In 2000, the country witnessed their first power transition from the KMT to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and a second transfer back to the KMT in 2008. So, most in this generation experience the blossoming of democratization in Taiwan that citizens from previous generations have not seen. Politicians now need to earn the public's vote. The democratization,

combined with the growing identification of a Taiwanese identity (Li & Zhang, 2017), result in a generation most supportive of Taiwan's independence (Rigger, 2015). In a 2019 survey, close to 60% of citizens view themselves as Taiwanese, while only around 3% think of themselves as Chinese (Huang, 2019).

Because of their tendency to identify themselves as Taiwanese, supports independence, and disapproves unification (Rigger, 2015), this generation overwhelmingly regards China as a foreign country. The tendency strengthens as the pro-independence president Chen Shui-bian, during his terms, engaged in numerous policies to build an exclusive Taiwanese identity such as changing Taiwan's official name (the Republic of China), writing a new constitution, and holding a referendum to demonstrate that Taiwan is an independent country. For instance, Chen directed state-owned postal service to change their name from "Chunghwa Post" to "Taiwan Post" (Taiwan News, 2007).

Public animosity toward China continue to rise in this generation due to China's efforts at blocking Taiwan's international space. In the past two decades, China has blocked Taiwan's attempt to rejoin the United Nations, and other international organizations, including, but not limited to the World Health Assembly (WHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Additionally, China has been actively poaching Taiwan's allies, resulting in seven countries switching ties to China since 2016 (the Republic of Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, Republic of El Salvador, Republic of Panama, and Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe). If anything, losing allies successively do not worry the public in Taiwan (Shattuck, 2020), and only worsens China's image.

Despite the above observations, there are in fact several reasons that lead us to believe that although citizens in this generation harbor hostile attitudes toward China, they are unwilling to get involved in a military action against China. First, this generation is heavily reliant on the Chinese

market for employment. Citizens in this generation growing up at a time when the economy in Taiwan is stagnant, so many moves to China for better economic opportunities. In recent years, Taiwanese businesses in China have become an important source for the pro-China forces in Taiwan. In 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, more than half of this group voted for the pro-China party (Schubert, 2013).

Another reason is that citizens in this generation do not have direct combat experience and preparation compared to other generations. The military in Taiwan has been through several rounds of funding cuts, and many in this generation now only have to serve four months of mandatory military service, much shorter than their predecessors who served for at least a year, and in some cases, two years. A study has shown that perceiving military training to be useful is linked with higher war support among citizens in Taiwan (Wu et al., 2021). Consequently, receiving insufficient training would discourage this generation from engaging in an armed conflict with China. In fact, recent polls support this viewpoint: less than 30% for those aged between 20 and 29 is willing to fight China on the battlefield. Percentages for other generations are noticeably higher, ranging from 37.8% to 48.9% (Hsiao, 2020).

3.3.5 Summary of Hypotheses

The following Table summarizes key events and hypotheses for each generation. Based on the individual prediction of war support for each generation, we could derive six hypotheses: 1) war support for the first group should be higher than the third group (G1>G3), 2) war support for the first group should be higher than the fourth group (G1>G4), 3) war support for the second group should be higher than the third group (G2>G3), 4) war support for the second group should be higher than the fourth group (G2>G4), 5) war support for the first group should be no different

from the second group (G1=G2), and 6) war support for the third group should be no different from the fourth group (G3=G4).

3.4 Research Design

I use 11 (2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019) waves of Taiwan National Security Survey to examine hypotheses. The TNSS is an ideal source of data to probe this research question as it is a representative survey of citizens in Taiwan and has identical questions directly related to war and peace across the Strait in nearly all their surveys. As a result, the TNSS is often used in academic and policy research. A total of 11,279 observations, collected through three presidencies, are used (Chen Shui-bian of DPP, 2000–08; Ma Ying-jeou of KMT, 2008–16; and Tsai Ing-wen of DPP, 2016–present). The data from different presidencies provide an opportunity to examine the dynamics of public opinion in different cross-Strait environments. Cross-Strait relations are often considered to be more strained under DPP leaders.

The dependent variable is "War Action". Subjects provided a response to this open-ended question: "if a declaration of independence by Taiwan would cause war between Taiwan and the Mainland, what action would you take"? This dependent variable is different from traditional measures of public support for the use of force. Existing war support studies often asks citizens in either surveys or survey experiments about the extent to which they approve the use of force in a foreign country. For instance, in their classical study of war support, Gelpi et al. (2006) asked subjects the following question:

> "…would you support continued U.S. military action in Iraq until a new Iraqi government could take over if it resulted in no additional U.S. military deaths?" (pg., 28).

Gauging individual level of willingness to support a military operation overseas remains the go-to measure across a wide range of topics within war support, even to this day. Most recently, for instance, when assessing public approval for the use of drones in foreign military actions, McDonald and Walsh (2021) asked the following on a 7-point scale:

"Do you support or oppose this attack?" (pg., 196).

Thus, the War Action question does not assess approval for a military action but instead ask what each citizen would do personally in a war with China. Thus, this question should not be taken as a traditional war support question, which often focus on support for the use of force by government, but one that taps into individual attitude toward self-defense.

In the context of Taiwan, there are a few reasons that justify the use of this measure. First, although there are a few polls that ask public approval for the use of force against China in Taiwan, these surveys are conducted sporadically and by institutions affiliated with certain political parties (Wang, 2017). The TNSS survey is more reliable as the question of War Action is constantly asked throughout all of its survey in the past two decades and is conducted by reputable academic institutions in the US and Taiwan.

Since the TNSS measure asks citizens specifically what they would *do* in a case of cross-Strait conflict, it is capturing a construct that is at least as relevant as "support" in the Taiwanese context. Taiwanese citizens answering an approval question in war support could agree to it easily, but they themselves might not be willing to go to the battlefield, thinking that others would. But a cross-Strait conflict is likely to impact every citizen living on the island. Any war would require a massive effort on behalf of all the Taiwanese people – it is a war of necessity, not a choice (Yeh & Wu, 2020). To obtain a fuller picture of citizens' behaviors in such a

conflict, and help shape government policy, understanding individual willingness to take action and contribute to the war effort would be more important than simply measuring approval. Thus, the measure has the potential to better understand the unique context of a conflict between Taiwan and China.

Since the dependent variable is an open-ended question, the data-collection agency (National Cheng-Chi University) collected a myriad of responses, for instance in the 2019 survey, War Action contained 33 different kinds of responses. When the data was released from the administrators, only 6 responses contained meaningful answers, whereas the rest were coded as no response or missing. Based on the 6 meaningful responses, I created an ordinal-level variable on a spectrum of the public's willingness from least supportive to most supportive of government's military action to use force against China. The least supportive responses include "surrender" or "escape abroad" and the most supportive responses include "serve the military" or "defend Taiwan". The other two, more neutral responses, are "let it be" and "support the government's decision".

Aside from the DV, I control the following demographic as well as other variables found to influence results in studies on Taiwan and war support. Subjects will receive a value of 1 as **Female** and 0 otherwise. A citizen's belief whether announcing Taiwan's independence would lead to a war (**Independent War)** is measured by the following: "if Taiwan declares independence, do you think the Mainland will attack Taiwan"? The responses range from 1 "absolutely no", 2 "no", 3 "yes" to 4 "absolutely yes". A citizen's belief whether the United States will come to Taiwan's assistance (**US Military Help)** is measured by the following: "if the Mainland attacks Taiwan because Taiwan declares independence, do you think the US will send troops to help Taiwan"? The responses range from 1 "absolutely no", 2 "no", 3 "yes" to 4 "absolutely yes".

A citizen's **Taiwanese Identity** is assessed by the following: "in our society, some claim to be Taiwanese, some claim to be Chinese, and others believe they are both. Do you consider yourself to be Taiwanese, Chinese or both"? Those with a Taiwanese identity are given a value of 3; those with a Chinese identity are given a value of 2. Those with a dual identity (both Taiwanese and Chinese) receive a score of 1. For **Mainlander Heritage**, citizen's whose father is a Mainlander is coded as 1, while the rest of group is coded 0.

For support for the Democratic Progressive Party **(DPP),** subjects are coded as 1 if they answer 'DPP' for the two questions probing their partisanship. Last, subjects are assigned the following values to reflect their **Education**, including 1 (illiterate), 2 (elementary school), 3 (junior high school), 4 (high school or professional high school), 5 (technological and vocational education), 6 (college), and 7 (graduate school). The summary statistics of the dependent and independent variables were shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Summary Statistics

	Mean	S.D.	Scale
Dependent Variable			
War Action	1.976	0.673	1 to 3
Independent Variables			
Female	0.514	0.500	Dichotomous
Independent War	2.875	0.991	1 to 4
US Military Help	2.723	0.993	1 to 4
Taiwanese	2.454	0.579	1 to 3
Mainlander Father	0.139	0.345	Dichotomous
DPP	0.241	0.427	Dichotomous
Education	4.676	1.411	1 to 7

Table 3.3 Frequencies of Generations

	Frequencies	Percentage
Generation 1	1183	9.68
Generation 2	5926	48.47
Generation 3	4178	34.18
Generation 4	938	7.67

To estimate the effects of independent variables on War Action, I ran an ordered logistic regression model with respect to its ordinal feature. 51.2% of the observations were missing in estimation. To overcome the potential biases imposed by the missing observations, I conducted additional robustness checks using multiple imputation with chained equations (MICE) for all independent and dependent variables, which generated imputed values based on the distributional assumption with respect to each variable.

The application of multiple imputation hinges on the missing data fulfilling the assumption of missing at random (MAR), which indicates that the missing of the data is related to other recorded responses in the dataset (Rubin, 1987). So, in this case, the missing response of on war support may depend on other observed variables, except for the war support variable (the dependent variable) itself. An example of their relatedness that I can think of it that gender is potentially related to the response of war support because females lack military training to provide their answer with respect to war support. Thus, missingness of the war support is not related to itself but to other variables in the dataset, such as gender. Another two robustness check I ran were Bayesian ordered logistic regression and with different age cut points. The Bayesian model was estimated through Markov chain Monte Carlo methods (MCMC) with the Random-walk Metropolis-Hastings sampling.

3.5 Empirical Findings

Table 3.4 reported the basic estimation of the independent variables on War Action. Since coefficient estimates from ordered logistic regression models do not provide intuitive interpretations, I present the marginal effect of the dependent variable. Figure 3.1 presented a graphic illustration of the predicted probabilities of the option 3 of the dependent variable (serve the military or defend Taiwan).

With the assistance of Table 3.4, let us examine each pair comparison. According to Model 1, I found support for the first hypothesis (G1> G3). War support for the first group was significantly higher than the third group. According to Model 2, I found support for the second hypothesis (G1> G4). Taken together, war support for the first two generations were significantly higher than the fourth generation, providing evidence to support the impact of generational difference on war support. Citizens in the first generation that have been through the First and Second Strait crises were found to be supportive of a conflict against China. Substantively, this result means that having been through fighting increased war support by as large as 14%.

Additionally, with the help from Model 1 and 2, I found support for both the third (G2> G3) and fourth (G2> G4) hypotheses. Citizens in the second generation were significantly more supportive of the use of force against China than their counterparts in the third and fourth generations. Substantively, the results echo the views that generational difference could influence war support: high hostilities toward China in the second generation created a significant gap in war support compared to the third and fourth generations.

Based on Model 3, I also found support for the fifth hypothesis: war support for the first group was no different from the second group (G1=G2). This result fit our understandings that high hostilities in both generations are conducive to high war support. Last, according to Model 1 and 2, I did not find support for the sixth hypothesis (G3=G4): war support for the third group was significantly differently from the from the fourth group. This divergence will be explained in detail in the discussion section. Overall, I found a certain level of support for the generation thesis: 5 out of 6 hypotheses were supported.

Table 3.4 Coefficient Estimates of Predictors on War Action

DV: War Action	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.	Coeff.	s.e.
1st Generation	0.301**	(0.110)	0.997***	(0.141)	0.018	(0.104)
2nd Generation	0.283***	(0.058)	0.979***	(0.103)		
3rd Generation			0.696***	(0.102)	-0.283***	(0.058)
4th Generation	-0.696***	(0.102)			-0.980***	(0.103)
Female	-0.997***	(0.053)	-0.997***	(0.052)	-0.997***	(0.053)
Independent War	-0.171***	(0.027)	-0.171***	(0.027)	-0.171***	(0.027)
US Military Help	0.190***	(0.027)	0.190***	(0.027)	0.190***	(0.027)
Taiwanese	0.310***	(0.048)	0.310***	(0.048)	0.310***	(0.048)
Mainlander Father	-0.297***	(0.076)	-0.297***	(0.076)	-0.297***	(0.076)
DPP	0.306***	(0.061)	0.306***	(0.061)	0.306***	(0.061)
Education	-0.088***	(0.021)	-0.088***	(0.021)	-0.088***	(0.021)
Intercept (1/2)	-1.645	(0.222)	-0.950	(0.242)	-1.928	(0.213)
Intercept (2/3)	0.972	(0.221)	1.670	(0.243)	0.700	(0.212)
Intercept						
# of Observations	5962					

Note. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.10$. War Action is estimated by the ordered logistic regression. Estimates of wave dummies are not reported to save space.

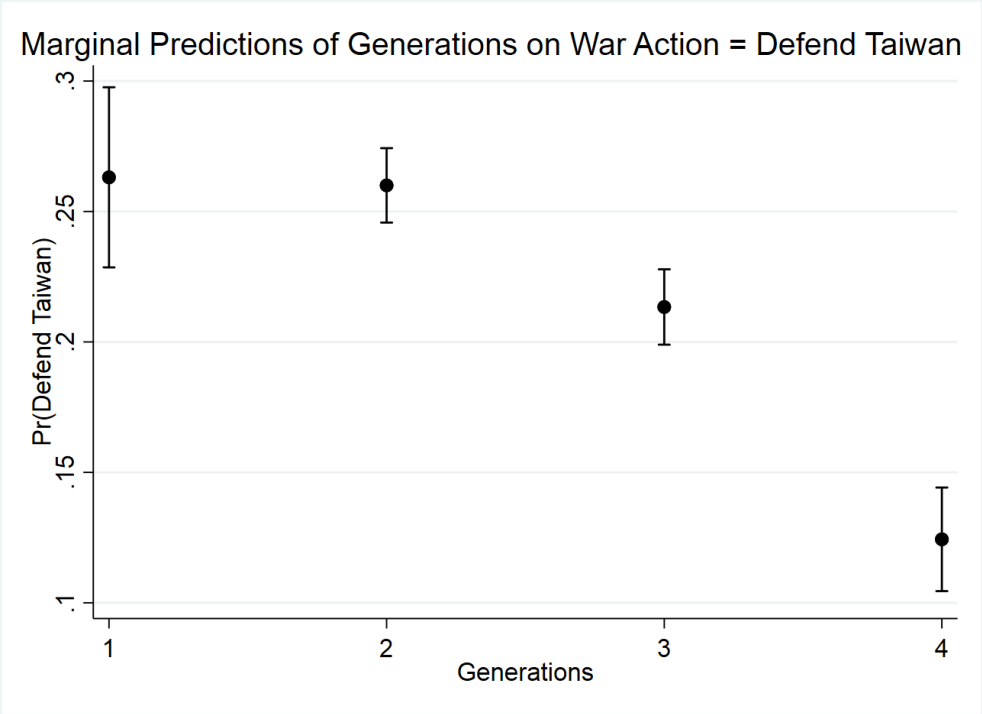

Figure 3.1 Marginal Effects on War Action

3.6 Robustness Checks

To overcome the potential biases generated by missing observations, I employed the Bayesian ordered logistic regression for estimating War Action through MCMC with the Random-walk Metropolis-Hastings sampling, and the ordered logistic using the sample derived from the multiple imputation with chained equations (MICE) incorporating all independent and dependent variables. Additionally, to assess the potential impact of age cutpoints in defining of generations. I reanalyzed the dataset with different age cut points.

Table 3.5 Robustness Check: Bayesian Estimation

DV:	War Action		
	Mean Estimate	95% Conf. Interval	
Generation 1	0.153	0.060	0.255
Generation 2	0.281	0.197	0.364
Generation 4	-0.587	-0.687	-0.473
Female	-1.005	-1.092	-0.915
Independent War	-0.148	-0.192	-0.107
US Military Help	0.195	0.150	0.236
Taiwanese	0.339	0.272	0.406
Mainlander Father	-0.339	-0.500	-0.208
DPP	0.309	0.236	0.391
Education	-0.094	-0.128	-0.061
Intercept (1/2)	-1.535	-1.678	-1.365
Intercept (2/3)	1.084	0.940	1.258
Intercept			
# of Observations		5962	
MCMC sample size		10000	

Table 3.5 showed the Bayesian estimations of the dependent variable, I reported the 95% confidence interval to include the 95% range of the coefficient of each independent variable. I also reported the mean estimates of the Bayesian simulation, but it is not a coefficient estimate like the ones in OLS or MLE – Bayesian simulation does not report coefficient estimates. Table 3.6

reported the coefficient estimates on War Action using the sample from the multiple imputation. The direction and sign of the estimates in Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 were mostly identical to the ones reported in Table 3.4, meaning that the findings from Table 3.5 were robust and likely are not generated through estimation biases imposed by missing observations. In terms of the results from the different age cutpoints, Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 matched what has been presented above. The results from both age cutpoint of 9 and 11 reported identical results as using the age cutpoint of 10. Overall, the robustness checks with the Bayesian estimations, the sample imputed by the multiple imputation, and the alternative age cut points supported above findings.

Table 3.6 Robustness Check: Multiple Imputation

DV:	War Action	
	Coeff.	s.e.
Generation 1	0.164*	(0.077)
Generation 2	0.326**	(0.053)
Generation 4	-0.765***	(0.100)
Female	-1.010***	(0.042)
Independent War	-0.154***	(0.023)
US Military Help	0.189***	(0.024)
Taiwanese	0.287***	(0.037)
Mainlander Father	-0.295***	(0.070)
DPP	0.330***	(0.049)
Education	-0.087***	(0.016)
Intercept (1/2)	-1.541	(0.178)
Intercept (2/3)	1.210	(0.187)
Intercept		
# of Observations	12225	

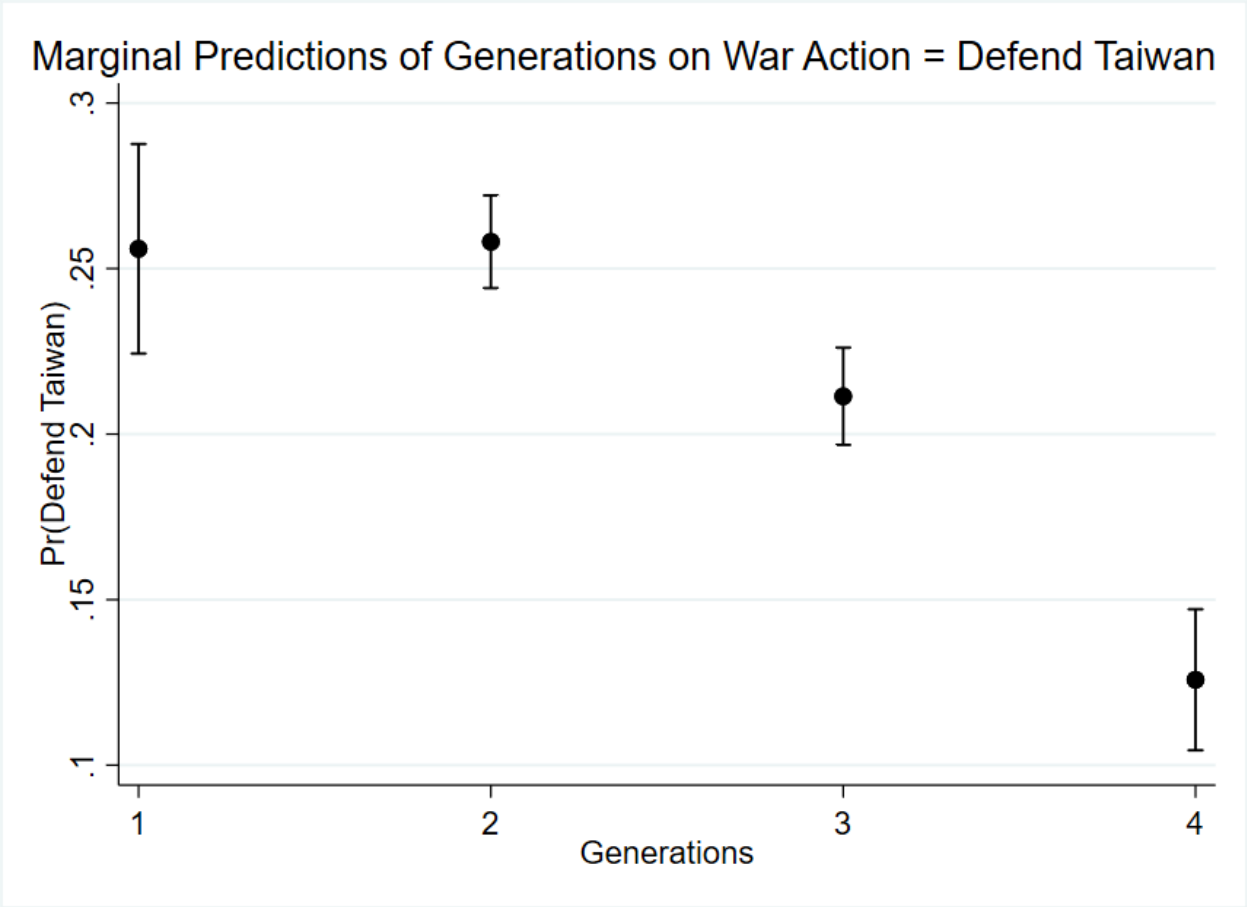

Figure 3.2 Marginal Effects on War Action (Age Cutpoint =9)

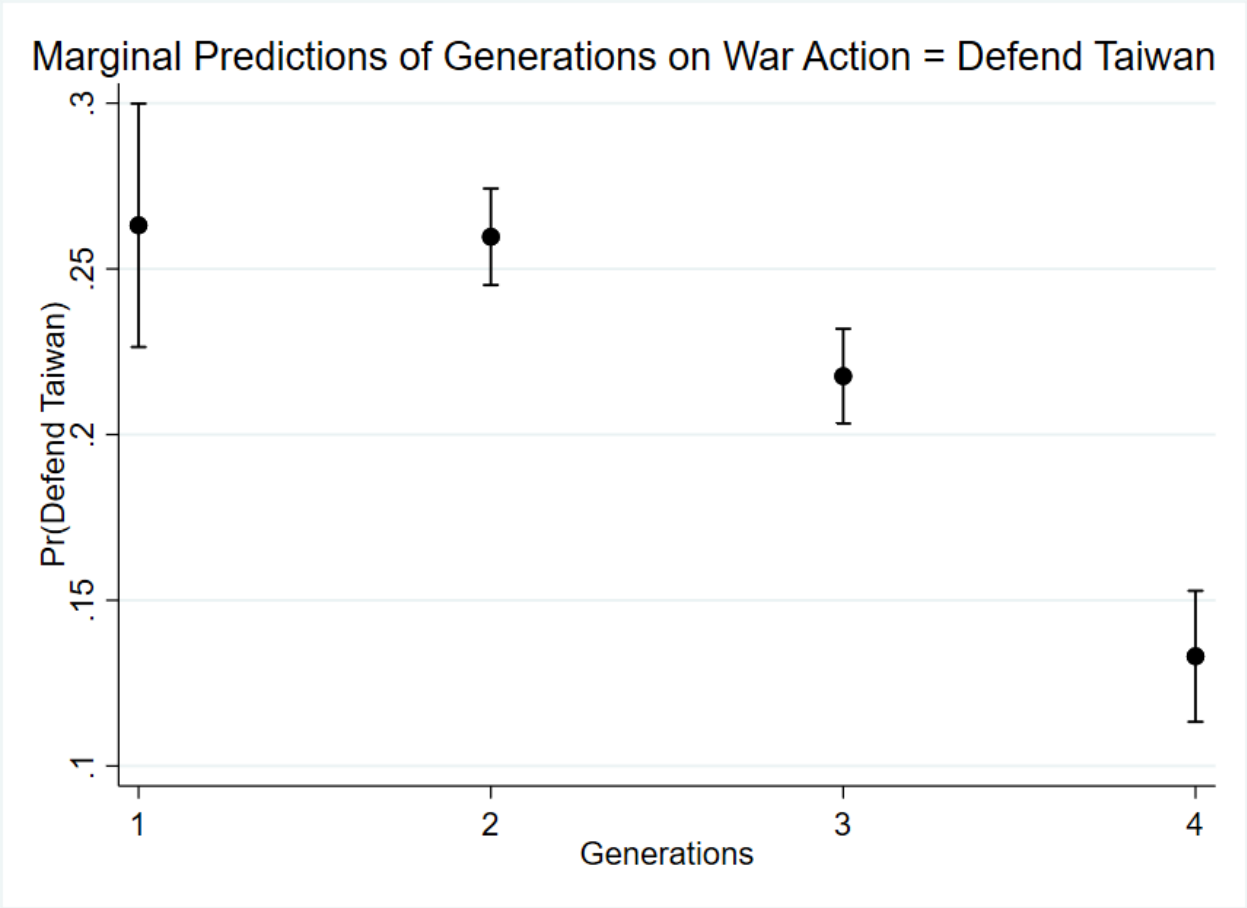

Figure 3.3 Marginal effects on war action (Age Cutpoint =11)

3.7 Discussion and Conclusion

The paper provides a test of the generational hypothesis in the context of Taiwan. Overall, I found support for most of the hypotheses. Comparing between generation 1 and generation 4 allows us to infer that that having fought the war with China increase citizens' willingness to fight a war by China by 14% compared those what do not have conflict experience. This result will help contribute to an existing debate of the influence of generation on war support.

That being said, there are some incongruities between the hypotheses and the findings that require explanations. The major difference that comes to mind is that the third and fourth generations turned out to be markedly different, contrary to the hypothesis. Close inspection would reveal that the third generation turned out to be more supportive of war, whereas the fourth generation matched expectations of low war support. I offer some possible explanations.

One possibility is that I underestimated the impact of the crisis on the psyche of the citizens. Although the crisis was short-lived, it might have created a lasting impact on the generation that changed how they view self-defense in an armed conflict with China. There is some anecdotal evidence. During the crisis, citizens who were serving their mandatory military service were told to be prepared for war with China. They were instructed to retaliate against military bases in mainland should China attack the island first.

As China began their first waves of military exercises and sending missiles, officials in the government in Taiwan ordered mass mobilization and began final stages of preparation for combat (Su, 2003). Studies of dramatic events such as terrorism reveal that such information could induce strong emotions to make one feel less secure (Breckenridge et al., 2010) and more supportive of

the use of force to counter potential threats (Huddy et al., 2005). Thus, it is possible that this crisis, albeit short-lived, led this generation to have a sharp reaction to the missile crisis and became much more support of self-defense.

Another possibility for not observing a larger difference between the third and one generation is that war support for the first generation might be underestimated due to survey questionnaire design. Since the question asks what an individual would do in a cross-Strait conflict, senior citizens might suppress their support for use of force against China if they think the question is asking whether they would be willing to go to war themselves. A question that gauges their support for the use of force against China by Taiwanese government should drive up their support considerably than what I found.

Overall, the findings in this paper advance the literature in a few ways. First, it adds to the literature that studies the effects of generations on political attitudes. Some scholars find that existing research suggests that generation could introduce additional explanatory power when studying foreign policy attitudes (Cutler, 1970), while others suggest that generation is not effective at explaining public support for interventions overseas (Holsti & Rosenau, 1980). This study contributes to this debate by providing some support for the importance of generation on foreign policy attitudes.

Similarly, this study raises doubts about findings that suggest that younger citizens are more supportive of US interventionist policy overseas and oppose to withdrawal (Erskine, 1970; Mueller, 1973; Lunch & Sperlich, 1979). This study shows that young generation is not as supportive of war as older generations (Cutler, 1970). Future research could continue to examine this question in different contexts to discover mechanisms.

The findings presented here suggest several venues for future research. Currently, the public support for war literature has overlooked the factor of generations in explaining attitudes for interventions overseas. This research highlights the necessity of including it when analyzing public opinion. An immediate step would be to replicate existing research with a generation component to see if the results would differ.

CHAPTER 4. DIVERSIONARY BEHAVIORS OF WEAK STATES: A CASE OF TAIWAN

4.1 Introduction

In 2006, Chen Shui-bian was a different man than he was in 2000. As a sitting president of Taiwan, he was constrained by norms of interactions and mutual understandings established with both China and the United States that he would not rock the boat by declaring Taiwan's independence. For instance, in his 2000 and inauguration speech, Chen pledged "…during my term, I will not declare independence, I will not change the national title, I will not push forth the inclusion of the so-called "state-to-state" description in the Constitution, and I will not promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard to the question of independence or unification. Furthermore, there is no question of abolishing the Guidelines for National Unification and the National Unification Council…" (USC US-China Institute, 2000).

Independence is a touchy issue in this trilateral relationship, and if managed inappropriately, could lead to a conflict with China. To this day, many in Taiwan still remember vividly the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1996. When a former president, Lee Tung-hui, delivered a pro-independence speech at Cornell University, China responded by shooting missiles into the waters around Taiwan. The conflict eventually deescalated after the US dispatched its 7th fleet into the Taiwan Strait.

But Chen did it anyways. Starting in 2006, Chen became the most iconic person to promote Taiwan's independence while blaming Chinese military threats against the island. That was a surprise, even to many inside Chen's party. Chen broke several key promises in just the first month of 2006. In his New Year's speech, he blasted China's ever-growing military threats against Taiwan with "784 missiles pointed at Taiwan, and the PLA is strengthening its maritime, air force,

tele-communications, and special operations" and used it as a justification to push for Taiwan's independence. Chen told citizens that he foresaw "…a draft version of "Taiwan Constitution" could emerge in this year" for a referendum in 2017 (*President Chen's 2006 New Year Speech*, 2006).

In the next two years, Chen doubled down on his aggressive foreign policy against China. In an interview with CNN (2007), Chen again highlighted Chinese military threats and used it as a reason to seek independence: "…China has never renounced the use of force against Taiwan…attempting to lay a legal basis for its future invasion of Taiwan …. I want to make Taiwan become a normal country. Even though Taiwan is an independent, sovereignty country, it is not yet a normal and complete country…. Because our current Constitution has never been approved by our people." Chen's pro-independence foreign policy culminated in March 2007 in a meeting with a pro-independence group. In front of media, Chen said: "Taiwan needs independence, Taiwan needs to be its formal name, Taiwan needs a new constitution, and Taiwan needs development" (Romberg, 2007). No president of Taiwan has ever walked so far as Chen.

What explains Chen's sudden changes of foreign policy, from one that is amicable to China and eschews pursuing independence, to the entire opposite. Scholars studying Chen's presidency agree that Chen resorted to rhetoric blaming China and pursuing Taiwan's independence to help him divert domestic criticisms (Li et al., 2010). But it is unclear why he made a drastic change in early 2006, but not before.

From late 2004, Chen started to face domestic challenges such as electoral defeats and political scandals, involving his political appointee, his family members and eventually himself. As a beleaguered president with declining public support, Chen needed a strategy to rescue himself. This paper delves into how Chen coped with these challenges with a hostile foreign policy toward

China by proclaiming Taiwan's independence and the conditions under which he decided to resort to diversionary behavior. Though Chen remained an unpopular president throughout most of his second term, his strategy did offer him temporary relief, giving him a significant boost in public support. In one case, a 12% increase in approval.

Chen's success raises an interesting question with respect to the diversionary literature. Diversionary foreign policy does not always pay off. An insightful study by Oneal (1993) showed that it could lead to zero increase in a leader's approval. Worse, such behavior can be harmful to leaders. Take the case of the Falklands War as an example. After the invasion, although the Argentine junta enjoyed a short-term period of increase in approval, subsequent military actions by the British led the citizens to quickly turned against the leader, unseating the junta (Weisiger, 2013). Thus, the paper also explores the reasons behind Chen's success.

Taken together, this paper makes multiple contributions to the diversionary literature. A shared characteristic between Argentina and Taiwan is that both are non-major powers, or weak states. But the diversionary literature has not been able to tell us about how a weak state could employ diversionary behavior. This case allows us to do so. Another contribution of this paper is the focus on provocative policies or hostile rhetoric. The majority of studies in the diversionary literature focus on military intervention, and understanding of how states could use non-forceful means as a diversionary strategy has just begun (e.g., Carter 2020). Weak states, given the limitations they face in using force abroad, provide an opportune context to examine the use of such tactics. In this paper, I explore various considerations and conditions under which a weak state like Taiwan would encounter when thinking about diversion. I find that diversionary foreign behavior for a weak state occurs only when a multitude of forces, including dwindling public approval, a major electoral defeat, and internal opposition from within the leader's party, were

jointly present. On the other hand, pressure from a major power, such as the United States, did not force the leader of Taiwan to walk back from his provocative foreign policy.

4.2 Literature Review

When state leaders encounter domestic challenges, such as a decline in approval and economic concerns, including rising inflation and unemployment, they often resort to the use of force overseas to divert the public's attention, dodge potential criticisms, and regain public support. This behavior, called diversionary use of force, is one of the most studied phenomena in political science. Studies have largely provided evidence to confirm that economic woes and declining approval do motivate state leaders to initiate foreign conflicts (DeRouen, 1995; Oneal & Tir, 2006; Levy, 1989; Mitchell & Prins, 2004; Foster & Palmer, 2006; Gent, 2009; Brulé & William, 2009; Mitchell & Thyne, 2010; Martinez-Machain & Rosenberg, 2016; Pickering & Kisangani, 2005).

Leaders resort to diversionary behavior not only because it takes the minds of their citizens off domestic problems, but because foreign use of force can induce rallying effects for them. There are three rationales that can explain why diversionary war could help leaders drive up approval. First, rooted in social identity theory, when leaders amplify the difference between an "out-group" in a foreign country and their "in-group" in a conflict, they could stimulate support among the public (Coser, 1956; Simmel, 1955). Second, fighting a war overseas is a spectacle and could distract the public from economic woes or domestic scandals. When a country is busy engaging in a foreign conflict, little time is left for the public to closely focus on domestic issues (Levy, 1988; Mueller, 1973). Third, a foreign conflict could help the leader reestablish an image of competence in foreign policy, and if the leader succeeds, it could help reorganize his political landscape and agenda (Downs & Rocke, 1994; Kisangani & Pickering, 2007).

Diversionary war examples are not hard to find. One of the classical examples is US invasion of Panama under George H. W. Bush. Bush was criticized as someone who could not handle foreign relations well due to his weak attitudes toward foreign affairs. In response, he sent over 20,000 troops to Panama to attack a weak leader and a military composed of only around 6,000 soldiers. Scholars analyzing this incident mostly agreed that this operation is a dire attempt for Bush to rescue his image. The victory helped Bush tremendously: his approval jumped to 80% after the mission (Cramer, 2006).

Despite a vast number of studies, empirical findings on the effect of diversion are still mixed. Whereas a plethora of studies have found evidence of diversionary actions when leaders encounter crises (Fordham, 1998; DeRouen, 2000; Clark, 2003; Howell & Pevehouse, 2005; James & Hristoulas, 1994; James & Oneal, 1991; Levy, 1989; Clifton & Bickers, 1992; Ostrom & Job 1986), dissenting studies are commonplace (Meernik & Waterman, 1996; Leeds & Davis, 1997; Gowa, 1998; Johnston, 1998; Chiozza & Goemans, 2003, Chiozza & Goemans, 2004; Foster & Palmer, 2006; Lian & Oneal, 1993; Meernik, 2004; Moore & Lanoue, 2003; Potter, 2007).

4.2.1 Weak States and Diversionary War

More importantly, a significant gap with the diversionary literature is that most cases are drawn from powerful states like the United States and Great Britain, with little emphasis on weak states' diversionary behavior. Like their counterparts, weak state leaders do face domestic challenges that call for diversionary behavior. But they are subject to several different constraints and incentives when thinking about diversion, making exploration of weak states' diversionary behaviors worthwhile.

First, weak states are by definition less powerful, reducing the likelihood that they will succeed if military operations are initiated. Studies have shown that states with superior capabilities tend to prevail in conflict against weaker ones (Wang & Ray, 1994; Blainey, 1998; Reiter & Stam, 1998; Wayman et al., 1983). Thus, weak states often encounter difficult times finding an appropriate target that they would have a high likelihood of winning in a war (Levy, 1998).

Furthermore, insistence on the use of force could bring negative consequences to weak state leaders. Their limitations of military capabilities reduce their credibility of making military threats, and the leader's reputations could suffer if the military threats are ignored or called bluff (Tomz, 2007; Hoffman et al., 2009; Trager & Vavreck 2011; Levendusky & Horowitz 2012; Davies & Johns, 2013; Chaudoin, 2014). As citizens in stronger states, the public in weak states would also question the exorbitant costs associated with military operations. Thus, a risky foreign adventure could result in a divided public and might even trigger more dissent (Morgan & Anderson, 1999). Consequently, weak state leaders that do not have a clear and strong public backing and military preparedness would think twice before starting new conflicts overseas. It is perhaps of little surprise that weak states are more likely to bandwagon than balance in international politics (Palmer & Morgan, 2011; Fox, 1958) to avoid using force unnecessarily.

The reduction in propensity to engage in use of force overseas among weak states exposes another gap in the diversionary literature. Most of this literature focuses on military intervention, but as elaborated above, weak states often have good reasons not to use force overseas when engaging in diversion. In fact, diversionary wars often fail (Oakes, 2006). Thus, leaders do adopt other policy alternatives such as initiating reforms, passing legislation, or focusing on a minority

ethnic group to weaken oppositions (Tir & Jasinski, 2008). Studying weak state could help us understand if weak states resort to other types of diversionary strategies.

Additionally, the inclusion of weak state cases could also help contribute to a long-standing question in the diversionary theory of war literature. Studies have shown that diversionary wars do not always pay off in helping the leaders become more popular. Confronting foreign countries sometimes lowers approval for a sitting leader (Brody & Shapiro, 1989). Even if the policy succeeds in boosting approval, the effects are often temporary (Lian & Oneal, 1993). In the case of the Falklands War, even when a gathering for the president was at its largest, its size was only a fraction (10%) of the size of a gathering after the country's victory during 1978 World Cup (Fravel, 2010; Markman, 1982). Other cases of foreign wars, such as Korea, Suez, or Kosovo wars, simply do not provide any rallying effect for leaders (Lai & Reiter, 2005). Studying weak states gives us a new opportunity to examine this question.

4.2.2 Diversionary Behavior for Weak States

One of the tactics that could be especially helpful for weak state leaders is the use what I call "diversionary behavior," or the use of hostile or provocative policies short of the threat or actual use of force. There is a nascent literature on diversionary foreign policy, based on the use of aggressive language toward a foreign enemy (Carter, 2020). Hostile foreign policies with aggressive language can be a sensible strategy as it could trigger salient inter-group differences, a critical mechanism of diversionary war, and the effect has been found to be especially strong when facing threatening outgroups (Carter, 2020). Studying US presidents between 1945 and 2010 leads Carter (2020) to conclude that US presidents do divert verbally, which could be associated with

improvements of presidential approval. However, the use of such strategy has not been examined in a weak state context.

Provocative policies or hostile rhetoric could be useful for weak states for several reasons. To begin with, actions such as major foreign policy changes that potentially provoke a hostile foreign state are potentially much less costly than the use of force overseas and can help leaders rally support against an external enemy. While such tactic could be criticized as ineffective, it can help weak states avoid the credibility question arising from threats of use of force (Alrababa'h, 2020). The problem could also be attenuated as leaders could intensify or escalate hostile foreign policy to attract more support. Rhetoric could serve as a low-cost first option that is particularly attractive to weak states. There is also evidence to suggest that weak states do engage in hostile foreign policy as a diversionary tactic. For instance, studies have shown that when the approval for Chen sinks, it leads him to use harsh foreign policy toward China (e.g., Li et al., 2009). Second, studies have attested to the effect of the use of political rhetoric in rallying support for political leaders (MacKuen, 1983; Carter, 2019).

4.2.3 Hypotheses of Diversionary Behavior for Weak States

With respect to the factors that influence the conditions under which weak states adopt diversionary behavior, a prominent one is their relations with great powers. Because of their limited ability to stand up to an aggressor, weak states often rely on great powers for protection (Weber, 2000; Cooley, 2005; Donnelly, 2006). An alliance with a major power offers weak states advantages such as reducing defense burdens as allies can pool resources (Long & Leeds 2006). But such dependence also limits the flexibility of weak states to pursue diversionary actions without informing, consultation or even approval from great powers. The asymmetrical

relationships also make weaker states sensitive to potential reactions from great powers (Womack, 2006). Stronger state can often force weak states to change their actions when they are economically interdependent (Drury, 1998).

Proceeding with diversionary actions without mutual understandings or approvals by great powers runs the risks of jeopardizing relations with them. In return, great powers could take actions that impose prohibitive costs on weak states. At the minimum, a great power could cease to honor the defense needs of weak states. If relations between them sour, stronger countries might even find ways to punish weak states. Incurring the wrath of a great power also has domestic costs for leaders. The diplomatic setbacks by losing the support of a great power are likely to be picked up by the opposition to undermine a leader's reputation.

US-Turkey relations is a case in point. When Turkey adamantly decided to buy weapons from Russia despite of U.S. objections, the US punished the country with a series of actions including cancelling the sales of fighter jets, raising tariffs, and sanctioning Turkish officials, with additional threats of revoking Turkey's membership in NATO. Additionally, the classical case of Argentina invading the Falkland Islands also suggests how a weak state (Argentina) is mindful of reaction from great powers (the United States and the Great Britain) prior to its invasion of the Falkland Islands. The assumptions that Britain would not intervene, and that the US would be neutral toward the invasion led Argentina to initiate the conflict (Oakes, 2006). Clearer signals from the great powers would delay or prevent the conflict from taking place.

The above discussion leads us to hypothesize that explicit opposition from a major power should motivate a weak state to alter its diversionary foreign policy. Whereas a weak state might not abandon its diversionary policy altogether, the pressure should, to a great extent, modify the direction or the content of the policy of the weak state.

H1: Weak state should modify the context or direction of their diversionary foreign policy when receiving clear opposition from a major power.

In addition to relations with a great power, variation in domestic political conditions in weak states should also influence the conditions under which leaders adopt diversionary behavior. Political elites could exert pressure on leaders when their performance is not adequate (Gelpi, 1997; Heldt, 1999). But weak state leaders could adopt various strategies such as co-opting the opposition, adopting new legislations (Oakes, 2020) without necessarily resorting to diversionary behavior. The following explores these conditions.

In general, political leaders face two kinds of political opposition: internal (from within one's party) and external (from opposition party). I argue that weak state leaders facing internal opposition are less likely to resort to diversionary behavior. In analyzing the source of opposition within the leader's party, it will be helpful to consider if it comes from prominent leaders. If the challenges do not come from prominent leaders, then leaders could likely ignore their demands or use their position to resolve them as they are unlikely to pose a real threat to their position. In this case, leaders would not resort to diversionary behavior.

Opposition from prominent leaders as a source of internal opposition would be more stressful for leaders. Since the prominent leaders are more likely to hold key positions inside the leader's party, their demands could not be dismissed easily. They might gather enough momentum to threaten a leader's power. Dealing with them forcefully also does not bode well for leaders. The internal conflict, when revealed, could hurt a leader's reputation. Research shows that losing intraparty support can jeopardize a leader's survival (Ennser-Jedenastik & Müller, 2015).

Internal opposition from prominent leaders could certainly motivate leaders to consider diversionary behavior but doing so could carry negative consequences. Elites from the same party could learn the intentions behind it, and to weaken the leader's power, the elites might release the information to the public, furthering damaging a leader's reputation. Thus, failures from the diversionary action would exacerbate elite rift and party fragmentation, and a leader is likely to be held responsible by the public to face electoral consequences. Taken together, the discussion shows that facing internal opposition is unlikely to motivate leaders to resort to diversionary behavior.

H2: Weak state leaders that face internal opposition do not resort to diversionary behavior.

4.3 Research Design

Most analysts agree that Chen's foreign policy change dramatically after 2006 (Fell, 2010). In his 2006 New Year Speech, Chen openly blamed China:

> , "At present, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has deployed 784 ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan along the coast across the Taiwan Strait; the PRC has also vigorously reinforced its naval and air force combat readiness, coordinating its ground, information, electronics, and Special Forces, severely impacting and posing direct threat to peace in the Taiwan Strait…Meanwhile, the PLA has aggressively expanded its own military armaments, augmenting its combat readiness in a three-stage preparation for war against Taiwan, setting the following goals as its interim objectives: establish contingency-response combat capabilities by 2007; build up combat capabilities for large-scale military engagement by 2010; to ensure victory in a decisive battle by 2015... Following China's so-called "annihilation" of the Republic of China in 1949, it has unceasingly pursued its ambition to annex Taiwan" (*President Chen's 2006 New Year Speech*, 2006).

Granted, this is not the first time that Chen blame China's aggression during his entire eight years of presidency. What is notable, is that, in this speech, Chen, for the first time, in his presidency, encouraged the Taiwanese society to create a new constitution that promotes Taiwan's independence. But Chen himself ruled out just this possibility two years ago. In 2004, during his

inauguration speech after winning a reelection, Chen vowed those sensitive issues related to unification/independence would not be included in his constitutional reengineering project. Here, in 2006, Chen openly broke his promise, asking the society to come up with a constitution that would almost certainly touch upon these topics. This shift, led Romberg, a prominent observer of Taiwanese politics, to comment that this speech "raise serious doubts" about whether Chen could fulfill his promise (2006, pg. 6).

> Chen said: "In regard to the most important constitutional reengineering project, our course of action will be a "bottom-up and outside-in" approach, and relevant proposals will be initiated by civic groups before political parties are engaged. We will…produce "Taiwan's New Constitution" by 2008—one that is timely, relevant and viable. I had at first believed that the re-engineering of a New Constitution had to be undertaken as a single project. Surprisingly, the first phase of the project began ahead of schedule (June 7th, 2004) and successfully completed the goals set forth in my second Inaugural Address… In life, there is no calling too great. The journey may be arduous, but if we have faith, if we persist, we will find a way. I have always paid close attention to and have been most pleased to see the vigorous development of a constitutional reform movement in our civil society. I look forward to the completion of a civilian-drafted bill of "Taiwan's New Constitution." Should conditions in the Taiwan society become sufficiently mature, who is to say that holding a referendum on the new Constitution by 2007 is an impossibility? After all, this is an overarching national goal of Taiwan, which also manifests the foremost significance of the alternation of political party in power" (*President Chen's 2006 New Year Speech*, 2006).

Chen's speech can be considered as diversionary. Following Carter (2020), I define diversionary foreign policy as hostile rhetoric against a foreign enemy. In the case of Chen, diversionary behavior would consist of two themes. First, Chen would blame China for its military threats and aggression toward Taiwan. Second, in response, he would pursue Taiwan's independence in separation from China. By focusing on Chinese aggression, Chen diverted the public's attention from several major challenges that he faced. Brining up a new constitution taps into growing support among citizens in Taiwan that see themselves as separate from China. Consequently, seeing that the threat from Chinese aggression could prevent an independent

Taiwan from emerging is likely to trigger an in-group/out-group mentality among Taiwanese citizens, leading them to support Chen.

In 2006, Chen faced major domestic issues that he could not resolve easily. At this juncture, Chen had become a widely unpopular president. In just one year and a half after his reelection, his approval rate plummeted from 43% in May 2004, shortly before he was reelected, to 10% in December 2005, a month before he delivered the above speech (TVBS, 2006). A 33% reduction. During this period, a major official of Chen's presidential staff was mired in corruption scandals, and his party sustained several significant electoral losses, giving up major mayoral seats to the opposition party. It is logical that Chen resorted to diversionary behavior to rescue his own political career.

A puzzle then emerges here. Chen was engulfed in controversy shortly after the beginning of this second term in 2004, but he did not resort to diversionary behavior right away. Instead, he waited well over a year and a half to start pursuing aggressive foreign policy toward China by formally pursuing Taiwan's independence in 2006. Why did Chen rely on diversionary behavior in 2006, but not before? What are the conditions under which that motivate Chen to make this decision? In other words, my dependent variable is hostile foreign policies and actions toward China during the first month of 2006.

To understand the conditions that motivate Chen' decisions, I rely on academic publications and media reports from local major newspapers in Taiwan, in both Chinese and English, such as *the United Daily*, *the China Times*, and *Liberty Times, Taipei Times*, *the Apple Daily*, and *Central News Agency*. Since each newspaper has different ideological orientations, I examine a similar news in different newspapers to reduce bias reporting or even falsehood. Given the secondary nature of my sources, they do not allow me to ascertain Chen's motives for making

his decisions with certainty. However, it is reasonable to assume, consistent with the diversionary literature, that his actions closely resemble what diversionary theorists have in mind when they talk about diversionary behavior. To provide evidence that Chen's actions are diversionary in nature, I will also find statements by other politicians and authorities that accused Chen of playing the independence card for purely political reasons.

Thus, this case study is exploratory, designed to probe diversionary behavior in a weak state. Doing so could generate new insights about how diversionary actions work in a state that is usually ignored in the diversionary literature (Eckstein, 1975; Levy, 2008; Yin, 1994). Thus, this study is not a definitive test of the theory or hypotheses. I conduct my case study with in-depth process tracking and analysis of historical events to provide rich descriptions that can strengthen the internal validity of the analysis (Blatter, 2008). This technique allows me to match Chen's behavior against a pattern to draw inferences about why he did what he did and when.

Other key variables are public approval, political opposition, and US pressure. For these variables, in addition to the sources above, information about Chen's approval comes from the polls from a major TV station, Television Broadcasts Satellite (TVBS), in Taiwan. I will also reference polls found elsewhere to corroborate with the information. Analysis of political oppositions and US pressure will focus on how these actions influence Chen's political career and what Chen did in response.

4.4 Diversionary Foreign Policy in Chen Shui-Bien Era, Pre and Post 2006

4.4.1 A Surprising Announcement

On the first day in 2006, Chen delivered his New Year speech. In that speech, Chen made a groundbreaking announcement that he would encourage the civil society in Taiwan to come up

with a new constitution for a referendum at the end of the 2007. Similarly, in less than a month, Chen, during the New Year's Eve of the Lunar New Year, announced that he would abolish the National Unification Council, the institution that help facilitate Taiwan's eventual reunification with China.

In just one month's time, Chen broke two of his campaign promises that he pledged not to when reelected. In May 2004, Chen, during his reelection inaugural speech, reiterated his stance of not pursuing Taiwan's independence. He proclaimed to continue his policy of "five noes" that he would not declare independence, change the national title of the Republic of China (Taiwan's official name), change state-to-state description in the Constitution, hold a referendum to change the status quo across the Strait, and abolish the National Unification Council or the Guidelines for National Unification.

Chen's rapid departure from his campaign pledges sent shock waves throughout the world. The Globe and Mail called his aspiration for a new constitution a "scary New Year's resolution" (Ching, 2006). The Los Angeles Time (2006) indicated clearly that this speech would "crush expectations…to reconcile with China". Scholars analyzing this speech recognize Chen's diversionary intentions by pointing out that the internal pressure from his party is an important reason why he gave this speech: "Chen…concluded that his party's internal divisions contributed more to its defeat in the municipal elections." so he wants to "shore up support…for independence" (Bradsher, 2006).

Within Taiwan, reactions to Chen's speech also clearly followed partisan lines. Whereas the pro-DPP Liberty Times (2006) supported Chen's speech that "correcting the official name, creating a new constitution, and other policy…we never pressure the government to do…we believe that citizens will support the president's goal." On the other hand, the opposition was

disappointed in Chen's speech. The pro-unification China Times criticized that Chen's goal for this speech was simply to "create more divisions inside the country" (*Continue to idle and procrastinate for two more years*, 2006). The following analyzes the conditions that guide Chen's decision to dramatically alter his foreign policy.

4.4.2 Chen Dealt with Internal Opposition Successfully

Chen's major domestic challenges started around August 2005. The period before August 2005 was comparatively tranquil for Chen. The biggest political challenge for him came from a failure in the legislative election in 2004. Although Chen was confident that his party would secure more seats in the election, his party was outperformed by the opposition, which widened the gap in the number of legislative seats. In the aftermath of the election, Chen was criticized by party members that by weakening his pro-independence stance, as evidenced in his reelection inaugural speech, he disheartened and distanced many pro-independence supporters to come out to vote (Ko, 2004). To bear responsibility, Chen resigned from his position as party chair. However, this incident did not really hurt Chen politically as his approval rating did not decrease after the election. His approval stayed at around 34 percent, nearly identical to the rating before the election (*Poll revealed Chen's approval sank to new low*, 2004). Also, despite of leaving his post as party chair, Chen still wielded influence as the president of the country. Accordingly, this hurdle does not necessitate Chen to resort to diversionary action.

Real troubles for Chen started in late 2005. On August 21, around 300 foreign workers affiliated with the Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Corporation (KRTC) initiated a strike due to unpaid wages. Media revealed that the workers should have received NT$29,500 ($983) each month, but only received around 20,000 ($666), leaving around NT$9000 ($317) of their monthly salary

unaccounted for. Authorities suspected that the agency, Huapan, that brought those workers to Taiwan, was responsible and started an investigation.

As the scandal continued to develop, investigators found reasons to believe that the lost wages were linked to the CEO of the KRTC and Huapan. To many's surprise, it was soon found out that the Deputy Secretary-General of Chen could be involved as he went on a trip with them to Thailand to hire workers. Although the Secretary-General quickly denied his involvement in this scandal, the public quickly lost confidence in him as a report showed a photo of him sitting next to the vice chairman of KRTC at a casino table in South Korea. Public uproar increased and many now wondered if the president knew, condoned, or was even involved in the scandal. The development led the Deputy Secretary-General to resign quickly, and Chen, on many occasions, openly apologized to the public. But these attempts did little to regain the trust of the citizens. Chen's approval took a direct hit, dropping to around 25% (Chiu, 2005).

The corruption scandal is damaging for Chen and his party on several fronts. Political corruption has been a salient issue in Taiwanese politics (Fell, 2005). Before this scandal took place, most citizens associated the opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), with political corruption. Thus, criticizing the KMT for illegally taking assets from citizens during their rule has been a winning strategy for Chen's party. During his reelection campaign, Chen vowed that he would continue to crack down on corruption that has plagued Taiwanese politics during the past several decades.

Thus, this scandal, involving a top official working closely with Chen, decimated this hard-earned image of Chen's party. According to TVBS polls by from 1999 to 2005, citizens in Taiwan always regarded the opposition party to be more corrupt. The incident marks the first time in this poll that the public think of Chen's party as more corrupt. In May 2005, just six months before the

scandal, the public still considered Chen's party to be "cleaner" than the KMT (34% vs 30%). Much to Chen's chagrin, after the scandal, Chen's party dropped 17 percentage points to become the clearly more corrupt party. Only 17% of the public now considered Chen's party to be clean, compared to the opposition's 29% (Fell, 2010).

But Chen still did not respond to this crisis with diversionary action for two reasons. First, he successfully defeated internal opposition arising from this scandal. During the scandal, a faction inside Chen's party known as the New Tide started a movement called the "new DPP movement" to encourage the party to bring back its values such as freedom, democracy, and integrity. The movement gained momentum quickly, receiving close to 70 endorsements in a short time, including the approval of the chairman (Huang, 2005a). Although the movement does not directly challenge the president, its call for focusing on moral factors is regarded as blaming the president for the party's recent challenges.

Before the movement could pose a real threat to Chen, Chen used his power to quell it preemptively. At a meeting, joined by several key members of the party, Chen framed the movement as an endeavor to push the older generations out of the party, indicating that the growing power of factions could lead to a split of the party (Huang, 2005b). After Chen expressed disapproval of the movement, the party's chairman held a meeting days later to act on the movement. The consensus from the meeting was that the movement should be silenced, and the term "the new DPP movement" should never be brought up again (Huang, 2005b). Members of the faction were also reprimanded as ungrateful to Chen's support for helping them win seats (Chang, 2006). Chen successfully diffused pressure from internal political opposition.

A second reason that Chen did not choose diversionary foreign policy is because he was busy helping the party prepare for a critical national election in December. The scandal took place

when the party was laying the groundwork for the campaign. As the president, Chen has responsibilities for helping his party win the election. Chen took actions to reduce negative influence of the scandal on the election. On campaign trails, he repeatedly apologized to his supporters, stressing that he "had no relationship at all" with the scandal, but that he would "bear all responsibilities, biggest responsibilities, and ultimate responsibilities" (Yang & Yin 2005).

Aside from trying to regain support by going to rallies and campaign events, Chen also adopted other approaches to shift the focus from the public on the party's scandal. For instance, DPP legislators started holding press conferences to censure the opposition party for not willing to give up their assets taken from citizens when it was in power (Huang, 2005c). In addition to blaming the opposition, Chan also tried to restore the public's confidence in the administration' ability to improve their economic well-being by holding conferences with major industry and business leaders (*Editorial: Conference won't cure nation's ills*, 2005).

4.4.3 Major Electoral Defeat and Internal Opposition Prompted Diversionary Action

Chen's efforts did not pay off. In December, the opposition won a landslide victory over the DPP. The KMT won 14 out of 23 city and county seats, whereas DPP only got 9. In the election, Chen's party lost 3 seats including cities that were historically very supportive of it. Most believe that the scandal is a major reason for the party's failure (Huang & Chiu, 2005). After losing the election, Chen's approval rate was only 10% (TVBS, 2006). After the debacle, Chen did not appear publicly for several days and made first official comment only a week after the election and agreed that the party's scandal is a key reason for the failure.

The electoral defeat prompted internal opposition to Chen, and many more agreed that the party was in dire need for reform to improve its image among the public. Immediately after the electoral defeat, a senior DPP politician sent a letter urging Chen to resign from the party, and not

interfere or dictate the party's subsequent elections. Leaders of various factions tagged on to this letter and commented that Chen's refusal to comply would lead to more resentment within the party (Huang, 2005c). The criticisms led to a rift inside Chen's party. While some suggested that Chen should leave the party immediately, others considered such a decision as too extreme. The debate about whether the president should leave the party again, turned heated (Ko, 2005).

The dwindling public approval, major electoral defeat, and intense internal pressure prompted Chen to resort to diversionary action. In his 2006 new year's speech, Chen switched his foreign policy toward China from one that eschewed Taiwan's independence to one that promoted it with concrete policy actions. In that speech, Chen announced his intentions to pursue Taiwan's independence via creating a new constitution and a referendum by the end of next year. Specifically, Chen touched upon both themes of diversionary rhetoric. He criticized China's military preparations against Taiwan and wanted citizens to support his goal of achieving Taiwan's independence. Chen's tactic was successful. The speech gave him a 50% boost of approval rate, as his approval increased to 15% (TVBS, 2008). It also significantly weakened the internal opposition of his party. After the speech, leaders from his party announced that "DPP will be united and give its full support to the president" (Huang, 2006).

4.4.4 Motivations for Chen's Sharp Turn in Policy toward China

By openly supporting Taiwan's independence, Chen made a risky choice. Most of the citizens in Taiwan at that time still supported the status quo, so Chen's announcement could actually alienate the voters he wanted to court. Then, why did Chen decide to change his policy dramatically? The answer has to do with Chen's political and electoral calculations. Since Chen came into office, the political situation in Taiwan had been polarized, and presidential candidates rarely obtained significantly more than 50 percent of votes. In the case of Chen's reelection in

2004, his got 50.11% of vote, and the opposition got 49.89%. The source of polarization largely came down to one issue: relations with China. Whereas Chen's party advocated a more hostile attitude toward China, his opposition adopted a more conciliatory approach.

Before this announcement in 2006, trying to court voters in the middle, Chen tried to downplay his party's hostile position toward China. In doing so, Chen appeared friendly to China and tried to tamp down pro-independence forces inside his party. For instance, after Chen's first failure of legislative election in late 2004, he met with a pro-unification party leader, James Soong, and signed a joint 10-point agreement that reemphasized his five pledges (Bellows, 2005). Despite of Chen's goodwill in courting the voters in the middle, the biggest problem with his China strategy was that it looked a lot like that of the opposition's. Judging from his approval rate of 10% after the election in December 2005 (TVBS, 2008), his strategy did not work.

Furthermore, compared to Chen's approach, China was much more willing to work with the opposition, which shares beliefs and goals about unification with it. Consequently, Chen made limited progress in his relationship with China, while the opposition was making important headway and won public support. For instance, in May 2005, the leader of the opposition party, Lien Chan, visited China, making him the first person to set foot on mainland since the end the civil war in 1949. Lien's speech received high attention in Taiwan and during his visit, he and a leader from China made a joint announcement to oppose Taiwan's independence. Chen also spoke approvingly of Lien's visit, believing that it could foster bilateral talks between the two governments in the future (Bellows, 2005).

Post-trip surveys show over 50% of citizens supported Lien's trip. In another survey, 46% believed that the KMT could handle cross-strait relations well better than Chen's party (Ross, 2006). In addition to losing public support to the opposition, staying away from his pro-

independence stance also triggered criticisms from within his party. Many inside his party wanted Chen to oppose to Lien's trip. Ultimately, when the opposition party savored an increase in approval, Chen's approval dropped significantly in comparison (Bellows, 2005).

Thus, the major electoral fiasco in late 2005, combined with low public approval and internal public opposition, woke Chen to the reality that he could not continue to follow what the opposition was doing. Thus, Chen decided to revert to a more extreme, non-centrist position of pursuing Taiwan's independence.

Chen's change of strategy toward China was rational. In fact, several observations offered support for Chen's decisions. First, the percentage of those supporting creating a new constitution or constitution revisions has always been higher than the opposition since 2004 (Hsu, 2010). Additionally, the segment of citizens in favor of Taiwan's independence follows an ever-increasing trend since the 1990s. In 1994, around 20% of the public supported unification with China, and 11% wanted independence. In 2005, the opposite was true: 20% of respondents wanted independence, while supported for unification dropped to 14% (Election Study Center, NCCU, 2021). Thus, by supporting independence, Chen could expect his approval to be much higher than the 10% he enjoyed at the end of 2005.

4.4.5 Chen Did not Cave in to US Pressure

The US was displeased with Chen's announcement, which would be in direct violation of his pledges. As a long-standing ally of Taiwan, according to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), the US would supply weapons of defensive nature to Taiwan and assist Taiwan militarily in the case of Chinese aggression. In compliance with the TRA, the US has been selling weapons to Taiwan for the past several decades, and as tensions rise, such as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, in which

China shot missiles to the waters near major cities in Taiwan, the US dispatched an aircraft battle group into the Taiwan Strait to prevent the conflict from escalating.

A potential drawback from this policy is that a leader in Taiwan could exploit this security guarantee to carry out pro-independence activities. Doing so is a grave concern to the US as Taiwan's formal independence will nearly guarantee a military conflict with China, one that the US does not want to be entrapped into unnecessarily. Chen's announcement in 2006 looks like he was doing exactly that.

US pressure ultimately failed to motivate Chen to change his course of action. Before Chen made his speech, he circulated the script to the US. The US, according to a news report, wanted Chen to revise the part about the constitution at least three times. Chen proceeded with the speech without change (Chang & Chiu, 2006). During the process, the US revealed its displeasure with the Chen administration and warned him not to divert from his campaign pledges to maintain the status quo (Hu, 2008). Judging from the history, these efforts were largely unsuccessful.

4.5 Alternative Explanations

There are several alternative explanations. In the following, I entertain each of them and point out that why it is not as persuasive as my explanations above. First, an argument could be put forth that the US did not pressure Chen enough. If the pressure from the US was stronger, with real actions as opposed to verbal condemnations, then perhaps Chen could be deterred from pursuing independence.

From Chen's interactions with the US after the speech we could conclude that Chen was unlikely to yield even with greater US pressure. After Chen's speech, the US responded with punishments. When preparing for his diplomatic trip to Paraguay and Costa Rica a few months later, the US rejected Chen's proposal of transiting in San Francisco and New York. Instead, the

US only allowed Chen to transit in Honolulu and Anchorage. By lowering Chen's transit treatment, Washington thought that Chen would alter his foreign policy. Chen did not. He abandoned his transit plan altogether. Instead, he chose a different route with stops in the United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands. It is clear that Chen was willing to jeopardize his relationship with the US to pursue independence.

Another argument is that Chen might believe that China did not have the capability to respond if he pushed for independence. It is of anyone's guess to see if Chen believed China would use force if he declared independence or not, but the argument that China did not have military capabilities to take Taiwan is incorrect. Since late 1990s, the PLA has been modernizing and by early 2000s, it is clear to most military analysts that Taiwan could not prevail in a conflict against China. In 2004, China's official defense budget was US$25 billion, three times the amount that Taiwan spent (Lee, 2008). Combined with other improvement that the PLA was making, a report from the Department of Defense (2006) pointed out that cross-strait military imbalance was clearly in China's favor. To make its threats to use force against Taiwan credible, in March 2005, China passed the Anti-Secession Law to provide legal standing to authorize the use of force in conditions that Taiwan pursues independence. Thus, if China's military threat was a concern, Chen should be dissuaded from taking pro-independence steps.

The third explanation, most notably, put forth by Ross (2006), argues that Chen's revisionist foreign policy is motivated by his personality as a risk-acceptant leader. While there is some truth to this argument that Chen is regarded as more aggressive than other presidents of Taiwan in pursuing independence, it could not explain why Chen *suddenly* became more risk-accepting in 2006 but not earlier. If we are going to label Chen as a risk-acceptant leader, then it would follow that Chen would display consistent, or at least to a certain degree, erratic behaviors.

But as discussed above, Chen was relatively restrained in bringing up independence prior to 2006. Before that, Chen's support for cross-Strait détente was apparent, and his policy of promoting Taiwan's independence was sporadic.

4.6 Conclusion

This paper examines the reasons that led to a weak state leader, Chen Shui-bian, to adopt diversionary behavior to deal with his domestic challenges. Several findings were reached in this case study. First, diversionary behavior in forms of aggressive foreign policy and other non-violent means could be a successful tactic for a weak state leader like Chen. His approval rate improved significantly and ended opposition from within his party. Second, not all domestic hurdles led to diversionary behaviors. For Chen, it was the combination of several factors, including a major electoral defeat, low public approval, and intense internal opposition that led him to adopt a diversionary policy.

The finding that pressure from a major power failed to alter weak state diversionary behavior buttresses earlier findings that suggest that weak states would adopt diversionary behavior when the relation with a great power is favorable (Yeh & Wu, 2020). Compared with other administrations that are on better terms with the US, there were already notable frictions between the US and Taiwan during Chen's first term, and the tensions continued to build up in the second term. These differences might reduce Chen's trust and willingness to change his foreign policy. Thus, in addition to the stability of relations, whether the ties are amicable or not are also critical.

In conclusion, while this paper suggests that weak states are likely to resort to diversionary behavior as a strategy to divert public opinion, it does not rule out the use of force for weak state leaders. In many cases worldwide, weak states do initiate conflicts, sometimes even against strong

power. Additionally, there should certainly be other factors and conditions that influence the adoption of weak state diversionary behavior. These questions should be explored in understanding weak state diversionary behavior.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Contributions

This dissertation centers around themes of Taiwan studies and more broadly, weak state political behavior in international relations. Due to its inherent constraints, weak states approach security concerns drastically different from major powers. Taken together, I focus on three examples to illustrate the contributions that weak states can make to IR literature. These three topics, social movements, public support for war, and diversionary use of force, each leaves us with nuances that have been missed in the literature and also raise new questions.

On the first paper on public opinion and social movement, for the social movement literature, the study confirms existing findings that public opinion often forces political elites to comply with citizens' demands (Agnone, 2007; Soroka & Wlezien 2010; Dür & Mateo 2014). More importantly, the paper shows that public opinion could be a powerful tool for weak states to compensate for the lack of military and economic strengths in international politics. Thus, public opinion could be the driver to alter the dynamics of interactions between weak and strong states.

As a result, in addition to adopting traditional alliance strategies such as balancing or bandwagoning, or other tactics such as providing distinctive goods and services (Abo Lila, 2017) and engaging in soft power diplomacy, weak state governments could rely on strong public backing to send a clear message to its negotiating countries. The collective response from the public gives weak state governments additional leverage when interacting with other countries. In this case of the Sunflower Movement, the clear opposition from the public augmented the position of the Taiwanese government to reject plans for economic integration with China.

For the public support for war literature, this second paper adds to existing studies that examine indicators of the war support in a non-Western context (Tanaka et al., 2017; Tago, 2005). More importantly, this paper highlights the importance of generation in studying war support – generations that have experienced conflicts were found to react to future conflict differently from those that did not taste the scourge of war. This is an important contribution for the war support literature as generation has largely been overlooked. Countries in which different generations of citizens have varying war or conflict experiences, such as the United States, are fertile testing grounds of generation theories of war support.

Turning to the paper on diversionary behavior, this paper finds that like their counterparts in strong states, weak state leaders also resort to diversionary action. In the case of Taiwan, its leader uses pro-independence foreign policy against its enemy, China, to shore up approval. I also found out the conditions under which Chen resorted to diversionary actions, which included a major electoral defeat, dwindling approval and opposition from within his party. The diversionary action worked to help Chen divert opposition and increase his approval. This study is also one of the few that investigates into diversionary behavior of weak states (e.g., Yeh & Wu, 2020). Additionally, the paper shows that by using a historical case study with process-tracing, researchers can ascertain the conditions under which leaders made their decisions. Thus, this paper adds to the diversity of methodologies employed in the diversionary literature, which tends to rely heavily on quantitative approach.

5.2 Limitations

Despite of their contributions, the papers have limitations. A weakness that all three papers share is generalizability since they all examine only the case of Taiwan. Despite of this apparent

weakness, there are in fact reasons to believe that the theoretical framework in every paper has potential to be applied to other contexts.

In the case of diversion, many states in Asia (e.g., Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines) face a similar circumstance situated between two superpowers of the United States and China. These countries tend to rely on or partner with the US for security and have growing animosities toward China due to the country's expansionist agenda in the region. Thus, leaders in these states are likely to utilize tensions with China as a source for diversionary action. Additionally, their relationship with another major power, the US, could also influence their decisions in the process. Thus, the theoretical framework developed in the paper could be useful.

With respect to the war support paper, the generation thesis should be applicable to other countries, too. In Asia, both Japan and South Korea have generations that have experienced wars (e.g., the World War II; the Korean War). Last, the Sunflower Movement paper is perhaps the most applicable of all three. The finding that public opinion could influence elite decision-making is common.

Moving on to the limitations for each paper. For the war support paper, its correlational design reduces the strength of the conclusions. Most war support studies employ an experimental design. Second, the demarcations of generation could influence the results. Although I have demonstrated that the results are identical when using different age cut-points, it is foreseeable that generations arising from other historical events and age cut-points could result in different conclusions.

The open-ended nature of the survey question for the dependent variable is another limitation. It leads to the loss of many responses in the construction of the dependent variable. The question might also be an imprecise way to measure war support, as it does not directly tap into

citizens' willingness or approval for a conflict. Instead, it merely asks what people would do in a conflict. There might be a group of citizens willing to support the government's military action against China but are unwilling to engage in a conflict themselves for a variety of reasons. I suspect this tendency will be especially visible in the older generations as it might be challenging for many of them to participate in an armed conflict. These conceptual differences are crucial for precisely gauging public willingness for self-defense.

Last, the questionnaire omits several variables that have been found to influence war support. Of critical importance is information about casualties (Gelpi et al., 2006). The paper also does not include economic variables. China's economy has grown rapidly in the past two decades. Considering the proximity between Taiwan and China and the increase in trade volume, perception of China's economy and cross-Strait economic integration might influence public opinion in Taiwan (Lynch, 2006; Kang, 2007; Weng, 2017).

For the diversionary paper, a limitation is the era covered in the analysis. I focused only on a period of the second term for Chen and it might be helpful to also include his entire presidency. Relatedly, since I do not provide a comprehensive database of Chen's speeches, I cannot provide a complete analysis to determine if Chen's statements in 2006 were more diversionary compared to others that he gave. The lack of additional materials that document the president's decision-making process also raise questions about the validity of findings.

For the Sunflower Movement, a limitation is that the impact, protest tactic, and strength of the movement are exceptions rather than the norms. The success of the movement seems to depend at least partially on its protest tactic – not many social movements could occupy a country's Congress for 23 days to voice their demands. But such a protest tactic could easily backfire or trigger a strong reaction from the government (e.g., US capital invasion in 2020). In this way, the

Sunflower Movement is perhaps a rare case that show us what a successful social movement with this tactic with strong public support could achieve.

5.3 Future Research

For the diversionary paper, it will be interesting to extend the analysis to the Ma Ying-jeou era (2008-2016). As stated, Chen did not give in to the pressure from the US partly due to his personal beliefs in pursuing Taiwan's independence, which resulted in tense relations with the US. The situation is very different in Ma's era. Ma has restored relations with the US so he might be more receptive to pressure from the US should he adopts a diversionary foreign policy. More importantly, as opposed to Chen, Ma has beliefs in the eventual reunification with China. Thus, Ma has successfully ushered in a détente across the Strait. These differences allow for an interesting extension and comparison to see if Ma resorted to diversionary behavior and what his target would be.

For the war support paper, there are several promising avenues for future research. It will be interesting to examine how information about potential battle deaths could influence war support and if there is a threshold beyond which war support would drop for citizens of each generation. Existing research suggests that the public in Taiwan do have high tolerance for battle deaths (>25,000). It is worth exploring if inclusion of this information has any effect on war support (Wu et al., 2021).

Other improvements center around enhancing mundane realism of the research design, which can increase generalizability by making the experiments mimic real-life scenarios. A working paper has revealed that information about the US coming to Taiwan's defense could drive up citizens' willingness for self-defense in a conflict with China (We et al., 2021). Other influential

factors such as elite cues, assistance from international organizations, and perception that the combat will result in a victory, and perceptions of economic conditions are all viable options.

The context that an armed conflict could intrude in citizens' living space – the major difference between Taiwan and other major powers – should also be explored. I can think of two ways. To manipulate the information about a conflict hitting home, in a survey experiment fielded with American subjects, the group could be separated into scenarios and only some will receive information about a potential conflict impacting US mainland while others do not. Both groups will then be asked about their war support. For an experiment like that to be fielded in Taiwan, one can manipulate information so that some subjects will learn that the conflict will occur mostly in the offshore islands, whereas other learn that the main island will be impacted.

In addition to the United States and Taiwan, other countries for which conflicts are likely to involve their living environment can be potential cases. Existing research by Japanese scholars have shown that information about economic interdependence could reduce support for ongoing territorial disputes between Japan and China (Tanaka et al., 2017). However, the impact of war support when an armed conflict with China would influence Mainland Japan will also be worth exploring. Along the same logic, another example can gauge public opinion in South Korea for a conflict with North Korea that bring damages to the South's major cities.

The generation thesis should also spark new research in several directions. As stated, states that have generations that differ in their experience are immediate options. For instance, both Japan and South Korea have generations that have experienced combats (e.g., the World War II; the Korean War), so comparisons between different generations could be made. Studying the impact of generation on war support will be more difficult for the US, as many in the US have an implicit assumption that the US is still engaging in a conflict or preparing for the next one, making it

difficult to assess the specific impact of a unique conflict on war support. A way to mitigate this is to employ generation-specific treatment scenarios to elicit effects for citizens living through the conflict during their adolescence.

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APPENDIX INTERVIEWEE LIST

Number	Role	Political Identification or Employment	Gender
1	Legislator	Non KMT/DPP	Male
2	Legislator	DPP	Male
3	Legislator	DPP	Male
3	Policy Aide	KMT	Male
4	Policy Aide	KMT	Male
5	Policy Aide	DPP	Male
6	Activist Leader	Social Worker	Female
7	Activist	Graduate Student	Female
8	Activist	Writer	Male
9	Activist	College Student	Female
10	Activist	Graduate Student	Male
11	Activist	Reporter	Female
12	Activist	College Student	Male