

Does Electoral Cooperation with the JCP Reduce Vote Share? : Evidence from the 2024 Japanese General Election

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Highlight

- **Research Question**
 - What effects does electoral cooperation with the JCP (commonly referred to as “Yato-Kyoto”) have on voters’ behavior and political perceptions?
- **Hypotheses**
 - Opposition party supporters are likely to view electoral cooperation favorably.
 - Individuals with anti-JCP are likely to dislike candidates more if they engage in electoral cooperation.
- **Results and Implication**
 - Electoral cooperation with the JCP does not appear to lead to a reduction in the vote share for the opposition parties alliance.
 - From the standpoint of electoral vote composition, the critique that frames the alliance as the ‘Rikken-Kyosan Party’ is unlikely to be empirically substantiated.

Background

- In recent Japanese elections, the role of the JCP within opposition electoral cooperation has emerged as a contentious issue (e.g., Hata, 2022a,2022b,2024; Umeda, 2023)
- In its review of the 2021 general election, the CDP concluded that “(electoral cooperation with the JCP) influenced the election results, and from now on, a more cautious approach should be taken” (Nikkei Shimbun, January 27, 2022)
- At the aggregate level, Analysis provides no evidence that individuals who ‘dislike the JCP’ refrained from voting for the CDP in the 2021 general election. However, at the micro level, it has also been revealed that the CDP’s left-leaning image was already perceived as excessively strong (Sakaiya and Yoda, 2022).
- > At the micro level, the causal effects of electoral cooperation with the JCP on voter motivation and party image remain unclear.
- **RQ: When the CDP engages in electoral cooperation with the JCP, (i) opposition party supporters and anti-JCP individuals abstaining from voting?, and (ii) reinforcement of the CDP’s left-leaning image?**

Hypotheses

- H1-1: Opposition party supporters are more likely to express a higher intention to vote for candidates who engaged in electoral cooperation compared to those who did not.
- H1-2: Opposition party supporters will not change their perception of left-wing parties when electoral cooperation occurs compared to when it does not.
- H2-1: Individuals with anti-JCP are less likely to express an intention to vote for candidates who engaged in electoral cooperation compared to those who did not.
- H2-2: Individuals with anti-JCP are likely to perceive left-wing parties more positively when electoral cooperation occurs compared to when it does not.

Overview of Survey

- Participants: 4,017 men and women over the age of 18 registered on Rakuten Insight Inc.
- Participants with missing values were excluded from the analysis.
- Survey Period: October 23 to 26, 2024.
- Survey Method: An online survey was distributed based on gender, generation, and region, aligned with demographic data from the 2020 Census.

Experimental Design

Suppose that in the upcoming general election, [Treatment] candidate presents the following policy pledges:

[The seven actual policy pledges presented by the CDP in the 2024 general election.]

First, we would like to confirm whether you have carefully read the above policy content. Please select one option from the choices below that aligns with the content of the policies mentioned above. → Only respondents who answered correctly are included in the sample (n=2,894)

✓ [Treatment] shows the random assign of one of the following 4 options:

- **Group1: a certain party X (n= 687)**
- **Group2: a certain party X in electoral cooperation with the JCP and others (n= 610)**
- **Group3: the CDP (n= 699)**
- **Group4: the CDP in electoral cooperation with the JCP and others (n= 676)**

✓ **Outcome Variables**

Now, based on the above scenario, what impression do you have of the candidate, party, and policies? (11-point scale)

- I would like to vote for this candidate.
- I perceive this party as right-wing.

✓ **Subgroup 1: Opposition party supporter**

- Respondents who selected options other than the LDP, New Komeito Party, or Independent in the party support question were defined as opposition party supporters (n=977).

✓ **Subgroup 2: Anti-JCP attitude**

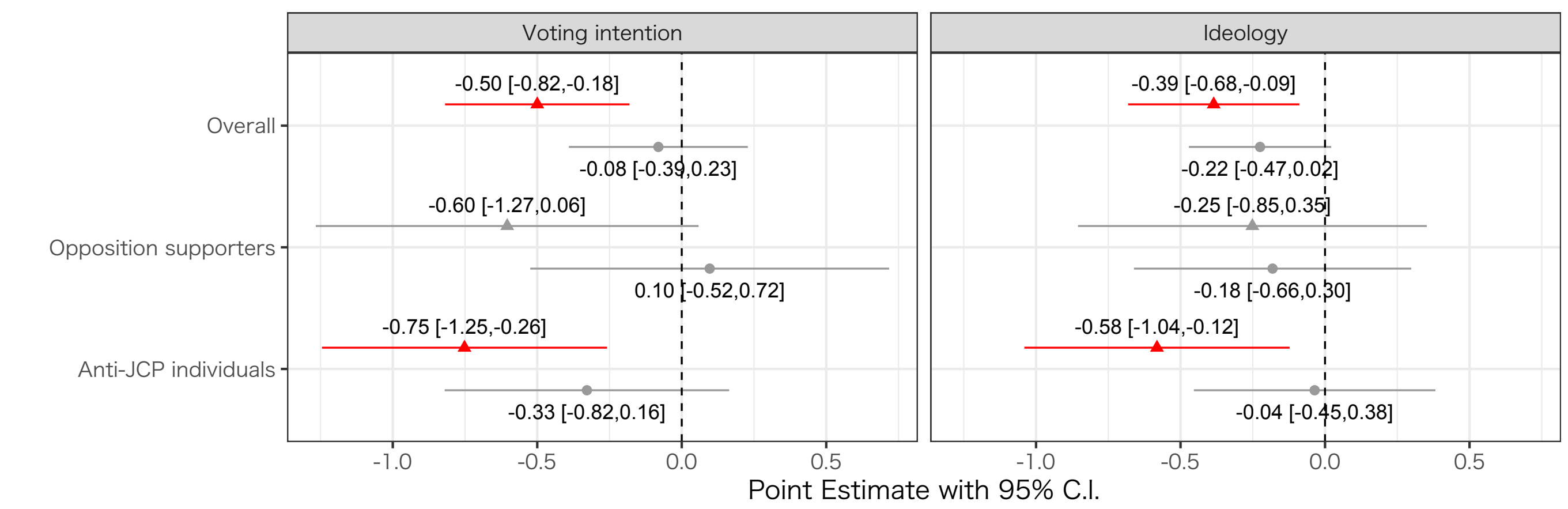
- Anti-JCP individuals were defined as respondents who rated their feeling thermometer towards the JCP at 30 degrees or below (n=1039).

Analysis

- To control for the effects of party labels, models were constructed comparing Group 1 v.s. Group 2 (masking the CDP name) and Group 3 v.s. Group 4 (the CDP name is displayed), and analyzed using OLS with robust standard errors as HC-2.
- To test the hypothesis (H1-2) positing null results, an equivalence test was conducted using {TOSTER} package in R.

Results

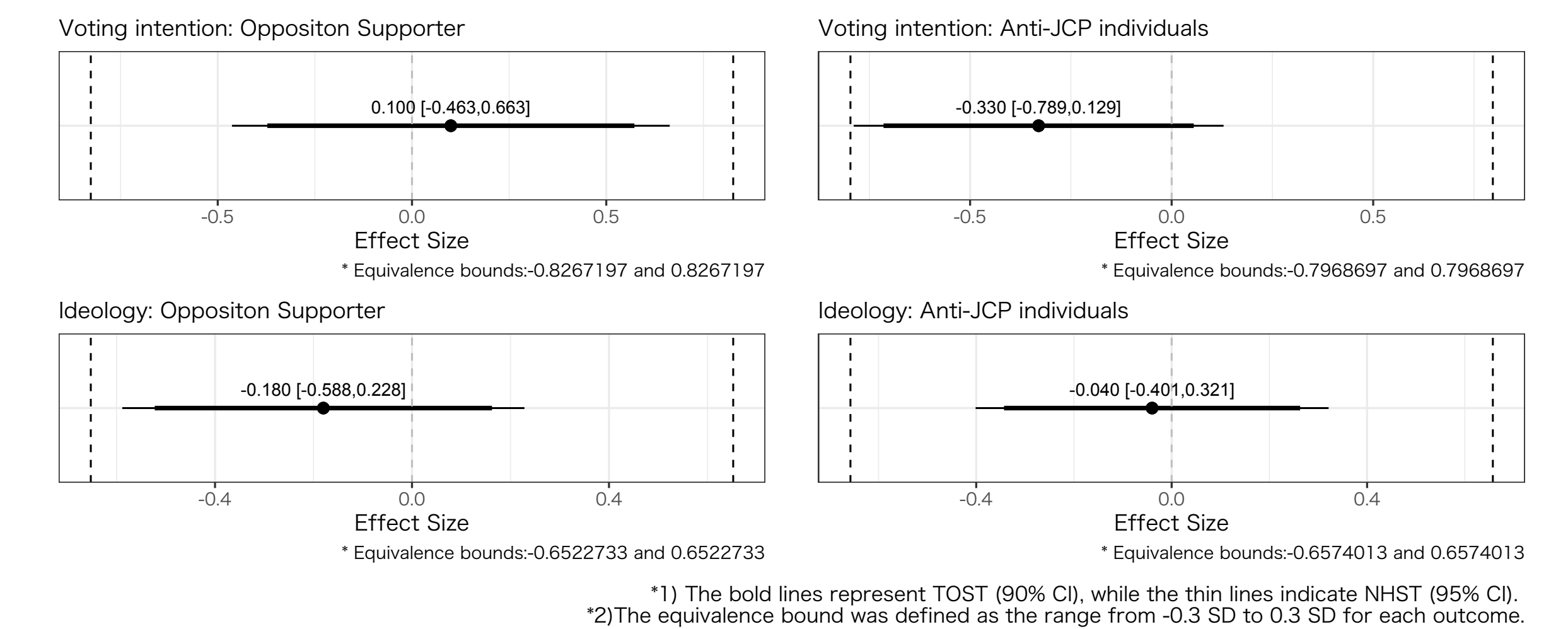
▪ **Estimated Using OLS**



▲ Masking the CDP name ● the CDP name is displayed

*1) The reference category is No information on JCP cooperation.
*2) Robust standard errors were specified using HC-2.

▪ **Equivalence Test**



*1) The bold lines represent TOST (90% CI), while the thin lines indicate NHST (95% CI).
*2) The equivalence bound was defined as the range from -0.3 SD to 0.3 SD for each outcome.

Conclusion and Implication

1. Electoral cooperation between the CDP and the JCP shows **no observable tendency** to reduce voting intention or to enhance the perception of left-wing image.
2. When the CDP label is absent, electoral cooperation with the JCP tends to reduce voting intention. -> it suggests that electoral cooperation with the JCP may only be effective because it involves the CDP specifically.
3. The criticism of a “Rikken-Kyosan Party” does not appear to be valid from the voters’ perspective.

References

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