A Comparison of Death Penalty Opinion
Among University Students in the United States and Taiwan

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Abstract

While American opinion about the death penalty has been extensively studied, there have been remarkably few such studies carried out in Taiwan, a country that saw a dramatic increase in executions during the late 1980s and early 1990s, but that is now debating the possible abolishment of capital punishment. Using data from samples drawn from university students in Denver, Colorado and Taipei, Taiwan, the researchers compared expressed reasons for death penalty attitudes, factors that aggravated and mitigated that support, and opinions regarding who should be sentenced to death. The findings suggest support for the death penalty runs rampant in Taiwan, leading to the puzzling question: Why is Taiwan on the verge of abolishing it? The authors suggest the current government movement in Taiwan to abolish the death penalty is tied to its foreign policy objectives.

KEYWORDS: Death penalty, Capital punishment, Taiwan, US, public opinion

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