Assessing Public Safety and Trust in the Taiwanese Military: An Analysis of Post-2022 China Drills

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Abstract

Public safety depends on a strong rule of law, efficient governance, and a capable military. Without these elements, trust erodes, and economic growth suffers. Despite its critical role in national security, research on political trust in the military, especially in democracies like Taiwan, is limited. Taiwan faces a unique security challenge from China, making trust in its military indispensable for deterrence and domestic stability. The 2022 Chinese military drills intensified tensions, underscoring the need for robust public trust to support defense policies and maintain civilian control over the military. This study explores the factors influencing public trust in the Taiwanese military in light of these recent developments. Statistical evidence suggests that four key factors play a role: public safety, the China threat, government trust, and democratic governance. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for formulating policies that bolster national security and public confidence in the military.

Keywords: civil-military relations, democratic governance, partial proportional odds model, political trust, public safety

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Introduction

A society's failure to guarantee public safety is a stark indicator of a malfunctioning rule of law. The absence of fundamental regulations and a stable civil order leaves citizens exposed to crime, violence, and even natural disasters. Security is essential for safeguarding lives, freedoms, and property. Without a pervasive sense of public safety, communities falter, trust evaporates, and economic prosperity crumbles. This erosion of security often stems from inadequately resourced or corrupt law enforcement, a dysfunctional justice system, or an unprepared military. Furthermore, disregarding basic human rights compromises public safety. In an environment devoid of safety, trust withers, and businesses become reluctant to invest, ultimately crippling long-term economic growth, especially when corruption or a weak justice system is present (Hurwitz 2008; Jensen 2008; Rose-Ackerman 1999).

Two primary conditions uphold law and order within a political system: the political legitimacy of the government and the neutralization of external threats. As a cornerstone of a functioning democracy, the rule of law ensures that laws are applied universally, fairly, and consistently to all citizens through an independent judiciary (Diamond and Morlino 2005). The first condition, political legitimacy, constitutes a form of diffuse political support that is key to a regime's stability and endurance. This legitimacy is reflected in citizens' confidence in various governmental institutions (Easton 1965). While a decline in political confidence may not immediately lead to regime collapse, research suggests it can gradually erode public perceptions of government effectiveness, ultimately diminishing government efficiency and governance capacity over time (Lipset and Schneider 1987; Miller and Listhaug 1999).

The second condition requires a sovereign government with unimpeded authority to manage its internal affairs and enforce its political order within its borders. This necessitates a strong national defense maintained by the national

armed forces. In other words, national security is a prerequisite for public safety. As expressed in Chinese proverbs, "There are no eggs left under the overturned nest" and "The lips being lost, the teeth feel cold," a nation without security cannot ensure public safety. Furthermore, political trust in the military, as part of government institutions, is vital for effective national security. To minimize coordination costs in the face of imminent challenges, maintaining trust between civilians and the military is imperative for safeguarding the nation's interests and constitutional values (Feaver 2023; King and Karabell 2003). Thus, a nation's capability to uphold public safety is closely tied to national security, which, in turn, reinforces public confidence in the military.

The importance of investigating political trust in the Taiwanese military stems from two main reasons: the scarcity of research on this topic and the reality of military tension in the Taiwan Strait. Firstly, despite the prominence of trust in the military, studies exploring this subject in both democratic and non-democratic contexts remain limited (Abouzzohour and Yousef 2023; Garb and Malešič 2016; Koehler et al. 2022; Sarigil 2015; Solar 2022). This scarcity is particularly evident in research on political trust in Taiwan's military. Most English-language studies on political trust in Taiwan treat military trust as part of broader civil institutional trust, with little attention to the specific factors driving trust in the military (Shyu 2010). Our research addresses this gap by focusing explicitly on military trust, offering a deeper understanding of its determinants. Although few studies focus specifically on confidence in Taiwan's military, Inoguchi (2017) stands as a notable exception, though his approach is comparatively generalized.[1]

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[1] Inoguchi (2017) sought to explain the determinants of military trust through a broad focus on institutional confidence. However, this general approach lacks the depth required to fully capture Taiwan's unique geopolitical context. Using a pooled dataset from 17 countries in the Asian-Europe survey, Inoguchi's study arrived at generalized conclusions that overlook country-specific variables. In contrast, our study narrows its focus specifically

Secondly, Taiwan faces the persistent threat of China's claim to the island, creating an ongoing geopolitical challenge (Elleman 2021). This threat underlines the importance of military trust, both domestically and internationally. Not only does a strong and credible military deter Chinese invasion but also promotes domestic stability and attracts potential allies, both of which are critical components of Taiwan's delicate balance. Furthermore, unlike countries with a history of military rule and varying degrees of democratic control over the military, such as those in Latin America, Taiwan's military has operated under democratic conditions since the early 1990s (Kuehn 2008, 2018). Analyzing the sources of public trust in this context is crucial, as this trust shapes societal support for defense policy and national security efforts. Greater public trust can bolster deterrence against external threats and improve mobilization and collaboration with the military in times of crisis.

Additionally, grasping the factors that influence public trust in the military is essential for ensuring civilian control and encouraging the military to maintain its professionalism, transparency, and accountability. By investigating public trust in Taiwan's military, we gain unique insights that are relevant to a democratic society facing distinct security challenges. This knowledge can help in designing policies aimed at boosting national security and strengthening civil-military relations.

Another important event for understanding public trust in the Taiwanese

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to Taiwan, allowing for a more precise exploration of how both international and domestic factors influence military trust.

Furthermore, Inoguchi's model relies heavily on cultural and political factors, such as satisfaction with life, politics, and ideology, while neglecting performance-related variables. We argue that a more comprehensive understanding of military trust requires incorporating both cultural and performance dimensions (see the theoretical section for a more detailed discussion of the framework). By addressing these gaps, our study offers a clearer depiction of Taiwan's complex sociopolitical environment and provides a more nuanced explanation of the factors influencing military trust.

military was the elevated tensions in the cross-strait relationship between Taiwan
and China in 2022. This year marked a watershed moment following a visit from
U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, which prompted China to conduct its most
significant military drills around Taiwan to date. These exercises included live-
fire scenarios, air incursions by advanced jet fighters, and missile launches. This
unprecedented display of power heightened tensions and sparked concerns about
the potential for unintended confrontation. The United States and its allies con-
demned China's actions, while Beijing defended them as necessary deterrents
against Taiwanese independence (Blanchette and Hass 2023).

The sequence of significant events can be collectively referred to as the
2022 Taiwan Crisis, historically considered the fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis.
China aimed to showcase its military strength and to deter what it viewed as
U.S. interference in its internal affairs (China Power Team 2023; Munro 2024).
The 2022 Taiwan Crisis had lasting impacts on both Taiwan and China. China
significantly increased patrols of Taiwan's airspace with jet fighters, aiming to
pressure Taiwan and undermine its control. This constant barrage of military ac-
tivity underscores ongoing tensions and the potential for future escalation. These
events have strengthened Taiwanese people's awareness of national security is-
sues, continually reminding them of the fragility of public safety. The mindset of
Taiwanese citizens has shifted toward a serious defense stance, emphasizing the
need to enhance and upgrade national security capabilities.[2]

Simultaneously, the powerful military threats from China have become a
primary concern for the Taiwanese people regarding security issues, as these
threats directly impact their lives. The 2022 Taiwan Crisis has made the Taiwan-

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[2] A salient event, such as major Chinese military drills widely covered by the media, would
undoubtedly capture the attention of citizens. Frequent media reports on Chinese jet fight-
ers patrolling Taiwan's airspace serve as constant reminders of the ongoing threats posed
by China. For a more detailed discussion on shifting public perspectives, please refer to
Chapters 12-13 of Kahneman (2013).

ese realize that their public safety depends not only on domestic civil order but also on border security. In other words, Taiwan's public safety heavily relies on the military to fulfill its duties. When Taiwanese citizens recognize that they can live their daily lives freely and without fear under civil order, they are more likely to place greater trust in the military.

This article aims to explore the evaluative determinants of political trust in the Taiwanese military. Statistical evidence strongly supports institutional explanations for military trust in Taiwan. These factors influence public faith in the military through three distinct mechanisms. First, the assurance of domestic public safety and national security—largely dependent on the protection provided by the national armed forces to deter threats from China—helps citizens gain greater trust in the military. Second, the efficient performance of the central government signals to the Taiwanese people that the government is working for their benefit, thereby building output-oriented legitimacy. This political support encourages public confidence in the military, as it is an integral part of the government apparatus. Third, the effective functioning of the entire democratic system ensures that it responds to people's requests and processes these opinions fairly and impartially according to constitutional rules. This inclusive process builds input-oriented legitimacy, leading citizens to have more faith in the system. Consequently, this increased trust extends to specific political institutions, such as the military. These mechanisms demonstrate how institutional factors are pivotal in shaping public trust in the military, reinforcing the importance of both output-oriented and input-oriented legitimacy in the political trust framework.

The structure of the paper is organized as follows: We begin with a literature review to understand the theoretical importance of public trust in the military and its potential origins from the trust-as-evaluation approach within institutional theories. From this review, we derive our primary hypotheses. Next, we describe the research design, including data collection methods and the operationalization of key concepts outlined in the hypotheses. Following this, we

present findings on patterns of confidence in the armed forces and examine possible determinants of military trust. Finally, we conclude with a summary of our findings and recommendations for future research directions.

Theory

1. The Nature of Military Trust

The core question of civil-military relations centers on the problem of civilian control (Rukavishnikov and Pugh 2018). The dilemma is, "How to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask them to do with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorize them to do" (Feaver 1996, 149). This paradox stems from the tension between two forces: a functional imperative and a societal imperative (Huntington 1957, 2-3). Public trust in the military is indispensable for democratic control, fostering a relationship where the public respects the military's autonomy while the military submits to civilian authority. This mutual trust is key to stable democratic control (Feaver 2023).

Public trust in the military extends beyond government oversight; it fosters a stable triadic relationship among the public, the government, and the military (Forster 2006; Huntington 1957; Schiff 2009). When these three actors align on key issues such as military leadership and recruitment, the likelihood of military interference in politics diminishes. Strengthening trust between the military and the public is a cornerstone of a robust democracy (Cohn et al. 2018; Rapp 2021).

To explain the concept of public trust in the military, it is important to consider two dimensions: relational and domain-specific. This concept can be summarized by the formula: A trusts B to do X. The relational dimension focuses on the relationship between the public (A, the trustor) and the military (B, the trustee), while the domain-specific dimension pertains to the specific actions or responsibilities (X) in which trust is placed or withheld. At the heart of trust is

the belief that A regards B as trustworthy, expecting B to act with integrity and competence and to prioritize A's interests (Citrin and Stoker 2018; Hardin 2002).

Public confidence in the military, as understood by society at large, reflects how the public (the trustor) perceives the performance (X) of its armed forces (the trustee). Coleman (1990) provides a detailed explanation of this subjective trust calculus. The relationship between the trustor and the trustee is inherently uncertain, requiring careful evaluation (Deutsch 1960). This trust-as-evaluation approach has prompted scholars to examine not only the characteristics of individuals who do or do not trust—considering factors such as their socialization, genetic predispositions, social background, and attitudes—but also the attributes of the entity being trusted, including the effective and efficient performance of the military. This evaluative framework has been widely applied to the roots of government trust (Hakhverdian and Mayne 2012; Harteveld et al. 2013; Hetherington 1998; Klingemann 1999; Proszowska et al. 2022; van der Meer 2018; van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2016).

The evaluative framework of political trust offers two key advancements over recent research on military trust (Abouzzohour and Yousef 2023; Garb and Malešič 2016; Koehler et al. 2022; Sarigil 2015; Solar 2022): the use of a unified theoretical model and a focus on trustee performance. As Norris (2022, 16) aptly states, "The logic of performance theories can apply to any type of trustworthy agent, such as decisions to trust neighbors and strangers, ... security forces such as the police and military, and even other nations and peoples."

First, the application of a consistent theoretical framework across various countries, including Taiwan, enables systematic conclusions that can be generalized while accommodating unique contextual differences. This approach is flexible, allowing for adaptation to different geopolitical environments. Second, while trust in institutions is typically measured at the societal level, it is fundamentally rooted in individual judgments about the trustee's performance. These individual assessments form the foundation for broader societal trust. Therefore,

by applying this framework in Taiwan, we can better understand the specific factors influencing political trust in the military, resulting in a more nuanced and context-sensitive analysis.

The basic analytical framework of this study examines how public trust in the military in Taiwan is influenced by factors related to the trustee's performance, as conditioned by citizens' expectations. This public perception depends on whether the military's actual performance meets these expectations. Cultural standards set the societal benchmark for how the military is viewed, while performance standards evaluate the military's competence, reliability, and commitment to public welfare in carrying out its duties. When the military is deemed trustworthy and is perceived to prioritize the public interest, it strengthens the legitimacy of civilian control.

To make abstract theoretical concepts—such as military competence, reliability, and commitment to public welfare—more concrete and applicable, performance standards are used to evaluate how effectively the military meets societal expectations in its core functions: ensuring national security (the ability to protect the nation from both external and internal threats), serving the state (the government's ability to deploy resources to support the military), and upholding democratic governance (the military's responsiveness to civilian control, avoiding authoritarian overreach). These functions are assessed through the lens of public perception regarding institutional performance.

The dimensions of security, government performance, and democratic governance serve as overarching frameworks that shape how the public perceives the military's performance. Strong performance in these areas consistently fosters greater public trust. By grounding abstract concepts in measurable standards, this approach clarifies the connection between military performance and its influence on public trust.

2. *National Security*

There are two perspectives for evaluating military performance: effectiveness and efficiency. The first perspective, effectiveness, assesses whether the military can faithfully and flawlessly fulfill its roles and missions. The second perspective, efficiency, evaluates the accomplishment of assigned tasks while minimizing resource usage. Together, these benchmarks allow citizens to judge whether the military truly executes its tasks at an optimal cost (Matei 2013).

The fundamental priority in structuring any state's defense establishment and making decisions about the use of armed forces is to have clearly defined military roles and missions. A role can be defined as a broad and enduring purpose assigned by the highest public authority to each branch of the armed services. Missions, on the other hand, are specific tasks that clearly indicate actions to be taken and are assigned to operational commanders by the commander-in-chief (Shemella 2006). In today's rapidly changing security environment, the roles and missions of the military in many countries can be categorized into three core types: defense (warfighting and irregular warfare), collective security (military assistance and international crisis management), and aid to the nation (disaster relief, military support to internal security forces, and epidemic support) (Wilén and Strömbom 2022).

A nation's security policy is imperative for its survival, safeguarding its sovereignty and enabling effective governance. This policy operates on two levels: international and domestic. Internationally, it focuses on military threats from external forces. Domestically, it addresses internal threats that aim to weaken the state (Huntington 1957; Roller 2005). Additionally, situational security involves the military in disaster relief, emergency response, and border security when needed. These actions demonstrate the military's adaptability and contribution to both national defense and internal stability. When citizens feel secure from war and internal conflict, they have greater trust in the military's ability to

protect them. This sense of security fosters public confidence in the government and its capacity to maintain order.

The effective realization of public safety, supported by a well-functioning rule of law, can be achieved through a robust national security policy and efficient law enforcement. An integrated national defense is pivotal in ensuring a strong sense of security and public confidence. Traditionally, the armed forces are tasked with maintaining national security, while the police are responsible for enforcing laws (Shemella 2006). However, the boundaries between internal and external security forces have increasingly blurred in recent times (Campbell and Campbell 2010). Regardless of the roles assigned to the national armed forces, the critical point is to strike a balance between freedom and security. A country's security policy should have, as its primary objective, sufficient flexibility to meet unforeseeable needs, with limits in place to safeguard the very constitutional values the military is pledged to protect. The security policy must also be grounded in the rule of law, as law lies at the core of the relationship between civilians and their military on the home front (Banks and Dycus 2016). Ultimately, military performance is evaluated by citizens based on the effective and efficient execution of its roles and missions, including defending against external threats and helping preserve law and order internally.

Following the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, no serious military conflicts occurred between Taiwan and China until 2022, a year that marked a significant escalation in cross-strait tensions. The situation intensified after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, prompting China to conduct its most extensive military drills around the island to date. These drills included live-fire exercises and missile launches, raising fears of an unintended confrontation. The 2022 Taiwan Crisis had lasting effects, with China significantly increasing its patrols of Taiwan's airspace, aiming to pressure Taiwan and erode its control.

In addition, following a meeting between Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen

and U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in April 2023, China launched large-scale military drills named "Joint Sword", further heightening tensions. In May 2024, China again demonstrated its military might with drills codenamed "Joint Sword-2024A", conducted in response to newly elected Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's stance on Taiwan's independence. These exercises simulated a full-scale invasion, signaling China's potential shift toward more frequent military maneuvers to pressure Taiwan.

China's incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone have also increased since 2016, likely driven by its growing military strength and desire to assert control over Taiwan. The ever-present threat from China shapes public opinion in Taiwan. Extensive media coverage keeps the population informed about China's military capabilities and intentions. Consequently, Taiwanese awareness of national security issues has grown, shifting public sentiment toward the need for stronger defense measures and emphasizing improved national security capabilities. The formidable military threats from China now dominate Taiwanese security concerns, underscoring the importance of both domestic order and border security.

Overall, Taiwanese citizens view a strong national defense as essential for maintaining both internal and external security. When external threats arise and citizens perceive the military as the institution most capable of protecting them, their confidence in its abilities increases. The military is regarded as the primary entity responsible for national defense (Wilén and Strömbom 2022). Recent research supports this perspective, showing that public trust in the military increases when citizens become aware of security threats, leading them to support higher military spending or promote social cohesion (DiGiuseppe et al. 2024; Myrick 2021).

While Taiwan's domestic environment differs from that of other nations, the argument for a positive relationship between perceived safety and trust in the military aligns with studies showing a correlation between security threats and

trust in military institutions (Abouzzohour and Yousef 2023; Goedegebuur 2019; Sung et al. 2022). Given that deterring threats from China and maintaining public safety are crucial to Taiwan's survival, we argue that both national and domestic security rely on the effective guardianship of the armed forces. This guardianship, in turn, fosters greater public trust in the military.

Hypothesis 1: *Individuals who experience a heightened sense of security—stemming from both domestic and national sources—are more likely to place their trust in the military.*

3. Government Performance

Institutional theories of political trust argue that trust in institutions is built on performance. People assess whether trusting a government institution benefits them (van der Meer 2018). Citizens are more likely to trust well-functioning institutions and less likely to trust poorly performing ones (Newton and Norris 2000). Trustworthiness is judged by factors such as competence in managing public affairs, institutional accountability, and adherence to the rule of law (Norris 2022; Park 2017).

Trust in specific institutions, such as the military, builds on general trust in the government (Easton 1965; Norris 2017). This "diffuse support" strengthens when the government performs effectively and avoids scandals. Citizens who have confidence in the government's overall performance are more likely to trust individual institutions.

The performance-based view of political trust suggests that individuals' trust in government is influenced by their evaluation of its performance relative to their expectations (Hetherington 1998, 2005; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). While economic growth is a key factor affecting well-being, policy performance also includes areas such as national security, socio-economic welfare, and envi-

ronmental protection (Roller 2005). A government's ability to effectively address a diverse range of issues is essential for maintaining political trust, reflecting how well it fulfills its responsibilities across multiple domains.

The relationship between regime performance and trust in specific institutions, such as the military, can be understood as a multi-layered system of political support, ranging from broad, general trust to focused, institution-specific trust (Easton 1965; Norris 2017). General or "diffuse" support refers to the overall confidence citizens have in the political system, serving as the foundation for "specific" support, which is trust placed in particular institutions. When these institutions meet public expectations, avoid controversies, and implement policies effectively, the connection between diffuse and specific support is reinforced. Thus, citizens with positive perceptions of government performance and a sense of involvement in the political process are more likely to trust individual institutions. In other words, favorable views of the regime as a whole create a solid foundation for trust in individual components, such as the military.

To conceptualize government performance as a whole, we define it as trust in the national government, encompassing the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. When citizens perceive higher levels of government performance, they are more likely to trust other political institutions, such as the military. To test this argument, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *Individuals who exhibit trust in the central government are more likely to trust the military.*

4. Democratic Governance

Understanding the distinction between the quality of government and its performance is pivotal. The quality of government pertains to the effectiveness of its institutions, encompassing aspects such as transparency, accountability,

and adherence to the rule of law. This concept represents input-oriented legitimacy, reflecting the design and structure of governance based on democratic principles—essentially, government by the people. In contrast, government performance refers to the tangible outcomes these institutions achieve, representing output-oriented legitimacy and focusing on how well the government meets citizens' needs and aspirations—fundamentally, government for the people (Dinesen and Sønderskov 2021; Hakhverdian and Mayne 2012; van der Meer 2017).

To further elucidate input-oriented legitimacy, this concept encompasses the overall functioning of democratic processes, focusing on the fair and effective inclusion of diverse voices in policy-making. This includes citizen participation, free and fair political competition, and an open political system that integrates these inputs into policy decisions. Additionally, the rule of law and procedural justice are pivotal for resolving disputes, maintaining order, and ensuring equality. Efficiency in these processes is also crucial to minimize transaction costs and avoid unnecessary burdens (Diamond and Morlino 2005; Rothstein and Teorell 2008).

Evaluating democratic governance requires a dual approach: a positive perspective assesses the system's effectiveness, while a negative perspective examines the absence of significant interference (Lijphart 2012; Rose and Peiffer 2019). A well-functioning democracy processes requests impartially, adhering to principles of fairness and justice. Conversely, a corrupt system—characterized by rule-bending, clientelism, nepotism, cronyism, patronage, and discrimination—fails its purpose. Thus, assessing the quality of democratic governance necessitates both positive and negative viewpoints. To test this, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Individuals with stronger faith in democratic processes, as indicated by satisfaction with the system or a perception of lower corruption, are more inclined to trust the military.*

5. *Other Factors of Military Trust*

Beyond performance arguments, another source of political trust arises from cultural explanations. Cultural theories suggest that political trust stems from in-grained cultural norms and early-learned interpersonal trust, which later extends to political institutions (Mishler and Rose 2001; Wong et al. 2009). As citizens' evaluations of military performance are shaped by their expectations, these stan-dards are established early and derived from socialization experiences. There-fore, it is necessary to control for cultural factors to accurately assess the effects of performance on public trust in the military.

5.1 Social Capital

Easton's concept of regime support refers to public attitudes toward the legitimacy of a political system, encompassing multiple levels from abstract to concrete: the political community, regime principles, regime norms, regime insti-tutions, and political authorities (Easton 1965). High political trust and a strong civic culture characterize critical or disaffected citizens who support democratic ideals but hold skeptical attitudes about democratic performance (Dalton 2004).

There are two main approaches to explaining political trust: bottom-up and top-down theories. Bottom-up theories focus on individual experiences, while top-down theories consider the characteristics of the political system. Clear pat-terns of political trust emerge at the country level due to the rainmaker effect, whereby higher trust within a country leads citizens to consider one another as more trustworthy (Newton and Norris 2000; Roßteutscher 2008).

According to new institutionalism, actors behave rationally within the rule-based constraints set by their institutional environment (North 1990). Offe (2006) notes that these institutional patterns define the "possibility space" for citizen-ship and political action, shaping both perceptions and incentives. Individuals hold two beliefs: their own judgments and their perceptions of the broader en-

vironment. Rothstein argues that universal and impartial political institutions foster social capital, provided that public policies promote social and economic equality (Rothstein 2005; Warren 2018).

Social capital theory comprises two dimensions: interpersonal social trust and voluntary activism in social groups. Interpersonal social trust involves individuals' confidence in others within their networks, based on the belief that others will act responsibly and fulfill obligations. Voluntary activism reflects the extent of individuals' participation in social organizations and civic activities, indicating their engagement in community groups and volunteer efforts (Brehm and Rahn 1997; Fukuyama 1995; Newton and Norris 2000).

The dimensions of social capital theory—interpersonal social trust and voluntary activism—are closely interconnected. High levels of interpersonal trust often encourage individuals to participate in social groups and engage in voluntary activism, which, in turn, enhances trust through social interactions and cooperation. Thus, individuals with higher social capital are more likely to trust political institutions, including the military, as suggested by cultural theories and the social capital thesis (Uslaner 1999, 2002). Therefore, both dimensions should be taken into account when examining the impact of social capital on political trust.

5.2 Confucianism

Confucianism has profoundly influenced Taiwan's political culture, molding its society through principles such as reverence for authority, strong family values, hierarchical relationships, and adherence to traditional norms (Huang 2023). These values permeate multiple aspects of life, including politics, family structures, education, and social interactions (Shin 2012; Yao 2000). Consequently, traditionalism significantly impacts societal development and shapes political and economic behaviors (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The collective mindset and

societal norms in Taiwan are deeply guided by Confucian principles, affecting interactions and decision-making processes.

Confucian values, sometimes referred to as "Asian values," emphasize strong moral authority, leading to debate regarding their compatibility with democracy (Huntington 1996). While some view these values as a barrier, others argue they can coexist within a democratic framework, potentially emphasizing meritocratic leadership (Dalton and Ong 2006; Shin 2013).

Thus, while the emphasis on respect for authority, informed by Confucian values, may indeed lead Taiwanese citizens to place greater trust in the government (Shi 2001), it does not necessarily preclude the potential for democratic progress. Based on these arguments, it is also important to account for traditional values to distinguish their effects from those of performance-based explanations.

6. Social-Economic Characteristics

Apart from our main variables of interest and culture-related characteristics, controlling for personal variables is important, as these account for the diverse individual socialization processes shaped by unique life experiences. Scholars highlight the influence of political culture and socio-demographic factors such as age, education, and occupation on political trust (Christensen and Lægreid 2005; Norris 2022; Wong et al. 2011).

Cultural sociologists argue that early childhood socialization forms enduring values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms, ultimately influencing trust in individuals, groups, institutions, and even nations. These early experiences become lasting frameworks for interpreting the world within each society (Rotenberg 2010).

Since military trust is closely tied to political matters, any factors influencing or shaping citizens' political predispositions will naturally impact their level of trust in the military. In this context, key political characteristics, such as political interest and party identification, are incorporated as control variables

within the regression model. Including these controls enables a more precise understanding of how other factors independently affect public confidence in the military, ensuring that political biases do not distort the results (Feaver 2023).

Data and Methodology

This research investigates the aforementioned hypotheses using data from Wave 6 of the Asian Barometer Project's Taiwan survey, conducted from September to December 2022, to understand Taiwanese citizens' beliefs and behaviors toward democracy. The dataset comprises a sample of 1,532 respondents (Asian Barometer 2022).

The dataset is particularly suitable for verifying the relationship between public safety and public confidence in the Taiwanese military, as it enables the empirical examination of necessary causation conditions. To assert that X (public safety) is a necessary cause of Y (military trust) implies that some state of X is required for a certain value of Y to occur (Freese and Kevern 2013). This examination involves meeting three criteria: temporal order, correlation, and the absence of plausible alternative explanations. Temporal order requires that X precedes Y. Since the Chinese military drills took place in August 2022, just before the survey period of September to December 2022, this condition is satisfied because increased public awareness of safety concerns preceded the measurement of public trust in the military. By establishing an empirical correlation between public safety and military trust, we meet two of the three necessary conditions, thereby increasing confidence that public safety significantly influences public faith in the Taiwanese military, even if the third condition remains partially unaddressed.

1. Dependent Variable

This study investigates public confidence in the Taiwanese military as the dependent variable. The measure is derived from responses to the question: "I'm going to name a number of institutions. For each one, please tell me how much trust you have in them? Is it a great deal of trust, quite a lot of trust, not very much trust, or none at all?" The scale ranges from 1 (None at all) to 4 (A great deal of trust), which we interpret as ordinal. For further details on the scale's descriptive statistics, please refer to the Appendix Table A1.

2. Research Variables

Three evaluative concepts form the foundation of performance explanations: the perception of public safety and external threats related to the military's fulfillment of its roles and missions, the efficiency of government performance, and the effectiveness of the democratic system. Public safety is measured by the response to the question: "Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/town/village?" The scale ranges from 1 (Very unsafe) to 4 (Very safe). This response represents the respondent's sense of security in their daily life, serving as an indicator of the military's effectiveness in fulfilling its duties.

To operationalize the perception of the China threat, we developed a proxy for the perceived level of threat by combining responses from two relevant questions, as the Asian Barometer Project questionnaire does not directly assess this perception. The first question asked about China's influence on Taiwan, measured on a 6-point ordinal scale. The second question focused on which aspect of the major powers' influence respondents had in mind, offering four categories: politics, economy, (military) security, and culture. We dichotomized both questions into two categories: positive versus negative for the first question and security versus other factors for the second. Respondents who viewed China's influence as negative and associated this negativity with the military security

aspect were considered to perceive China as an imminent threat to Taiwan. Thus, the "China threat" variable is constructed as a binary (dummy) variable.

Turning to the second evaluative concept, while social capital can indeed affect government confidence, Hetherington (1998, 2005) emphasizes that assessing government performance remains paramount. This assessment should not be overly broad, encompassing more than just the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as Brehm and Rahn (1997) argue that such a generalized measure of confidence lacks robustness. In alignment with the methodological approaches of Cook and Gronke (2005) and Wong et al. (2011), we measure government performance by examining political confidence in the national government, encompassing all three branches. The measurement question is included in the same question battery as the dependent variable with identical response categories. The four-point Likert scale used for the dependent variable (None at all, Not very much, Quite a lot, and A great deal) was replicated for trust in the three political institutions.

Given that our analysis centers on the efficiency of government performance, an abstract latent variable measured by three ordinal questions, our goal is to transform these measures into a score that reflects the underlying continuum of this trait. There are three main methods for constructing this dimension: additive models, factor analysis, and item response models. Additive models assume equal weight for all indicators and may not effectively assess dimensionality, while factor analysis requires continuous indicators. In contrast, item response theory (IRT) can be applied to discrete ordinal data without these limitations (Raykov and Marcoulides 2011; Warshaw 2018). Following the recommendations of Raykov and Marcoulides (2018), we use the graded response model from IRT to construct the latent variable of government trust for our empirical analysis.

To further ensure the robustness of the exogeneity of the government trust variable, we conducted a Hausman test to assess its potential endogeneity. The results, with a p value of .72, indicate no evidence of endogeneity, supporting the

assumption that government trust represents diffuse political support.[3]

To assess the effectiveness of democratic governance, we analyze two key aspects: satisfaction with the functioning of democracy and the perceived prevalence of corruption.[4] The first aspect is measured by asking respondents about their overall perception of the system's effectiveness with the question, "On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in Taiwan?" The second aspect focuses on the perceived prevalence of corruption within the national government, asking respondents how widespread they believe "corruption and bribe-taking" are. This approach allows us to gauge their perception of the government's effectiveness in addressing this critical issue. Both dimensions are measured using a four-point Likert scale.

3. Control Variables

The first set of control variables focuses on cultural explanations, particularly social capital, measured through two key dimensions: the extent of social

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[3] The procedure for the test is as follows (Wooldridge 2020, chapter 15):

I. Identify Instrumental Variables (IVs): The IVs must be uncorrelated with military trust (exogeneity), correlated with government trust (relevance), and have no direct effect on military trust (exclusion condition). A set of questions related to public services—such as access to roads, running water, public transportation, and healthcare—measured on an ordinal scale, meet these criteria.

II. First-Stage Regression: A regression of government trust on the four IVs and all other research/control variables is performed. The residuals from this regression are saved as a new variable.

III. Auxiliary Regression: An ordinal logistic regression is conducted, including the saved residual variable from the first stage. The null hypothesis being tested is that the coefficient of the residual variable is equal to zero. A small p value would indicate endogeneity, in which case IVs would be necessary. However, in this case, the large p value suggests the exogeneity of the government trust variable.

[4] To examine the impact of perceived corruption on trust in the military, it is important to have a measure specific to military corruption. However, since the Asian Barometer survey does not include questions directly addressing this issue, we use perceptions of corruption within the national government as a broader indicator of system-wide transparency, which implicitly encompasses the military.

connections and the level of interpersonal trust. The first dimension examines
the variety of organizations individuals are involved in, providing insight into
their social connections and participation in different social groups. The second
dimension assesses interpersonal trust among strangers, as outlined by Warren
(1999a, 1999b). Respondents are asked about the trustworthiness of others to
gauge their level of interpersonal trust, which contributes to their overall social
capital. By analyzing these two dimensions, we can understand the impact of so-
cial capital on trust in the military.

The second cultural explanation is grounded in the Asian Values thesis,
specifically the concept of social hierarchy within Confucianism. This hierarchi-
cal concept is operationalized through a set of four questions, previously used
in empirical studies on Confucianism by Fetzer and Soper (2013) and Shi (2001,
2015). These four questions are: "Government leaders are like the head of a fami-
ly; we should all follow their decisions," "When a mother-in-law and a daughter-
in-law come into conflict, even if the mother-in-law is in the wrong, the husband
should still persuade his wife to obey his mother," "Even if parents' demands are
unreasonable, children should still do what they ask," and "Being a student, one
should not question the authority of their teacher." All these questions are rated
on a four-point ordinal scale.

To maintain consistency with our government trust analysis, we apply the
graded response model of item response theory to these four measurements, pro-
viding deeper insights into the underlying continuum of individuals' propensity
toward hierarchism.

The second set of control variables pertains to individual socio-economic
and demographic characteristics. To comprehensively represent personal vari-
ables correlated with political leaning, we include age, gender, education, in-
come, residential location (urban or rural), and political interest. Age is measured
in years. Gender is categorized as male or female. Education is measured on a

7-point ordinal scale, while income is classified into five equal-quantile groups.[5]

The political control variables in the model include political interest and political identification. Political interest is measured on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all interested, 4 = Very interested) to capture variations in individuals' engagement with political issues. Political identification is categorized into three main groups: Pan-Blue (Kuomintang, New Party, People First Party, Taiwan People's Party), Independents, and Pan-Green (Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan Solidarity Union, New Power Party, Taiwan Radical Wings). This categorization ensures that the analysis accounts for varying political alignments that may influence trust in the military.

Results

The scale for measuring public confidence in the military ranges from 1 "None at all" to 4 "A great deal of trust", with intermediate values of 2 "Not very much" and 3 "Quite a lot". This categorical dependent variable, with its four ordered levels, suggests that an ordered logit model is the most appropriate analytical approach. The regression equation for predicting a Taiwanese citizen's trust in the military is as follows:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\Pr(\textit{Trust in the Military}) = \Lambda(&\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Public safety} + \beta_2 \text{ China threat} \\
&+ \beta_3 \text{ Government trust} + \beta_4 \text{ Democratic satisfaction} + \beta_5 \text{ Corruption control} \\
&+ \beta_6 \text{ Civic engagement} + \beta_7 \text{ Interpersonal trust} + \beta_8 \text{ Hierarchism} + \beta_9 \text{ Urban}
\end{aligned}
$$

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[5] Assessing the impact of early childhood socialization requires controlling for demographic variables. Individuals' political socialization in their early years profoundly shapes their political behavior as adults. Demographic structures create conditions that determine each citizen's foundational pattern—a pattern we aim to control for in the model. Furthermore, the inclusion of political interest, despite its lack of statistical significance, is necessary to avoid omitted variable bias. Omitting such variables can bias the estimates of other variables, skewing our understanding of their true relationship with political behavior.

$$+ \beta_{10} \text{ Male} + \beta_{11} \text{ Age} + \beta_{12} \text{ Education} + \beta_{13} \text{ Income} + \beta_{14} \text{ Political interest}$$
$$+ \beta_{15} \text{ Independents} + \beta_{16} \text{ Pan} - \text{Green} + \varepsilon)$$

where $\Lambda(x)$ represents the logistic function, which transforms real numbers into values between 0 and 1 to fit the definition of probability.

Nevertheless, a potential concern with ordered logit models is the assumption of proportional odds, also known as the parallel regression assumption. This assumption suggests that the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable remains consistent across all categories of the dependent variable. If this assumption is violated, it could lead to biased results in the ordered logit model (Long and Freese 2014).

The essential attribute of the dependent variable's data structure is its ordinal nature with multiple categories. Simplifying it to a binary indicator variable in statistical models like logit or probit could result in significant information loss and oversimplify the data's complexity. Similarly, assuming consistent regression slopes across all categories may be overly simplistic, as social phenomena often exhibit more intricate patterns. On the other hand, ignoring the ordinality and treating the attributes as unordered categories could make the analysis unnecessarily complicated. Therefore, employing partial proportional odds models, which relax the parallel regression assumption for some independent variables, provides a balanced approach for analyzing the ordinal dependent variable.

Without theoretical reasoning to predict possible asymmetric effects of explanatory variables on trust in the military, we adopt a data-driven approach to evaluate the parallel regression assumption. Our goal is to identify any violations of this assumption among the independent variables. The Brant test, a widely used method, assesses whether the observed differences between predictions from the proportional odds model and the actual data exceed what would be expected by random chance (Brant 1990). Results from the dataset indicate

that some independent variables, as well as certain control variables, do not meet the proportional odds assumption.[6] Consequently, we will use a partial proportional odds model, which maintains the parallel regression assumption for most variables while relaxing it for others.

The partial proportional odds model operates by comparing category 1 against categories 2, 3, and 4. The second panel then contrasts categories 1 and 2 with categories 3 and 4, while the third panel compares categories 1, 2, and 3 with category 4. In simpler terms, the jth panel yields outcomes equivalent to those of a logistic regression where categories 1 through j are recoded to 0 and categories $j+1$ through M are recoded to 1. Simultaneously estimating all equations leads to slightly differing results compared to the separate estimation of each equation. When interpreting outcomes for each panel, it is important to remember that the current category of Y and the lower-coded categories serve as the reference group (Williams 2006, 2016).

The results of the empirical analysis using partial proportional odds regressions are presented in Table 1. The right-hand side of the regression models is divided into two sections: research variables and control variables. Since Hypotheses 1 through 3 propose theoretical relationships between the dependent and independent variables, and are directional in essence, one-tailed hypothesis testing will be used in the subsequent discussion.

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[6] The Brant test results reveal that the parallel regression assumption is violated for public safety, age, and education in the dataset.

Table 1.　Trust in the Taiwanese Military: Partial Proportional Odds Model

Explanatory variables	N/A vs NVM, QALOT, AGD	N/A, NVM vs QALOT, AGD	N/A, NVM, QA-LOT vs AGD
Public safety	0.119(0.221)	0.320(0.125)**	0.777(0.196)***
China threat	0.322(0.179)*		
Government trust	1.100(0.087)***		
Democratic satisfaction	0.239(0.102)*		
Corruption control	0.294(0.099)**		
Control variables			
Civic engagement	-0.039(0.051)		
Interpersonal trust	0.123(0.121)		
Hierarchism	-0.002(0.078)		
Urban	-0.060(0.134)		
Male	0.348(0.120)**		
Age	0.027(0.001)**	0.010(0.005)*	-0.004(0.007)
Education	0.015(0.125)	0.019(0.022)	-0.177(0.075)*
Income	-0.087(0.044)*		
Political interest	0.067(0.075)		
Party ID (base: Pan-Blue)			
Independents	-0.072(0.154)		
Pan-Green	-0.460(0.146)**		
Intercepts	0.364(1.251)	-2.533(0.612)**	-5.284(0.978)***

Data Source: Wave 6 of the Asian Barometer project's Taiwan survey, 2022.

Note1: The number of cases is 1217. The Pseudo R^2 value is 0.144, and standard errors are presented in parentheses. Hypothesis tests for the research variables that align with the assumed research direction are one-tailed, while the remaining tests are two-tailed. The statistical significance is denoted as follows: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Note2: Only one set of coefficients is presented for explanatory variables that meet the proportional odds assumption. N/A = None at all, NVM = Not very much, QALOT = Quite a lot of trust, AGD = A great deal of trust.

Regarding Hypothesis 1, which suggests that a personal assessment of individual safety enhances trust in the armed forces, the statistical evidence in Table 1 provides robust support. Due to the violation of the parallel regression assumption, there are three coefficient estimates for the public safety variable. While the first estimate, comparing "None at all" with "Not very much", "Quite a lot", and "A great deal of trust", does not reach statistical significance, the other two estimates—comparing below "Not very much" with above "Quite a lot" and below "Quite a lot" with "A great deal of trust"—are statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. These significant estimates align positively with the hypothesized direction.

These findings also validate the decision to use the partial proportional odds model, as the regression coefficients for the main research variable vary across different thresholds of comparison. The evidence supports Hypothesis 1, indicating that when Taiwanese citizens feel an enhanced sense of security, their trust in the military increases, shifting from "Not very much" to "Quite a lot" and from "Quite a lot" to "A great deal of trust". These outcomes suggest that when Taiwanese citizens perceive an improved sense of law and order and believe in the effective protection of their lives and property, their propensity to trust the military also increases.

Another key variable related to Hypothesis 1 is the perception of the China threat, which is expected to increase trust in the military due to heightened security concerns and the need for protection. The coefficient estimate for this variable in Table 1 is positive and statistically significant. Combined with the evidence on public safety, these findings reinforce support for Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 posits that greater trust in the government is linked to higher confidence in the military. Accounting for cultural influences, Taiwanese citizens interpret government performance as a reflection of the military's credibility in executing its responsibilities. When citizens believe the government is acting in their best interests, they are more inclined to trust it, and this trust extends to

the military, which is viewed as a key component of the government's political structure. Statistical evidence strongly supports this hypothesis. The coefficient for "trust in the national government" consistently shows a positive correlation and is highly significant ($p < .001$). These findings highlight the substantial impact of Taiwanese citizens' perceptions of government performance on their trust in the military.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that higher evaluations of the democratic system are associated with increased trust in the military. Trust in the government is not solely based on its performance; the democratic process, which fairly considers diverse viewpoints from various societal segments, is equally crucial. This inclusive political process promotes a balanced government that reconciles competing policy objectives and produces compromises that are broadly accepted by society. A stable and efficient government is maintained through these democratic mechanisms. Therefore, Taiwanese citizens who regard the political process as lawful and free from cronyism and corruption are likely to have greater political support for the entire political system. Consequently, these individuals, who have more faith in the democratic system, tend to exhibit higher trust in the military, as it is an integral part of the political institutions.

The assessment of democratic governance is evaluated through two variables: democratic satisfaction and corruption control. The coefficient estimate for democratic satisfaction shows a positive and statistically significant relationship in Table 1. Similarly, the coefficient estimate for corruption control also indicates a positive and statistically significant association in Table 1. These robust statistical outcomes provide substantial support for Hypothesis 3. Additionally, to further validate this hypothesis, we conducted a chi-square test of the Wald statistic for the joint significance of the coefficients for both variables. The results of this test yield a p value of .001, confirming that Hypothesis 3 is supported in the statistical analysis.

To better understand how these statistical relationships manifest in the real

world, it is useful to transform the coefficient estimates into probabilities. This approach adheres to the basic axioms of probability and is easily understood by most people. Moreover, given the nonlinear functional relationship between the dependent variable and all independent variables, it is more practical to present the probabilities in the form of average marginal effects (AMEs). These are computed at the observed values for all observations in the estimation sample, providing a clear summary of the impacts of independent variables on the dependent variable (Long and Freese 2014; Wooldridge 2020).

To solidify our interpretations of Hypotheses 1 to 3, we calculate the AMEs of the independent variables. We use a one-unit change for all variables except age, for which we apply a one-standard-deviation change. The results are presented in Table 2. The independent variables comprise three types: continuous (government trust, hierarchism, and age), ordinal (public safety, democratic satisfaction, corruption control, civic engagement, education, income, and political interest), and dummy (interpersonal trust, male, and urban). A one-unit change for the latter two types reflects the effects of moving one level in the ordinal scale and the effects of a discrete change between two categories for the dummy variables. Since the range of the three continuous variables differs significantly—with government trust and hierarchism roughly between -2 and 3, and age ranging from 20 to 99—we chose to use the effects of one standard deviation (approximately 16.3 years) for age to provide a more reasonable coverage of its range.

To understand how public safety affects military trust, we analyzed the data while holding other variables at their observed values. Increasing public safety by one level leads to an average increase of 8.0% in the probability of being in the "A great deal of trust" category for military trust. This increase mainly comes from a reduction of about 5.4% in the "Not very much" category. Both probability changes are significant at the two-tailed .01 level. Regarding another variable related to Hypothesis 1, citizens who perceive China as a threat are, on average, approximately 6% more likely to trust the military than those who do not.

Table 2.   Average Marginal Effects of All independent Variables in Partial Proportional
Odds Model

Independent var.	N/A	NVM	QALOT	AGD
Public safety +1	-0.005	-0.054	-0.020	0.080
p values	(.610)	(.004)**	(.495)	(.001)**
China threat +1	-0.013	-0.046	0.031	0.029
p values	(.045)*	(.070)	(.036)*	(.099)
Government trust +1	-0.035	-0.151	0.064	0.122
p values	(.000)***	(.000)***	(.000)***	(.000)***
Democratic satisfaction +1	-0.010	-0.034	0.024	0.021
p values	(.012)*	(.019)*	(.009)**	(.029)*
Corruption control +1	-0.012	-0.042	0.028	0.026
p values	(.002)**	(.003)**	(.001)**	(.007)**
Civic engagement +1	0.002	0.006	-0.004	-0.003
p values	(.454)	(.446)	(.452)	(.441)
Interpersonal trust vs No	-0.006	-0.018	0.013	0.011
p values	(.287)	(.309)	(.285)	(.325)
Hierarchism +1	0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000
p values	(.976)	(.976)	(.976)	(.976)
Urban vs Rural	0.003	0.009	-0.007	-0.005
p values	(.660)	(.652)	(.659)	(.647)
Male vs Female	-0.014	-0.050	0.033	0.032
p values	(.002)**	(.004)**	(.001)**	(.009)**
Age +Std. Dev.(about 16.3)	-0.017	-0.014	0.035	-0.004
p values	(.003)**	(.316)	(.013)*	(.594)
Education +1	-0.001	-0.003	0.018	-0.014
p values	(.904)	(.667)	(.007)**	(.011)*
Income +1	0.004	0.012	-0.010	-0.007
p values	(.060)	(.046)*	(.054)	(.043)*
Political interest +1	-0.003	-0.010	0.007	0.006

Independent var.	N/A	NVM	QALOT	AGD
p values	(.362)	(.374)	(.361)	(.382)
Pan-Blue vs Independents	-0.003	-0.010	0.007	0.007
p values	(.639)	(.638)	(.639)	(.639)
Pan-Green vs Independents	0.020	0.053	-0.042	-0.031
p values	(.014)*	(.010)*	(.008)**	(.015)*
Pan-Green vs Pan-Blue	0.023	0.063	-0.048	-0.038
p values	(.003)**	(.001)**	(.001)**	(.002)**

Data Source: Wave 6 of the Asian Barometer project's Taiwan survey, 2022.

Note1: The number of cases is 1217 and *p* values are in the parenthesis. The tests are two-tailed, denoted as follows: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Note2: N/A = None at all, NVM = Not very much, QALOT = Quite a lot of trust, AGD = A great deal of trust.

To understand the impact of government trust on military trust, we conducted an analysis similar to that used for public safety. A one-unit increase in government trust results in an average rise of 6.4% in the likelihood of falling into the "Quite a lot" category and an average increase of 12.2% in the likelihood of being in the "A great deal of trust" category for military trust. These increases are mainly attributed to a decrease of 3.5% in the "None at all" category and a 15.1% reduction in the "Not very much" category. All four probability changes are significant at the two-tailed $p < .001$ level.

As with the previous analysis, we examined the effects of democratic satisfaction and corruption control. On average, when other variables are held at their observed values, a one-level increase in democratic satisfaction is associated with a small but significant overall increase of 4.5% in the probability of trusting the military a lot ("Quite a lot" or "A great deal of trust"). This rise is primarily driven by a decrease in the "None at all" and "Not very much" trust categories. All four probability changes are statistically significant at the two-tailed $p < .05$ level. A similar pattern of probability shifts is observed for the effects of corruption control ($p < .05$, two-tailed).

Among the sociodemographic control variables, three demonstrated statistically significant AMEs: gender, age, and education. On average, men are 6.5% more likely than women to express a high level of trust in the military ($p < .01$, two-tailed). Additionally, a 16.3-year increase in age corresponds to a 3.5% rise in the probability of selecting the "Quite a lot" of trust category, along with a 1.7% reduction in the likelihood of choosing the "None at all" level (both significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed). Lastly, a one-level increase in education is associated with a 1.4% decrease in the probability of selecting the "A great deal of trust" category, while the probability of choosing the "Quite a lot" category increases by 1.8% (both significant at $p < .01$, two-tailed).

Regarding the political control variable, Pan-Green citizens tend to be less likely to trust the military compared to other groups. On average, Pan-Green citizens are 7.3% less likely than Independents to express a positive view of the military ($p < .05$, two-tailed). Additionally, Pan-Green citizens are, on average, 8.6% less likely than Pan-Blue citizens to express positive sentiments toward the military ($p < .01$, two-tailed). These results indicate that political alignment significantly influences citizens' trust in military institutions, with Pan-Green and Pan-Blue identifiers showing varying degrees of skepticism compared to Independents.

To better visualize the impact of government trust on public faith in the military, we plot the predicted and cumulative probabilities of the four military trust categories on the y-axis against a specific range of government trust values. To minimize the effect of extreme outliers, we focus on the range of government trust from the 5th percentile to the 95th percentile, as shown in Figure 1. In Panel A, which displays predicted probabilities, the line representing "A great deal of trust" consistently rises with increasing government trust values. Conversely, the lines for "None at all" and "Not very much" categories steadily decline across the entire range. Panel B, which shows cumulative probabilities, reveals that the gains in "A great deal of trust" come from losses in the "None at all" and "Not

very much" categories, indicating a shift toward greater trust in the military as government trust increases.
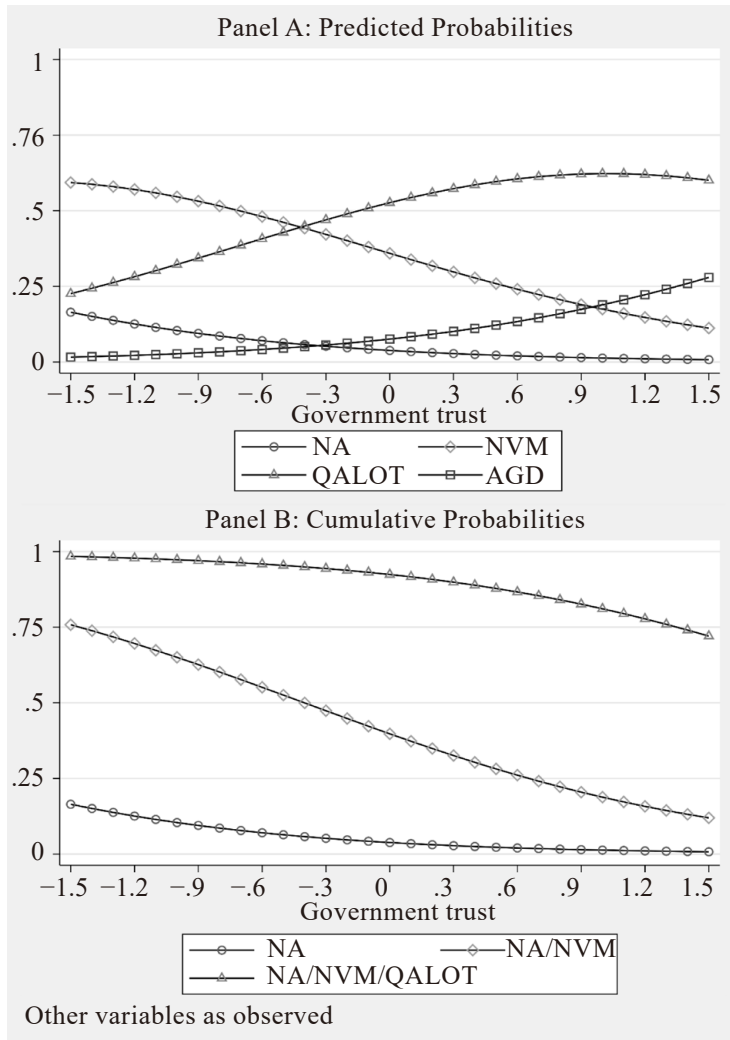

Figure 1. Plot of Predicted and Cumulative Probabilities of Military Trust on Government Trust in the Partial Proportional Odds Model

Data Source: Wave 6 of the Asian Barometer project's Taiwan survey, 2022.

Note:　N/A = None at all, NVM = Not very much, QALOT = Quite a lot of trust, AGD = A great deal of trust.

An analysis of the effectiveness of institutional and cultural explanations for political trust in the military reveals substantial support for institutional explanations related to Hypotheses 1 to 3. However, cultural explanations, including civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and hierarchism, show no statistical significance, indicating no support for these factors in influencing political trust. This suggests that the evaluative approach to political trust is more robust in explaining the sources of trust in the military compared to cultural explanations. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Choi and Woo (2016) and Wong et al. (2011), which also highlighted the stronger explanatory power of institutional factors over cultural ones in determining political trust.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to investigate the factors influencing trust in the Taiwanese military. The statistical findings strongly support institutional interpretations of political trust within Taiwan. Among the institutional elements, trust in the government and individual perceptions of public safety and the China threat are closely tied to public confidence in the military. Additionally, democratic satisfaction and corruption control, while somewhat less pronounced, still significantly impact the formation of trust in the armed forces.

The effect of these factors operates through three primary mechanisms. First, the assurance of domestic public safety and national security, heavily dependent on the national armed forces' ability to deter threats from China, enhances citizens' trust in the military. Second, the effective performance of the central government demonstrates to the Taiwanese populace that the government works for their benefit, fostering output-oriented legitimacy. This political support, in turn, bolsters public confidence in the military, an integral part of the governmental framework. Third, the efficient functioning of the democratic system, which addresses citizens' requests and processes their opinions fairly and

impartially according to constitutional rules, builds input-oriented legitimacy. This inclusive approach increases citizens' faith in the system, extending to specific political institutions such as the military. These mechanisms underscore the pivotal role of institutional factors in shaping public trust in the military, highlighting the importance of both output-oriented and input-oriented legitimacy within the framework of political trust.

Based on these findings, several policy initiatives can promote trust in the Taiwanese military. Regarding public safety measures, the government can strengthen national security infrastructure by modernizing military capabilities, improving defense readiness, and conducting regular public drills and awareness programs to reassure citizens. In terms of government performance, increasing operational transparency and demonstrating effective governance are crucial. This can be achieved through regular performance reports, enhanced accountability measures, and efficient public service delivery systems. To combat corruption, strict anti-corruption policies should be established, along with independent watchdog bodies to ensure rigorous enforcement. Improving communication and public engagement involves establishing better channels between the military and the public, including regular updates, open days, community engagement programs, and discussions on national security issues. By implementing these policy measures, the government can address key factors identified in the research, thereby enhancing public trust in the military and ensuring national stability and security.

The levels of public trust in the Taiwanese military from 2001 to 2022 have shown a trend of initially high confidence roughly during the presidential term of Chen Shui-bian, followed by a decline during Ma Ying-jeou's term, and then a resurgence to higher confidence levels during Tsai Ing-wen's term. This trajectory aligns with Desch's structural theory, which posits that military adherence to civilian mandates depends on the interplay of external and internal threats facing a nation. Trust levels in the military fluctuate in response to the severity

of external threats. When threats from China intensify, particularly since August
2022, building and maintaining public faith in the Taiwanese military becomes
indispensable for national security.

According to the conclusions of this research, there are three primary ave-
nues for future exploration. Firstly, it is crucial to investigate additional potential
causes of military trust. The six primary drivers of public confidence in the mili-
tary highlighted by Feaver (2023) can be categorized by impact duration: long-
term factors like Patriotism (the enduring impact of national pride associated
with being a nation at war) and Professional Ethics (where the military maintains
high ethical standards), and short-term effects like Performance (public assess-
ment of military operations), Party influence, Personal Contact with the military,
and Public Pressure. Our theoretical framework focuses on the institutional ap-
proach, which aligns with short-term factors like Performance, while also con-
sidering the cultural approach, which corresponds to long-term factors, thereby
establishing the societal context for attitudes toward the military. Factors such as
Party influence, Personal Contact with the military, and Public Pressure require
further investigation. It is essential to design comprehensive surveys to gather
detailed public opinion on various aspects of the military, including these fac-
tors, perceived effectiveness, and accountability. Analyzing this data can provide
deeper insights into public sentiment toward the military.

Secondly, two additional factors that may alter public trust in the military
are media propaganda and historical context. Regarding media strategy, it is im-
portant to analyze the role of both traditional and social media in shaping public
perceptions of the military. This analysis could involve studying the effects of
media narratives, misinformation, and propaganda on trust. Grasping how dif-
ferent types of media affect public opinion can provide insights into the mecha-
nisms through which trust is built or eroded.

Concerning historical context, examining the influence of historical events,
such as past military actions, wars, or conflicts, on current levels of trust could

offer valuable insights. Historical context can have a long-lasting impact on public sentiment, and analyzing these factors can help explain persistent attitudes toward the military. These additional factors warrant thorough investigation to fully understand their impact on public trust in the military.

Finally, expanding the scope of research to other Asian countries facing similar threats from China can provide a comparative perspective. Understanding how different political, cultural, and institutional contexts influence public trust in the military can help identify universal drivers of military trust and tailor strategies accordingly.

These steps will deepen our knowledge of the dynamics of military trust and support the development of more effective policies to bolster public confidence in military institutions.

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Appendix

To view this paper's appendix, please visit *Journal of Electoral Studies* official website after the current issue is published.[7]

Appendix Table A1: Variables, measurement and descriptive statistics.

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[7] *Journal of Electoral Studies* official website: https://jestw.nccu.edu.tw/

評估公共安全和台灣軍隊信任度：
2022年中國軍演後之分析

陳澤鑫[*]

《本文摘要》

　　公共安全依賴於穩健的法治、高效的治理與精實的國防力量。若缺乏這些要素，社會信任將逐漸瓦解，進而影響國家經濟發展。儘管軍隊在維護國家安全中扮演關鍵角色，針對軍隊政治信任的學術研究在臺灣這樣的民主國家卻相對有限。臺灣面臨來自中國的特殊安全挑戰，因此，民眾對軍隊的信任成爲威懾外部威脅與維繫國內穩定的重要基石。2022年中國軍事演習進一步加劇兩岸緊張情勢，突顯出強化民眾信任以支持國防政策及確保文人對軍隊的有效監督之必要性。本文探討在此情勢下影響臺灣民眾對軍隊信任的相關因素。統計結果顯示，公共安全感受、中國威脅、政府信任及民主治理品質是影響信任程度的四大核心因素。理解這些因素的交互作用，對於制定促進國家安全並提升民眾對軍隊信心的政策具有關鍵意義。

關鍵詞：軍民關係、民主治理、部分比例勝敗比模型、政治信任、公共安全

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