

Study Guide for 2023 Policy Debate

Resolved: That Taiwan's compulsory military training should include both men and women.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has stirred debate in Taiwan over the readiness for a potential attack by China. Although Taiwan has its own constitution, democratic elections, and armed forces, China has long seen Taiwan as a breakaway province to be annexed by force if necessary. In 2022, China heightened the tensions by repeatedly dispatching warplanes into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ), sending naval vessels to cross the median line of the Taiwan Strait, and firing ballistic missiles into waters around Taiwan. Global media calls Taiwan "the most dangerous place on Earth" and suggests that China's willful attempts to change the status quo could be destabilizing, and very dangerous not only for Taiwan, but also for the Indo-Pacific region and the whole world.

According to Taiwan's "Act of Military Service System" (兵役法), only male citizens are obligated to undergo a four-month military training. Over the years, people have been debating whether Taiwan should amend the policy by including both men and women in the compulsory military training. Some believe that modern warfare requires far broader set of skills other than physicality, and regard this policy as a move towards true equality and fairness. Others, however, are worried about the implementation challenges and ramifications, such as a potential increase in rates of sexual harassment or discrimination during the draft. Will drafting women make Taiwan's military more combat ready and/or more equal? Do the benefits outweigh its costs? This debate offers an opportunity to reason through this controversial but pressing issue.

As this is a policy debate, both the affirmative and the negative should address a comprehensive policy involved or conceived for this proposition. Both sides should also address the magnitude, probability and/or time frame of the benefit/cost argued in each other's case with reasoning and concrete support. Here is a word of caution: This debate tournament, aligning with "traditional" policy debate, prioritizes use of logic and evidence, as well as arguments from the pragmatic perspective (i.e., the benefit-and-cost analysis of the policy itself), instead of something purely philosophical or only based on critical theories. Thus, a case containing only arguments that challenge a certain mindset or assumption made by the opposing team, often from the perspective of a critical theory (called a kritik) is strongly discouraged. The negative counterplan, if the negative decides to run one, has to be non-topical (meaning the counterplan cannot affirm the proposition) and non-conditional (meaning the negative cannot ditch their counterplan during the debate), and preferably philosophically or practically incompatible with the affirmative plan to prevent the affirmative from running a permutation argument (i.e., arguing the affirmative plan and the counterplan can be implemented at the same time).

Following is a list of references meant to serve as groundwork for debaters, which means it is by no means comprehensive or flawless. Many of them also contain information or arguments that may not be directly relevant and thus warrant closer examination. Debaters are encouraged to do more research when working on their cases.

References:

"Act of Military Service System" (兵役法)

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<https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/08/vol-7-issue-16/>

It is time for women to do military service
<https://www.nzz.ch/english/it-is-time-for-women-to-do-mandatory-military-service-ld.1673123>

Don't conscript Taiwanese women without addressing patriarchy
<https://international.thenewslens.com/article/101036>

No to female conscription
<https://www.womenalliance.org/no-to-female-conscription/>

Drafting women into the army the Norwegian way
<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/drafting-women-into-the-army-the-norwegian-way/47659994>

The changing contours of women in armed forces (India and Israel)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4110311>

Conscripting women: gender, soldiering, and military service in Sweden 1965–2018
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2019.1596542>

South Korea's military is shrinking and some say women must answer the call of duty
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/south-koreas-military-is-shrinkingsome-say-women-must-answer-the-call-of-duty-11622727598>

South Korea exempts women from the draft. Is that fair?
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/south-korea-exempts-women-from-the-draft-is-that-fair/2017/09/17/e333662e-9896-11e7-af6a-6555caaeb8dc_story.html

【投票】國防部拒絕了「女生也要當兵」的提案——這是性別平等的倒退嗎？
<https://buzzorange.com/ctiorange/2016/09/23/women-join-army/>

台灣媳婦的女兵日記·揭露以色列力抗強鄰備戰學
<https://www.gvm.com.tw/article/88355>