Winning over foreign domestic support for use of force: power of diplomatic and operational multilateralism

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Abstract

The United States uses two forms of multilateralism to increase levels of foreign public support for military action: *diplomatic* multilateralism and *operational* multilateralism. Diplomatic multilateralism is typically done by obtaining a United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing military action. The use of multinational forces, the so-called coalition of the willing and many flags program, is an example of operational multilateralism. While scholars have empirical evidence that diplomatic multilateralism generates foreign domestic support for the use of force, there is no equivalent study for operational multilateralism. We do not know *if* or *how much* the two types of multilateralism would differ in inducing foreign domestic support for military action. This article, by using Japan as a field of survey experiment, answers these questions.

1 Introduction

Whenever the United States of America embarks upon a major overseas military action, it has made extensive efforts to cultivate foreign public support for this use of force.[1] These efforts are known as 'public diplomacy' and seek to rationalize the use of force in the eyes of the general public. Among the variety of rationalization strategies with regard to military actions abroad, two key approaches have often been adopted to generate foreign public support for American military action. One is multilateral diplomacy through the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) and the other is the use of multinational forces including a large number of coalition partners.[2] Here in this article, we use the term 'diplomatic multilateralism' for the former style of multilateral approaches and 'operational multilateralism' for the latter.[3] It is commonly accepted that the passing of an UNSC resolution to authorize the use of force and the inclusion of a large number of coalition participants (even on a tokenistic level) foster higher levels of international support for US military actions.

However, there has been surprisingly little research on the degree to which multilateral diplomacy and multinational coalitions increase levels of foreign public support. In particular, scholars tend to focus on diplomatic multilateralism and pay less attention to operational multilateralism. Nevertheless, as we will show later in this article, American political pundits and bureaucrats tend to believe in the power of coalitions in cultivating foreign public support for their use of force abroad. Unfortunately, we do not know the degree to which levels of public support for military intervention are affected by diplomatic multilateralism as compared with operational multilateralism.

In this article, we offer a unique experimental study on the power of the two distinctive forms of multilateralism and how they generate international support for American use of force. By conducting a survey experiment in Japan with >2,250 respondents, we find that having a greater number of

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1   In this article, we use the terms 'foreign audience', 'foreign domestic audience', and 'foreign publics' interchangeably.

2   The two different aspects of multilateralism can be taken simultaneously. Tago (2005) reports dataset on American multilateralism in its use of force. Twenty-eight cases are such a simultaneous multilateral use of force out of total 212 cases from 1948 to 1998.

3   Diplomatic multilateralism is also called as 'qualitative multilateralism'. Also, operational multilateralism is often expressed as 'quantitative multilateralism' (Ruggie 1992).

coalition members *does not* substantially increase levels of international support; only the UNSC's authorizing resolution could cultivate foreign support for the American use of force. Moreover, the study finds that the size of the coalition could not change the level of support for Japanese coalition participation along with US troops; that is, while the size of the coalition becomes larger, the general public would not necessarily favor sending its national armed forces to assist in an American military mission. The never-tested assertion on the limited power of coalition-building to generate positive foreign public attitudes toward use of force is strongly supported by this study.

The study is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on the two types of multilateralism and foreign domestic support for American use of force. Section 3 discusses the hypotheses. In Section 4, we explain why we use the survey experiment for testing the hypotheses and why Japan was selected as the field of the experiment. It is then followed by the introduction of two experimental scenarios. Section 6 explains the additional research design issues, and Section 7 presents and discusses the results of the statistical analysis. The final section concludes the study.

2 Literature review

According to Goldsmith and Horiuchi (2012), American 'soft power' leads to higher levels of support for US military action abroad. The probability of sending armed forces to Iraq increased from 0.2 to 64% when 'opinion about US foreign policy' changed from −1 to +1 SD from the mean. The greater the number of people in a foreign country that favors American foreign policy in general, the more likely they will support its military actions. In a similar vein, Kahin (1986: 333), a well-known historian of the Vietnam War, explains that the real reason why the UK government failed to supply even the small token size of forces for the Vietnam War was the unpopularity of America's policy among the British public, despite the considerable support it received from the media in the UK. For the United States, it was devastating that the UK could not help its coalition war in Indochina.

American policy-makers know that negative reactions among foreign nations would lead to difficulties in implementing policies and constraints for future decisions. They are, therefore, eager to use their resources to promote favorable foreign media coverage of American policies and try to

create a more positive reaction for its international actions, including the use of force. Entman (2008) describes this as 'mediated public diplomacy'.[4] This includes activation of pro-US frames to counter anti-US frames in foreign media by asking foreign political elites and journalists, who are usually supportive of American policies, to make favorable comments and reports on US action.

As an effort to increase positive attitudes toward its coercive international policy, the United States can seek to achieve favorable foreign public reaction by pursuing military action in a 'multilateral' style and frame its policy as an act of 'multilateralism'. First off, the US government could obtain approval (authorization) from international organizations, in particular from the UNSC. The literature on collective legitimization (Claude, 1966; Ku and Jacobson, 2002; Finnemore, 2003; Tago, 2005, 2007; Hurd, 2007) and information transmission of International Organizations (IOs) approval (Voeten, 2001, 2005; Thompson, 2006, 2009; Fang, 2008; Chapman and Wolford, 2010; Chapman, 2011; Grieco et al., 2011; Tago and Ikeda, 2014) extensively covers the subject.

Collective legitimization theorists place their emphasis on the power of international norms and law. Since the UN Charter defines the UNSC to be solely responsible for authorizing the use of force, the foreign public recognizes its legitimacy and thus they will be less critical to an authorized military action. If the authorization fails, the foreign audiences would be more critical, because it would lack legitimacy under international law.

Scholars who believe in the power of information transmission through the IOs approval claim that neutral organizations, such as the UNSC, could send the information to the foreign domestic audience that the approved use of force is based upon good intentions and has a prospect of a desirable outcome for international society as a whole. Foreign domestic audiences are more likely to be critical of American military actions if they consider that the actions would bring negative consequences to the rest of the world and/or if the United States' intension is overly aggressive. The UNSC's involvement and authorization would thus ease the foreign domestic concerns and generate more support for the American use of

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4 This is defined as international informational, cultural relations, and broadcasting activities (Gregory 2008: 275). For more on public diplomacy, see Gregory (2008) and Sheafer and Shenhav (2009).

force, or at least, the resolution would prevent the increase of critical responses to military action.

Empirical evidence to support these arguments is provided by Thompson (2009: 190). According to his cross-national polling data on support for the Iraq War, with varying conditions of UN approval, foreign domestic audiences preferentially support UN-authorized use of force compared with non-authorized use of force. For European domestic audiences, on average, there is a 27% or greater difference in support for the use of force, with and without UN approval. A similar result is evident in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by much smaller percentage differences in Africa and the Americas.

By contrast, while it is a minority view among the scholars, having many-flags in the operation is believed to increase international public support or at least to prevent increasing levels of criticism for American action among foreign people. For instance, in the Vietnam War, the so-called Third Country Support/Many Flags Program was used to increase public support for the military action by the United States (Kahin, 1986: 332–33). According to Kahin, 'the Many Flags Program was attractive to the administration for two reasons. It had the potential of significantly reducing the US military burden, and it also had the political advantage – in dealing with American as well as global audiences – of providing visible proof that the increased military intervention was sanctioned by, and enjoyed the tangible support of, some of Washington's allies' (332).

From the reading of archival material, we can say that the latter 'political advantage' was a very important motive for policy-makers in pursuing the Many Flags Program. For instance, a telegraph from the American Embassy in Saigon says 'where appropriate, [American Ambassador in South Vietnam] believe it should be explained quite frankly that token assistance is better than none at all and that what we are seeking is gesture of political solidarity and of free-world support for Vietnam'.[5]

More than 40 years later, the US administration during the Iraq War (2003) adopted the 'Many Flags Program' as an earlier administration had during the Vietnam War (Daalder 2003). The State Department and the White House issued press releases in a number of countries that were part

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5   'Incoming Telegram from American Embassy of Saigon to the Department of State, November 16, 1964, #107,' NSF Country File, Vietnam, Box 10, LBJ Library.

of the 'coalition of the willing'. President Bush emphasized that at the onset of the war, >35 states were giving crucial support for the operation. Other key officials like Defense Secretary Rumsfeld emphasized that the coalition against Iraq was large and growing, and thus the United States was not embarking on a unilateral action.

Moreover, on 20 March 2003, Ari Fleischer, the White House Press Secretary, discussed the coalition against Iraq in the following terms:[6]

> The President would like to thank the growing number of nations that have joined in the coalition of the willing to disarm Saddam Hussein. As of today, there are more than 35 countries currently committed to the coalition, and that number is growing. Contributions from nations include direct military participation; logistical, intelligence and political support; specialized chemical and biological response teams; over-flight rights; and humanitarian and other aid.

> Nations include – and this is just a partial list – Australia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom. Turkey, of course, today in their parliament, voted to grant over-flight rights to the United States and to the coalition.

The New York Times – based on resources from the Council on Foreign Relations – explains that the United States needed the coalition of the willing since it could leave the impression that 'its drive to topple Saddam Hussein has broad international support'. Having allies is meant to undercut widespread criticism that the United States is acting unilaterally.[7] Here, the arguments suggest that the size of the coalition is of key importance for showing the solidarity of the allies and friendly nations. A coalition of two or three would be too small to indicate the political solidarity of nations; there must be at least twenty or more states in a coalition to raise levels of foreign support – indeed, that is probably why Ari Fleischer mentioned the number of coalition member states and stated that the number is growing.

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6   George W. Bush Presidential Library's Archival Record. http://georgewbush-whitehouse. archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030320-7.html. (22 August 2012, date last accessed)

7   'Q&A: What is the 'Coalition of the Willing?',' *New York Times*. 28 March 2003.

As such, both scholars and pundits have argued that diplomatic and operational multilateralism could create a better impression of the use of force among foreign domestic audiences and increase levels of support for American military action. However, while we do have empirical evidence for diplomatic multilateralism in bringing foreign public support, we do not know whether operational multilateralism could really do the same as many policy-makers expect. Also, if both of the multilateral approaches affect the perceptions of foreign audiences, then the similarities and differences of the effects would be of theoretical interest. If the effects are not so different, the United States could choose to bypass UN authorization in order to boost levels of international support for its use of force – forming a multinational force would be sufficient. Alternatively, if the effects are different and the UNSC authorization boosts foreign support more significantly, this means that it would be a mistake for the United States to bypass multilateral diplomacy.

3 Multilateralism and foreign support: hypotheses

Before explaining the hypotheses, we would like to briefly mention how many US military actions were conducted in a 'multilateral' manner after World War II. This information can be found in the dataset provided by Tago (2005), which covers 212 cases of American use of force from 1948 to 1998. Each incident was coded if the use of force was conducted in a multilateral way, from a procedural and operational perspective; accordingly, 45 were classified as multilateral. Among those 45 cases, 28 of them had formal authorization/support from international organizations including the UNSC and involved multinational forces, and the other 16 cases were without authorization but featured multinational forces. These data suggest that two kinds of multilateralism could be simultaneously chosen in reality. Logically, the use of force could be (i) both diplomatic (i.e. authorized) and operational (i.e. done by coalition forces) multilateralism, (ii) only diplomatic multilateralism, (iii) only operational multilateralism, and (iv) unilateralism in both aspects.[8] Since these four categories are

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8   Example can be found in Tago (2005) for (i) the First Gulf War (1990–1991) provides evidence of diplomatic and operational multilateralism, (ii) the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 is a case of exclusive diplomatic multilateralism, (iii) only operational multilateralism is seen in the Second Gulf War in 2003, and (iv) unilateralism is demonstrated in the US aerial attack against Libya in the 1986 (see Tago 2005: 599–603).

Table 1 Key features of hypotheses

	H1	H2	H3
Relations between diplomatic and operational multilateralism	Diplomacy and operation are substitutive	Diplomacy matters more	Operation matters more
Key mechanism for persuading foreign domestic audiences	Legitimacy, information transmission, political solidarity	Legitimacy, information transmission	Political solidarity
Predicted effects to foreign domestic audiences	Any types of multilateralism increases levels of support more than unilateralism	Diplomatic multilateralism increases levels of support more than other options	Operational multilateralism increases levels of support more than other options

commonly used in literature (e.g. Finnemore 2003; Kreps 2011), we follow this distinction to generate the manipulations in the proceeding sections.

In hypothesizing the power of multilateralism in affecting the foreign domestic support, we can think of the following possibilities (see Table 1). First, multilateralism as diplomacy and as operation could be substitutive and generate a highly similar outcome *either in separate or in combination*. If this is the case, no matter which type of multilateralism is utilized, as long as the use of force is multilateral, the level of foreign domestic support will be increased. Higher public support would be observed for any type of multilateral American use of force than a unilateral one. This is only possible when foreign publics perceive political solidarity by the coalition and UNSC authorization as somehow *interchangeable* and either one of them is enough to know that military action is inevitable and done for the benefit for international society.

H1: Any type of multilateralism leads to a higher level of foreign domestic support for the use of force than unilateralism.[9]

Researchers who emphasize the power of international authorization by the UN would predict that the effect of diplomatic multilateralism

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9   This could be stated as $\{E(Y|X1 = 1) - E(Y|X1 = 0)\} > 0$ where we define $X1 = 1$ if UNSC authorization is obtained; $X1 = 0$ otherwise. And $\{E(Y|X2 = 1) - E(Y|X2 = 0)\} > 0$ when we define $X2 = 1$ if coalition is formed; $X2 = 0$ otherwise. We deeply appreciate one of the referees' suggestions to clarify our hypotheses.

overwhelms that of operational multilateralism. The UN Charter identifies the Security Council as the sole, supreme organization that can make an exception to its use of force prohibition rule in Article 2, unless the use of force was started as an act of self-defense. The number of countries that are in support of the United States in an actual military operation does not really affect the legal status of the military action. If the perceptions of foreign domestic audiences are contingent on international legal orientation, only procedurally multilateral cases would be highly supported by the foreign public since UNSC authorization is the only way to make an exception to the norm of use of force prohibition.

H2: Diplomatic multilateralism leads to a higher level of foreign domestic support for the use of force than operational multilateralism.[10]

By contrast, it could be possible that UNSC authorization is of limited significance to foreign domestic publics. In such a situation, a coalition with a certain number of partner states may bring more support than an UNSC resolution. This would be a likely case if the people have limited confidence in the UN and when they do not care about international law. Political solidarity by showing the variety of flags, i.e. a greater number of states in military operation along with the United States, seems intuitively plausible and would be appealing to the general public. People would not know about the international norm prohibiting the use of force, but they would recognize whether many states endorse the United States or not. The more states that are committing their troops, the more a foreign domestic audience thinks it is worth supporting.

H3: Operational multilateralism leads to a higher level of foreign domestic support for the use of force than diplomatic multilateralism.[11]

4 Why do we use a survey experiment and why Japan?

A survey experiment is the ideal method for this article because our interest lays in the reactions of individuals in a foreign domestic society to

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10   This could be stated as $\{E(Y|X1 = 1) - E(Y|X1 = 0)\} > \{E(Y|X2 = 1) - E(Y|X2 = 0)\}$.

11   This could be stated as $\{E(Y|X1 = 1) - E(Y|X1 = 0)\} < \{E(Y|X2 = 1) - E(Y|X2 = 0)\}$.

American military actions. The method enables us to observe each individual's responses to hypothetical US use of force and whether responses significantly vary as a function of randomly assigned stimuli of the UNSC authorization and/or coalition partners' size. We recognize that the weakness of the method is that the researcher cannot guarantee the respondents will receive the stimuli (i.e. manipulation) information properly; however, it has the advantage of yielding unbiased estimates of causal effects compared with typical observational studies because the randomization of stimuli makes the treatment and control groups equal on average in terms of both observed and unobserved characteristics.

To conduct the survey experiment in multiple states would be ideal, but budgetary constraints prevented us from doing so. We selected Japan for the following reasons. First, we believed our experiment should be conducted in a state where the people tend to think of the use of force as egregious, undesirable, and unusually unpleasant for managing foreign relations. We preferred a low baseline approval rate of military actions as a means to resolve international issues among the population, since a change in perception and increased support and approval would be more easily observed with the adoption of multilateralism. Japan has its peace constitution prohibiting war and the use of force. We thus assumed that Japanese people are more reluctant to use armed forces in international relations.

Second, it is better to conduct a survey experiment in a state where confidence in the UN has been stable over time. If the level of confidence had fluctuated, the experiment may be affected by such changes in the public's perception to the organization. Based on data from the World Values Survey (1995–2006), Japan has maintained a very stable confidence in the UN (Norris, 2009: 29–30). It has a level of confidence of ∼60%.

5 Scenarios

Two different scenarios were used to compare the effects of contextual information on the baseline support rate.[12] They were different in terms of the nature of interest at stake. Also, while it is implicitly suggested in the scenarios, the type of military forces used to attain the object is different:

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12   Full English and Japanese texts of experiment scenarios and related questions, along with the replication dataset and STATA codes, can be downloaded from [http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~tago/dataset.html].

one with ground troops and the other with the navy. By conducting an experiment using two scenarios, we can see how public support would be different depending on the military situation – this was included in our regression analysis and allowed us to check whether the size of support change caused by multilateralism stimuli was smaller than one caused by a difference in contextual conditions.

Scenario 1 is a military intervention involving a regime change in state 'A' in the Middle East. The authoritarian regime in Country A faces a popular movement demanding democratization. The government of Country A orders the armed forces to kill the people involved with this movement, resulting in mass political killing in the country. Because Country A is a major oil producer, the price of crude oil rapidly increases after the media reports the mass killing and flood of refugees leaving the country. The incident destabilizes the security of the entire region. The United States asks the UNSC to adopt a resolution that authorizes the member states to take all necessary measures to stop the mass killing and recover regional peace and security.

Scenario 2, by contrast, concerns military intervention against acts of piracy. Country A in the Middle East is a failed state and is unable to police piracy acts in the nearby sea called the Gulf of Country B. Commercial tankers are increasingly affected by piracy, and the 'safe haven' for the pirates in Country 'A' is now an international concern. The United States asks the UNSC to adopt a resolution that authorizes the member states to take all necessary measures to stop the acts of piracy and restore regional peace and security.

For both scenarios, the UNSC makes a decision regarding the proposed draft resolution made by the United States. There are four different manipulations on multilateralism: (i) *diplomatic and operational multilateralism*, (ii) *only diplomatic multilateralism* (i.e. operationally it was unilaterally conducted), (iii) *only operational multilateralism* (i.e. diplomatically it was unilaterally conducted), and (iv) *unilateral* in both aspects. These are listed in Table 2 and formed our key independent variable, having been randomly assigned to each respondent. For the purposes of this particular study, the authorizing resolution would be adopted by consensus (i.e. diplomatic multilateralism) or it would fail due to America's decision to bypass the Council's voting procedure (i.e. diplomatic unilateralism). Also, operational multilateralism was distinguished by the number of coalition partners:

Table 2 Four manipulations

	The UNSC	The coalition partners were
Manipulation 1		
Diplomatic and operational multilateralism stimulus	Authorized use of force	20 states
Manipulation 2		
Only diplomatic multilateralism stimulus	Authorized use of force	3 states
Manipulation 3		
Only operational multilateralism stimulus	Could not authorize	20 states
Manipulation 4		
Unilateralism stimulus (baseline)	Could not authorize	3 states

20 (successful, strong solidarity coalition, i.e. operational multilateralism) and 3 (isolated, failed coalition, i.e. operational unilateralism).[13]

In these scenarios, regardless of successfully obtaining a resolution from the UNSC or acquiring the support of many states, the US government, with overwhelming support from its domestic audience, has started multi-national military operations against the country.

6 Design of survey experiment

We conducted survey experiments from 6 to 10 July 2012 through Nikkei Research, Inc. (http://www.nikkei-r.co.jp/english/). The survey covered 2,269 individuals between the ages of 20 and 69. Table 3 (and Figures A to

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13 Some may say that three countries in a coalition constitute a multinational force and are therefore not a purely unilateral operation. While we concur that such a claim is logical, we think there is no problem to use three states in a coalition as an operational unilateralism in this experiment, mainly because a purely unilateral (i.e. United States alone) use of force is an infrequent and highly unusual situation – as Tago (2005) shows with his dataset. After the end of Cold War, the United States has been conducting any type of major military action abroad with its good allies and friendly states and purely unilateral use of force (in operation) is becoming rare – in other words, unrealistic. Popular coalitional military actions like the First Gulf War were conducted by >20 countries in the role of 'partner states'. By contrast, an unpopular coalition, which is often categorized as an act of American unilateralism, was formed at the onset of the Second Gulf War with two coalition partner states in operation: UK and Australia. We believe that the differences between 20 and 3 are quite large enough in terms of sending information to the foreign general public as to the degree of political solidarity.

Table 3 Sample size and mean value of key variables

	Manipulations				Chi-square	*P*-value
	1	2	3	4		
Sample size						
Gender Balance	0.58	0.52	0.53	0.54	4.60	0.20
Age	46.92	46.41	46.77	47.37	151.94	0.37
Income level	2.60	2.63	2.60	2.58	6.18	0.91
College education	0.60	0.54	0.56	0.53	7.18	0.07
Self-claimed political position (0 liberal; 10 conservative)	5.55	5.51	5.47	5.50	32.71	0.34
Attention to international relations (0 always; 4 never pay attention)	2.60	2.62	2.66	2.58	4.75	0.86
Feeling to using armed forces (0 accept; 4 do not accept)	2.04	2.06	2.02	2.06	7.75	0.56

G in *Supplementary material*) shows the sample size, mean age, gender balance, income level, education level, and the mean scores for three different questions regarding: (i) political position, (ii) level of attention to international relations, and (iii) level of acceptance on using force in international relations, for the four manipulations.[14] The table and figures clearly show that the random assignment of the four manipulations was implemented successfully and that there is therefore no systematic difference among the four sample groups in terms of basic attribution and key political positions and attitudes.

Although Nikkei Research, Inc. has a nationwide pool of respondents, our study inevitably suffers from some sampling biases since it is based on an internet survey. That is, individuals in the sample had to have internet access and voluntarily preregistered with the survey firm. We thus cannot and do not claim that the results of this experiment can be extended to the whole Japanese population. However, by carefully observing the differences among people with randomly assigned stimuli, we can claim that

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14 The Web Appendix can be reached at http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~tago/dataset.html. We confirm that statistically significant differences *do not* exist among the *randomly-assigned* four manipulated sample groups in terms of gender, age, income level, education level, the self-claimed political positioning, the level of attention to international relations, and the level of support for using force in international relations (questions asked before the experiment).

our test provides valuable information about how different stimuli on multilateralism can affect support for a military action.

To measure the level of foreign domestic support for use of force in our survey, two questions were prepared. First, subjects were asked whether they approved of the use of force initiated by the United States. Possible choices were as follows: (i) approve, (ii) somewhat approve, (iii) somewhat disapprove, (iv) disapprove, and (v) do not know. Second, subjects were asked whether she/he approved of the material support of sending the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to a military coalition led by the United States. Again the same five choices were given. These were used in our analysis as dependent variables. The answers to these two questions could be highly correlated, but some may answer quite differently. In particular, a person who tends to think in line with the free-rider argument may answer yes to the first and say no to the second (Olson, 1965). Indeed, it would be more difficult to answer yes for the second question, and thus we may be able to see the effects of multilateral support inducement significantly. In any case, we used these two different qualities of dependent variables for hypotheses testing. In *Supplementary material*, we report descriptive statistics.

7 Results

Tables 4 and 5 show that the multilateralism stimuli increase the foreign domestic support for both American use of force and coalition participation by Japanese troops. People were clearly less approving of Japanese

Table 4 Mean support for US use of force

	Mean	SD
Diplomatic multilateralism		
Without diplomatic multilateralism stimulus (X1 = 0)	2.24	0.90
With diplomatic multilateralism stimulus (X1 = 1)	2.58	0.88
Difference ([X1 = 1] − [X1 = 0]) = 0.34; *t* = 8.43		
Operational multilateralism		
Without operational multilateralism stimulus (X2 = 0)	2.36	0.91
With operational multilateralism stimulus (X2 = 1)	2.45	0.89
Difference ([X2 = 1] − [X2 = 0]) = 0.09; *t* = 2.26		

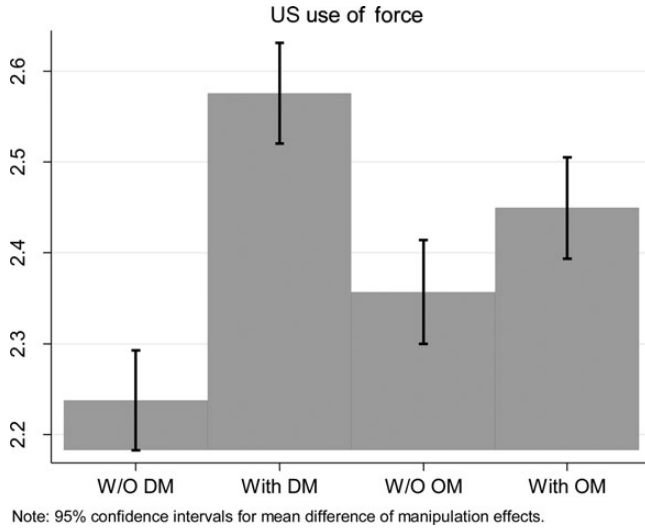**Table 5** Mean support for coalition participation by JSDF

	Mean	SD
Diplomatic multilateralism		
Without diplomatic multilateralism stimulus (X1 = 0)	2.12	0.97
With diplomatic multilateralism stimulus (X1 = 1)	2.38	0.97
Difference ([X1 = 1] − [X1 = 0]) = 0.26; t = 6.00		
Operational multilateralism		
Without operational multilateralism stimulus (X2 = 0)	2.17	0.99
With operational multilateralism stimulus (X2 = 1)	2.32	0.97
Difference ([X2 = 1] − [X2 = 0]) = 0.15; t = 3.40		

coalition participation (Table 5) when compared with support for American use of force (Table 4). There is a difference of 0.16 in the mean support rate; this 0.16 can be interpreted as a proof of the free-rider preference among Japanese respondents in this experiment.

Unpaired, unequal t-test confirms that the mean differences are statistically significant and some important discrepancies exist between the support rate for American use of force and for sending Japanese Self-Defense Forces as a coalition member of the US-led military coalition. Figures 1 and 2 visualize the effects of diplomatic and operational multilateralism manipulations, respectively, and show that H1 is supported.[15]

As to H2 and H3, Figure 3 shows that the statistical difference of the diplomatic and operational multilateralism can be seen only in the support rate for American use of force. Diplomatic multilateralism generates 0.34 point increase in public support whereas operational one does so only by 0.09. Multilateral authorization from the UNSC does make a difference among Japanese public to support American military action itself (i.e. H2 is confirmed). By contrast, Figure 3 also suggests that we cannot conclude the same for the support rate for coalition participation by Japanese Self-Defense Forces in the Middle East. No meaningful difference exists between diplomatic and operational multilateralism in promoting positive view toward Japanese troops deployment. That is, while multilateral

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15   As it can be seen in the replication package, H1 is supported for the sub-sample of the respondents who read a counter piracy scenario as well as those who read a regime change one.
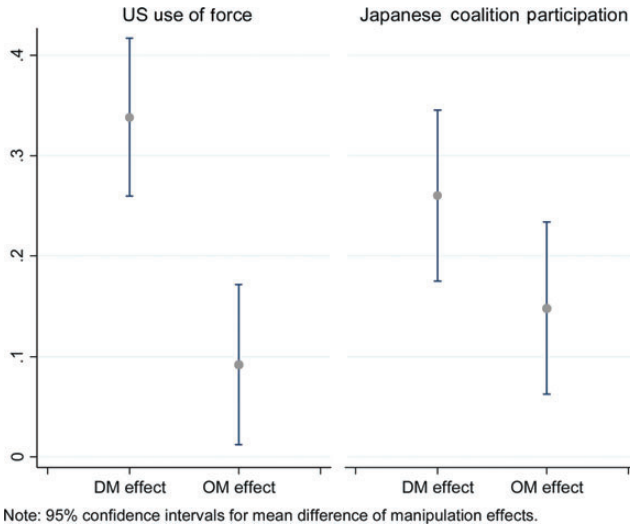
Note: 95% confidence intervals for mean difference of manipulation effects.

Figure 1 Diplomatic multilateralism (DM) and operational multilateralism (OM) effects on support for use of force.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for mean difference of manipulation effects.
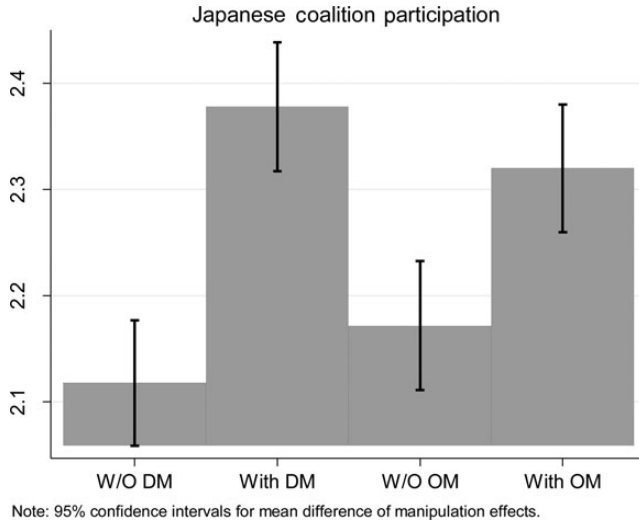
Figure 2 Diplomatic multilateralism (DM) and operational multilateralism (OM) effects on coalition participation.

authorization is crucial to increase public support for US use of force, it is not necessarily needed in order to increase public support for coalition participation by Japanese troops. It is sufficient to gather as many coalition partner countries to persuade Japanese audience to be relatively positive to making troops contribution to American-led multinational forces.
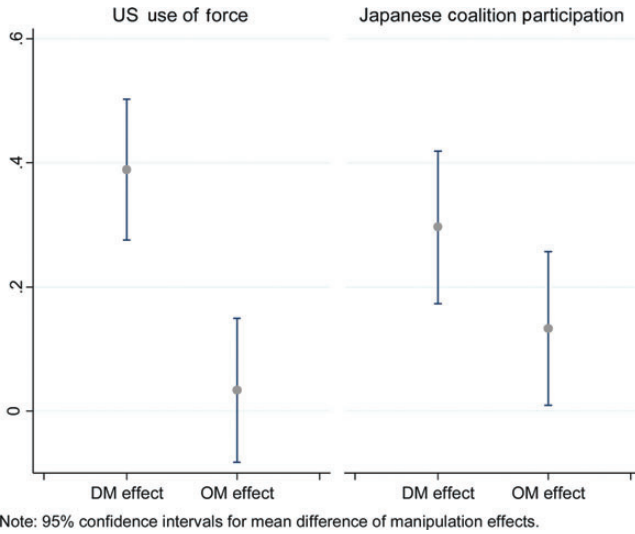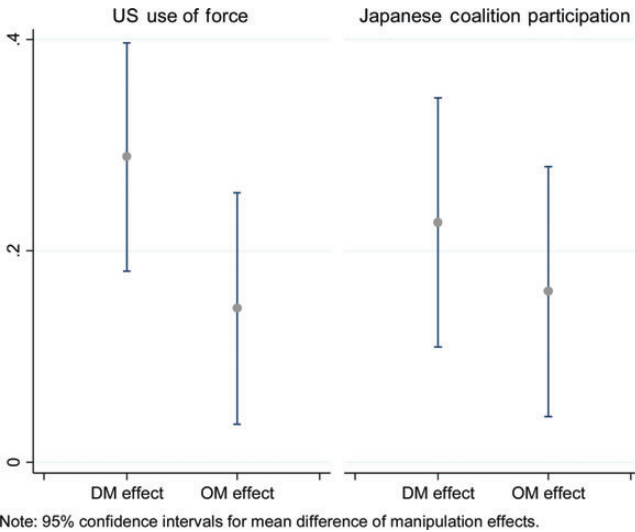
Figure 3 Difference between diplomatic multilateralism (DM) and operational multilateralism (OM) effects on support for use of force and coalition participation.

Before concluding the section, it must be noted that the finding may be conditional to a particular operation scenario. That is, depending on an operation scenario presented to the respondents, their reactions are considerably different. Figure 4 reports the same statistics as Figure 3, but it includes only the sample of the respondents who read a counter piracy scenario. Figure 5, by contrast, shows the same for the respondents who read a regime-change scenario. Those two figures suggest that, only in a counter piracy scenario, a statistically significant difference between diplomatic and operational multilateralism can be observed. While the H1 is confirmed throughout the different scenarios, H2 succeeds only in a counter piracy scenario and it fails in a regime-change one. We cannot easily provide a good theoretical explanation as to why diplomatic multilateralism does not function in a regime-change scenario as it does so in a counter piracy scenario. It could be possible that no matter how diplomatically supported, the respondents could have considered that a regime-change operation is too risky and comes with huge cost and that consideration prevented them from supporting the military action even with UN authorization.

The experiment as a whole implies that (while it is depended on the scenario of military operation) diplomatic multilateralism and operational multilateralism are *not* identical and interchangeable. There is an obvious

Figure 4 Difference between diplomatic multilateralism (DM) and operational multilateralism (OM) effects on support for use of force and coalition participation (counter piracy case).

Figure 5 Difference between diplomatic multilateralism (DM) and operational multilateralism (OM) effects on support for use of force and coalition participation (regime-change case).

advantage in diplomatic multilateralism in generating foreign public support for American use of force. However, this advantage could not be fully applied to public support for sending its own national troops as a

part of the US-led coalition. The experiment shows the mixed evidence as to the power of the UNSC's collective legitimization in comparison with the Many Flags strategy.

8 Conclusion

This study rejects the Many Flags Program and the Coalition of the Willing as a generator of foreign domestic support for American use of force. While American political pundits and bureaucrats believe they increase levels of foreign public support for American use of force, we find that they actually fail at increasing levels of international public support. At the very least, it would probably not work for Japanese people, who were our experimental subjects. Political solidarity shown by 'many flags', is not enough to change the minds of people regarding whether military action is acceptable.

This implies that foreign domestic audiences (again more precisely the Japanese people who were the subject of our experiment) understand the international norm of prohibiting the use of force and that the only legal exception can be made through the UNSC, not by the many flags of nations. Political solidarity could enhance the support for coalition participation, but the level of support was very limited. This study suggests to American policy-makers that they should not bypass the UNSC's authorization process, i.e. diplomatic multilateralism, to obtain international support for its use of force abroad; a bigger coalition of the willing and many-flags program would not really help to increase levels of support.

Finally, however confident we may be with our findings, we must admit that our study could be biased toward inflating the power of an UNSC resolution by selecting Japan as the field of the experiment. Furthermore, it could be possible that we need to be more specific about who the coalition partners were in order to clearly observe the effect of many flags. It is possible if a specific country or countries appeared as a contributing nation, the Japanese public could have given a much higher level of support – this can be only studied by doing another experiment. Obviously, this is one of the first tests using survey experiment designs on multilateralism/unilateralism, and thus further studies in other countries are needed to confirm the degree to which our findings are generalizable. We hope this study serves as a good reference point for future international comparative studies on the topic.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material is available at *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* online.

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Replication Data and IRB Approval

The replication materials are available at http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~tago/dataset.html. This study is screened and approved by the institutional review board of the Department of Social Psychology, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo.

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