Supplementary Information for When International Organizations Help Domestic Leaders Avoid Blame for Unpopular Policies*

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A Survey Instruments

Prompt

In the following questions, we will present the policies of the Japanese government and the international reactions to them. There are no right or wrong answers, so please provide your honest opinion.

Treatment

The Japanese government raised the consumption tax from 8% to 10% starting from October 1, 2019, with the aim of supporting the existing social security system. Additionally, there are plans to further increase the consumption tax to 12% in the future. The government has explained that the purpose of this tax hike is to decrease the ratio of public debt (government borrowing) in the overall fiscal landscape. **They also emphasized that the [IMF/G7/UN] has endorsed this consumption tax increase plan, stating that it would help reconstruct Japanese fiscal conditions.** (For respondents in the Control group, the texts in bold letters were not shown.)

Questions

1: If the government made such an announcement, how would your support for the current administration change? **(Outcome Government)**

2: Do you support this consumption tax increase? **(Outcome Tax)**

. . . . . .

Moderators

Expertise

Do you think the following international organizations [IMF/G7/UN/WHO/OECD] have expertise in finance and economics (have detailed knowledge and can provide effective advice)?

Neutrality

Which of the following international organizations [IMF/G7/UN/WHO/OECD] do you think is closer to statement A or statement B? Please select the statement that is closer to your impression.

A: A group of independent experts separate from the interests of each country.

B: A group of politicians representing the interests of each country.

Japan's Interests

How much do you think the intentions of the Japanese government are reflected in the decisions of the following international organizations [IMF/G7/UN/WHO/OECD]?

B Distribution of the Outcome Variables across Treatment Groups

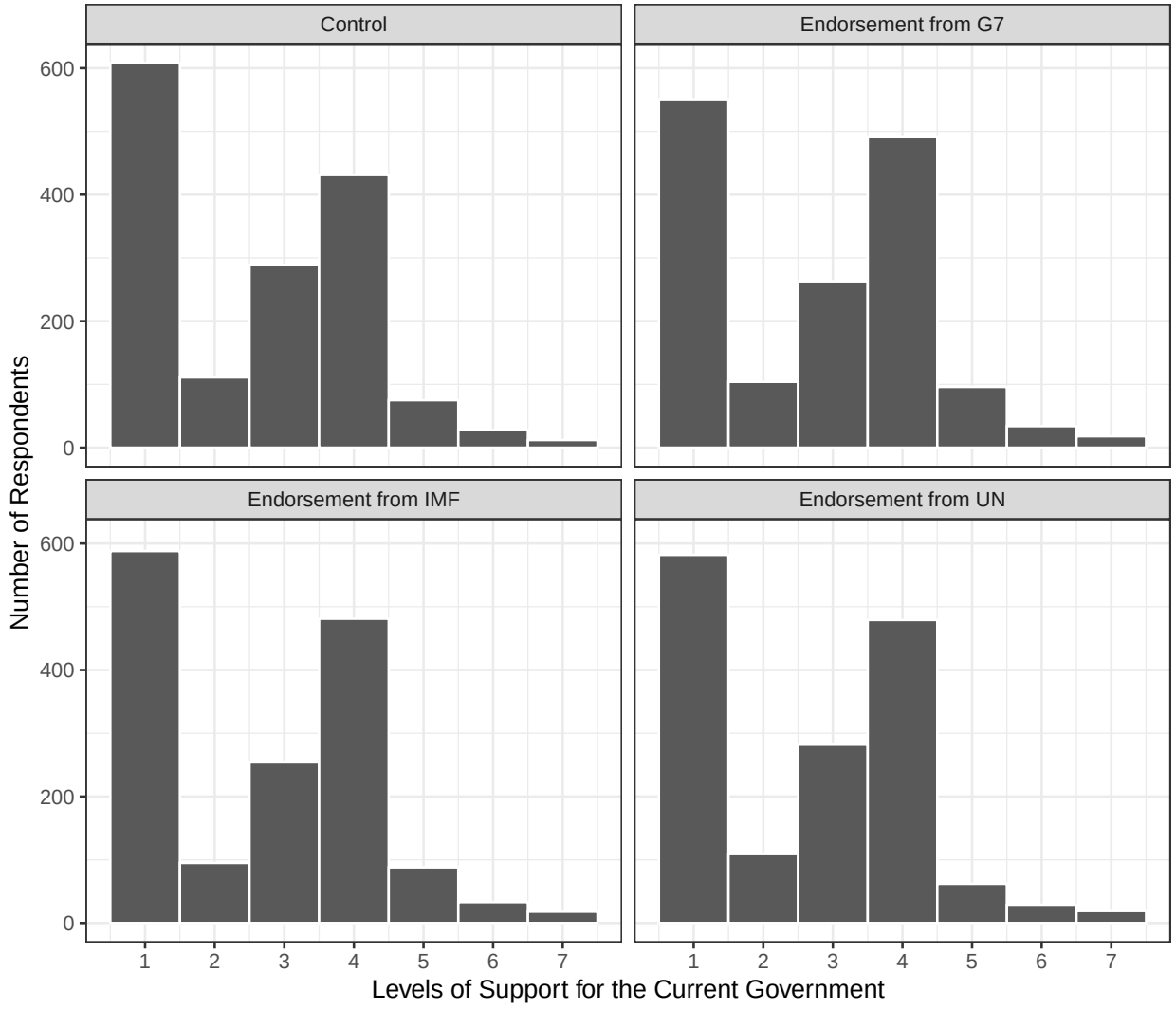

Figure B.1: **Distribution of the Outcome Variable: Government Support**
These graphs show the distributions of respondents' levels of support for the current administration. The answers were measured on a 7-point scale, with larger numbers indicating more support (the x-axis): Support (7), Somewhat support (6), Leaning towards support (5), Neither support nor oppose (4), Leaning towards not supporting (3), Somewhat not support (2), Do not support (1). Distributions are calculated for each treatment arm (G7, IMF, UN) and the control group. Those who preferred not to answer this question are excluded from this calculation.

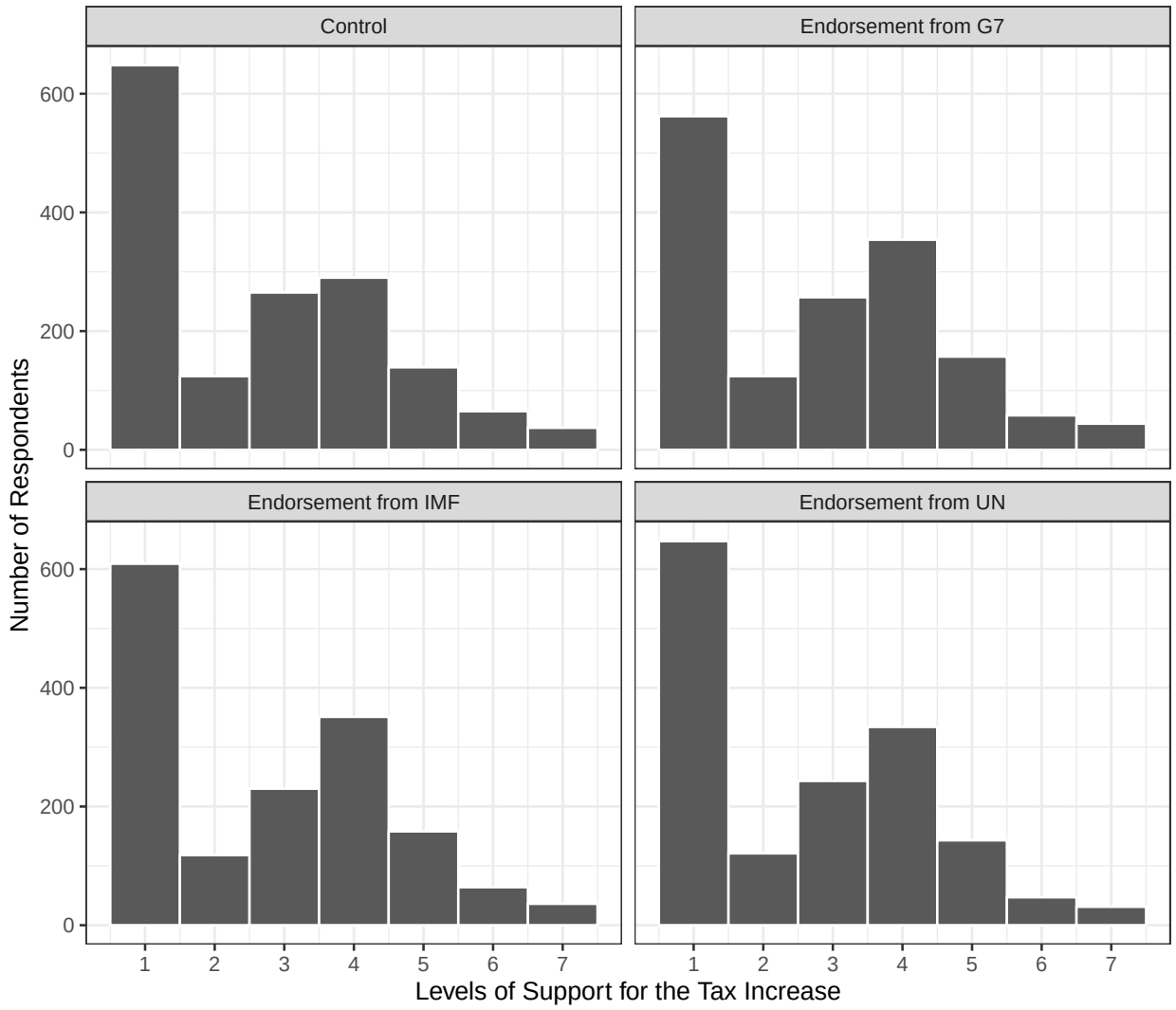

Figure B.2: **Distribution of the Outcome Variable: Policy Support**
These graphs show the baseline distributions of respondents' levels of support for the proposed policy to increase tax. The answers were measured on a 7-point scale, with larger numbers indicating more support (the x-axis): Support (7), Somewhat support (6), Leaning towards support (5), Neither support nor oppose (4), Leaning towards not supporting (3), Somewhat not support (2), Do not support (1). Distributions are calculated for each treatment arm (G7, IMF, UN) and the control group. Those who preferred not to answer this question are excluded from this calculation.

C Distribution of the Conditional Variables

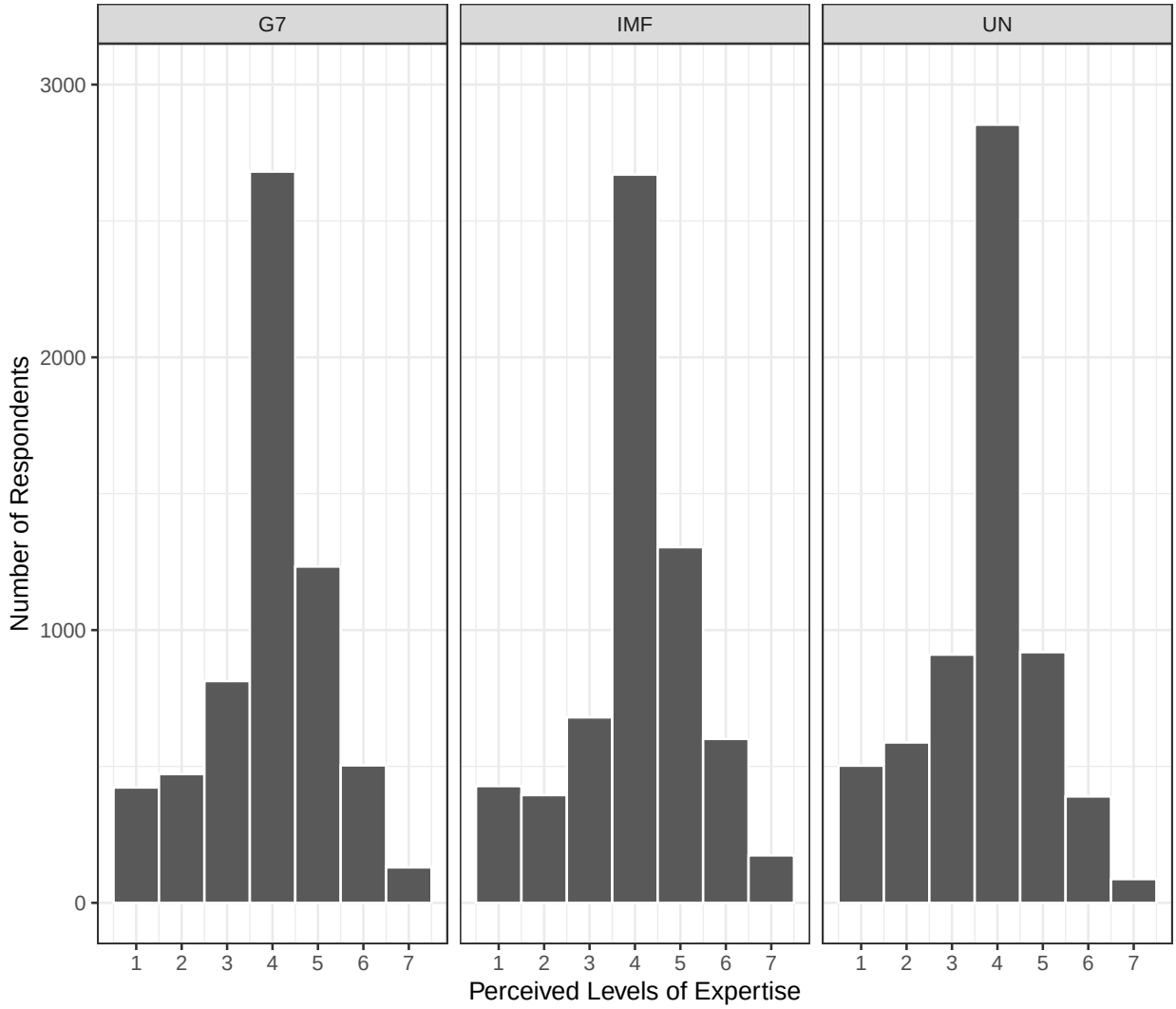

Figure C.1: **Baseline Distribution of the Perception of Expertise**
These graphs show the baseline distributions of perceived levels of expertise for the G7, IMF, and UN. Respondents were asked "Do you think the following international organizations (G7, IMF, and UN) have expertise in finance and economics (have detailed knowledge and can provide effective advice)?" and their answers were recorded on a 7-point scale: Strongly agree (7), agree (6), Somewhat agree (5), Neither agree nor disagree (4), Disagree (3), Strongly disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1). The y-axis represents the number of respondents, and the x-axis represents perceived levels of expertise measured on a 7-point scale.

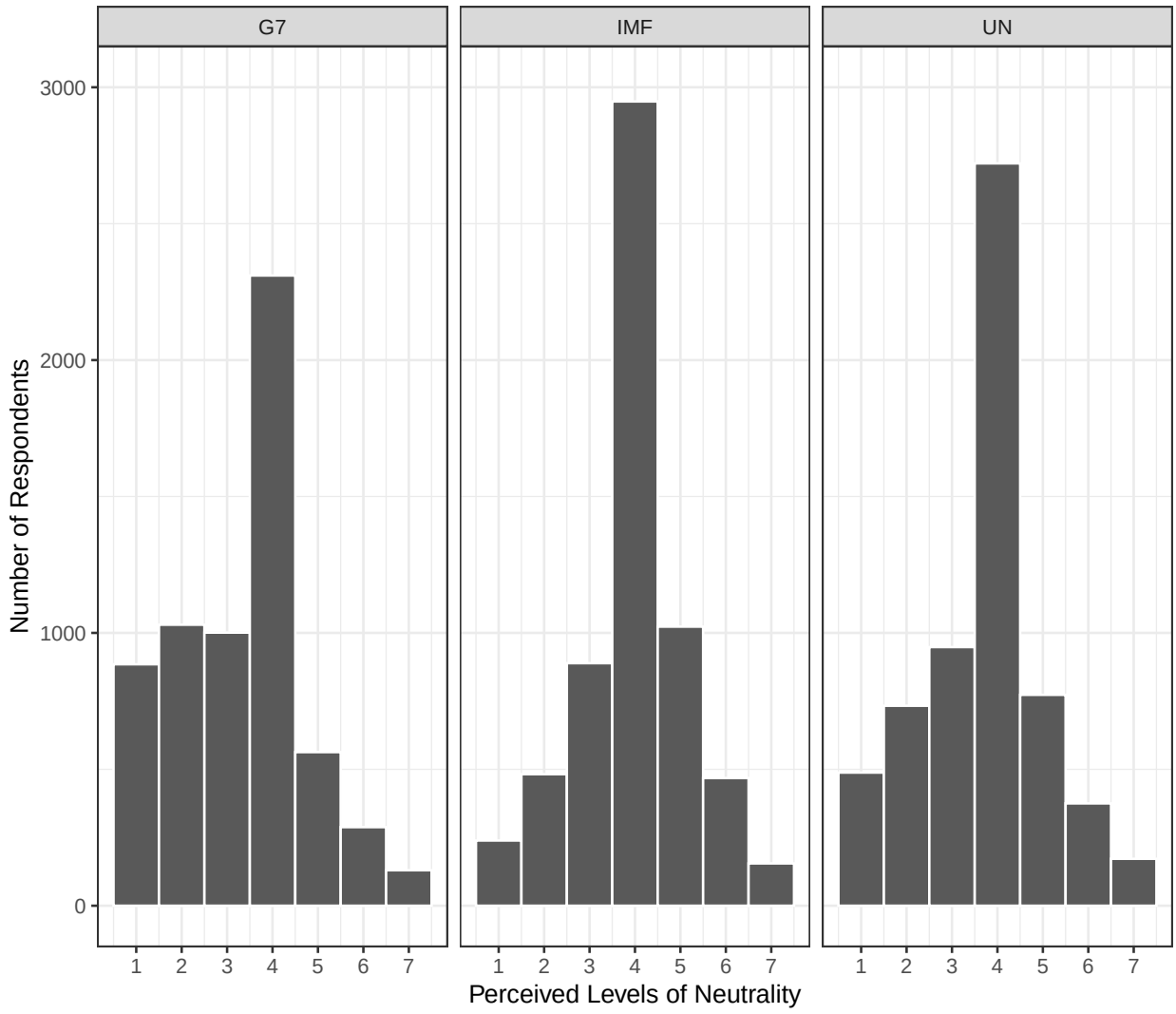

Figure C.2: **Baseline Distribution of Perception of Impartiality**
These graphs show the baseline distributions of perceived levels of impartiality (neutrality) in the G7, IMF, and UN. Respondents were asked which of these statements felt closer to their impression; [The G7/IMF/UN is] A) A group of independent experts separate from the interests of each country, B) A group of politicians representing the interests of each country. Their answers were measured on a 7-point scale, with larger numbers indicating that respondents perceived a greater level of impartiality in the corresponding IOs.

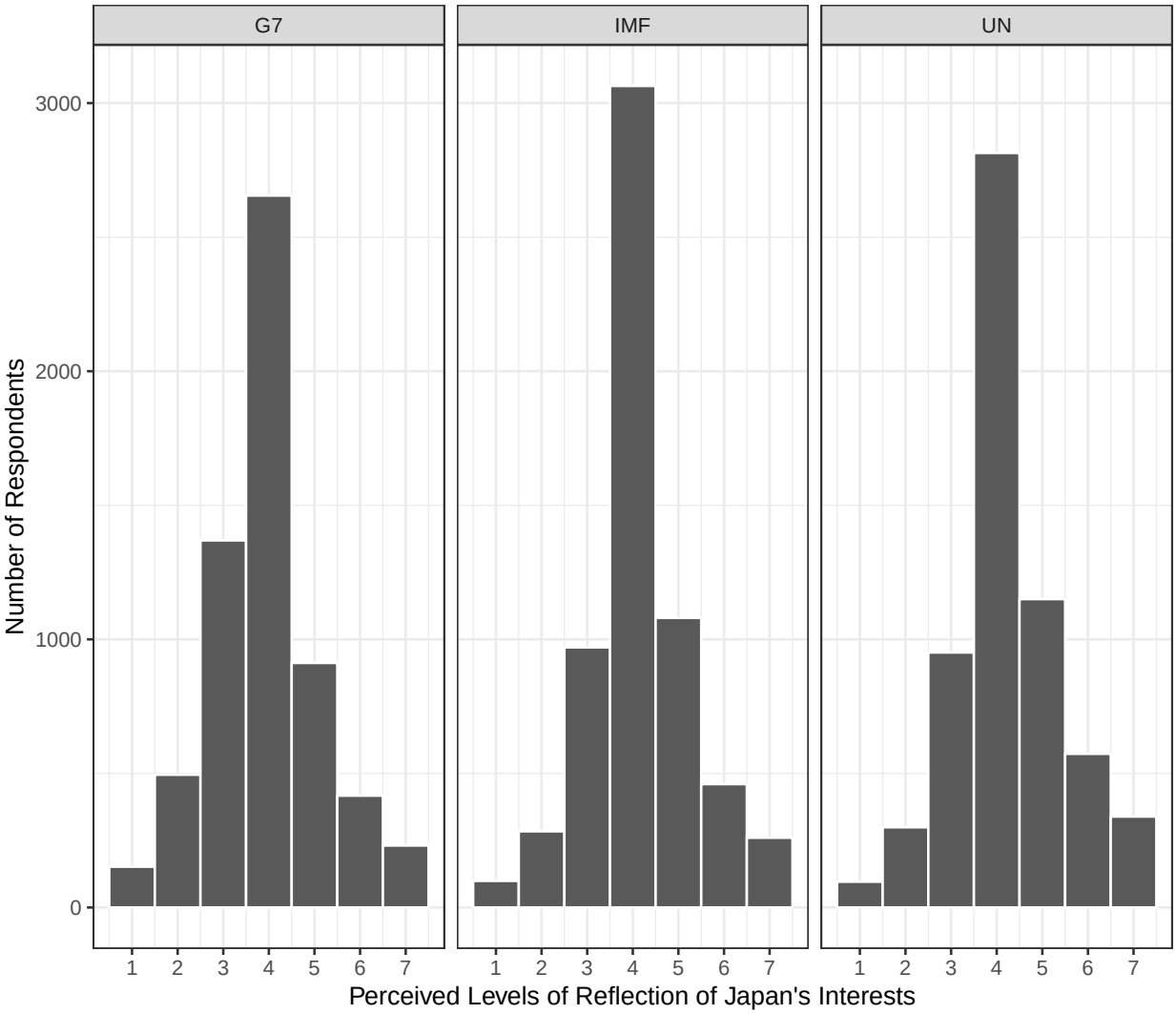

Figure C.3: **Baseline Distribution of Common Interests with Japan**
These graphs show the baseline distributions of perceived levels of Reflection of Japan's Interests in the G7, IMF, and UN. Respondents were asked "How much do you think the intentions of the Japanese government are reflected in the decisions of the G7/IMF/UN?" The answers were measured on a 7-point scale, with larger numbers indicating that respondents perceived a greater level of reflection of Japan's interests in the corresponding IOs.

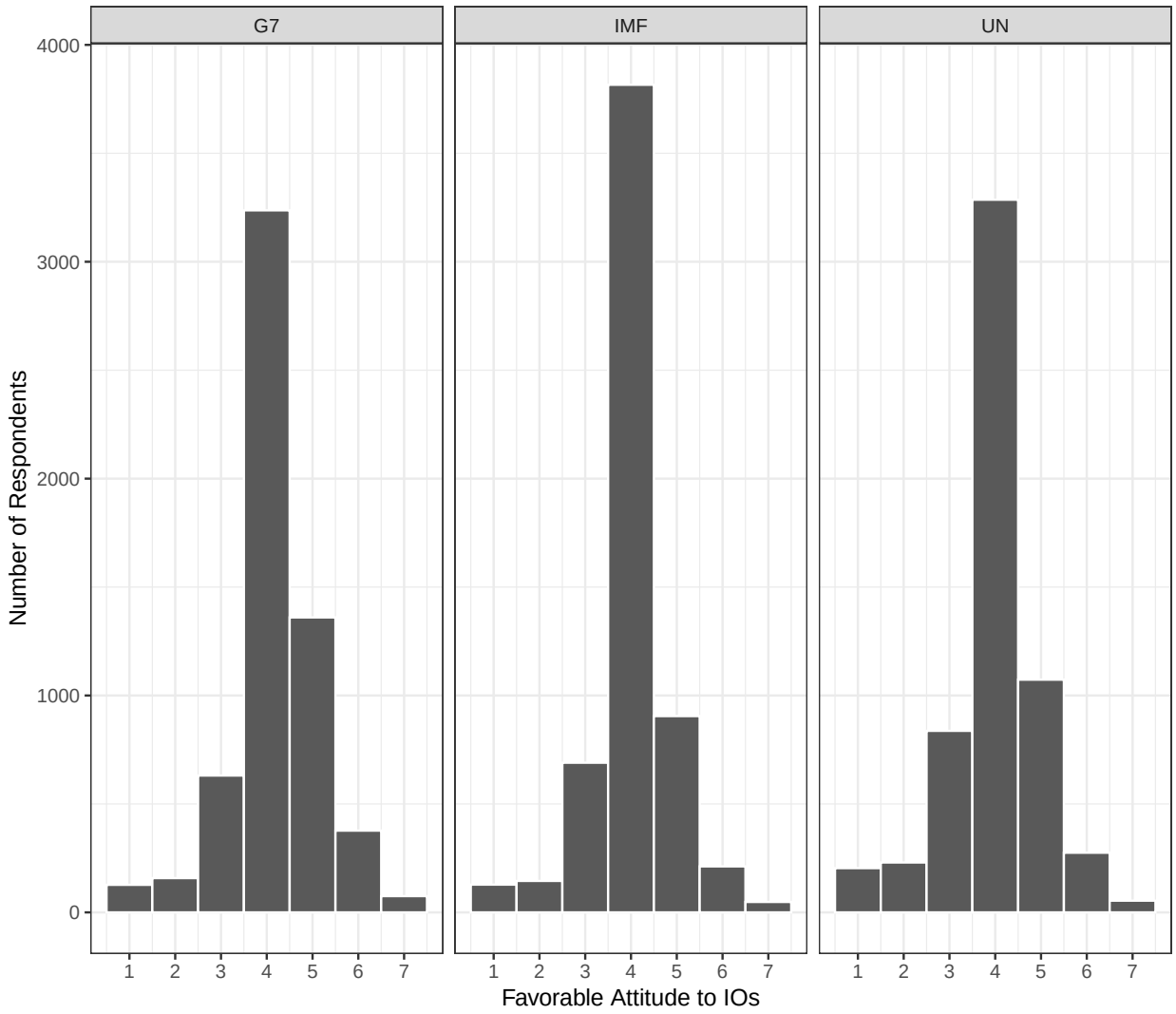

Figure C.4: **Baseline Distribution of Favorable Attitude to IOs**
These figures show the distribution of favorable attitude to the G7, IMF and UN. Respondents were asked to rate their level of favorability towards the G7/IMF/UN on a scale of 1 to 7. The higher values indicate that respondents have a favorable attitude toward these IOs.

D Supplementary Conditional Treatment Effects

In this section, we examine the pre-registered, supplementary conditional treatment effects, such as respondents' cosmopolitan identity (Figure D.1), sensitivity to international praise and criticism (Figure D.2), knowledge about international organizations (Figure D.3), and prior preferences about government finance (Figure D.4). We first present figures showing the effects of endorsements from the G7 and the IMF, and then provide results from the UN.

We hypothesize these respondents' perceptions and preferences regarding these issues largely influence the effects of endorsements by international organizations. However, the results suggest that the type of international organization has more influence on treatment effects than respondents' preferences regarding these issues. While endorsements by the UN and the IMF have little or no treatment effect across all issues (see Figures D.5, D.6, D.7, D.8 for the UN endorsement), endorsements by the G7 show statistically significant effects on some of the issues mentioned above.

Notably, respondents' attitudes towards the tax increase policy and the government become more favorable when they either have no knowledge of the G7 (never heard its name) or, conversely, when they possess detailed information about the G7 (Figure D.3). Additionally, the analysis revealed ceiling effects in these endorsements. The G7 endorsements exhibited stronger, significant effects on those who reported not worrying about Japan's fiscal deficits, while showing no effects on those who reported being concerned about Japan's fiscal deficits (Figure D.4). There were no seemingly meaningful results regarding the influence of respondents' cosmopolitan identities and sensitivity to international praise and criticism (Figures D.1, D.2).

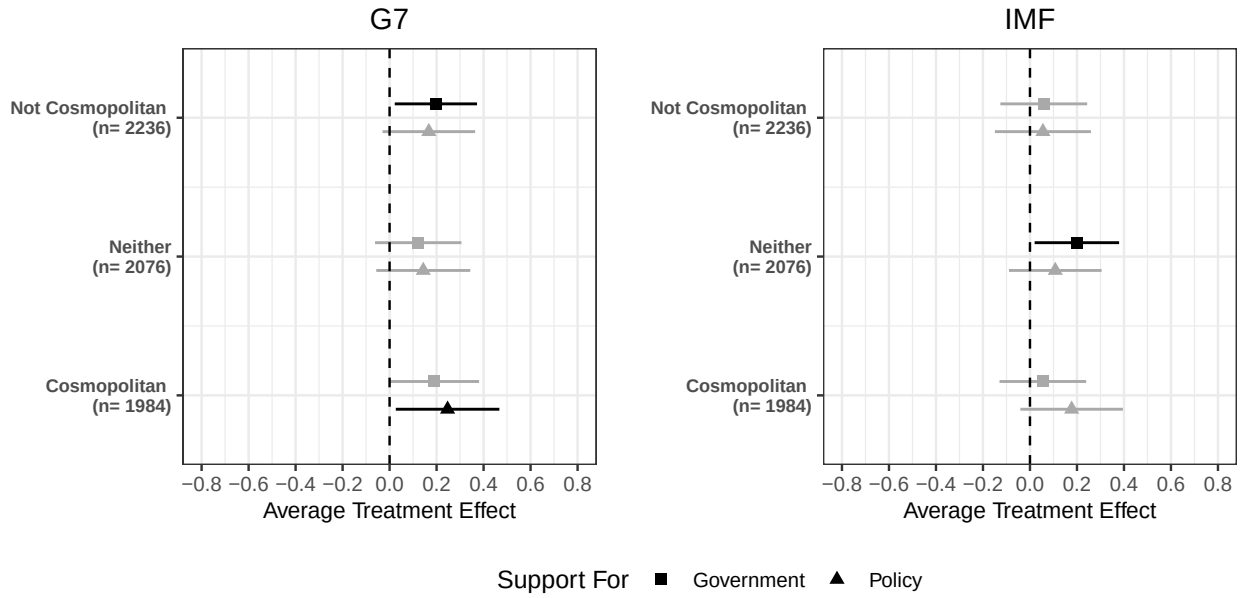

Figure D.1: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Self-Perceived Cosmopolitanism (the G7 and the IMF endorsement)**
These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' self-perceived cosmopolitan identity. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from the G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from the IMF. Self-perceived cosmopolitan identity is measured by the question "How do you feel about the following statement: I feel like a global citizen?" Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree," 4 means "Neither Agree or Disagree," and 7 means "Strongly Agree." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Cosmopolitan" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Not Cosmopolitan" if their answer is below 4. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

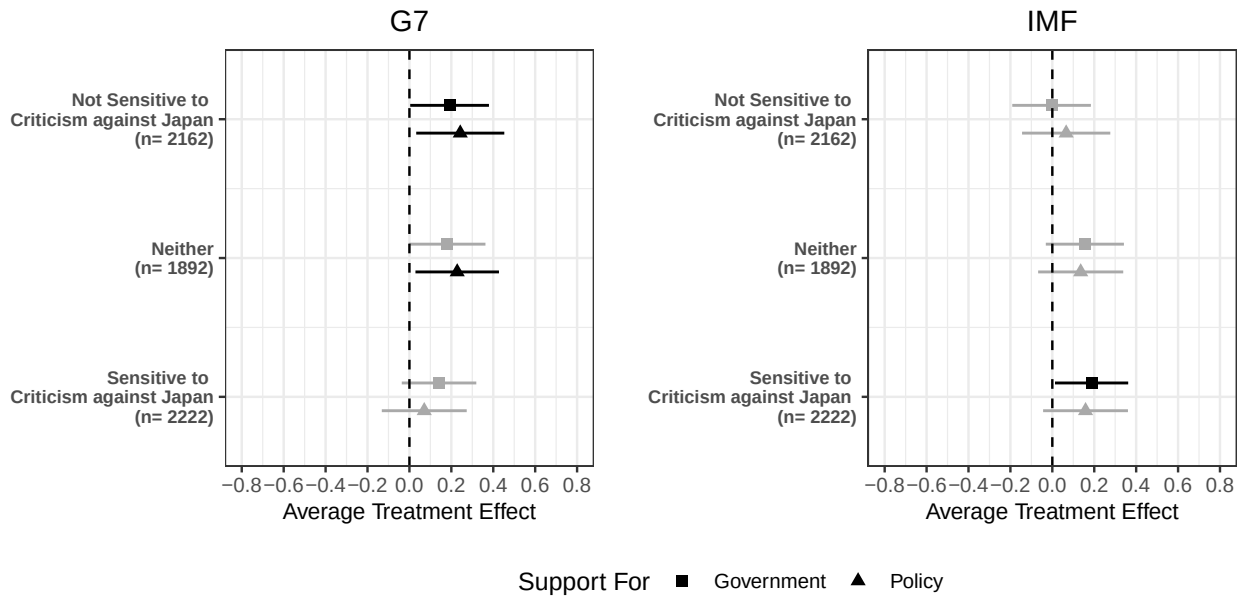

Figure D.2: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Sensitivity to the Criticisms against Japan (the G7 and the IMF endorsement)**
These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' sensitivity to the criticisms against Japan. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from the G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from the IMF. Respondent's sensitivity to the criticisms against Japan is measured by asking them to indicate how much they agree with the statement, "When someone speaks ill of Japan, I feel as if they are speaking ill of myself." Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree," 4 means "Neither Agree or Disagree," and 7 means "Strongly Agree." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Sensitive to Criticisms Against Japan" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Not Sensitive to Criticisms Against Japan" if their answer is below 4. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

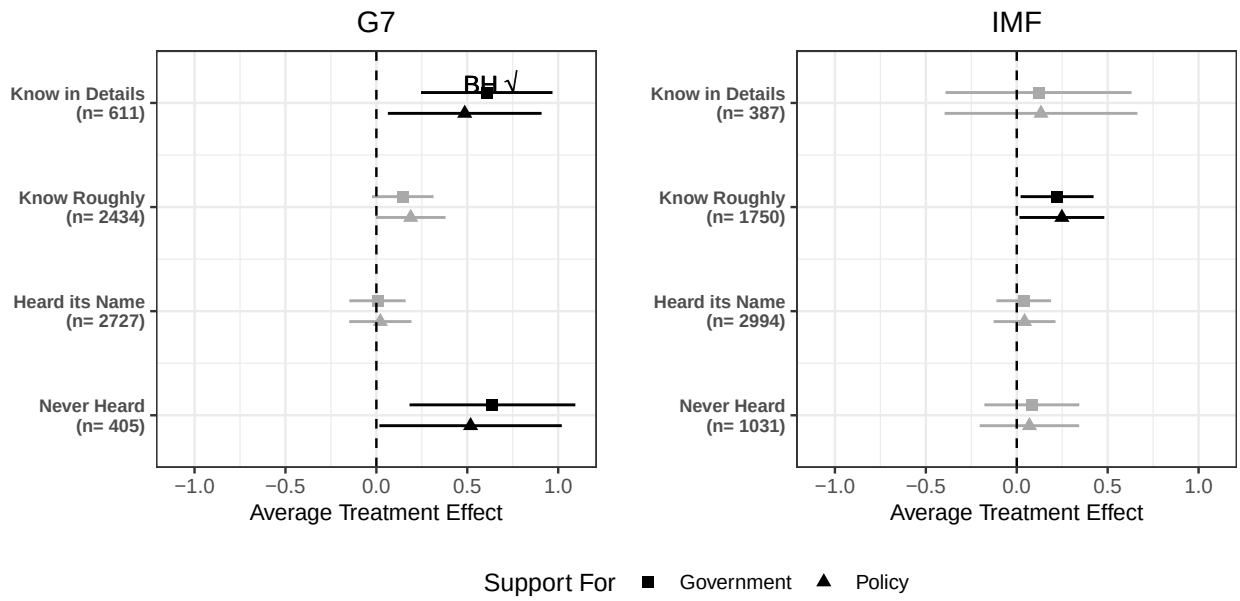

Figure D.3: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Knowledge of the IOs (the G7 and the IMF endorsement)**
These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the level of respondents' knowledge of the relevant IOs that endorse the tax increase. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from IMF. Respondents were asked, "How familiar are you with the following International Organizations?" and indicated their level of knowledge with one of the following options: "Never heard of it", "Heard the name before", "Have a general knowledge of the organization", and "Know detailed information about the organization." The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels. Please note that the x-axis scale is larger in these figures than in others, which may indicate that the perceived smaller size of the effect is larger than in other figures.

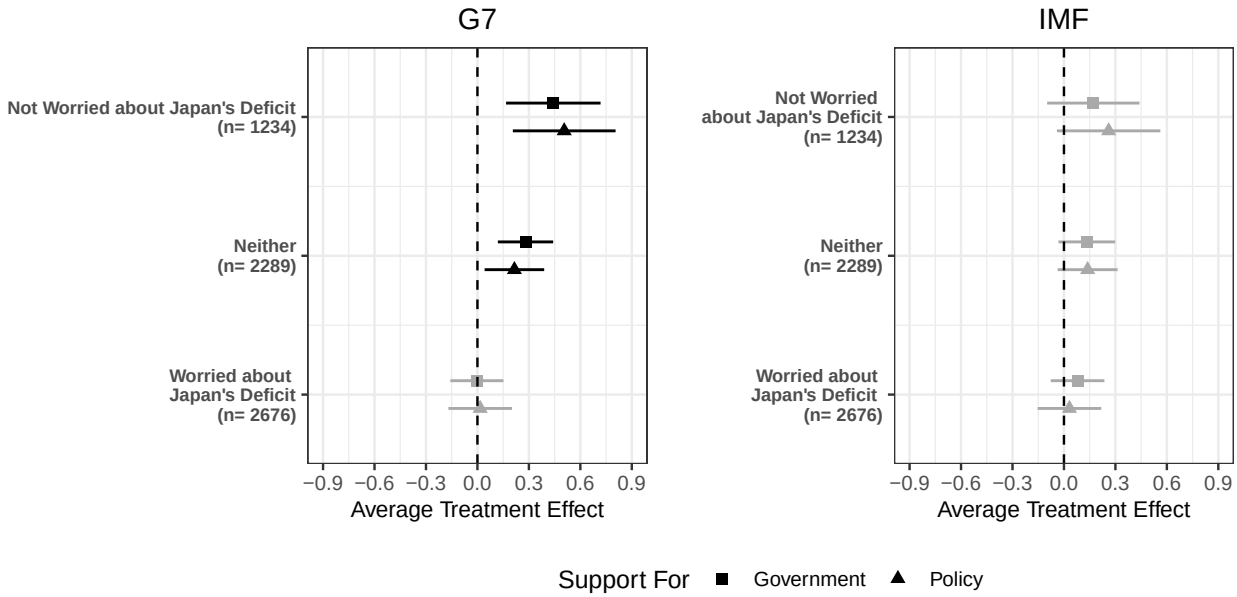

Figure D.4: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Perceived Severity of Japan's Fiscal Deficits (the G7 and the IMF endorsement)**
These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' concern regarding Japan's fiscal deficits. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from the G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from the IMF. Respondents' concern about Japan's fiscal deficits is measured by asking them to select the statement closest to their opinion: A) "Government bonds are being steadily absorbed, so there is no need to worry about fiscal deficits," or B) "Since the fiscal deficit is at a critical level, the issuance of government bonds should be restrained," rated on a 7-point scale. Based on their responses, respondents are divided into three groups: "Worried about Japan's Deficit" if they chose statement B, "Neither" if they chose 4, and "Not Worried about Japan's Deficit" if they chose statement A. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified beneath the y-axis labels. Please note that the x-axis scale is larger in these figures than in others, which may indicate that the perceived smaller size of the effect is larger than in other figures.

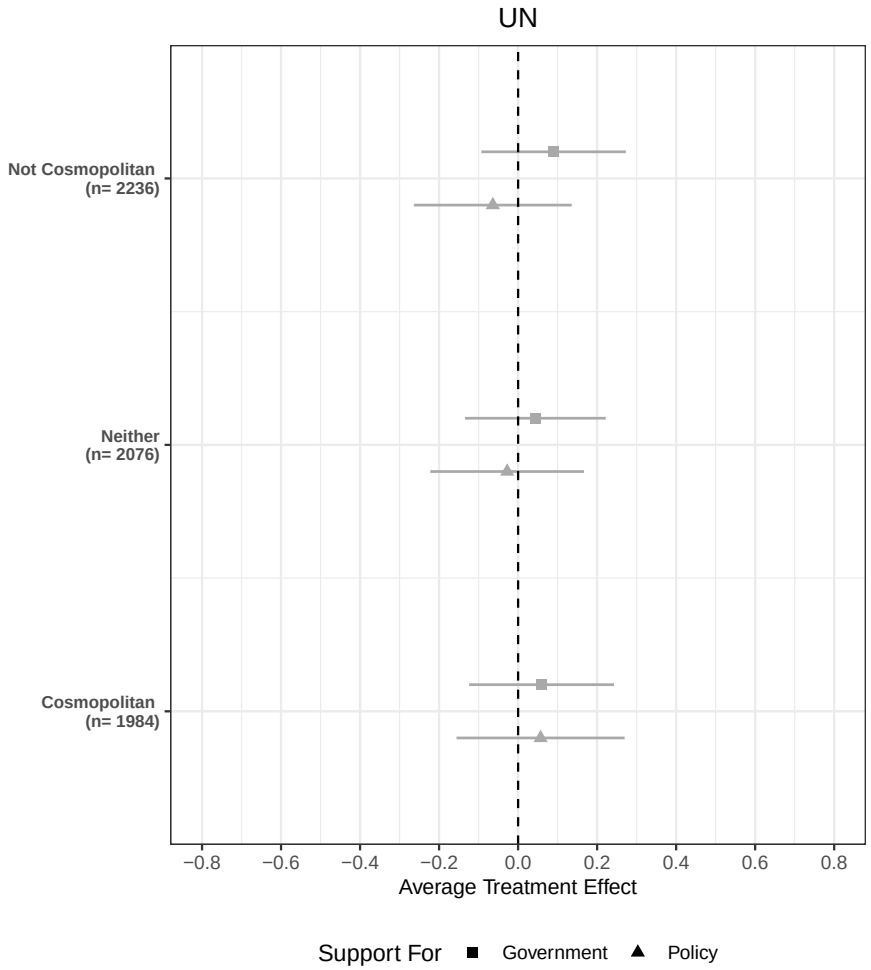

Figure D.5: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Self-Perceived Cosmopolitanism (the UN endorsement)**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' self-perceived cosmopolitan identity. Self-perceived cosmopolitan identity is measured by the question "How do you feel about the following statement: I feel like a global citizen?" Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree," 4 means "Neither Agree or Disagree," and 7 means "Strongly Agree." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Cosmopolitan" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Not Cosmopolitan" if their answer is below 4. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

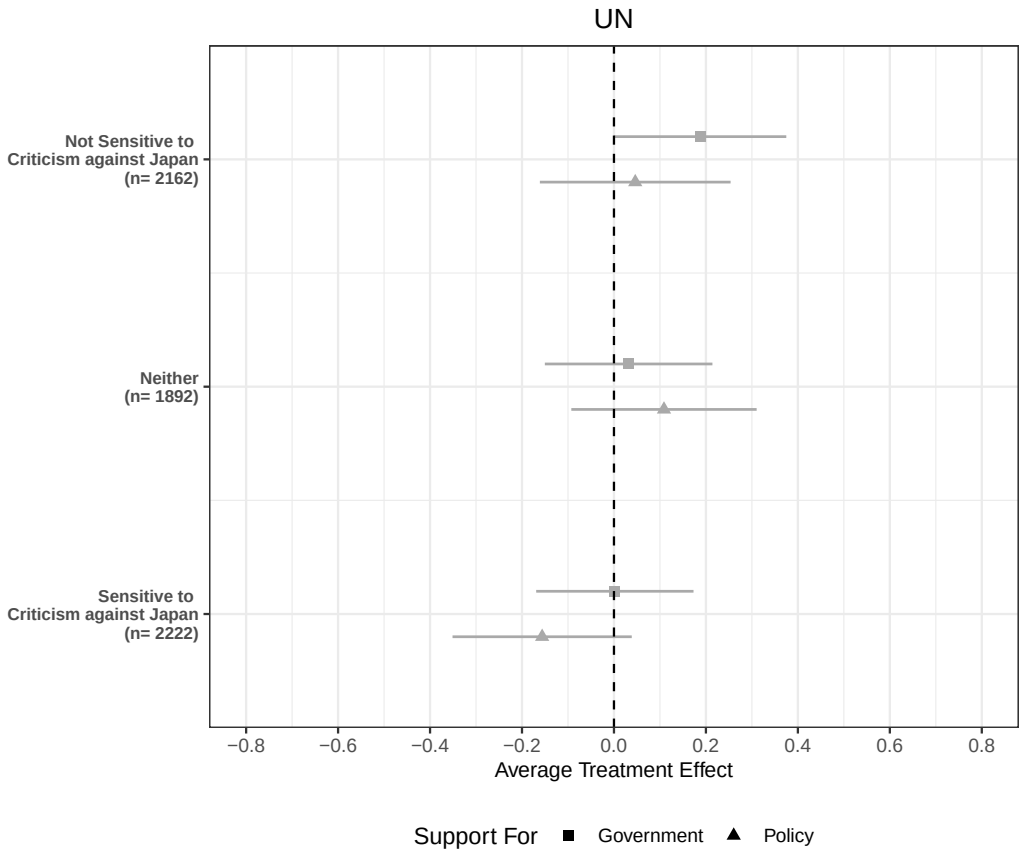

Figure D.6: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Sensitivity to the Criticisms against Japan (the UN endorsement)**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' sensitivity to the criticisms against Japan. Respondent's sensitivity to the criticisms against Japan is measured by asking them to indicate how much they agree with the statement, "When someone speaks ill of Japan, I feel as if they are speaking ill of myself." Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree," 4 means "Neither Agree or Disagree," and 7 means "Strongly Agree." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Sensitive to Criticisms Against Japan" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Not Sensitive to Criticisms Against Japan" if their answer is below 4. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

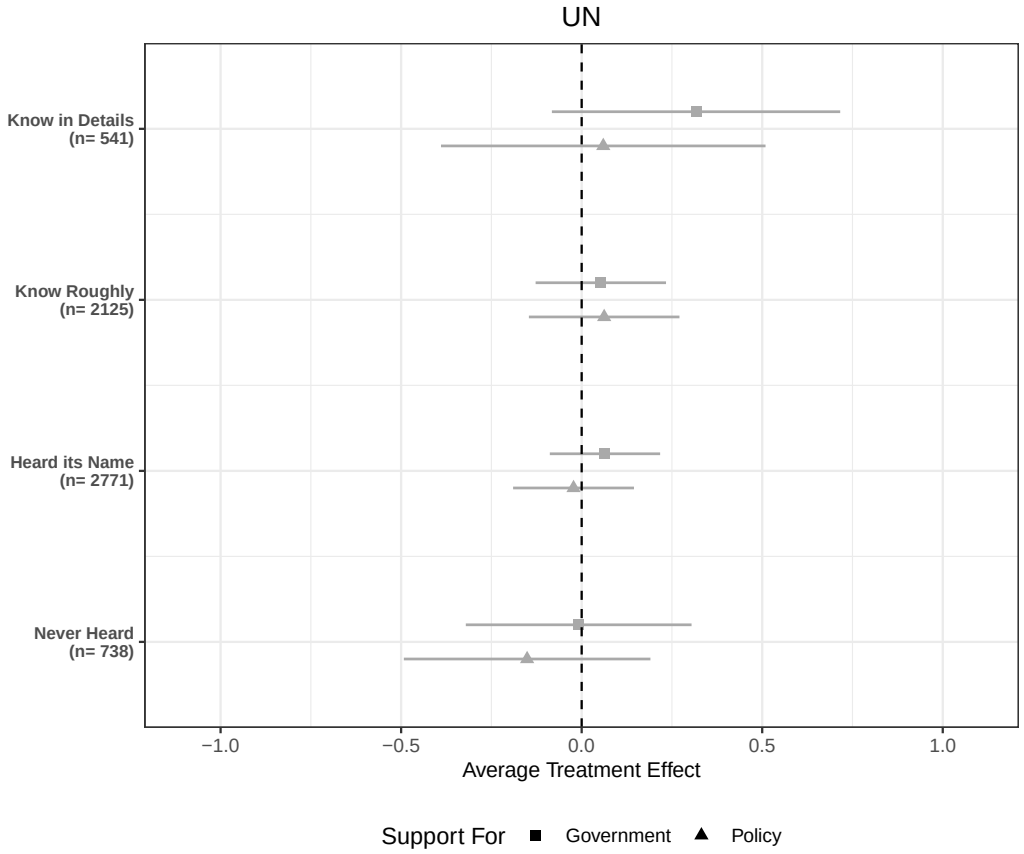

Figure D.7: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Knowledge of the IOs (the UN endorsement)**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on the level of respondents' knowledge of the relevant IOs that endorse the tax increase. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from IMF. Respondents were asked, "How familiar are you with the following International Organizations?" and indicated their level of knowledge with one of the following options: "Never heard of it", "Heard the name before", "Have a general knowledge of the organization", and "Know detailed information about the organization." The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels. Please note that the x-axis scale is larger in this figure than in others, which may indicate that the perceived smaller size of the effect is larger than in other figures.

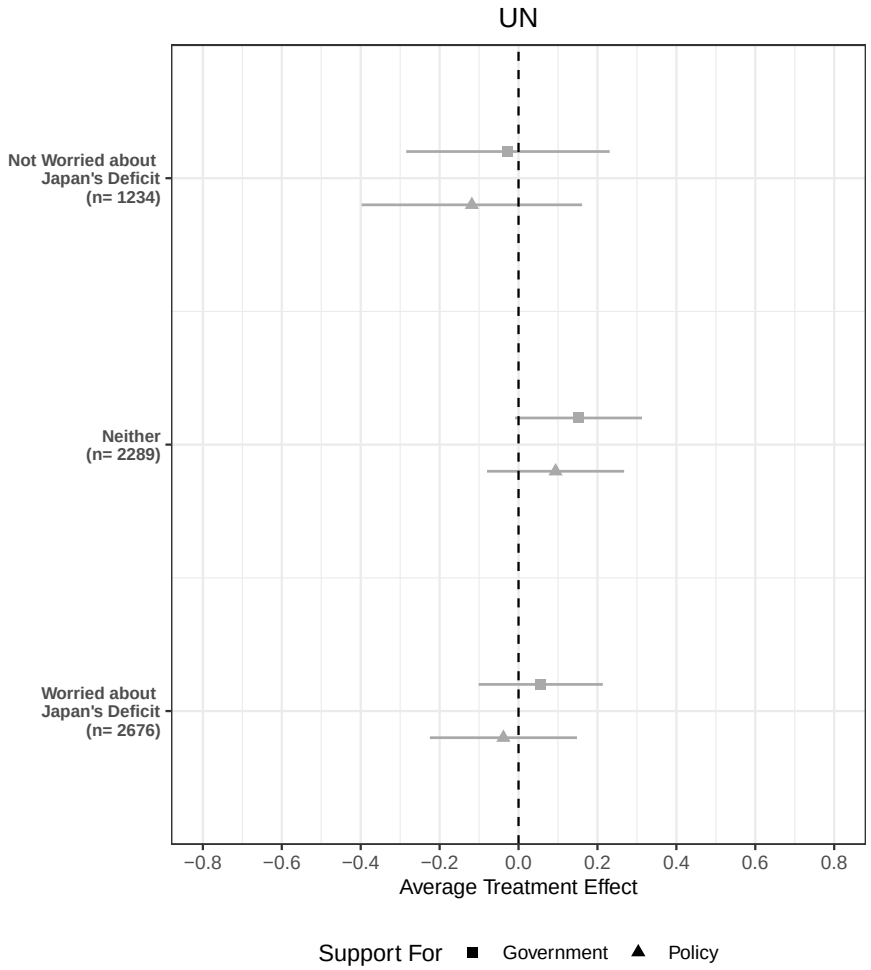

Figure D.8: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Respondents' Perceived Severity of Japan's Fiscal Deficits (the UN endorsement)**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' concern regarding Japan's fiscal deficits. Respondents' concern about Japan's fiscal deficits is measured by asking them to select the statement closest to their opinion: A) "Government bonds are being steadily absorbed, so there is no need to worry about fiscal deficits," or B) "Since the fiscal deficit is at a critical level, the issuance of government bonds should be restrained," rated on a 7-point scale. Based on their responses, respondents are divided into three groups: "Worried about Japan's Deficit" if they chose statement B, "Neither" if they chose 4, and "Not Worried about Japan's Deficit" if they chose statement A. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified beneath the y-axis labels.

E Conditional Treatment Effect of the UN Endorsement

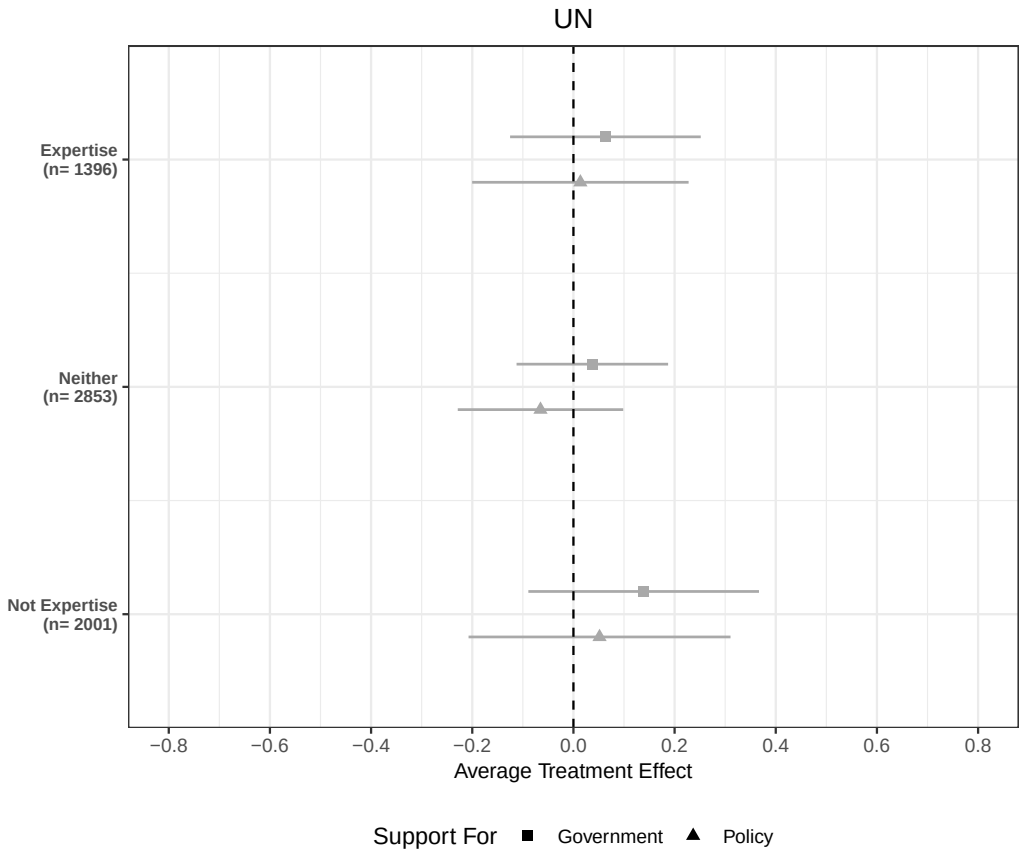

Figure E.1: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Perceived Expertise**
This figure shows the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of perceived expertise in the UN, the endorsing international organization. Perceived expertise is measured by the question, "Do you think the following international organizations have expertise in finance and economics (have detailed knowledge and can provide effective advice)?" Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree," 4 means "Neither Agree nor Disagree," and 7 means "Strongly Agree." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Expertise" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "No Expertise" if their answer is below 4. Square symbols represent the estimated effect on government approval, and triangle symbols represent the estimated effect on support for the proposed policy to increase consumption tax. Horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, with black color indicating statistical significance and gray color indicating no significance. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

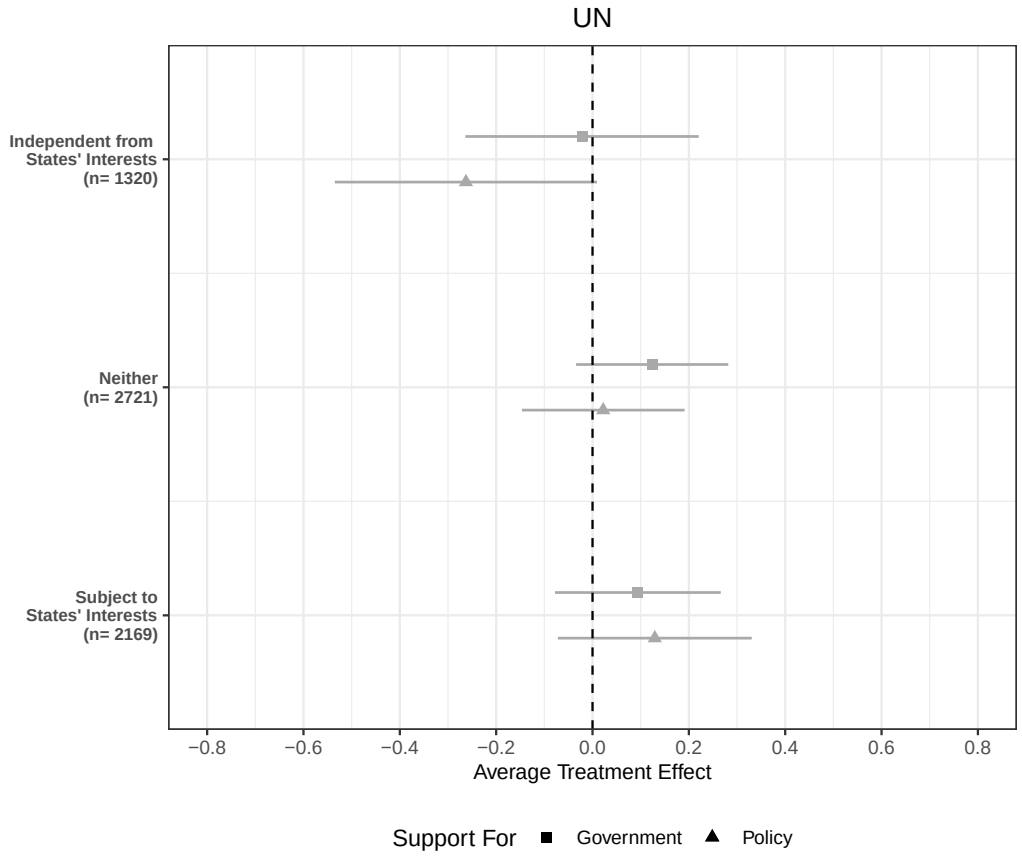

Figure E.2: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Perceived Impartiality**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of perceived impartiality. The effect estimates for respondents who perceive the G7 (IMF) as agreeing with the statement, "a group of independent experts separate from the interests of each country," are placed at the top row in the left (right) panel. The effect estimates for those who perceive the G7 (IMF) as agreeing with the statement, "a group of politicians representing the interests of each country," are placed at the bottom in the left (right) panel. The effect estimates for respondents who neither agree nor disagree with these statements are placed in the middle. Square symbols represent the estimated effect on government approval, and triangle symbols represent the estimated effect on support for the proposed policy to increase consumption tax. Horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, with black color indicating statistical significance and gray color indicating no significance. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

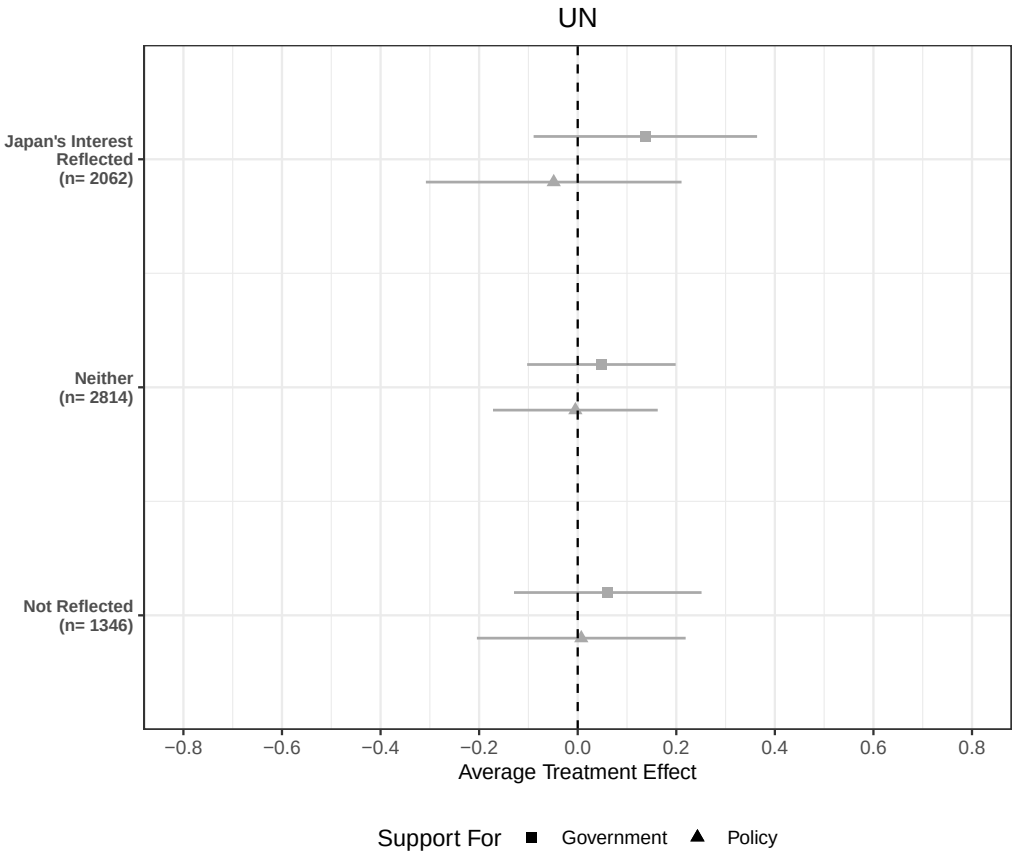

Figure E.3: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Perceived Reflection of Japan's Interests**

This figure shows the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of perceived alignment of Japan's interests with the UN, the endorsing international organizations. Respondents are divided into three groups based on their perceived degree of reflection of Japan's interests in these international organizations: "Reflected" (presented at the top), "Neither" (middle), and "Not Reflected" (bottom). Square symbols represent the estimated effect on government approval, and triangle symbols represent the estimated effect on support for the proposed policy to increase consumption tax. Horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, with black color indicating statistical significance and gray color indicating no significance. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

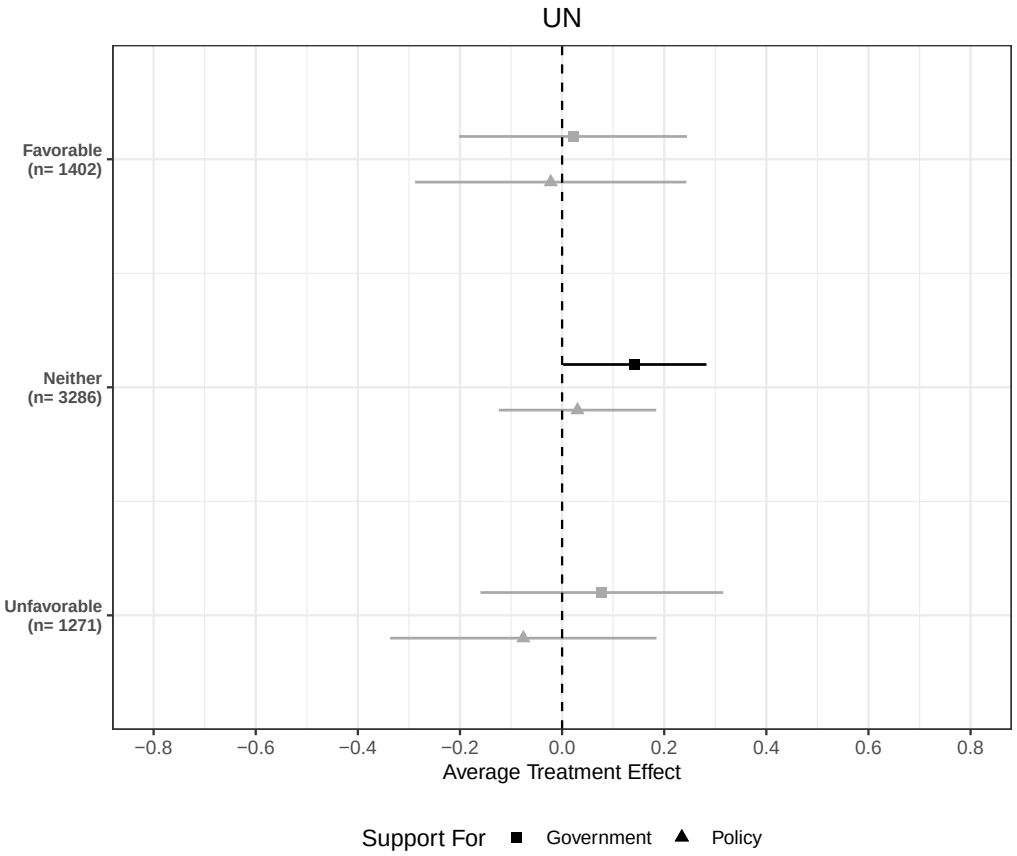

Figure E.4: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Favorability toward the UN**
This figure shows the treatment effect estimates conditional on the degree of respondents' favorable attitudes towards the UN, the endorsing international organization. Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Unfavorable," 4 means "Neither," and 7 means "Favorable." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Favorable" if their answer is above 4, "Neither" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Unfavorable" if their answer is below 4. Square symbols represent the estimated effect on government approval, and triangle symbols represent the estimated effect on support for the proposed policy to increase consumption tax. Horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, with black color indicating statistical significance and gray color indicating no significance. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

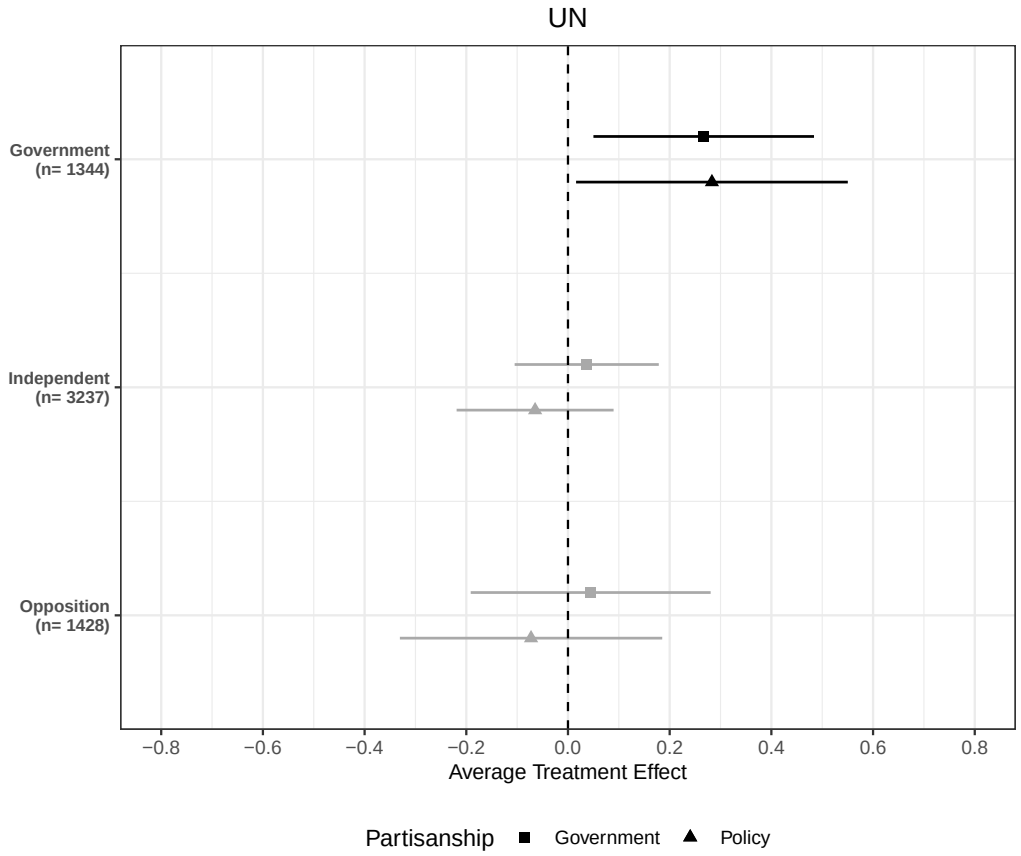

Figure E.5: **Heterogenous Treatment Effect by Party Identification**
This figure shows the UN treatment effect estimates conditional on party identification. Respondents are divided into three groups: "Government" if they support the ruling parties (LDP or Komeito), "Opposition" if they support parties other than LDP or Komeito, and "Independent" if they do not show support for any of these parties in this survey. Square symbols represent the estimated effect on government approval, and triangle symbols represent the estimated effect on support for the proposed policy to increase consumption tax. Horizontal lines represent the 95% confidence intervals, with black color indicating statistical significance and gray color indicating no significance. The number of observations in each subgroup is specified under the y-axis labels.

F Distribution of the Self-Reported Knowledge of IOs

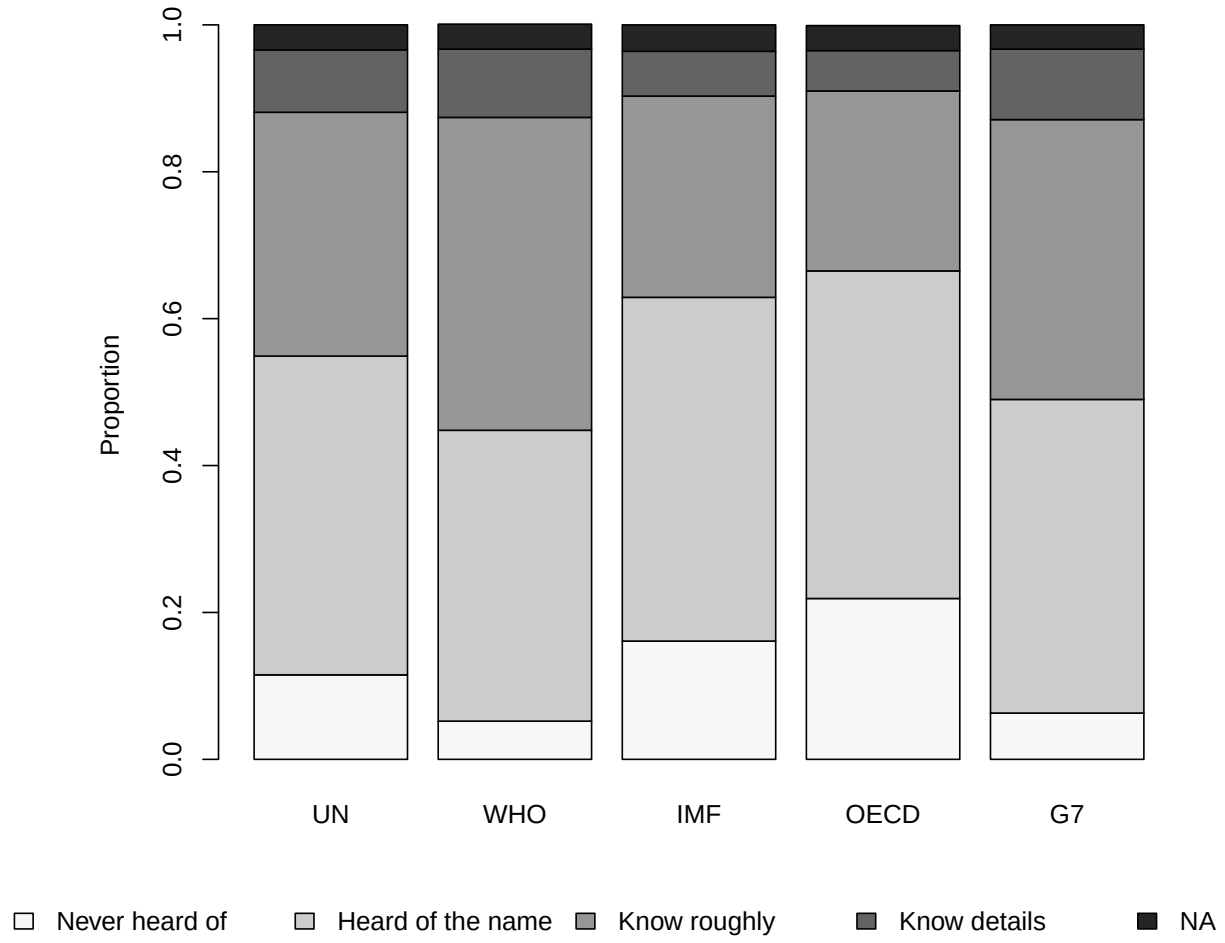

Figure F.1: **Distribution of the Self-Reported Knowledge of IOs**
This shows the distributions of the self-reported knowledge of IOs. In addition to the three IOs we used in the experiment, the IMF, G7 and the UN, we added two additional IOs, the OECD and the WHO, to compare if the IOs we used are particularly well-known or not. It makes sense that the WHO is the most well-known IO among the five due to its publicity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to the WHO, the three IOs we used in the experiments, the IMF, G7, and the UN, are less well-known, but the difference is not substantial. In particular, we find that the public awareness of the G7 is similar to that of the WHO.

G Heterogeneous Treatment Effect by the Support for the United States

One factor that explains the strong effect of the G7 endorsement is the support for the United States. We examine this possibility by presenting the treatment effect estimates conditional on the support for the United States. The support for the United States is measured in two ways: 1) the support for the alliance with the United States, and 2) the favorable attitude to the United States. Either way, we did not find evidence that the treatment effect of the G7 endorsement is stronger among those who support the United States.

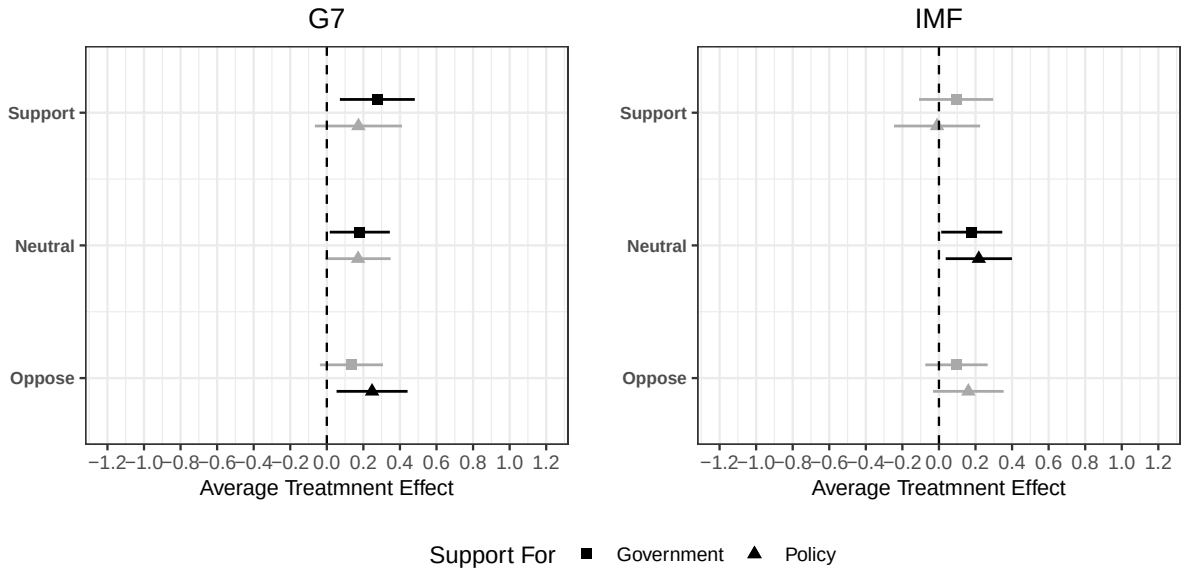

Figure G.1: **Heterogeneous Treatment effect by the Support for the Alliance with the United States**

These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the support for the alliance with the United States. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from the G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from the IMF. Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Oppose," 4 means "Neither," and 7 means "Support." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Support" if their answer is above 4, "Neutral" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Oppose" if their answer is below 4.

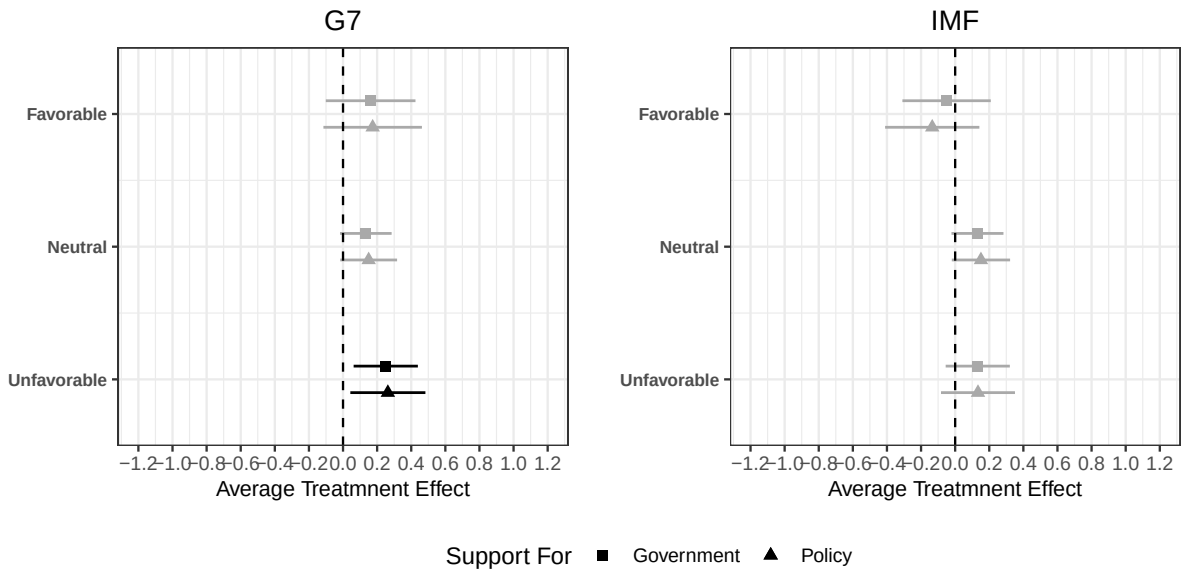

Figure G.2: **Heterogeneous Treatment Effect by the Favorable Attitude to the United States**

These figures show the treatment effect estimates conditional on the favorable attitude to the United States. The left panel shows the effect of endorsement from the G7, and the right panel shows the effect of endorsement from the IMF. Responses are recorded on a 7-point scale, where 1 means "Unfavorable," 4 means "Neither," and 7 means "Favorable." Respondents are divided into three groups: "Favorable" if their answer is above 4, "Neutral" if their answer is equal to 4, and "Unfavorable" if their answer is below 4.

H Summary Statistics of Demographic Variables

Variable	**Levels**	**n**	%
Gender	Male	3197	50.0
	Female	3116	48.8
	Other	21	0.3
	NA	57	1.0
Age	19-30	1308	20.5
	30-40	1274	19.9
	40-50	1260	19.7
	50-60	1280	20.2
	60-70	1269	19.9
Education	College	3024	47.3
	Not College	3367	52.7
Income(yen)	$<$ 2M	802	15.7
	2M-4M	1266	24.8
	4M-6M	1167	22.9
	6M-8M	771	15.1
	8M-10M	532	10.4
	10M-12M	409	8.1
	$>$ 12M	155	3.0
Partisanship	Government	1344	22.4
	Independent	3237	53.9
	Opposition	1428	23.8

Table H.1: Table of summary statistics about the respondents. The column n shows the number of respondents with the corresponding Levels of the Variable. The column % shows the proportion of such respondents. "Education" question asks the academic record and "Income" question asks the annual income (before tax) of the respondents. "Partisanship" question inquires whether they support the current government (LDP and Komeito) or are independent. NA means "No Answer."