

# Does 'Foreign leader's Endorsement' Boost Policy Support?

## Evidence from a Survey Experiment Regarding the Marine Discharge of ALPS Treated Water

HATA Masaki<sup>1</sup> ISEKI Tatsuya<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kyoto Prefectural University, Associate Professor <sup>2</sup>Independent Researcher

### Highlight

#### Research Question

Does 'foreign leader's endorsement' increase support for a policy or favorability towards the subject?

#### Hypothesis

- Endorsements of foreign leaders are likely to increase support for a policy and to enhance favorability towards the subject of the policy.
- The impact of these endorsements is likely to be conditioned by ideology.

#### Results and Implication

- Endorsement from South Korea decreases respondent's support about the discharge of ALPS-treated water among conservative factions while increasing support for the discharge among conservative factions.
- Endorsement from perceived rival country decreases public policy support although it remedies public attitude toward the country.

### Background

- In the case of policies that divide public opinion, the government seeks endorsements to validate their stance.
- Does foreign leader's endorsement affects domestic public opinion?
- International Organizations affect domestic public opinion: International Organizations' endorsement increases domestic public support for a policy while shaming decreases the support. (e.g. Grieco et al., 2011; Koliev et al., 2022).
- No effect of WHO's recommendations on public support for COVID-19 control measures (Heinzel Liese 2021).
- Research on cue effect of individual foreign country's leader is scare
- RQ: Does 'foreign leader's endorsement' increase support for a policy or favorability towards the subject?**

### Theory and Hypothesis

- Endorsement from great power (e.g. the U.S.) increases domestic public support for a policy such as International Organizations.
  - Hypotheses:Endorsement by a foreign government will likely (i) increase support for the policy, and (ii) enhance favorable attitudes towards the foreign country.
- Surprising cue; cueing effect of endorsement is large when the endorsement goes against stereotype image of the source
- People tend to accept opinion from foreign entities when the opinion is consistent with their prior beliefs (e.g. Koliev et al., 2022).
  - H2-1:**Among conservatives**, the endorsement of **South Korea** is likely to increase policy support and enhance their favorable sentiment towards **South Korea**.
  - H2-2:**Among liberals**, the endorsement of **South Korea** is likely to decrease policy support and reduce their favorable sentiment towards **South Korea**.

### Overview of Survey

- Survey Title: Survey on Political and Social Awareness
- Participants: 2,017 men and women over the age of 18 registered on Yahoo! Crowdsourcing
- Cases with missing values were excluded from the analysis.
- Survey Period: November 14-15, 2023
- Survey Method: Web survey with party support distribution aligned with the results of the most recent Asahi Shimbun opinion poll.

### Experimantal Design

On August 24,2023, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) commenced the ocean discharge of the so-called ALPS-treated water. This water, contaminated with radioactive materials, was used to cool the high-temperature reactors after the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident caused by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. The ALPS treatment removes all radionuclides except tritium.

Regarding this ocean discharge, the Chinese government has strongly criticized that Japan's decision is selfish and irresponsible, and has decided to halt the import of Japanese seafood.

Conversely, **Treament** has strongly supported the Japanese government's policy.

- Nothing (Control Group)
- President Yoon of South Korea
- the U.S. government and the EU Delegation in Japan
- President Khurelsukh of Mongolia

#### Outcome Variable 1

- Do you support the Japanese government's decision to permit the discharge of this treated water, or do you oppose it?(4-point scale)

#### Outcome Variable 2

- Feeling Thermometer(FT) towards towards China, South Korea, Mongolia, and the EU plus the US.(101-point scale)
- Difference in FT measured between before and after the experiment.

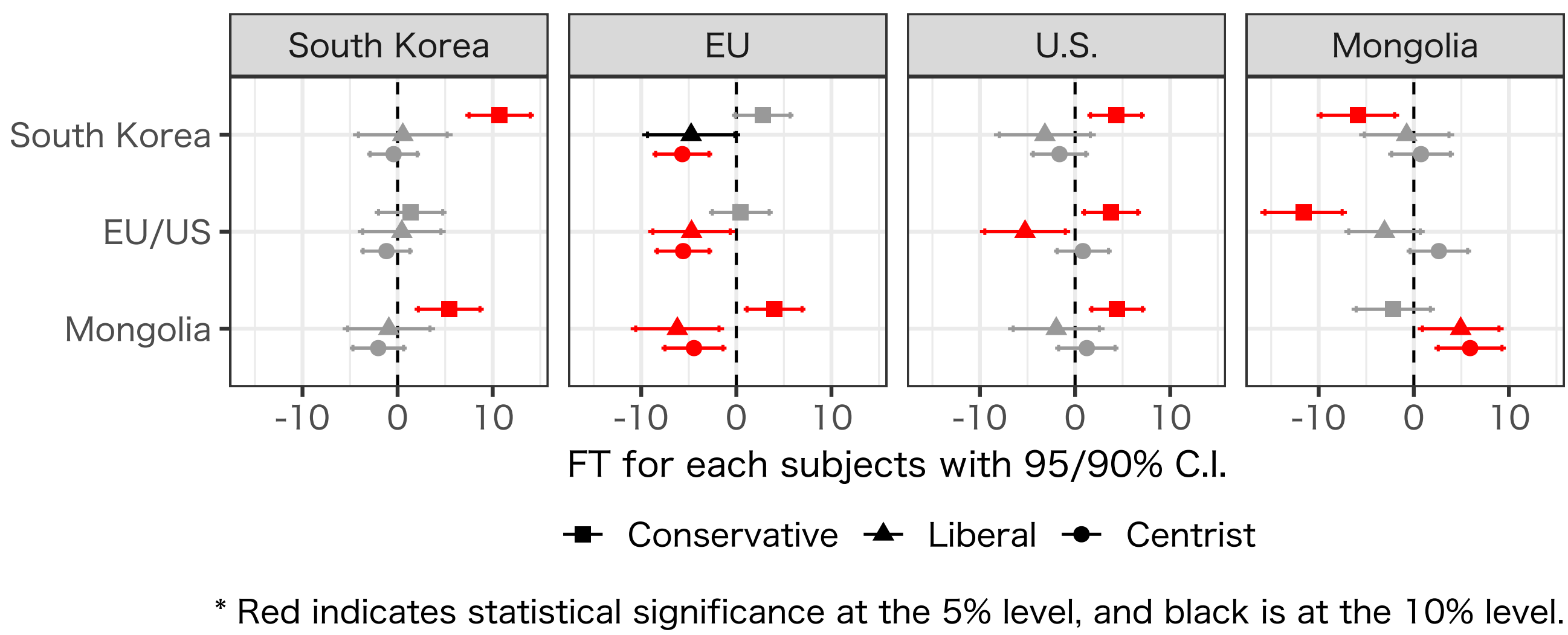
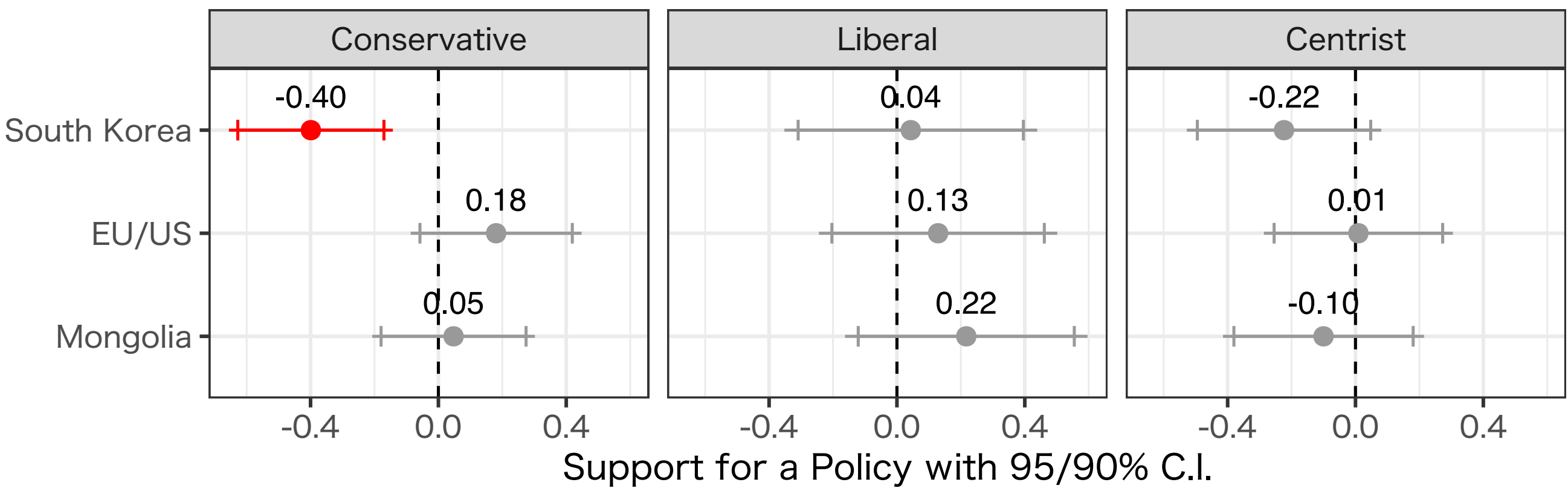
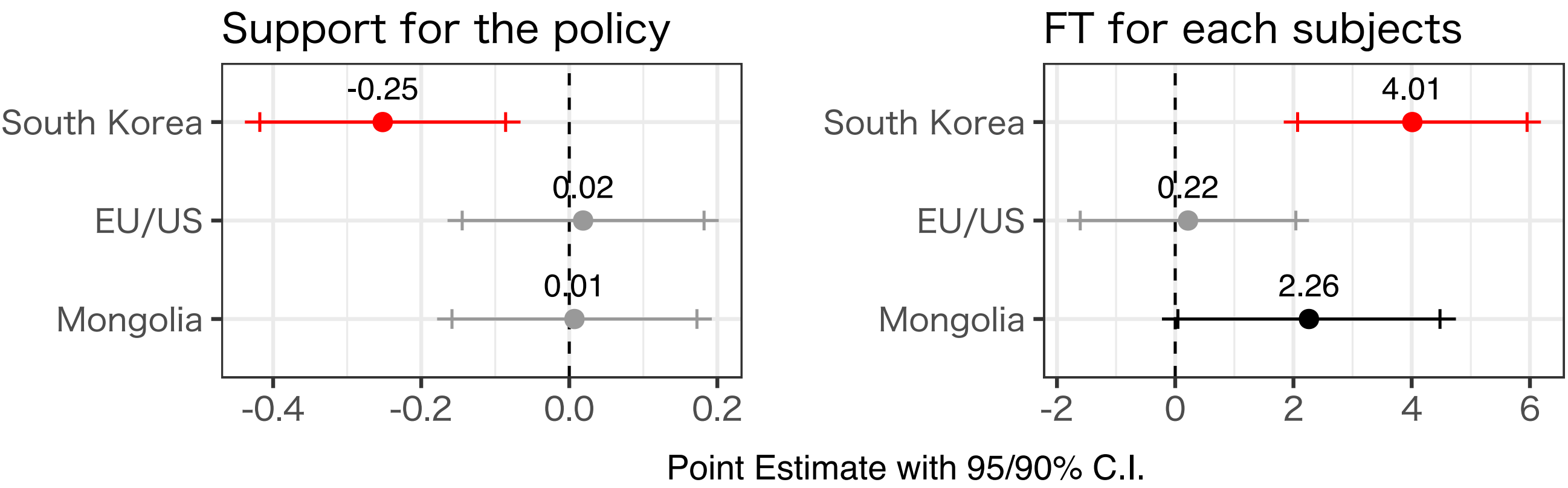
#### Subgroup via Ideology Groups

- Self-identification of ideological position on a scale from 0 (liberal) to 10 (conservative), where 0 to 4 is operationalized as 'Liberal', 5 as 'Centrist', and 6 to 10 as 'Conservative'.

### Analysis

- Estimate: OLS with multiple testing adjustments using the Tukey method.
- Statistical weighting was applied based on gender and generation using the 2020 Census.
- Analysis was limited to respondents who passed the attention check using DQS method (Maniaci & Rogge, 2014). As a result, sample size for the analysis is 1,907.

### Results



### Conclusion and Implication

- Endorsement from great powers has no effect on the domestic public opinion.
- Endorsement from perceived rival country **decreases** policy support among conservative, while it enhances favorable attitude toward the country.
- Does endorsement from neighbor country trigger backlash against the endorsed policy rather than enhances support because of national pride?
- However, endorsement enhances favorable attitude toward the perceived rival country. People's attitude foreign countries is more volatile than one toward a policy?