

**Assessing Public Support for (Non-)Peaceful Unification with Taiwan:
Evidence from a Nationwide Survey in China**

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Abstract

A military conflict over the Taiwan Strait seems increasingly likely today against the backdrop of intensifying geopolitical competition between China and the United States. While much has been discussed and debated about the prospects for and consequences of war, we know little about how ordinary Chinese evaluate the *full set of policy tools* that Beijing could potentially leverage against Taipei. Drawing from a unique public opinion survey in China, we find that armed unification, or ‘wutong’, garners only a slim majority of support, no more than for a range of less aggressive policy options, from using small-scale warfare, to coercing Taipei into negotiating, to simply maintaining the status quo. Mapping out the policy choices of individuals suggests that the majority are either ambivalent or pacifist, with only one out of one hundred rejecting all but the most extreme option of ‘wutong’. Analyses of respondent attributes further reveal that aggressive policy preferences are primarily driven by nationalism and peer pressure, but dampened by concerns about the economic, human, and reputational costs of non-peaceful unification and the likelihood of US intervention.

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Taiwan has become the ‘most dangerous place on earth’.¹ On 2 January 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared resolutely that ‘China must reunify, and China will reunify ... the “Taiwan Question” will surely end with China’s rise’,² signalling that the time may be ripe to end ‘the long game’ in the Taiwan Strait.³ Since then, flying aircraft into Taiwan’s air defence identification zones (ADIZs), once a rare occurrence, has become routine for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). While Beijing has never denounced the use of force to achieve national unification, the sense of urgency has never been greater.

Complicating the cross-strait relations is the role of the United States (US), which has never ruled out the possibility of defending Taiwan militarily. Since taking office in 2021, President Biden has repeatedly confirmed that the US would intervene should the mainland launch a military attack.⁴ Whether this was a mistake, as the White House later tried to walk back on Biden’s statement,⁵ or a betrayal of true intentions, the Taiwan Strait remains the most likely flashpoint in China–US relations — and increasingly so, given the world’s most important bilateral relationship is deteriorating

¹ The Economist, ‘The Most Dangerous Place on Earth’ *The Economist* (London, 1 May 2021) <<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/05/01/the-most-dangerous-place-on-earth>> accessed 26 February 2023

² Ben Westcott and Eric Cheung, ‘China Isn’t About to Invade Taiwan. But the Two Sides Are on a Dangerous Path’ (CNN, 16 October 2021) <<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/15/asia/taiwan-invasion-us-china-tensions-intl-dst-hnk/index.html>> access 26 February 2023

³ Suisheng Zhao, ‘Is Beijing’s Long Game on Taiwan About to End? Peaceful Unification, Brinkmanship, and Military Takeover’ [28 September 2022] *Journal of Contemporary China* <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2124349>> accessed 26 February 2023

⁴ Stephen McDonnell ‘Biden Says US Will Defend Taiwan if China Attacks’ (BBC News, 22 October 2021) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59005300>> accessed 26 February 2023; Tessa Wong, ‘Biden Vows to Defend Taiwan in Apparent US Policy Shift’ (BBC News, 23 May 2022) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-61548531>> accessed 26 February 2023

⁵ Alex Leary and Gordon Lubold, ‘White House, Clarifying Biden Remark, Says Taiwan Policy Hasn’t Changed’ *The Wall Street Journal* (New York, 22 October 2021) <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/white-house-clarifying-biden-remark-says-taiwan-policy-hasnt-changed-11634933685>> accessed 26 February 2023; Kevin Liptak, Donald Judd, and Nectar Gan, ‘Biden Says US Would Respond ‘Militarily’ if China Attacked Taiwan, but White House Insists There’s No Policy Change’ (CNN Politics, 23 May 2022) <<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/23/politics/biden-taiwan-china-japan-intl-hnk/index.html>> accessed 26 February 2023

to a historical nadir.

As the situation worsens, scholars and policy makers have closely monitored how ordinary Americans and Taiwanese view a potential military conflict in the Taiwan Strait. A recent survey conducted by the Global Taiwan Institute finds that 61% of Americans are supportive of the US defending Taiwan militarily, with higher support rates among Democrats than Republicans.⁶ In Taiwan, the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University, which has been tracking the unification versus independence stances of the Taiwanese since 1994, reported the smallest pro-unification margin in 2022.⁷ In the same year, as much as 73% of Taiwanese explicitly expressed their willingness to fight should the mainland use force.⁸

Surprisingly, we have very little systematic knowledge on ordinary Chinese views about how to resolve the 'Taiwan Question'. The handful of papers on Chinese public opinion regarding Taiwan, while highly valuable, suffer from three limitations: the data are relatively old; the samples have limited geographical coverage; and the survey questions tend to focus on evaluations of a single policy choice — armed unification, or 'wutong' (武统) — versus everything else. This thus remains a crucial yet underdeveloped research area for the academic and policy world, as public opinion in China can constrain and influence the government's domestic and foreign policies.⁹

⁶ Global Taiwan Institute, 'New Public Opinion Polling on US Support for Defending Taiwan' (*Global Taiwan Brief*, 24 August 2022) <<https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/08/new-public-opinion-polling-on-us-support-for-defending-taiwan/>> accessed 26 February 2023

⁷ Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, 'Taiwan Independence vs. Unification with the Mainland (1994/12~2022/12)' (Taipei, 13 January 2023) <<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7801&id=6963>> accessed 26 February 2023

⁸ Jake Chung, 'Majority Would Go to War for Taiwan' *Taipei Times* (Taipei, 1 May 2022) <<https://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2022/05/01/2003777507>> accessed 26 February 2023

⁹ Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations* (Oxford University Press 2014); Songying Fang, Xiaojun Li, Atsushi Tago, and Daina Chiba, 'Belief in Territorial Indivisibility and Public Preferences for Dispute Resolution' (2022) 10(4) *Political Science Research and Methods* 759

Even if authoritarian leaders do not come to power through competitive elections, they are still incentivized to make and implement foreign policies aligned with prevailing public opinion.¹⁰ Failure to do so can lead to an internal backlash against the leaders. This is particularly true for China, where nationalism serves as a key pillar of regime legitimacy, especially on issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹¹

In this paper, we pose the following question: How do ordinary Chinese citizens evaluate Beijing's peaceful *and* non-peaceful policy options to achieve unification with Taiwan? Using an original national survey conducted in China in late 2020 and early 2021, we move beyond the single scenario of military takeover that has been the primary focus in extant scholarly writings, policy debates, and media discussions. Instead, we provide Chinese citizens with a *full set of policy choices* that include armed unification; limited warfare in the offshore islands; economic sanctions; maintaining the status quo; and finally, the 'unthinkable' option of *de facto* independence of the island.

We find that armed unification, or 'wutong', garners only a slim majority of support, no more than do the less aggressive policy options. Mapping out the policy choices of the respondents suggests that the majority are either ambivalent about how to deal with Taiwan or are pacifist, with only one out of one hundred rejecting all but the most extreme option of 'wutong'. Analyses of respondent attributes further reveal that aggressive policy preferences are primarily driven by nationalism and peer pressure

¹⁰ Alexandre Debs & Hein E Goemans, 'Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War' (2010) 104(3) *American Political Science Review* 430; Songying Fang, Xiaojun Li, and Adam Y. Liu, 'Chinese Public Opinion about US–China Relations from Trump to Biden' (2022) 15(1) *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 27

¹¹ Erica Downs and Phillip C Saunders, 'Legitimacy and the Limits of Nationalism: China and the Diaoyu Islands' (1999) 23(4) *International Security* 114

but dampened by concerns about the economic, human, and reputational costs of non-peaceful unification and the likelihood of US intervention.

The rest of the paper is organized into four sections. Section 2 reviews recent developments in the Taiwan Strait, along with scholarly and policy evaluations of the prospects of war. Section 3 describes the survey design. This is followed by a presentation of the findings in Section 4. The last section concludes with a brief discussion of policy implications.

2. THE PROSPECTS FOR WAR IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Annexed by Japan in 1895 for five decades and politically separated from the mainland in 1949 towards the end of the Chinese civil war, Taiwan remains the final and central piece in China's drive to end 'the century of humiliation' and to achieve the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation'. After nearly a decade of relative détente under Ma Ying-jeou, tensions across the Taiwan Strait have been rising sharply since the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took power in 2016.¹² Beijing now sees the Tsai administration's refusal to acknowledge the '1992 Consensus'¹³ as a clear negation of the 'One-China' principle, a precondition for any cross-strait dialogue.

Many are convinced that Beijing is no longer satisfied with merely preventing Taiwan independence; it is now actively seeking unification. The US Indo-Pacific commander

¹² David Lampton, 'US' Taipei Act is a Needless Provocation Aimed at China, Even if Unintended' *The South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong, 14 April 2020) <<https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3079535/us-taipei-act-needless-provocation-aimed-china-even-if-unintended>> accessed 26 February 2023; Zoe Leung, 'The Precarious Triangle: China, Taiwan, and the United States' *The Diplomat* (Arlington, VA, 15 May 2020) <<https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/the-precarious-triangle-china-taiwan-and-united-states/>> accessed 26 February 2023

¹³ The 1992 Consensus refers to the outcome of a semi-official meeting across the Taiwan Strait, at which both sides agreed upon 'one China, different interpretations' — i.e. there is one China, but they disagree on what China means (People's Republic of China vs. Republic of China).

stated bluntly in early 2021 that a Chinese assault on the island will ‘manifest ... in the next six years’.¹⁴ Similarly, Oriana Mastro, a long-time observer of cross-strait relations, argues that the possibility of a Chinese attack is as real as ever, because of increasing PLA capabilities as well as the determination of President Xi, who sees unification with Taiwan as ‘an inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’.¹⁵

For others, however, rising political tensions need not translate into imminent military confrontations. US Army General Mark Milley, for example, sees no evidence of China getting ready for war from an operational point of view.¹⁶ Echoing this, Bonnie Glaser, another prominent expert on the issue, maintains that Beijing has strong incentives to avoid using force, given the possibility of US intervention and especially the difficulty of preventing a US–China clash from escalating beyond Taiwan.¹⁷ Under such circumstances, Beijing cannot guarantee complete victory, and anything short of that outcome once the trigger is pulled could be disastrous for the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The US intelligence system similarly maintains that a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Question remains Beijing’s priority policy choice.¹⁸ According to a recent study

¹⁴ Mallory Shelbourne, ‘Davidson: China Could Try to Take Control of Taiwan In “Next Six Years”’ (*USNI News*, 9 March 2021) <<https://news.usni.org/2021/03/09/davidson-china-could-try-to-take-control-of-taiwan-in-next-six-years>> accessed 26 February 2023

¹⁵ Oriana Skylar Mastro, ‘The Taiwan Temptation’ [2021] 100(4) *Foreign Affairs* 58 <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-06-03/china-taiwan-war-temptation>> accessed 26 February 2023

¹⁶ Sam LaGrone, ‘Milley: China Wants Capability to Take Taiwan by 2027, Sees No Near-term Intent to Invade’ (*USNI News*, 23 June 2021) <<https://news.usni.org/2021/06/23/milley-china-wants-capability-to-take-taiwan-by-2027-sees-no-near-term-intent-to-invade>> accessed 26 February 2023

¹⁷ Bonnie Glaser, ‘Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission’ (3 August 2022) <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Bonnie_Glaser_Testimony.pdf> accessed 27 February 2023

¹⁸ ‘Director of National Intelligence Haines on Classified Information’ (C-SPAN, 26 January 2023) <<https://www.c-span.org/video/?525468-1/dni-avril-haines-delivers-remarks-classified-information-democracy>> accessed 27 February 2023.

conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 83% of 64 leading experts surveyed believe that Beijing will not use military force against Taiwan by 2027, a widely speculated 'deadline', and 79% of them hold the view that Xi still prioritizes peaceful unification in his third term.¹⁹ Moreover, 80% of the experts also think that Beijing has no coherent plan for a peaceful resolution of the issue either, suggesting the possible fluidity and contingent nature of its policies towards Taiwan.

Many scholars have also made the argument that even if Beijing were to rely on non-peaceful means, it would not turn to a full-scale war. Instead, the most likely form of military action would be blocking Taiwan's trade, its international communication, and its maritime and air space (Carugati 2022).²⁰ Some believe that only if Chinese leaders prioritized unification over economic development would a military takeover be possible.²¹ Still others are convinced that Beijing would never use force for unification, provided Taiwan refrained from formal independence and the US stuck to its strategic ambiguity and did not formally recognize Taiwan's independence (Carugati 2022; Lo 2022).²²

Beijing's Taiwan policy has indeed been less aggressive in action than what the media

¹⁹ Bonny Lin, Brian Hart, Matthew P. Funaiole, Samantha Lu, Hannah Price, and Nicholas Kaufman, 'Surveying the Experts: China's Approach to Taiwan' (*Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 3 October 2022) <<https://chinapower.csis.org/survey-experts-china-approach-to-taiwan/#toc-7>> accessed 26 February 2023

²⁰ Rémy Carugati, 'Is War Over Taiwan Coming?' Policy Report 19, Network for Strategic Analysis, Queen's University (Montreal, June 2022) <<https://ras-nsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Policy-Report-19-Is-War-Over-Taiwan-Coming.pdf>> accessed 27 February 2023

²¹ Timothy R Heath, 'Is China Planning to Attack Taiwan? A Careful Analysis of Available Evidence Says No' *War On the Rocks* (Washington, DC, 14 December 2022) <<https://warontherocks.com/2022/12/is-china-planning-to-attack-taiwan-a-careful-consideration-of-available-evidence-says-no/>> accessed 27 February 2023

²² Carugati, 'Is War Over Taiwan Coming?' (n 20); Catherine Yuk-ping Lo, 'Taiwan Flashpoint' in the Indo-Pacific Region: 'Russian' lessons for Xi Jinping? [2022] 2 *Atlantisch Perspectief* 32 <<https://atlantische-commissie-s3-bucket.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/02105956/10-Artikel-6.pdf>> accessed 27 February 2023

often portray and predict (Lin 2022).²³ Chinese leaders themselves are best aware of the costs of using force, despite the PLA's intensification of military exercises in the Taiwan Strait. For instance, contrary to what many Chinese netizens and PRC news outlets predicted, Beijing exercised considerable self-restraint in responding to Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit. Of course, this measured approach thus far is only possible because Taipei has also been very careful not to provoke the mainland (Roy 2017).²⁴ Moving forward, many believe that the mainland will continue to use a set of grey-zone tactics to advance its unification agenda without waging war. These tactics could include, but not be limited to, cognitive/political warfare, trade and business sanctions, diplomatic quarantine, and sustained military drills around Taiwan.²⁵

Considering Beijing has more than one policy choice to leverage in advancing its unification agenda, it is surprising that the few existing studies that explore Chinese public opinions on cross-strait relations have focused exclusively on armed unification. For example, back in 2007, a survey of students at Peking University and Tsinghua University reported that 6.8% of the respondents supported the use of force if Taiwan were to declare independence.²⁶ Similarly, using a 2013 survey from 10 Chinese cities,

²³ Bonnie Lin, 'Guarding Against Overestimating PRC Intent and Ability to Use Force Against Taiwan' (*Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 6 October 2022) <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/are-washington-and-beijing-collision-course-over-taiwan#Lin>> accessed 22 January 2023; David Sacks, 'What Is China Learning From Russia's War in Ukraine?' (*Foreign Affairs*, 16 May 2022) <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-05-16/what-china-learning-russias-war-ukraine>> accessed 26 February 2023

²⁴ Denny Roy, 'Prospects for Taiwan Maintaining Its Autonomy under Chinese Pressure' [2017] 57(6) *Asian Survey* 1135 <<https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2017.57.6.1135>> accessed 27 February 2023

²⁵ Richard C Bush, 'From Persuasion to Coercion: Beijing's Approach to Taiwan and Taiwan's Response' Brookings Institution (Washington, DC, November 2019) <<https://www.brookings.edu/research/from-persuasion-to-coercion-beijings-approach-to-taiwan-and-taiwans-response/>> accessed 27 February 2023; Benjamin Jensen, Adrian Bogart, and Riley McCabe, 'What if: Alternatives to a Chinese Military Invasion of Taiwan' (*Center for Strategic & International Studies*, October 2022) <https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/221007_Jensen_Alternativestoinvasion_Taiwan.pdf?GyNm.7DPQzK_D4Q1j_gIM00vklQ1.S> accessed 22 January 2023

²⁶ Students were asked whether or not they agreed that 'if the province of Taiwan declares independence, China should use military force against Taiwan.' Elina Sinkkonen, 'Nationalism, Patriotism and Foreign Policy Attitudes Among Chinese University Students' (2013) 216 *The China*

researchers found that only 6% of respondents were in favour of armed unification, with older and more educated Chinese willing to leave the Taiwan Question to future generations.²⁷ Such low support for war is reflective of the amicable relationship between the two sides during the Hu Jintao and Ma Ying-Jeon era. Things have changed radically since the DPP assumed power in 2016, especially amidst the downward spiral of China–US relations in recent years. Not surprisingly, a randomly sampled mobile phone survey conducted in as late as 2019 in nine major Chinese cities showed that 53.1% of the respondents supported armed unification while 39.1% of them opposed it completely.²⁸

However, as we have discussed earlier, framing the question as a dichotomous choice — support using force or not — neglects the fact that Beijing could adopt a variety of policies, many of which do not necessarily involve the military, to achieve unification. So how would Chinese citizens evaluate the full set of potential policies that Beijing could adopt in dealing with Taiwan?

3. SURVEY DESIGN

Drawing on existing works, we propose five potential policy choices at Beijing's disposal that range from the most to the least aggressive. First, Beijing could 'launch a unification war to take back Taiwan entirely (一鼓作气，彻底武力收复台湾).' This

Quarterly 1045

²⁷ The survey question asked: 'Some people think China should use force to unite with Taiwan; others think China should use peaceful negotiation to resolve the Taiwan issue. Which solution do you prefer?' Hsin-Hsin Pan, Wen-Chin Wu, and Yu-Tzung Chang, 'How Chinese Citizens Perceive Cross-Strait Relations: Survey Results from Ten Major Cities in China' (2017) 26(106) *Journal of Contemporary China* 616

²⁸ These are based on responses to a survey question that asked: 'Do you agree that Taiwan should not be unified by force under any circumstances?' Dongtao Qi, Suixin Zhang, and Shengqiao Lin, 'Urban Chinese Support for Armed Unification with Taiwan: Social Status, National Pride and Understanding of Taiwan' [2022] *Journal of Contemporary China*
<<https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2107390>> accessed 26 February 2023

outcome, a full-scale war, is what the international community most worries about and hopes to prevent. This has also been the outcome that the scholarly literature has focused on.

Second, Beijing could resort to military coercion short of an all-out war, e.g. 'initiate limited military campaigns on the outskirts of Taiwan and take back its offshore islands such as Kinmen and Matsu, coercing Taiwanese authorities to accept unification (实施台湾外围战役, 如收复金门、妈祖, 逼迫台湾当局接受统一).' This would not be the first time such a tactic was attempted. The Kinmen Islands, controlled by Taiwan but nestled just three miles off China's coastline, were the site of three amphibious assaults and repeated shelling before the dawn of the Chinese reform era. Any military blockade measures would also fall into this category, i.e. using force without launching a full-scale war. The gist of this option is using non-peaceful means to force the Taiwanese to acquiesce to unification.

Third, besides using force either full-scale or not, economic sanctions remain a viable coercive measure too. As China's economy continues to grow and Taiwan becomes more dependent on cross-strait trade,²⁹ Beijing could take advantage of this leverage by 'imposing economic sanctions, and even cutting off trade and personnel exchanges, to facilitate unification (对台湾实施经济制裁, 甚至断绝和台湾的经贸、人员往来, 用经济手段促进统一).' While this measure would certainly impose costs on the Chinese economy as well, especially its high-tech sector, which relies on chips from Taiwan, it remains a possible policy choice and one that China has used occasionally on a

²⁹ The mainland is Taiwan's largest trading partner, accounting for 26.3% of total trade and 22.2% of Taiwan's imports in 2020.

smaller scale, including recent import bans on Taiwanese pineapples and groupers.³⁰

Fourth, Beijing has the option to be patient. It can choose to maintain the status quo in the short term and seek unification in the long term. There remains the possibility that Taiwan will eventually seek unification once China's national power surpasses that of the US and when Taiwan becomes more inextricably integrated with the mainland's economy (维持现状，持续发展经济军事实力，台湾迟早会主动寻求统一).³¹

Finally, in theory, Beijing could accept the two sides going their separate ways, i.e. 'keeping their separate political systems, with unification not necessarily being the end game (两岸可以各自为政，不一定非要统一).' This basically amounts to acquiescing to *de facto* Taiwan independence. While this outcome is highly improbable, we are still interested in gauging the extent to which Chinese citizens are even open to this option.

In the survey, we presented respondents with these five policy options altogether in random order to avoid recency bias. For each policy option, we asked respondents whether they found it 'acceptable or unacceptable during Tsai's second term (2020–2024),' or whether they were 'unsure'.³² The rationale for asking the respondents to evaluate each policy instead of picking their most preferred one is that political and social desirability bias could lead many respondents to pick the more aggressive options. This also allows us to map out a more diverse range of preferences instead

³⁰ Amy Chang Chien, 'First Pineapples, Now Fish: To Pressure Taiwan, China Flexes Economic Muscle' *New York Times* (New York, 23 June 2022) <<https://cn.nytimes.com/asia-pacific/20220623/china-taiwan-grouper-ban/dual/>> accessed 26 February 2023

³¹ Nicholas Chiu, 'Taiwan Security Needs Thinking Outside the "Military Box"' (*East Asia Forum*, 19 June 2021) <<https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/06/19/taiwan-security-needs-thinking-outside-the-military-box/>> accessed 26 February 2023

³² We restrict the time period to Tsai's second term so that their responses can be of more immediate policy relevance.

of a simplistic dichotomy between unification by force and everything else.³³

After the main questions, the survey included a series of questions designed to explore respondents' thinking when they weighed the different policy choices. First, we asked respondents to assess the likelihood of the US intervening in the event of cross-strait military conflict.³⁴ Since the late 1970s, Washington has deliberately maintained strategic ambiguity, avoiding an open commitment to direct military intervention. However, with the rapidly deteriorating US–China relationship, there have been increasing voices calling for an end to this ambiguity. Some now estimate that the likelihood of US military intervention is as high as 90%.³⁵ Others have argued for precisely the opposite, i.e. given China's growing military prowess in the region, the US should end its commitment to Taiwan.³⁶ The American public is also divided on what the US should do. According to a survey conducted in June 2021 by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, just over half of Americans (52%) favour using US troops to defend Taiwan.³⁷ We expect that higher estimates of the probability of US intervention would likely deter respondents from endorsing the more aggressive policy options.

³³ For recent studies that adopt a similar approach, see Songying Fang and Xiaojun Li, 'Historical Ownership and Territorial Disputes' (2020) 82(1) *The Journal of Politics* 345; Fang, Li, and Liu, 'Chinese Public Opinion' (n 10).

³⁴ The question asked: 'Leaving aside expert judgments, what do you think are the chances of the US military sending troops to intervene in a possible Taiwan Strait war?' The answer choices were: 0–25%, 25–50%, 51–75%, 76–100%.

³⁵ Bastillepost, 'Lin Wencheng: If there is a war between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, the United States is 90% likely to help Taiwan' (23 May 2020)

<<https://www.bastillepost.com/australia/article/1626138-林文程：兩岸若開戰%E3%80%80美國九成會幫台灣?variant=zh-cn>> accessed 26 February 2023

³⁶ Charles L Glaser, 'A US-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice Between Military Competition and Accommodation' (2015) 39(4) *International Security* 49; John J Mearsheimer, 'Say Goodbye to Taiwan' *The National Interest* (Washington, DC, 25 February 2014)

<<https://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931>> accessed 26 February 2023

³⁷ Dina Smeltz and Craig Kafura, 'For First Time, Half of Americans Favor Defending Taiwan If China Invades' Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy (Chicago, August 2021)

<<https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2021%20Taiwan%20Brief.pdf>> accessed 26 February 2023

Second, even if Beijing does take over Taiwan by force, it could well be a ‘Pyrrhic victory’.³⁸ The direct economic and human costs could be immense. But there would also be reputational costs. As we have seen in the Russia–Ukraine war, the US, whether it intervened militarily or not, would likely respond by organizing a western coalition, imposing choking sanctions on the Chinese economy, and engaging in a global campaign to paint China as the aggressor rather than its long-cultivated image of a peace-loving nation (Brands & Beckley 2021; Lin 2021).³⁹ In the survey, we therefore asked respondents to assess the economic, human, and reputational costs to China in the event of a unification war, all of which are expected to decrease the appeal of ‘wutong’.⁴⁰

Third, we included several questions that get at how respondents think about Taiwan. For example, we asked respondents whether they had had direct experiences with Taiwan through travel, work, or study. Those with such experiences might be more supportive of milder policies and less supportive of war.⁴¹ Additionally, we included two questions that gauge respondents’ estimates of whether ordinary Taiwanese would fight back resolutely, should war break out, and whether they believed a

³⁸ Jude Blanchette and Gerard DiPippo, “‘Reunification’ with Taiwan through Force Would Be a Pyrrhic Victory for China” (*Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 22 November 2022) <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/reunification-taiwan-through-force-would-be-pyrrhic-victory-china>> accessed 26 February 2023

³⁹ Blanchette and DiPippo, ‘Pyrrhic Victory’ (n 32); Sacks, ‘What Is China Learning’ (n 19); Hal Brands and Michael Beckley, ‘China Is a Declining Power—And That’s the Problem’ (*Foreign Policy*, 24 September 2021) <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/24/china-great-power-united-states/>> accessed 27 February 2023; Bonny Lin, ‘US Allied and Partner Support for Taiwan: Responses to a Chinese Attack on Taiwan and Potential US Taiwan Policy Changes’ (RAND Corporation, 2021) <<https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CTA1194-1.html>> accessed 27 February 2023

⁴⁰ These questions asked whether the respondents agreed or disagreed with the following statements: ‘If non-peaceful means are used to achieve reunification, China will have to pay a high economic price’; ‘Reunification by non-peaceful means will bring China a “belligerent” reputation and lead to deterioration of China’s external environment’; ‘Achieving reunification by non-peaceful means will inevitably mean a large number of casualties in China.’

⁴¹ Donghui Wang, Yan Ming, Shawn Dorius, and Yu Xie, ‘In the Eyes of the Beholder: How China and the US See Each Other’ (2022) 31(134) *Journal of Contemporary China* 232; Dong Wang, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Baoyu Wang, ‘The Effect of Imagined Social Contact on Chinese Students’ Perceptions of Japanese People’ (2021) 65(1) *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 223

Kuomintang (KMT) government would do a better job at promoting peace across the Taiwan Strait.⁴² Affirmative answers to both these questions should also lead to less aggressive policy preferences.

Fourth, we included two questions to measure peer pressure and time horizon.⁴³ With decades of state-directed education efforts, mainland Chinese have been taught that Taiwan has been a part of China since ‘ancient times’, and that the return of the renegade province can be achieved with force should peaceful unification become impossible. As such, it could well be the case that one’s belief about others holding hawkish preferences would compel conformity, as being soft could be considered a sign of being unpatriotic. In contrast, those who are more ‘patient’, believing that leaving the Taiwan Question to future generations is better than trying to resolve it in the near future, might be less likely to support milder policies such as maintaining the status quo.

Finally, the survey included standard and China-specific demographic questions to measure respondent age, gender, education (college degree and above), CCP membership, geographic location,⁴⁴ rural residence, income, as well as knowledge about PLA development.⁴⁵ Also included were five standard questions that tap into nationalism, which are used to construct an index of the respondents’ degree of

⁴² These questions asked whether the respondents agreed or disagreed with the following statements: ‘If the mainland uses non-peaceful means to force Taiwan to reunify, the people and military of Taiwan will resolutely resist’; ‘The Kuomintang ruling will be more conducive to the peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue in the future.’

⁴³ These questions asked whether the respondents agreed or disagreed with the following statements: ‘Most of the people around you will support “non-peaceful” means to achieve reunification’; ‘It is better to leave the Taiwan issue to the next generation than to solve it in the near future (the next four years).’

⁴⁴ This is a dummy variable for those residing in the five coastal provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, and Zhejiang, which are close to Taiwan

⁴⁵ This dummy variable was measured by whether the respondent correctly identified the most advanced Chinese destroyer among a list of choices.

nationalism.⁴⁶

4. FINDINGS

We implemented the survey⁴⁷ in two waves in China, with the first one completed between 29 October 2020 and 3 November 2020 and the second between 25 January and 2 February 2021, through Qualtrics' online opt-in panel using a quota sampling strategy that targeted pre-specified proportions of gender, age group, and geographic location as benchmarked on the latest census.⁴⁸ A total of 2,083 respondents successfully completed the questionnaire, but we removed 70 and 189 'straight-line' respondents who found all five options acceptable and unacceptable, respectively. While our respondents tend to be more educated and live in urban areas, just like other studies using online samples from China, our sample on these two measures is more representative of China's over one billion netizens,⁴⁹ whose opinions the government pays close attention to.⁵⁰

Figure 1 plots the aggregate level of support for each of the five policy options in the sample. We start with the full-scale war scenario. Contrary to conventional wisdom that over the past two years, there has been very high public support for using force to resolve the Taiwan Question, only about 55% of the Chinese public expressed

⁴⁶ To construct the nationalism measure, we average the proportions of respondents who agreed with the following five statements: 'As a Chinese, I am very proud,' 'I would rather be a Chinese citizen than a citizen of any other country,' 'China is the greatest country in the world,' 'I am proud of China's long history and culture,' and 'China should consider its own interests first, even if it means conflicts with other countries.'

⁴⁷ The National University of Singapore Institutional Review Board approved this project (NUS-IRB-2020-76).

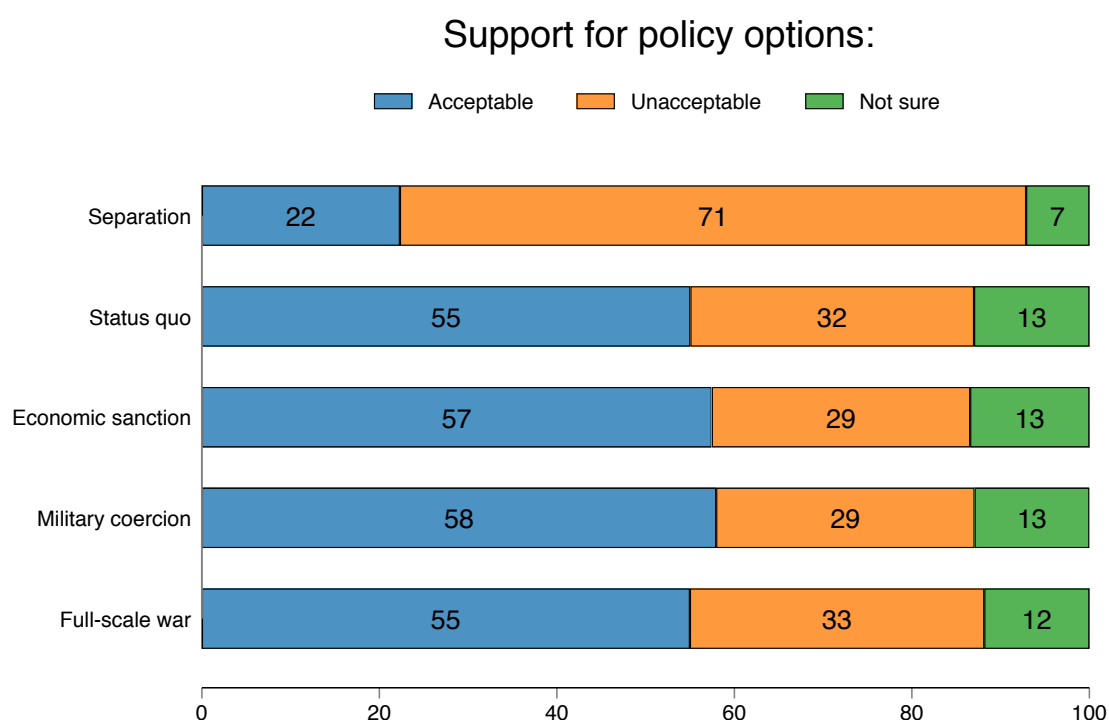
⁴⁸ With elevated challenges in conducting survey research on the ground, participant recruitment through online panels has become increasingly popular for research across a wide range of topics in China.

⁴⁹ Xiaojun Li, Weiyi Shi, and Boliang Zhu, 'The Face of Internet Recruitment: Evaluating the Labor Markets of Online Crowdsourcing Platforms in China' (2017) 5(1) *Research & Politics* 1

⁵⁰ Fang, Li, and Liu, 'Chinese Public Opinion' (n 10).

explicit approval of this policy option. In fact, a third of the respondents were unequivocally opposed to using force, with the rest being ‘unsure’. In a nutshell, despite the general impression that the voices for ‘wutong’ have been rising sharply on the Chinese Internet in the past few years, to the point that China’s State Council had to acknowledge and respond,⁵¹ this is not borne out by our data.

FIGURE 1. Public Support for Taiwan Policy Options



Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Source: Authors’ survey.

The next three policy options — using military forces to take Taiwan’s offshore islands without going for full-scale war, using sanctions to inflict harm on the Taiwanese economy, and embracing the status quo and patiently waiting for Taiwan’s return —

⁵¹ China Daily, ‘Video | The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council Talks about the Voice of “Military Unification” in the Mainland: Forced by the Democratic Progressive Party to Rebel’ [视频 | 国台办谈大陆“武统”声音:被民进党倒行逆施逼出来的] <<https://china.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/15/WS5e1ecc0aa3107bb6b579a234.html>> accessed 26 February 2023

were all viewed as 'acceptable' by a slim majority of the respondents. Similarly, about a third of the respondents were not on board with each of the three, respectively. Along with the full-scale war option, no single policy stood out as the most desirable one, confirmed by the fact that no statistically significant differences could be detected in the responses across these four policy options.

For the least likely policy option for Beijing, slightly less than a quarter of the respondents were fine with the two sides of the Taiwan Strait keeping separate political systems and deemed unification to be not absolutely necessary. This basically amounts to agreeing to *de facto* Taiwan independence, a term we refrained from using to ensure survey feasibility in the Chinese context and to avoid inducing social desirability bias. Thus, it is possible that the estimated support for this policy option is the lower bound. Regardless, this finding challenges the common perception that getting Taiwan back is the collective will of almost everyone in mainland China.

While the aggregated responses can give us a broad picture of the overall level of support of the policy options, they mask important variations across individuals. For example, how do individuals assess the relative desirability of different policy options? What individual-level characteristics make them support one option more than the another?

To answer these questions, we classify the respondents into three categories based on their answers. First, we label 'pacifist' the 313 respondents (17.1%) who found either or both of the two non-aggressive options ('status quo' and 'separation') acceptable while rejecting the other three options. Second, and conversely, we label 'bellicose' the 572 respondents (31.4%) who found some or all of the aggressive options ('sanction', 'military coercion', and 'full-scale war') acceptable while rejecting

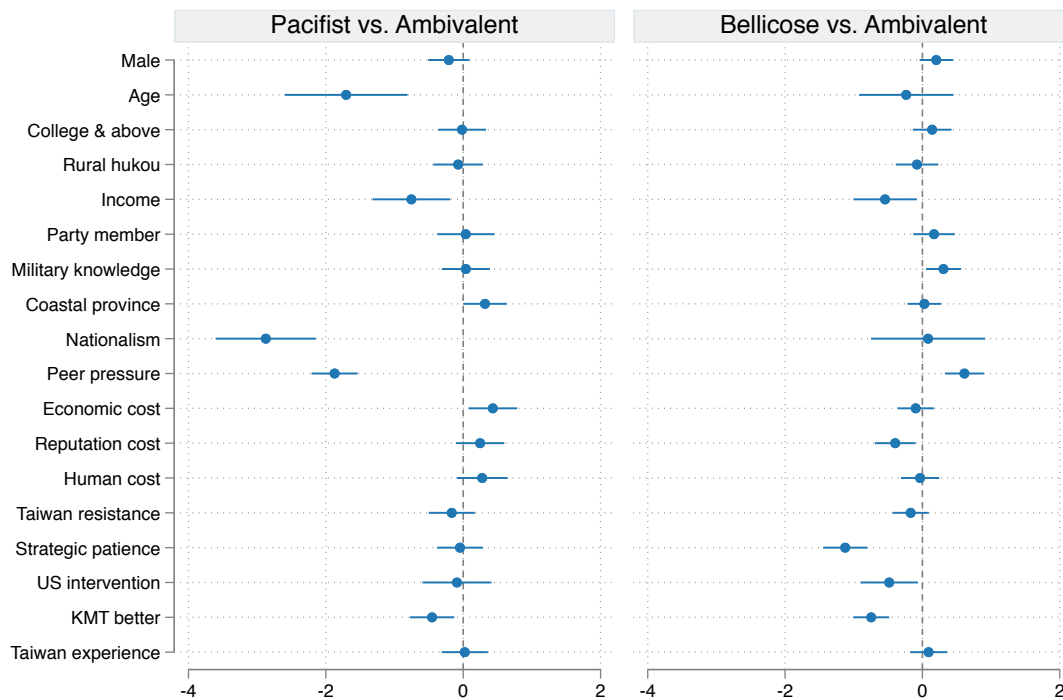
the other two options. Finally, for the remainder of the respondents (939, or 51.5%), who endorsed both aggressive and non-aggressive options or were unsure on some or all of the policy options, we label them 'ambivalent'. This classification points to an even smaller share of citizens in support of the aggressive policy options. In fact, only 19 out of 1,824 respondents (or about one percent of the sample) rejected all but the most extreme option of armed unification.

Which respondents are more likely to be pacifist or belligerent? To answer this question, we use multinomial logistic regression, which is akin to running two independent binary logistic regression models with 'ambivalent' respondents as the baseline category and the other two types separately regressed against the baseline outcome. All independent variables discussed above are binary or scaled to range from zero and one (e.g., age). The results are presented in Figure 2.⁵² Estimates to the right (left) of the vertical line of zero indicate that, all else being equal, having the personal trait (e.g. male compared to female, the oldest compared to the youngest) is correlated with increased (decreased) likelihood that the respondent is pacifist/bellicose rather than ambivalent. We summarize the findings below.

First, many demographic features are correlated with policy preferences in expected directions well established in the literature. For example, older and more nationalistic respondents were less likely to be pacifist, while those living in coastal provinces near Taiwan were more likely to favour only the non-aggressive policies; military knowledge about the PLA corresponded with being more belligerent, while richer respondents were more likely to be ambivalent.

⁵² Full estimation results can be found in the Appendix.

FIGURE 2. Correlates of Pacifist and Bellicose Respondents



Note: Point estimates with 95% confidence intervals are from a multinomial logistic regression model. Source: Authors' survey.

Second, there are clear signs of 'peer pressure'. Those with the belief that most people around them are supportive of non-peaceful means to unification were less likely to be pacifist and more likely to be belligerent. As we discussed earlier, however, this suggests that the observed level of support among the Chinese public for using force might be a higher-bound estimate.

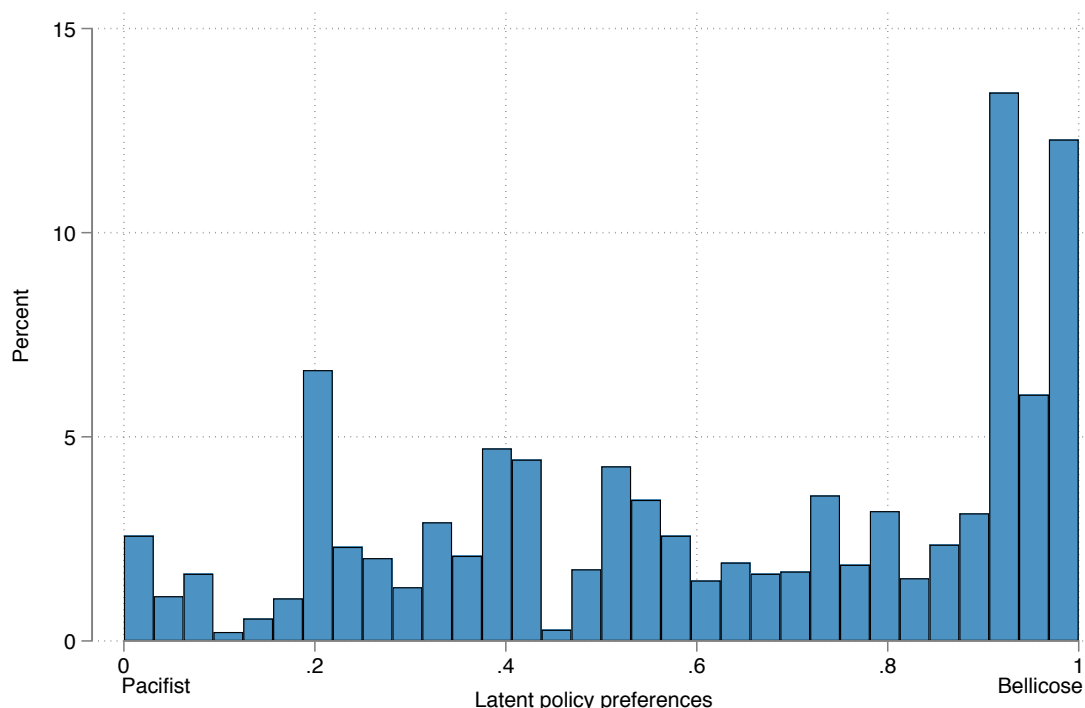
Third, out of the three cost variables, concern about economic costs was correlated with respondents being more pacifist, while concern about reputational costs reduced the likelihood of respondents being bellicose. Similarly, respondents who estimated a high probability of US intervention were less likely to endorse only the aggressive policy options. These findings suggest that respondents were largely following instrumental logic when making their choices.

Finally, those who believed that a KMT government could better facilitate the peaceful resolution of the cross-strait crisis in the future were more ambivalent, possibly hoping the KMT will win the 2024 election after Tsai's second term. These respondents likely also had a longer time horizon, as those who believed it would be better to leave the Taiwan question to the next generation than resolve it in the near term were less likely to support non-peaceful policies.

One limitation of the respondent classification is that the groupings are arbitrary and can overlook further nuances. For example, a respondent supporting economic sanction only is considered as bellicose as one who supports nothing but 'wutong'. To address this limitation and to take full advantage of the variations in the data, we constructed an index of aggressive policy preferences using an Item Response Theory (IRT) model. IRT models are useful for evaluating the relationships between the latent trait of interest and the items intended to measure the trait. From a broader statistical perspective, IRT models are akin to extensions of confirmatory factor analysis models on binary data and as special cases of generalized linear mixed-effects models. The benefit of IRT is that unlike other aggregation techniques, it allows items to contribute differently to the latent trait.

In our case, the latent trait is how pacifist or belligerent a respondent is in their policy preferences regarding Taiwan. Since we have five items (policy options) to measure it, with each item taking two values, 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable' ('unsure' responses are treated as missing values), we estimate a two-parameter IRT model. The predicted latent trait for each respondent is rescaled to range between zero and one, with scores closer to one (zero) on the IRT measure indicating more (less) aggressive policy preferences. Figure 3 plots the distribution of this measure for the sample.

FIGURE 3: Latent Measure of Taiwan Policy Preferences



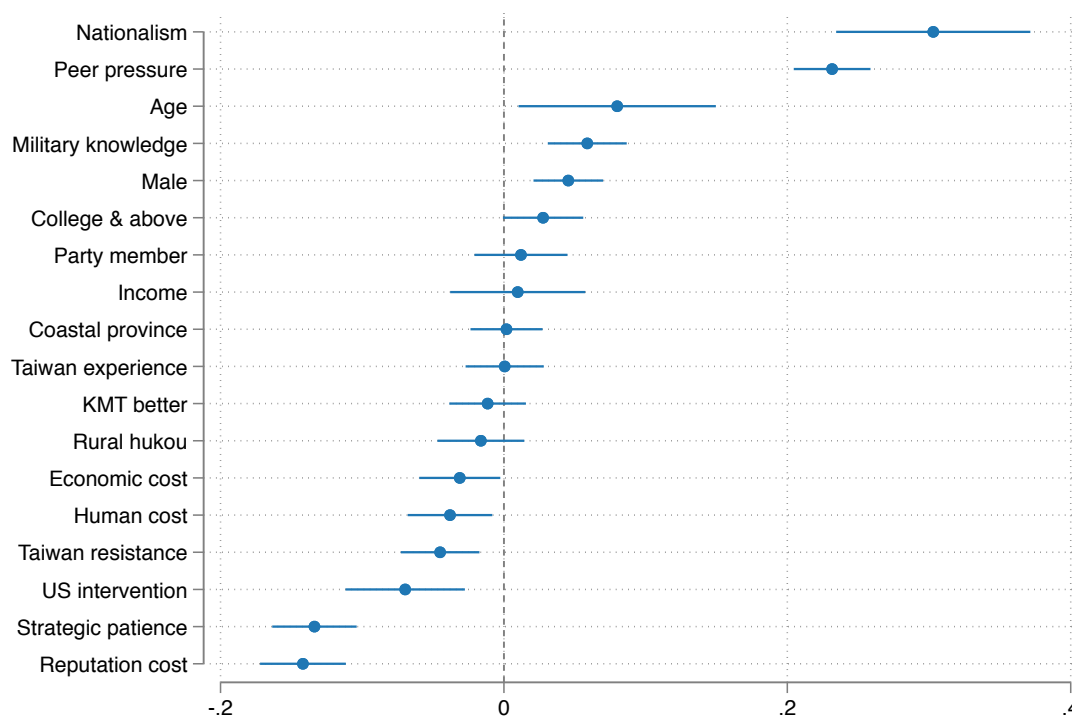
Note: This histogram of latent measure of Taiwan policy preferences is derived from a two-parameter IRT model rescaled to range from zero to one. Source: Authors' survey.

Having constructed this single measure of latent policy preference as the dependent variable, we can estimate a Tobit model with all of the independent variables used above.⁵³ Figure 4 plots the results from the Tobit model, with the coefficients of the independent variables rearranged in descending order. A positive (negative) coefficient suggests increased probability of the respondent preferring more (less) aggressive policy options as a function of the unit change in the independent variable, all else being equal. Furthermore, because all independent variables are either binary or scaled to range between zero and one, the coefficients can be directly compared

⁵³ We use Tobit model because the dependent variable is both left- and right-censored. Using an OLS regression model produce nearly identical results. The full estimation results can be found in the Appendix.

with one another in terms of the magnitude of their substantive effects. Since many of the findings are similar to what we reported earlier in Figure 2, we omit the detailed discussions here but note two things that are worth highlighting.

FIGURE 4: Correlates of Taiwan Policy Preferences



Note: Point estimates with 95% confidence intervals are from a Tobit model. Source: Authors' survey.

First, not surprisingly, nationalism has the largest positive effect on aggressive policy preferences, consistent with findings in the literature.⁵⁴ Specifically, holding all other variables at their mean, the predicted score for the least nationalist respondent is 0.371, i.e. leaning toward non-violent policies, whereas the predicted score for the

⁵⁴ Yinan He, 'History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict' (2007) 16(50) *Journal of Contemporary China* 1; Allen S Whiting, 'Assertive Nationalism in Chinese Foreign Policy' (1983) 23(8) *Asian Survey* 913; Allen S Whiting, 'Chinese Nationalism and Foreign Policy after Deng' (1995) 142 *The China Quarterly* 295; Suisheng Zhao (2013) 'Foreign Policy Implications of Chinese Nationalism Revisited: The Strident Turn' (2013) 22(82) *Journal of Contemporary China* 535; Sinkkonen, 'Nationalism, Patriotism and Foreign Policy Attitudes' (n 20).

most nationalist respondent is nearly twice as large at 0.674, i.e. leaning toward more aggressive policies. Peer pressure is a close second, with a coefficient of more than 0.2. These two factors in combination, especially during bouts of nationalism, could create an amplifying effect, pushing up the overall aggressive stance of the public as the moderate ones are pressured to conform.

Second, and perhaps reassuringly, respondents do take into account the potential costs of non-peaceful means to achieve unification when weighing the different policy options. In particular, all three cost measures and the likelihood of US intervention reduce the appeal of aggressive policy options, including a full-scale war. Substantively, holding everything else constant, these four factors combined can decrease the predicted score of aggressive policy preferences by 0.28, which is larger than the effect of peer pressure and almost on par with that of nationalism. In other words, even for the most nationalistic respondents, concerns about the human, economic, and reputational costs of a unification war and possible US intervention can deter them from endorsing more aggressive policies.

5. CONCLUSION

Conventional wisdom holds that the call for armed unification has been ramping up in mainland China in recent years,⁵⁵ setting the stage for ‘an all-out war ... devastating to all’.⁵⁶ Despite the media hype, there is scant empirical evidence indicating the extent to which the Chinese public would support such a war rather than non-violent means to unification. Understanding mass support for the different policy options Beijing could

⁵⁵ Mastro, ‘The Taiwan Temptation’ (n 15).

⁵⁶ Xie Wenting and Bai Yunyi, ‘China, US Face Historic Task of Managing Rivalry, Avoiding Fights: Ezra Vogel’ (*Global Times*, 19 July 2020) <<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1194994.shtml>> accessed 26 February 2023

adopt to 'resolve the Taiwan Question' is important because we know this is one issue about which public opinion holds sway over Chinese leaders. This paper therefore makes a unique and timely contribution by mapping out public support for both peaceful and non-peaceful means of unification with Taiwan through a nationwide public opinion survey conducted during a time of intensified US–China competition.

We find that at the aggregate level, only a slim majority of the respondents are explicitly supportive of waging a unification war, which has been the focus of current policy debates and academic research, and a third of them are explicitly opposed to it. These numbers are consistent with a survey conducted on an urban sample in 2019,⁵⁷ thus bolstering our confidence in the external validity of the findings. This also suggests that public support for armed unification has remained relatively stable, despite the rapid deterioration in Beijing's relations with both Washington and Taipei.

One contribution of our survey is that we move beyond the focus on armed unification. In doing so, we provide a more nuanced understanding of public preferences for a broad range of peaceful and non-peaceful policy options that Beijing could adopt in achieving unification: military coercion short of full-scale war, economic sanctions, and embracing the status quo and waiting patiently for Taiwan's return. Furthermore, we find all of these policies receive levels of support similar to that for full-scale war. And quite surprisingly, about one fifth of the respondents even find acceptable the unthinkable option of allowing the two sides to go their separate ways, which is tantamount to de facto independence for Taiwan.

⁵⁷ Qi, Zhang, and Lin, 'Urban Chinese Support' (n 22).

Our study has important policy implications. Both pundits and policy makers who sound the alarm for an imminent or inevitable war in the Taiwan Strait, one that likely would involve the US and its allies, implicitly assume that Beijing's hands are tied because most Chinese support 'wutong' and the public's patience is wearing thin. An ambitious paramount Chinese leader who cares about his domestic audience can only make things worse. Our findings suggest that this pessimistic outlook may be based more on myth than on reality. The fact that armed unification garners no more support than a wide range of less aggressive policy options, and only one out of one hundred holds the most extreme 'wutong-and-nothing-else' policy stance, suggests that Beijing may have more wiggle room on Taiwan than is commonly perceived, and shifting away from using force may not necessarily generate a domestic backlash that would undermine the regime's legitimacy.

Supplementary Materials

Online Appendix

A. Survey Questionnaire

On January 2, 2019, when commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Issuance of the 'Message to Compatriots in Taiwan,' President Xi Jinping for the first time stated that 'Our country must be reunified, and will surely be reunified', and that 'The Taiwan Question originated in a weak and ravaged China, and it will definitely end with China's rejuvenation.' However, Tsai Ing-wen, who repeatedly stated that Taiwan was already an independent sovereign state, was re-elected with almost 60% of the votes in 2020. This indicates that most Taiwanese are unequivocally against unification, despite the mainland's determination to achieve that objective.

2018 年 1 月 2 日，在纪念“告台湾同胞书”发行 40 周年的大会上，习近平总书记首次明确指出“祖国必须统一，祖国必然统一”。然而，2020 年初，谋求台独的民进党人蔡英文再次高票当选台湾地区领导人。这表明，尽管大陆的统一意志坚如磐石，但是目前大多数台湾人对统一的拒绝也毫不含糊。

Which of the following potential policies toward Taiwan do you find acceptable or unacceptable during Tsai's second term (2020-2024), or are you unsure? (Acceptable/Unacceptable/Unsure)

[The order of the following policies is randomized]

在蔡英文第二任期内（2020-2024），以下可能的大陆对台政策中，哪些是您可以接受的？哪些不能？（可以接受/不可以接受/不确定）

- Launching the unification war to take back Taiwan entirely.
一鼓作气，彻底武力收复台湾
- Initiating limited military campaigns on the outskirts of Taiwan and take back its offshore islands such as Kinmen and Matsu, coercing Taiwanese authorities to accept unification.
实施台湾外围战役，如收复金门、妈祖，逼迫台湾当局接受统一
- Imposing economic sanctions, and even cutting off economic and personnel exchanges, to facilitate unification.
对台湾实施经济制裁，甚至断绝和台湾的经贸、人员往来，用经济手段促进统一
- Maintaining status quo and continue to increase economic and military power so that Taiwan would eventually seek unification with the mainland.
维持现状，持续发展经济军事实力，台湾迟早会主动寻求统一
- Keeping their separate political systems, with unification not necessarily being the end game.
两岸可以各自为政，不一定非要统一

Additional questions

Q1. Do you agree that China will have to pay a very high economic cost for unification through non-peaceful means?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

如用非和平手段实现统一，中国需要付出高昂的经济代价，您同意吗？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q2. Do you agree that unification through non-peaceful means will invariably lead to a large number of casualties of Chinese people?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

非和平手段实现统一必然意味着中国大量人员伤亡。您同意这个论断吗？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q3. Do you agree that unification through non-peaceful means will earn a bad reputation of warmongering, causing the country a worsening external environment?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

非和平手段实现统一会给中国带来“好战”的恶名，导致中国的外部环境恶化，您同意这个论断吗？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意

- 不知道如何评价

Q4. Setting aside expert opinion, what's your evaluation of the likelihood of US intervention should war breaks out in the Taiwan Strait?

- 0 – 25%
- 26% – 50%
- 51% – 75%
- 76% – 100%

抛开专家的论断，您自己认为美军派军队介入可能的台海战争几率有多大？

- 0 – 25%
- 26% – 50%
- 51% – 75%
- 76% – 100%

Q5. Do you agree that the Taiwanese military and general public will resolutely resist should Beijing uses force to coerce and achieve unification?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

您是否同意，如大陆用非和平手段迫使台湾统一，台湾民众和军队会进行坚决抵抗？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q6. Do you agree that most people around you support unification with Taiwan by non-peaceful means?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

您是否同意，您身边大部分人都会支持“非和平”手段实现统一？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q7. Do you agree that letting future generation to resolve the Taiwan issue is better than getting it done in the near future (e.g., in the next four years)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

您是否同意，将台湾问题留给下一代解决，比近期（未来四年）解决更好？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q8. Do you agree that it would be easier to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully with the KMT in power?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure how to evaluate

您是否同意，国民党执政会更有助于未来台湾问题的和平解决？

- 非常同意
- 同意
- 不同意
- 完全不同意
- 不知道如何评价

Q9. Do you have the experience of studying or working in Taiwan?

- Yes
- No

您是否有在台湾学习或者工作的经历？

- 有
- 没有

Q10. Does your family member (only your parents, wife or kids) has had the experience of studying or working in Taiwan?

- Yes
- No

您是否有家人（仅限父母妻儿）在台湾学习或工作？

- 有
- 没有

Q11. Have you ever traveled to Taiwan?

- Yes
- No

您有去过台湾旅游？

- 有
- 没有

Q12. Which of the following is currently China's biggest destroyer?

- 055
- 052
- 051
- 099
- Don't know

Demographic Module

Q13. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

您的性别是

- 男
- 女

Q14. In what year were you born? (Please enter the four-digit year, such as 1980)

您是哪年出生的？

Q15. Which province do you live in? (select from full list of Chinese provinces)

您居住在哪个省份？

Q16. Which city do you live in? (select from full list of Chinese cities)

您居住在哪个城市？

Q17. Do you hold rural hukou or non-rural hukou?

- Rural hukou
- Non-rural hukou

您现在持有的是农业户口，还是非农业户口？

- 农业户口
- 非农户口

Q18. What is your political affiliation?

- a. Member of the Communist Party of China
- b. Communist Youth League members
- c. The masses (have been or are applying to join the party)
- d. The masses (never applied and no plan to join the party)
- e. The masses (not sure whether to join the party or not)
- f. Other democratic parties

您的政治面貌是？

- a. 中共党员
- b. 共青团员
- c. 群众（曾经或正在申请入党）
- d. 群众（从未也不打算入党）
- e. 群众（不确定是否入党）
- f. 其它民主党派

Q19. What is the highest degree you have obtained or are currently studying?

- a. Did not go to school
- b. Primary school
- c. Junior high school
- d. High school
- e. Vocational high school / technical secondary school
- f. Junior college
- g. Bachelor
- h. Master
- i. PhD

请问您已获得或在读的最高学历是？

- a. 没上过学
- b. 小学
- c. 初中
- d. 高中
- e. 职高/中专
- f. 大专
- g. 本科
- h. 硕士
- i. 博士

Q20. What was your income last year (including all of your salary, bonuses, party-time income, gifts from friends and family, investment, and non-monetary incomes, and all other incomes), roughly speaking in terms of RMB?

- a. 10000 yuan or below
- b. 10001-30000 yuan
- c. 30001-60000 yuan
- d. 60001-90000 yuan
- e. 90001-120000 yuan
- f. 120001-200000 yuan

g. 200001yuan or above

去年您本人的收入（包括所有的工资、奖金、第二职业收入、亲友馈赠、各种投资收益、其他所得、收获的粮、棉、蔬菜等实物折合的钱；工副业收入；出外做工挣的工资）大约为多少元（人民币）？

- a. 10000 元及以下
- b. 10001-30000 元
- c. 30001-60000 元
- d. 60001-90000 元
- e. 90001-120000 元
- f. 120001-200000 元
- g. 200001 元及以上

Q21. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Strongly agree / quite agree / disagree / strongly disagree / hard to say)

- a. As a Chinese, I am very proud
- b. I would rather be a Chinese citizen than a citizen of any other country
- c. China is the greatest country in the world
- d. I am proud of China's long history and culture
- e. China should consider its own interests first, even if it means conflicts with other countries

您在多大程度上同意以下的说法？（非常同意，比较同意，不同意，非常不同意，不好说）

- a. 作为中国人，我很骄傲
- b. 我宁愿做中国公民，而不愿意做任何其他国家的公民
- c. 中国是世界上最伟大的国家
- d. 我对中国的悠久历史和文化感到自豪
- e. 中国应该首先顾及自己的利益，即便这意味着和其他国家发生冲突

B. Summary Statistics

	N	mean	sd	min	max
Separate ways	1,694	0.240	0.427	0	1
Status quo	1,587	0.632	0.482	0	1
Economic sanction	1,579	0.663	0.472	0	1
Military coercion	1,588	0.665	0.471	0	1
All-out war	1,608	0.623	0.484	0	1
Pacifist	1,824	0.172	0.377	0	1
Ambivalent	1,824	0.515	0.500	0	1
Bellicose	1,824	0.314	0.464	0	1
IRT latent preference	1,824	0.626	0.305	0	1
Peer pressure	1,824	0.647	0.477	0	1
Military knowledge	1,824	0.322	0.467	0	1
Age	1,824	0.356	0.188	0	1
Male	1,824	0.535	0.499	0	1
College & above	1,824	0.622	0.484	0	1
Party member	1,824	0.172	0.378	0	1
Coastal province	1,824	0.501	0.500	0	1
Nationalism	1,824	0.905	0.179	0	1
Income	1,786	0.612	0.271	0	1
Taiwan experience	1,824	0.338	0.473	0	1
KMT better	1,824	0.419	0.493	0	1
Rural hukou	1,824	0.222	0.416	0	1
Economic cost	1,824	0.660	0.473	0	1
Human cost	1,824	0.563	0.496	0	1
Reputational costs	1,824	0.452	0.497	0	1
Taiwan resistance	1,824	0.475	0.499	0	1
US intervention	1,824	0.314	0.303	0	1
Strategic patience	1,824	0.345	0.475	0	1

C. Full Estimation Results for Figure 2

VARIABLES	Pacifist vs Ambivalent	Bellicose vs Ambivalent
Male	-0.210 (0.154)	0.203 (0.123)
Age	-1.705*** (0.456)	-0.236 (0.350)
College and above	-0.0169 (0.178)	0.142 (0.144)
Rural hukou	-0.0736 (0.185)	-0.0790 (0.158)
Income	-0.754*** (0.288)	-0.544** (0.236)
Party member	0.0367 (0.212)	0.169 (0.154)
Military knowledge	0.0392 (0.179)	0.307** (0.131)
Coastal province	0.317* (0.162)	0.0285 (0.125)
Nationalism	-2.874*** (0.372)	0.0830 (0.424)
Peer pressure	-1.872*** (0.171)	0.612*** (0.145)
Economic cost	0.431** (0.181)	-0.0975 (0.136)
Reputation cost	0.246 (0.180)	-0.396*** (0.151)
Human cost	0.276 (0.189)	-0.0331 (0.142)
Taiwan resistance	-0.166 (0.171)	-0.171 (0.134)
Strategic patience	-0.0468 (0.171)	-1.124*** (0.164)
US intervention	-0.0909 (0.256)	-0.483** (0.213)
KMT better	-0.454*** (0.165)	-0.746*** (0.133)
Taiwan experience	0.0228 (0.171)	0.0903 (0.137)
Constant	2.910*** (0.479)	0.0467 (0.488)
Observations	1,786	1,786

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

C. Full Estimation Results for Figure 4 (Tobit) and OLS

VARIABLES	Tobit	OLS
Nationalism	0.303*** (0.0349)	0.287*** (0.0307)
Peer pressure	0.232*** (0.0138)	0.208*** (0.0123)
Age	0.0799** (0.0355)	0.0655** (0.0314)
Military knowledge	0.0588*** (0.0142)	0.0482*** (0.0125)
Male	0.0454*** (0.0125)	0.0381*** (0.0111)
College and above	0.0276* (0.0145)	0.0216* (0.0128)
Party member	0.0120 (0.0167)	0.0101 (0.0147)
Income	0.00972 (0.0243)	0.00910 (0.0214)
Coastal province	0.00181 (0.0130)	0.00431 (0.0114)
Taiwan experience	0.000550 (0.0141)	-0.000126 (0.0124)
KMT better	-0.0115 (0.0138)	-0.00573 (0.0122)
Rural hukou	-0.0163 (0.0156)	-0.0133 (0.0139)
Economic cost	-0.0311** (0.0146)	-0.0236* (0.0128)
Human cost	-0.0381** (0.0152)	-0.0352*** (0.0135)
Taiwan resistance	-0.0450*** (0.0141)	-0.0407*** (0.0125)
US intervention	-0.0697*** (0.0215)	-0.0618*** (0.0190)
Strategic patience	-0.134*** (0.0152)	-0.118*** (0.0135)
Reputation cost	-0.142*** (0.0154)	-0.134*** (0.0137)
Constant	0.327*** (0.0424)	0.333*** (0.0375)
Observations	1,786	1,786
(Pseudo) R-squared	0.630	0.451

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1