Group Belongingness and Redistribution Preference: A Survey Experiment in Japan[†]

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Abstract

The political economy of redistribution preference sheds new light on the role of social identification in the process of preference formation and change. Group identity is an undeniable factor that shapes redistribution preference. Echoing the recent advance of the literature, I argue that individuals identify with an income group whose household income is similar to theirs. In-group favoritism arises within that income group. This mechanism makes the poor more supportive of income redistribution while the rich provide less support for redistribution. I also contend that the nation/foreigner cleavage plays a significant role. Native citizens find little to no reason to perceive proximity with foreign-born residents, which renders them less supportive of income redistribution in general. I test these arguments experimentally with a nationally representative sample of Japanese people. Much of the experimental evidence on this line of argument has been accumulated in North America and Europe. Thus, fielding an experiment in Japan has a potential of making contributions to the literature by offering external validity of the theory on redistribution preference that involves the role of social identification. Empirical analyses of my experimental data generally provide support for my arguments, which gives an additional piece of evidence to the literature.

Keywords: Redistribution Preference, Social Identification, Survey Experiment, Japan

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1 Introduction

Understanding the sources of preference for income redistribution is vital for citizens living in democracy. Redistribution preference relates closely to the state of income inequality (Milanovic 2000). Scholars argue that income inequality is one of the major explanatory factors of important phenomena including democratization (Acemoglu and Robinson 2005), civil war (Cederman et al. 2013), and low economic growth (Bénabou 1996), among many others. That is, redistribution preference is one of the key matters in social science research.

What are, then, factors that account for preference for income redistribution? Early research started with material self-interest of voters (Romer 1975; Meltzer and Richard 1981). Studies have improved our understandings of the role that material self-interest plays in shaping redistribution preference (Alesina and Giuliano 2011; Bénabou and Ok 2011; Iversen and Soskice 2001). More recently, the role of social identification started to play an important role in our explanation of redistribution preference (Shayo 2009; Lupu and Pontusson 2011).

Building on the recent development of the literature, in this paper, I conduct an online experiment and test two hypotheses on the role of social identification in redistribution preference formation. First, I argue that individuals identify with a group whose household income is similar to theirs. This identification process makes the poor more supportive of income redistribution whereas the rich is more likely to oppose it. Second, foreign-born permanent residents are considered as out-group from the perspective of the majority in society, and therefore redistribution targeted to those "foreigners" generally attracts limited support. Reflecting that the accumulated empirical evidence in the literature largely comes from North America and Europe, I conduct my experiment with a nationally representative sample of Japanese people. Analyses of experimental data provide support for these two hypotheses, providing additional piece of evidence that social identification plays a significant role in shaping redistribution preference.

This paper is organized as follows. First, I briefly review the literature, highlight the role that social identification plays in forming redistribution preference, and derive

my hypotheses. Second, I describe the design of experiment and discuss my empirical strategy. Third, I discuss the findings from empirical analyses which render support for my hypotheses. The last section concludes.

2 Literature Review

The Political Economy of Income Redistribution

An important point of departure for the political economy of economic inequality is the median voter models initiated by Romer (1975) and subsequently developed by Meltzer and Richard (1981). One of the major implications from their model (the RMR model, heareafter) suggests that individuals whose income is below the average prefer greater income redistribution than those who have income higher than the average.

In works that follow the RMR model, scholars question one of the key assumptions that expectations of the future play no role in the preference formation.[1] In other words, the RMR model assumes individuals as short-term income maximizer. Bénabou and Ok (2011) coin the term, the prospect of upward mobility (POUM), and argue that individuals who are currently poor, but have a good expectation to become rich in the future are less inclined to tax the rich today. This is the case because taxing the rich today will also hurt their income in the future if we assume that taxation is sticky and does not change so dramatically. Also, in order to explain incentives for the rich to support redistribution, Iversen and Soskice (2001) and Moene and Wallerstein (2001) develop the argument that the rich deem income redistribution as insurance against future income. Likewise, Alesina and Giuliano (2011) contend that the rich have an incentive to redistribute more if they are concerned with negative externalities that income inequality brings about. In sum, recent studies relax an assumption of the RMR model and suppose that individuals have a more extended time horizon.

[1] Mérola and Helgason (2016:1109) point to another important assumption of the RMR model—Individuals have perfect information about their position in the distribution of income.

Social Identification

The extension of the RMR model is not limited to the time dimension. Another group of studies sheds new light on the target of redistribution and individuals' social identification with that target. Drawing insights from research in social psychology that found in-group favoritism and in-group bias (e.g., Tajfel and Turner 1979; Brewer 1979), Shayo (2009) develops a model that incorporates parochial, rather than universal, altruism in the discussion of redistribution preference. His model primarily focuses on two identities, namely class and nation. Two factors play a prominent role when individuals decide to identify with one group over another. First, perceived similarity between an individual and the other members of the group works as a cognitive stimulus. Second, individuals identify with a group whose status they care about. Group status can take different forms, but in the context of redistribution preference, it refers to material gains since more redistribution to a group renders individuals who identify with that group better off.[2] In other words, group status functions as an affective factor. Shayo (2009) argues that, on the one hand, when the poor identify with their class, they prefer a high tax rate. On the other hand, if the poor identify with the nation as a whole, they become in favor of a lower tax rate.[3] This line of argument is easily extended to ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, leading to an implication that fractionalization in society reduces overall support for redistribution (Rueda and Stegmueller 2019).

The target of social identification in the discussion of redistribution preference is not restricted to racial, linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups. Mérola and Helgason (2016) use this idea when they make a conceptual distinction between absolute income shifts and relative income shifts. They argue that relative income shifts make differences between members of society salient, leading to self-interested behavior. In contrast to that, absolute income shifts highlight similarities between members. In the case of positive

[2]Since it is only the members in that target group that are better off, altruism here is not universal, but particular (Shayo 2009) or parochial (Fowler and Kam 2007). See Dimick et al. (2018) for a thorough review of the political economy of redistribution preference and altruism (or other-regarding preferences).

[3]This is the case because the redistribution to a smaller group such as a class benefits the poor. However, redistribution to all members in a country involves efficiency loss during taxation and redistribution, which decreases the nation's group payoff and thereby group status (Shayo 2009:154). An important assumption that might need to be relaxed is that individuals vote sincerely in his model.

absolute changes, social affinity increases and inequality aversion becomes a stronger motivation, which increases redistribution preference. Lupu and Pontusson (2011) argue that, in the absence of cross-cutting ethnic cleavages, middle-income individuals coalesce with the poor and support redistribution. This is likely to be the case when the middle-income group is closer to the poor than the rich with respect to income. In this situation, the middle-income group expects a higher probability of becoming poor in the future. Then, this proximity promotes social affinity of the middle-income group with the poor. Social affinity with the rich might also happen if the proximity between the middle-income group and the rich is high relative to the proximity to the poor.

The above discussion indicates advantages of incorporating social identification process in the political economy of income redistribution. This is a natural extension to the line of research that primarily studies material self-interest of individuals in the formation of redistribution preference (Piketty 1995; Bénabou and Ok 2001). Income redistribution can indirectly affect their utility since the accumulated income through taxation might come back to individuals depending on the form of redistributive policies.

Empirical Evidence in Previous Studies

In the field of political science and economics, empirical evidence of the impact of social identification on redistribution preference has been obtained through surveys and experiments.[4] Among observational studies based on public opinion data, scholars have found the role of racial group loyalty (Gilens 2000; Luttmer 2001), ethnic, linguistic, and religious fractionalization (Alesina and Glaeser 2004), identification with class and nation (Shayo 2009), inflow of immigration (Dahlberg et al. 2012), population heterogeneity (Rueda and Stegmueller 2019), and social network (Kourtellos and Petrou 2020).

Not surprisingly, findings from observational research invite criticism with respect to identification of causal relationship in question. Having this concern in mind, a growing number of studies conduct experiments to overcome this problem. For example, Habyarimana et al. (2007) performed a field experiment in Uganda and found that co-ethnics

[4]For the purpose of this paper, I refer to previous studies that investigate the impact of social identification of certain forms on redistribution preference broadly defined.

are better able to commit public goods provision since ethnic groups possess norms and networks that enforce cooperation. Klor and Shayo (2010) conducted laboratory experiments on the effect of social identity on redistribution preference. Results from survey experiments have been accumulated: Harell et al. (2016) found that racialized characterization of policy beneficiaries negatively affects attitudes toward redistribution. Studies found the impact of race/ethnicity and migrant status on welfare support in the UK (Ford 2016), support for social policy in the UK (Muñoz and Pardos-Prado 2017), perceived deservingness in the Netherlands and the UK (Kootstra 2016), and supposrt for social assistance in North America (Soroka et al. 2017).

Interestingly, most of the previous studies on the relationship between social identification and redistribution preference rely on experimental evidence from North America and Europe. Therefore, more evidence should be produced from other parts of the world with different political, economic, and social contexts and settings in order to ascertain generalizability of the argument. In this paper, I attempt to contribute to the literature by providing an additional piece of evidence through a survey experiment in Japan.

Group Belongingness, Parochial Altruism, and Redistribution Preference

In the section that follows, I will test my hypotheses that incorporate the idea of social identification and parochial altruism in the formation of redistribution preference. In order to assess the impact of in-group and out-group on support for redistributive policies, I randomly group respondents into three groups. There are two treatment groups and one control group. One treatment group is primed about the poor in general. Another treatment group is primed about poor foreigners. I explain these treatment conditions in a greater detail in the next section. Here, I develop hypotheses that I am testing.

First, when respondents are primed about the poor in society in general, in-group favoritism argument would expect that people whose economic circumstances are similar to those of the poor are likely to identify with them and express support for redistibutive policies to them. That is, poorer people are expected to show more support for income

redistribution to the poor than wealthier people. Thus, the first hypothesis expects:

H_1 **Conditional In-Group Favoritism:** Priming the poor in society as recipients of income redistribution increases (decreases) support for redistribution among the poor (the rich).

In contrast to in-group favoritism that can be conditioned by respondents' financial situation, discrimination against foreigners (which is a form of out-group discrimination) is expected to be uniform across different income groups. This is the case because individuals have neither a cognitive factor nor an affective factor when facing foreigners (out-group). In other words, they perceive little to no proximity to the out-groups and have little to no incentive to improve the status of those out-groups. The second hypothesis maintains:

H_2 **Out-Group Discrimination:** Priming foreigners in society as recipients of income redistribution decreases support for redistribution.

3 Experimental Design

To test my hypotheses, I conducted a survey experiment with a nationally representative sample of Japanese people. Respondents were randomly grouped into three groups.[5] One group of respondents received no treatment and was prompted to answer a question about their redistribution preference.[6] Thus, their answer is no different from ordinary survey. Second group received a treatment that involves priming the poor in general as public assistance (*Seikatsu Hogo*)[7] recipients. Lastly, third group received a treatment that

[5]Randomization is based on three factors: respondents' gender, prefecture of residence, and age group.

[6]Question wording closely follows the one in General Social Survey in the US while the answer categories range from 1 (The government ought to reduce the income inequality) to 6 (The government ought not to reduce the income inequality).

[7]This is a means-tested program that is aimed at helping assist the poor. In order to be eligible for public assistance, individuals' household income has to be below minimum living cost of their living area. They must not possess properties including land or fields that are not in use, holiday homes, precious metals and brand-name goods, luxury cars, a second or subsequent cell phone or computer, credit cards, stocks, and life insurance with a saving component. They should have no family or relatives who can provide them with financial support. Thus, the requirements are not necessarily easy to satisfy.

gives priming foreigners as public assistance recipients.[8] In 2019, the number of people who received public assistance was 2,073,116 (1.6% of population) while the number of foreigners who received it was 66,801 (0.05% of population). That is, the proportion of foreigners who receive this public assistance program is about 3.2%.[9]

In this experiment, the treatments were given in the form of actual newspaper articles with a figure and texts. I designed the experiment in this way so that the design mimics real world situation in which individuals might have a look at newspaper articles to get informed about redistribution policies. Appendix A1 shows the original newspaper articles that were used in the experiment. Respondents in treatment groups also received information about example monthly benefits since some might not know how much one might receive through this means-tested program (Appendix A2). After reading an article, respondents in the treatment groups were asked to answer two questions for the purpose of checking their compliance to the treatments.[10] Lastly, they were prompted to answer the question about their redistribution preference.

Rakuten Insight fielded this experiment as a part of an online survey in January 2021.[11] In total, 4,002 respondents were recruited so that the treatment groups and the control group each consist of 1,334 respondents.[12] In the survey, there were two questions that were designed to check for the respondents' attention to survey items.

[8]Foreigners are also eligible for public assistance in Japan if they are permanent residents, settled residents, spouses of Japanese residents, spouses of permanent residents, special permanent residents, or persons with refugee status.

[9]Data are gathered by Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (MHLW). The number reported here is the monthly average of recipients.

[10]First, respondents in *The Poor* treatment group were asked which number was closest to the number of households that received public assistance as of April 2018: (1) 0.5 million, (2) 1 million, (3) 1.5 million, or (4) 2 million. Respondents in *Foreigner* treatment group were asked which number was closest to the number of foreigners' household that received public assistance in 2016: (1) 10,000, (2) 30,000, (3) 50,000, or (4) 80,000. Second, respondents in the treatment groups were asked which was closest to the monthly benefit for the cases of elderly single person household living in Tokyo: (1) 40,000 yen, (2) 60,000 yen, (3) 80,000 yen, or (4) 100,000 yen. Correct answers are (3) for both questions.

[11]Participants can take the survey through web browsers or smartphone/tablet app. Participants were recruited from the pool of individuals who register for *Rakuten Insight*. Once the survey became available, they received notification through emails and app notification system. By joining the survey, respondents receive Rakuten points which can be used as digital currency afterwards.

[12]The online survey was fielded in two separate modules Each module recruited 2,001 respondents. Some of the questions were different between the modules. Since the same experiment was conducted in both modules and the covariates I use are shared by the modules, I pool the sample in the following analysis. Inclusion of a dummy variable of a module as well as estimating the models by modules do not affect the substantive conclusions I draw.

Those questions asked respondents to choose a certain answer from multiple choices. The sample of 4,002 respondents does not include individuals who failed to answer these questions correctly. Also, satisficers who provided answers in a certain pattern (such as giving "1" to all questions) are not included in the sample. In other words, 4,002 respondents were recruited while putting aside those satisficers and respondents who paid low attention to the survey. Appendix A3 reports descriptive statistics and balance.

4 Analysis

Table 1 about here.

In my experimental research design, treatments were provided as a newspaper article. Even though it allows researchers to mimic a real world situation in which individuals are exposed to information in a way they are likely to consume, the potential downside of this approach is that a newspaper article contains information that is not central in light of the intended treatment. In other words, a treatment that takes a form of newspaper articles can contain noises, leading to noncompliance to the treatment that researchers intended to administer. To address this concern, I examine the respondents who received the treatment by distinguishing compliers from noncompliers. Compliers are those who provided the correct answer to the two compliance check questions right after they received a treatment. Noncompliers are respondents who failed to answer them.[13]

Table 1 shows the number of respondents in the treatment groups who correctly answered the compliance check questions. In both groups, less than 20% of participants answered them correctly. In the analysis that follows, I compare them with respondents

[13]If there are covariates in the model that are systematically associated with compliance to treatments, it indicates that certain type of individuals are more likely to get treated. In order to check for this possibility, for each treatment group, I estimated an ordered logistic regression model in which the dependent variable is the number of correct answers to the two compliance check questions. The covariates in the right-hand-side of the equation are income, education level, conservativeness, party identification dummies, age, squared age, female, response time, and dummies of prefecture of residence. Results are reported in Table A4 in Appendix. In both treatment groups, coefficient on education level is positive and statistically significant. The coefficient on response time variable is positive and statistically significant only in *Foreigner* treatment group. But the rest of the variables are found systematically unrelated to the extent of compliance to treatments.

in the control group.[14]

Table 2 about here.

Table 2 shows the results of the experiment. *The Poor* refer to participants who complied with the treatment with which they read the newspaper article on the change in the number of recipients of public assistance in general. *Foreigner* indicates participants who complied with another treatment with which they read the newspaper article on the statistics of public assistance claimed and received by foreigners. Model 1 displays the results from an OLS regression that includes *The Poor* and *Foreigner* covariates. Model 2 adds response time (in seconds) and dummy variables of prefecture of residence. In both models, *The Poor* and *Foreigner* are negative and statistically significant at the 0.05 level and at the 0.01 level, respectively.

Model 3 and Model 4 further add an ordinal variable of self-reported annual household income[15] and its interaction with *The Poor* in order to test Hypothesis 1 of the conditional in-group favoritism. I expect the marginal effect of *The Poor* to be negative and statistically significant. Lastly, Model 5 includes a battery of control variables that might be associated with redistribution preference. These control variables include self-reported conservativeness,[16] education level,[17] age, squared age, and a dummy variable of female. I also include dummy variables of party identification with government parties (i.e., LDP and Komei), non-partisan, and respondents with DK/NA answer to partisanship question. Thus, party identification with an opposition party is set as the reference category.[18]

[14]In the robustness check section, I also report the results in which different criteria are used to distinguish compliers from noncompliers. Overall conclusion is not sensitive to the change in how to measure compliers.

[15]*Income* is measured through a survey question on household income in which respondents choose from (1) less than 1 million yen, (2) between 1 million and 3 million yen, (3) between 3 million and 5 million yen, (4) between 5 million and 7 million yen, (5) between 7 million and 10 million yen, (6) between 10 million and 15 million yen, (7) more than 15 million yen, (8) Don't know/Refuse to answer. According to National Livelihood Survey conducted by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2019), the average household income in 2018 is 5.523 million yen while the median is 4.37 million yen.

[16]This is measured through a seven point scale of self-reported conservativeness. The variable ranges from 1 (most liberal) to 7 (most conservative).

[17]This is an ordinal variable in which respondents report the last school they attended: (1) junior-high school, (2) high school, (3) junior college or higher professional school, (4) college, (5) graduate school, and (6) others.

[18]Opposition parties in the survey include Constitutional Democratic Party, Democratic Party for

Figure 1 about here.

Overall, the models presented in Table 2 immediately provide us with empirical support for out-group discrimination with respect to income redistribution (Hypothesis 2) because the coefficient on *Foreigner* is negative and statistically significant at the 0.01 level throughout the models. That is, respondents who were primed with public assistance to foreigners are less inclined to support redistribution than respondents who were not primed at all.

Figure 1 presents the marginal effect of *The Poor* contingent on respopndents' household income using the estimates from Model 5 (Table 2). As the conditional in-group favoritism argument (Hypothesis 1) expects, the wealthier individuals are, the less they are inclined to show support for income redistribution. In particular, the effect of *The Poor* treatment is found negative and statistically significant at the 0.05 level among respondents whose income ranges from 5 million to 10 million yen (i.e., The income group above the median of 4.37 million yen). Respondents whose annual income is less than 5 million yen are not affected by the *The Poor* treatment with respect to their redistribution preference. If Hypothesis 1 holds, this is the case because some of the people in that income group identify themselves with the people in need and are better off by providing financial support to them. It is important to note that, the results would have been stronger if individuals whose income is very low (say, less than 1 million yen per year) were more willing to support income redistribution after receiving *The Poor* treatment. However, since redistribution preference is deemed a stable attitude (Kuziemko et al. 2015; O'Grady 2019), the treatment that I administered in the online experiment might not be strong enough to change their attitude radically. In other words, finding the marginal effects that vary across different income groups provides us with an intriguing piece of evidence that corroborates my theoretical expectations.

the People, Japan Innovation Party, Communist Party of Japan, Social Democratic Party of Japan, and other parties.

Robustness Check

Alternative Measures of Complier

Since using the definition of compliers above significantly reduces the number of respondents in the analyzed sample, I estimate the models above with alternative measure of compliers. First alternative is to define compliers as respondents who correctly answered at least one of the two compliance check questions (Model 6). This strategy obviously has risks to consider respondents who are not fully complied with the treatment as the treated. Second alternative is to use the count of correct answers to the compliance check questions instead of dichotomizing it with a certain criterion (Model 7). In other words, in contrast to compare "compliers" with the control group respondents, I now measure the level of compliance in the treatment groups. One major concern of this approach is, however, this imposes a strong assumption that those who failed to answer the two compliance check questions are deemed equivalent to respondents in the control group who received no information about public assistance. Having these issues in mind. I present the results from this robustness check to demonstrate that the findings are not sensitive to a specific definition of compliers in the analyses above.

Table 3 about here.

Table 3 shows the results from these robustness checks. To facilitate the comparison, the first column includes the results from Model 5 in Table 2. We can observe the increase in the sample size with the alternative measure of complier (Model 6) and the measure of compliance level (Model 7). In both Model 6 and Model 7, the interaction term between *The Poor* and Income is negative and statistically significant, which is consistent with my theoretical expectations. The marginal effect of *The Poor* decreases as the income level increases, leading to less support for income redistribution among wealthier respondents while poorer respondents do not change their view on redistribution upon receiving the treatment about public assistance in general. As for Hypothesis 2 on outgroup discrimination, the same result is consistently found with different specifications. In brief, the conclusions that are drawn from Model 5 in Table 2 are not sensitive to the

specific definition of complier. Moreover, comparing the control group to the respondents who appear to fully comply with the treatment gives a more conservative test of the hypotheses.

Placebo

To examine whether the findings presented above were obtained by chance alone, I replace the dependent variable with other (non-experimental) survey items that asked respondents about their perspective on income redistribution and inequality. More specifically, I use four survey questions that begin with "What do you think about the following opinions? Please choose one that is closest to your opinion."

> **Placebo 1:** The government should increase the welfare of the less fortunate even if it means increasing taxes from the rich (6=Closest $\cdots$ 1=Not close).
>
> **Placebo 2:** It is the responsibility of the government to take care of the poor who cannot support themselves (6=Closest $\cdots$ 1=Not close).
>
> **Placebo 3:** There should be more income inequality to encourage individual effort (6=Not close $\cdots$ 1=Closest).
>
> **Placebo 4:** It is desirable to have a society where individuals are responsible for taking care of their own affairs (6=Not close $\cdots$ 1=Closest).

Values of the variables are reorganized so that a higher value represents more supportive attitude toward redistribution.

Table 4 about here.

Table 4 reports the regression results in which the dependent variable is replaced with one of these four survey items. All covariates except the dependent variable are the same with the ones in Model 5 (Table 2. It is only in Column 1 (Placebo 1) that the coefficient on *Foreinger* is statistically significant at the 0.1 level. Figure 2 plots the marginal effect of *The Poor* treatment contingent on the respondent's household income.

In no models, the effect is negative and statistically significant. Hence, the results give us more confidence in the findings above, concluding that they are not obtained by chance alone. Interestingly, the coefficients on Income are negative and statistically significant at the 0.01 level in the all four models. This suggests that among the respondents in the control group there is a negative correlation between their household income and the survey items that measure non-experimentally their support for redistribution. This is the case because the coefficients on Income variable represents the marginal effect of Income in the absence of *The Poor* treatment. As we know already, we cannot interpret these correlations as causal relationships.

Figure 2 about here.

5 Conclusions

The political economy of redistribution preference sheds new light on the role of social identification in the process of preference formation and change. Group identity is an undeniable factor that shapes redistribution preference. Echoing the recent advance of the literature, I develop the two hypotheses in which social identification plays a major role. First, I argue that individuals identify with an income group whose household income is similar to theirs. In-group favoritism arises within that income group. This mechanism makes the poor more supportive of income redistribution (since this benefits people like the poor) while the rich provide less support for redistribution (since the gains are much smaller than the costs they pay). Second, I contend that the nation/foreigner cleavage also plays a significant role. Native citizens find little to no reason to perceive proximity with foreign-born residents, which renders them less supportive of income redistribution in general.

I test these arguments experimentally with a nationally representative sample of Japanese people. Much of the experimental evidence on this line of argument has been accumulated in North America and Europe. Thus, fielding an experiment in Japan has a potential of making contributions to the literature with respect to testing external valid-

ity and generalizability of the theory on redistribution preference that involves the role of social identification. Empirical analyses of my experimental data generally provide support for my arguments, which gives an additional piece of evidence to the literature.

Despite the positive findings of this paper, there are some caveats and lessons from my experiment. First, the design of the survey experiment in which respondents are asked to read and process a certain amount of texts and figures as a form of published newspaper articles, not surprisingly, can cause non-compliance to treatments. Using newspaper articles has a risk of providing redundant and unnecessary information to respondents, which might obscure the treatments that researchers intend to administer. However, published newspaper articles allow us to mimic a likely situation in the real world, which might not be possible to attain in other design in which researchers provide a combination of (hypothetical) vignettes or profiles. More evidence is necessary to conclude which design is more effective and appropriate than others. Second, this paper primes about poor foreigners to see how respondents shape their attitude toward income redistribution. However, in many societies, there are also rich and middle-class "foreigners" who permanently reside. It is also an intriguing next step to prime about those foreigners to examine whether, albeit their relatively high income, native people become less supportive to income redistribution although those "foreigners" are not likely to be recipients of public assistance, but rather financially support the social security system as taxpayer.

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Table 1. Distribution of Compliers

	Complier	Noncomplier	
Number of correct answers	2	1	0
The Poor treatment	247 (18.52%)	551 (41.30%)	536 (40.18%)
Foreigner treatment	235 (17.62%)	573 (42.95%)	526 (39.43%)

Table 2. Results of Experiment

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
The Poor	-0.24*	-0.24*	-0.08	-0.08	0.04
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
The Poor × Income			-0.05	-0.05	-0.07
			(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Foreigner	-0.32**	-0.33**	-0.31**	-0.32**	-0.31**
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Income			-0.14**	-0.13**	-0.11**
			(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Controls	No	No	No	No	Yes
Response Time	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
N	1336	1336	1336	1336	1336
Adjusted R^2	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.08

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression. Dependent variable is support for redistribution.

The full results are available in Table A5 in Appendix.

Table 3. Robustness Check with Alternative Measures of Complier

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
The Poor	0.04	0.26	0.14
	(0.30)	(0.18)	(0.12)
The Poor × Income	-0.07	-0.09*	-0.06†
	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Foreigner	-0.31**	-0.17*	-0.13**
	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Income	-0.11**	-0.09**	-0.10**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Response Time	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1336	2166	2893
Adjusted R^2	0.08	0.07	0.06

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression.

Dependent variable is support for redistribution.

The full results are available in Table A6 in Appendix.

Table 4. Robustness Check with Placebo

	Placebo 1	Placebo 2	Placebo 3	Placebo 4
Compliance to *The Poor*	-0.29	-0.07	-0.10	-0.14
	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.25)
Compliance to *The Poor* × Income	0.07	-0.02	0.06	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Compliance to *Foreigner*	-0.16†	-0.08	-0.09	0.04
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Income	-0.14**	-0.07**	-0.08**	-0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Response Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1336	1336	1336	1336
Adjusted R^2	0.15	0.10	0.07	0.05

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression. The full results are available in Table A7 in Appendix.

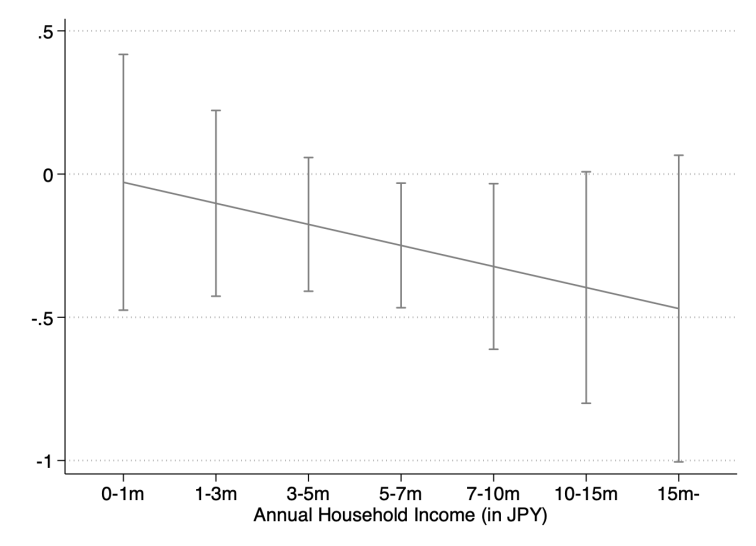


Figure 1. Marginal Effect of *The Poor* Treatment with 95% Confidence Intervals

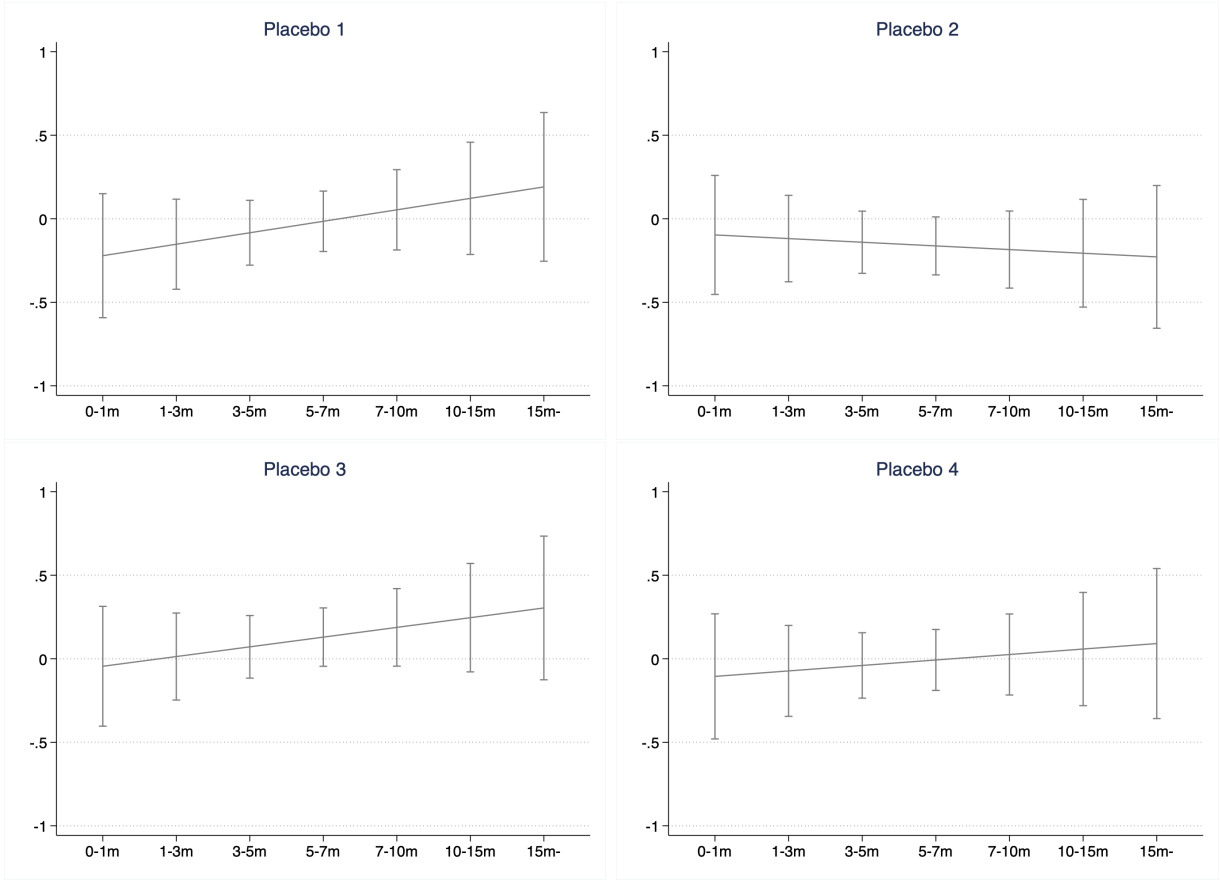
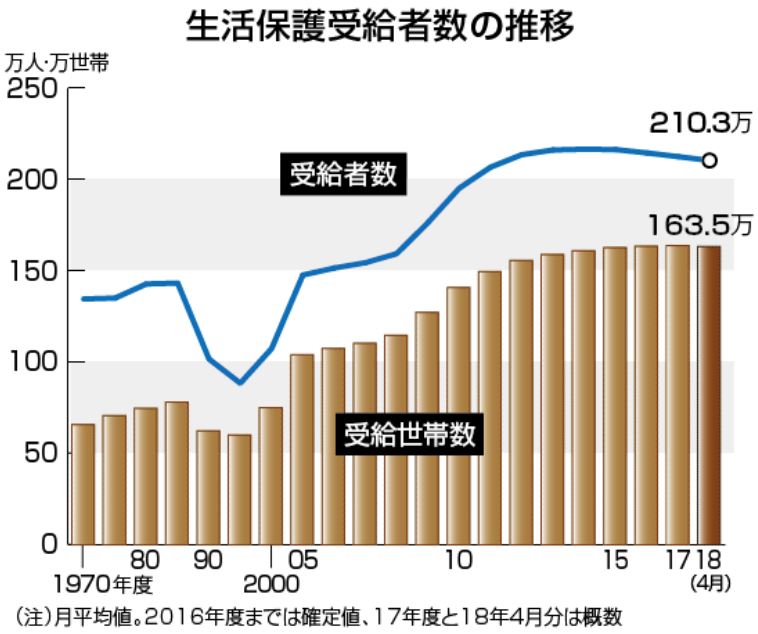


Figure 2. Marginal Effect of *The Poor* Treatment with 95% Confidence Intervals

Appendix

A1: Newspaper Articles Used for Treatment Groups

Treatment Group 1: Public Assistance Claimed by the Poor



４月の生活保護、２カ月ぶり減＝厚労省

※記事などの内容は2018年7月4日掲載時のものです

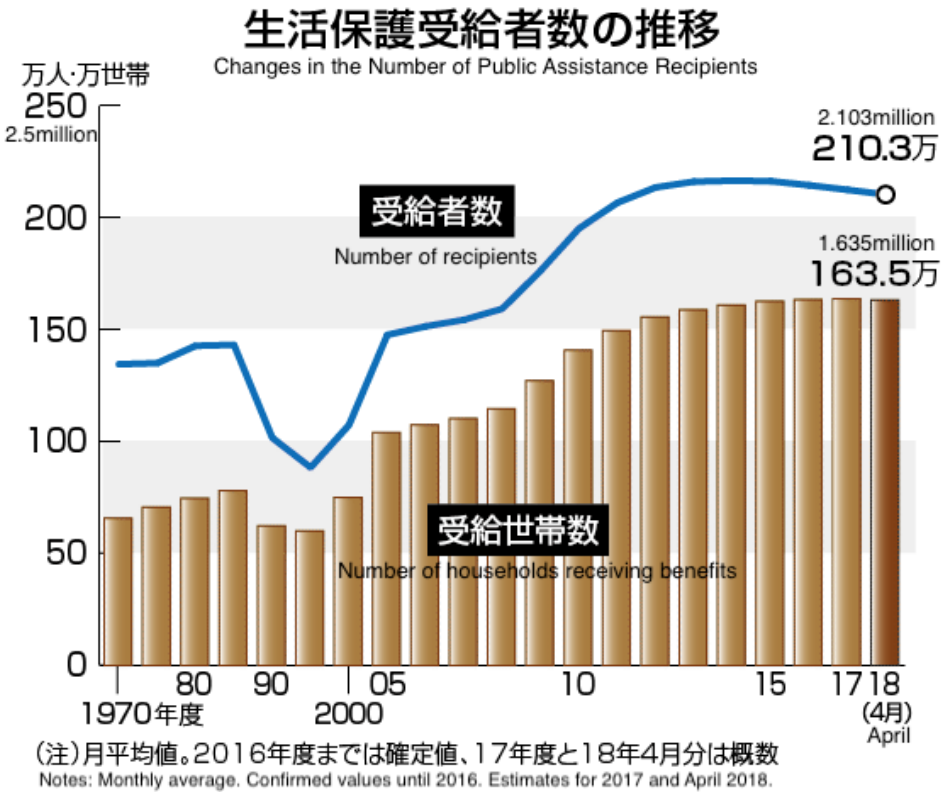
厚生労働省は４日、４月に生活保護を受給した世帯が前月より４４８８世帯少ない１６３万５２８０世帯だったと発表した。２カ月ぶりの減少。６５歳以上の高齢者世帯が増えた一方、失業者のいる世帯など高齢者以外の世帯が大きく減少した。雇用情勢の改善が影響したとみられる。

一時的な保護停止を除く受給世帯の内訳を見ると、６５歳以上の「高齢者」は８７万９０４１世帯。うち単身世帯が８０万７７９世帯で受給世帯全体の約半数を占める。高齢者以外では、「母子」が8万７４６４世帯、失業者を含む「その他」は２４万９７１７世帯だった。

Figure A1. Priming Public Assistance in General

Figure A1 shows an article published by Jiji Press Ltd. on July 4, 2018. This article was assigned to Treatment Group 1 in order to prime the poor in general as public assistance beneficiaries. It displays the trend in the number of individuals and households that received public assistance from 1970 to 2018. It reports the statistics provided by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. According to the text, 163.5 million households were recipients of public assistance as of April 2018. The graph also shows that the number of individual recipients was 210.3 million in the same month.

Translated texts and a figure (*The Poor* treatment)



Title: Public assistance in April down for the first time in two months—MHLW

(Article and other contents are as of the time of publication on July 4, 2018)

On April 4, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare announced that the number of households receiving public assistance in April was 1,635,280, 4,488 fewer than the previous month. The first decrease in two months. While the number of households with elderly people aged 65 and above increased, the number of households with non-elderly people, such as those with unemployed people, decreased significantly. The improvement in the employment situation is believed to have an impact.

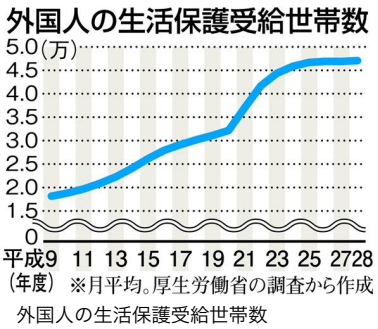
A breakdown of the households receiving public assistance, excluding those receiving temporary suspension, shows that 879,041 households are aged 65 and above. Of these, 807,779 are single-person households, accounting for about half of all households receiving public assistance. Other than the elderly, 87,464 households were "mothers and children" and 249,717 households were "others" including the unemployed.

Treatment Group 2: Public Assistance Claimed and Received by Foreigners

生活保護受給の外国人４万７０５８世帯　過去最多　背景に無年金や語学力不足も

2018.5.3 05:00 | 政治 | 政策

生活保護を受けている外国人が平成２８年度に月平均で４万７０５８世帯に上り、過去最多に達したとみられることが２日、政府の調べで分かった。日本語能力の不足で職につけない外国人が多いことなどが理由とみられる。人手不足が深刻化する中、政府は２月の経済財政諮問会議で、外国人労働者の受け入れ拡大方針を示したが、福祉のあり方まで含めた的確な議論や対策が求められる。



外国人の生活保護受給世帯数

厚生労働省によると、２８年度の外国人が世帯主の生活保護受給世帯数は月平均で前年度比０・４％増。景気が上向いているここ数年は伸びが鈍化しているが、１８年度（3万１７４世帯）からの１０年間で５６・０％増えた。

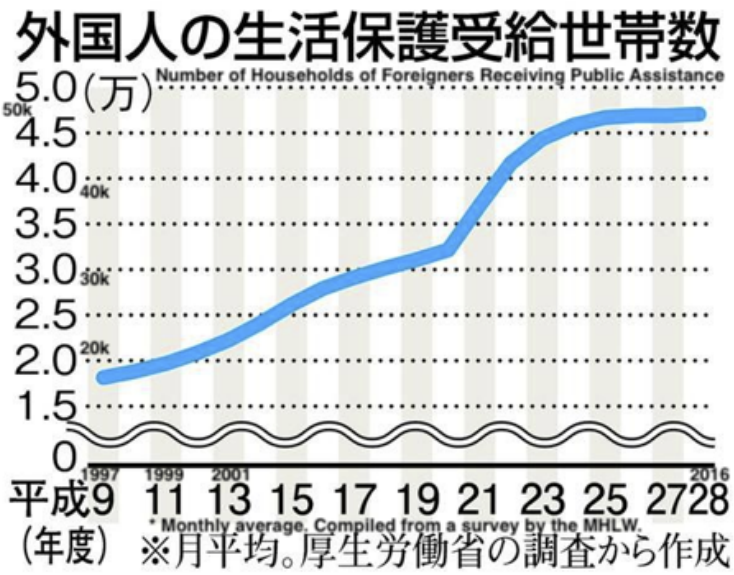
また人数ベースでみても外国人が世帯主の世帯による生活保護の受給は大幅に増えている。２８年度は月平均７万２０１４人と、１８年度の４万８４１８人から４８・７％多くなった。一方、在留外国人全体の人数の増加率は１９年末から２９年末にかけての１０年間で２３・８％にとどまっている。

外国人の生活保護受給が増えているのは、バブル期の人手不足で労働者として大量に入ってきた日系南米人などがリーマン・ショックなどによる景気悪化で解雇され、日本語が話せず、再就職が難しいためとされる。また、昭和５７年の難民条約発効に伴う国民年金法の国籍条項撤廃で、老齢年金の支給対象から外された在日外国人が高齢化し無年金状態であることも大きいとみられる。

Figure A2. Priming Public Assistance for Foreigners

Figure A2 shows an article published by Sankei Shinbun on May 3, 2018. This article was assigned to Treatment Group 2 in order to prime foreigners as public assistance beneficiaries. It displays the trend in the number of households of foreigners that received public assistance. The title of the article says that "the number of households is 47,058 which is highest in the past." It also mentions lack of pension and language skills as potential reasons for them to receive the assistance.

Translated texts and a figure (*Foreigner* treatment)



Title: A record number of 47,058 foreign households receiving public assistance, partly due to lack of pensions and language skills

The number of foreigners receiving public assistance rose to an average of 47,058 households per month in 2016, which is the largest number ever, according to a government survey on April 2. The reason is believed to be that many foreigners are unable to find jobs due to their lack of Japanese language skills. As the labor shortage worsens, the government announced a policy to increase the number of foreign workers at the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy in February, but there is a need for precise discussions and measures including the state of welfare.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the number of households headed by foreigners receiving public assistance in 2016 increased by 0.4% per month on average compared to the previous year. Although the growth has slowed in recent years when the economy has been improving, the number has increased by 56.0% in the 10 years since 2006 (30,174 households).

In terms of the number of people receiving public assistance, the number of households headed by foreigners has also increased significantly, averaging 70,2014 people per month in 2016, a 48.7% increase from 48,418 people in 2006. On the other hand, the rate of increase in the overall number of foreign residents was only 23.8% over the 10 years from the end of 2007 to the end of 2017.

The increase in the number of foreigners receiving public assistance is said to be due to the fact that a large number of South Americans of Japanese descent, who entered Japan as workers during the labor shortage of the bubble economy, were laid off due to the economic downturn caused by the Lehman Shock and other factors. And they have hard time finding a job due to the lack of Japanese language skills. It is also believed that the aging of foreign residents in Japan, who are not eligible to receive old-age pensions due to the abolition of the nationality clause in the National Pension Law following the entry into force of the Refugee Convention in 1982, is also deemed a major factor.

A2: Example Public Assistance Benefits

Table A1. Example Benefits Dependent on the Type of Household and Living Area

	Tokyo	Rural Area
Household of three persons (33, 29, and 4 years old)	158,210 yen	135,830 yen
Elderly single person household (68 years old)	78,230 yen	65,270 yen
Elderly couple household (68 and 65 years old)	120,240 yen	102,430 yen
Mother and child household (30, 4, and 2 years old)	189,580 yen	164,670 yen

Note: Includes additional childcare expenses.

Table A1 shows example benefits from public assistance program that the respondents in the treatment groups also saw with one of the newspaper articles presented above. This highlights the benefits depend on the type of households and living areas of recipients.

A3: Descriptive Statistics and Balance

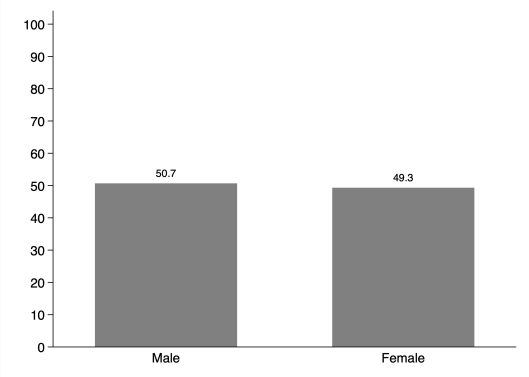


Figure A3. Proportion of Gender

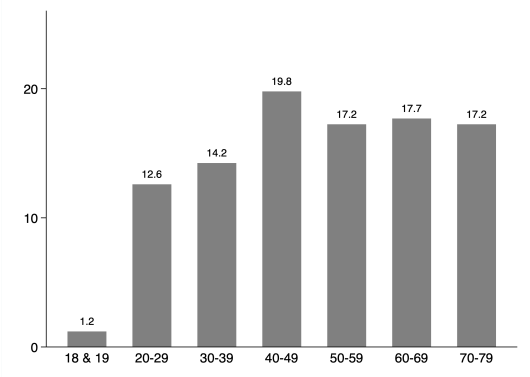


Figure A4. Proportion of Age Groups

Age group, gender, and prefecture of residence were used to randomly assign treatment conditions. The number of respondents in each group is 1,334, which makes up 4,002 respondents in total. In each group, 676 respondents are male and 658 respondents are female (Figure A3). In each group, 16 respondents are aged 18 or 19, 168 are between 20 and 29, 190 are between 30 and 39, 264 are between 40 and 49, 230 are between 50 and 59, 236 are between 60 and 69, and 230 are between 70 and 79 (Figure A4).

Respondents are recruited from 39 prefectures out of 47 (Figure A5). Eight prefectures from which no respondents are recruited are Fukui, Nagano, Tottori, Shimane, Tokushima, Kagawa, Kochi, and Saga. The number of recruited respondents from 39 prefectures in each treatment/control group is Hokkaido (60), Aomori (16), Iwate (16), Miyagi (24), Akita (6), Yamagata (6), Fukushima (22), Ibaraki (26), Tochigi (24), Gunma (24), Saitama (80), Chiba (70), Tokyo (162), Kanagawa (106), Niigata (24), Toyama (8), Ishikawa (14), Nagano (24), Gifu (24), Shizuoka (40), Aichi (82), Mie (24), Shiga (22), Kyoto (24), Osaka (100), Hyogo (58), Nara (16), Wakayama (2), Okayama (24), Hiroshima (24), Yamaguchi (16), Ehime (16), Fukuoka (54), Nagasaki (16), Kumamoto (24), Oita (10), Miyazaki (6), Kagoshima (20), and Okinawa (20).

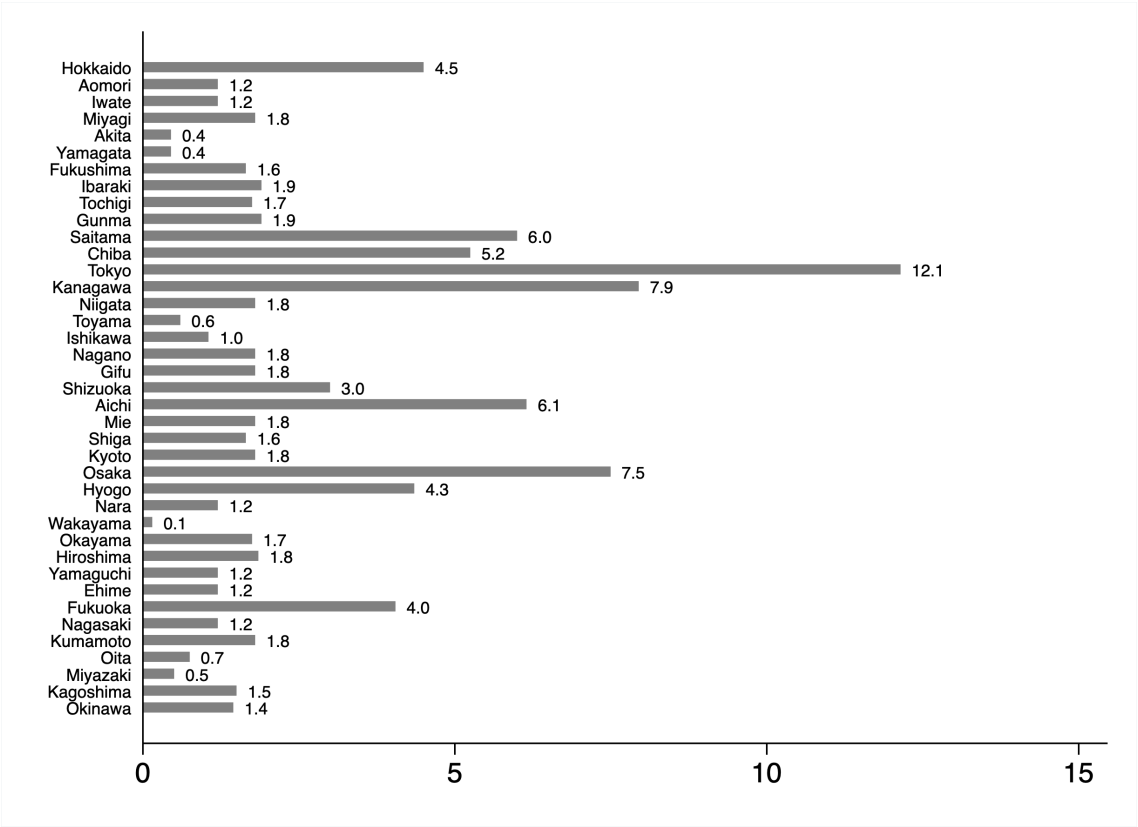


Figure A5. Distribution of Respondents' Prefecture of Residence (%)

Table A2. Covariate Balance

	Control Group			The Poor			Foreigner		
	N	Mean	s.d.	*N*	Mean	s.d.	*N*	Mean	s.d.
Income (1-7)	1,116	3.68	1.49	1,103	3.63	1.46	1,119	3.66	1.46
Education level (1-5)	1,302	3.23	1.02	1,308	3.17	1.01	1,313	3.14	1.00
Age (18-79)	1,334	50.49	15.98	1,334	50.45	15.85	1,334	50.59	16.05
Conservativeness (1-7)	1,146	4.15	1.24	1,149	4.18	1.25	1,144	4.18	1.25

Table A2 shows descriptive statistics of four covariates—household income, education level, age, and conservativeness—across treatment/control conditions. Three groups are not different with respect to those covariates, which strengthens our confidence with randomization.

Table A3. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	s.d.	Min	Max
Income	3,338	3.66	1.47	1	7
Education level	3,923	3.18	1.01	1	5
Age	4,002	50.51	15.96	18	79
Female	4,002	0.49	0.50	0	1
Conservativeness	3,439	4.17	1.24	1	7
PID (Government Parties)	4,002	0.30	0.46	0	1
PID (Opposition Parties)	4,002	0.19	0.40	0	1
PID (Non-partisan)	4,002	0.37	0.48	0	1
PID (DK/NA)	4,002	0.14	0.34	0	1

Table A4. Explaining Compliance to Treatments

	The Poor Treatment Group	*Foreigner* Treatment Group
Income	0.00	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.04)
Education	0.20**	0.16*
	(0.07)	(0.07)
Conservativeness	0.01	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.05)
PID: Government Parties	-0.29	-0.26
	(0.19)	(0.18)
PID: Non Partisan	-0.21	-0.20
	(0.18)	(0.18)
PID: DK/NA	-0.44	0.02
	(0.27)	(0.26)
Age	-0.04	-0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age (Squared)	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	0.10	0.13
	(0.13)	(0.13)
Response Time	0.00	0.00**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Prefecture Dummies	Yes	Yes
N	964	966
Pseudo R^2	0.03	0.04

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

Ordered logistc regression.

Dependent variable is the number of correct answers to compliance checks.

Table A5. Full Results of Table 2

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
The Poor	-0.24*	-0.24*	-0.08	-0.08	0.04
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)
The Poor × Income			-0.05	-0.05	-0.07
			(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Foreigner	-0.32**	-0.33**	-0.31**	-0.32**	-0.31**
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Income			-0.14**	-0.13**	-0.11**
			(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Conservativeness					-0.22**
					(0.03)
PID: Government Parties					-0.28*
					(0.11)
PID: Non Partisan					-0.15
					(0.10)
PID: DK/NA					-0.35*
					(0.15)
Education					-0.01
					(0.04)
Age					-0.00
					(0.02)
Age (Squared)					0.00
					(0.00)
Female					-0.07
					(0.08)
Constant	4.27**	4.34**	4.80**	4.82**	5.94**
	(0.04)	(0.19)	(0.11)	(0.22)	(0.45)
Response Time	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
N	1336	1336	1336	1336	1336
Adjusted R^2	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.08

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression. Dependent variable is support for redistribution.

Table A6. Full Results of Table 3

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
The Poor	0.04	0.26	0.14
	(0.30)	(0.18)	(0.12)
The Poor × Income	-0.07	-0.09*	-0.06†
	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Foreigner	-0.31**	-0.17*	-0.13**
	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Income	-0.11**	-0.09**	-0.10**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conservativeness	-0.22**	-0.17**	-0.15**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
PID: Government Parties	-0.28*	-0.27**	-0.26**
	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.08)
PID: Non Partisan	-0.15	-0.10	-0.10
	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.07)
PID: DK/NA	-0.35*	-0.18	-0.13
	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Education	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age (Squared)	0.00	0.00	0.00†
	(0.00)	(0.00)†	(0.00)
Female	-0.07	-0.06	-0.10†
	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Constant	5.94**	5.69**	5.67**
	(0.45)	(0.36)	(0.32)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Response Time	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1336	2166	2893
Adjusted R^2	0.08	0.07	0.06

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression.

Dependent variable is support for redistribution.

Table A7. Full Results of Table 4

	Placebo 1	Placebo 2	Placebo 3	Placebo 4
Compliance to *The Poor*	-0.29	-0.07	-0.10	-0.14
	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.25)
Compliance to *The Poor* × Income	0.07	-0.02	0.06	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Compliance to *Foreigner*	-0.16†	-0.08	-0.09	0.04
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Income	-0.14**	-0.07**	-0.08**	-0.06**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conservativeness	-0.12**	-0.06*	-0.07*	-0.11**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
PID: Government Parties	-0.33**	-0.43**	-0.33**	-0.25**
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.09)
PID: Non Partisan	-0.25**	-0.27**	-0.13	-0.22*
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)
PID: DK/NA	-0.30*	-0.22†	-0.05	0.07
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Education	0.00	0.05†	-0.03	0.06
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age	-0.00	-0.00	-0.02	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age (Squared)	0.00	0.00	0.00†	-0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Female	0.16*	0.07	-0.14*	-0.12†
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Constant	5.18**	4.38**	5.12**	3.92**
	(0.38)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.38)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Response Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prefecture Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1336	1336	1336	1336
Adjusted R^2	0.15	0.10	0.07	0.05

Note: $^{\dagger}p < 0.10$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

OLS regression.