Navigating the Amazon Pass-Through of Digital Service Tax

Dominika Langenmayr & Rohit Reddy Muddasani

August 26, 2024



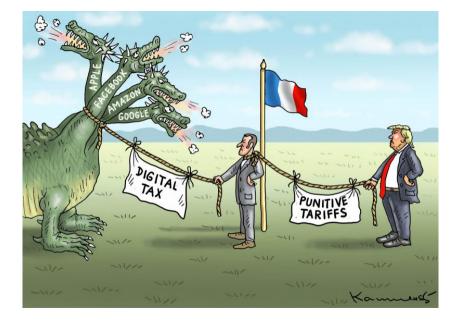
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- Digital services firms can often capture revenues from a country without attributing any profits to the country.
- Through a digital service tax, the idea of the governments might be to impose taxes on large corporates.
- But does this translate into reality?
- Research Question: Are DSTs effective in taxing large corporations in the digital economy or do they pass through the tax to other market participants?



• There is theoretical literature on the incidence of taxes on two-sided market platforms.

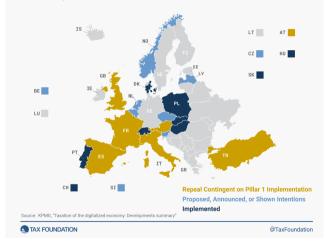
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- The results may considerably differ from standard incidence literature (e.g., Kind et al., 2010; D'Annunzio et al., 2020).
- No study looks at pass-through on multiple sides of the multi-sided market platform.
- Probably the first study to do this. (To the best of our knowledge!)

Digital Services Taxes in Europe

Legislative Status of Digital Services Taxes (DSTs) in European OECD Countries, as of February 21, 2024



Canadian Parliament Approves Controversial Digital Services Tax

POSTED ON JUNE 24, 2024		☆ Favorite	🔒 Print	🕞 View as PDF	⊠ Send Article	📌 Share
By KIARRA M. STROCKO Email the author	The Canadian Par percent digital ser U.S. trade groups	rvices tax o	n large l	ousinesses, s		

Bill C-59 was officially passed following a third reading in the Senate on June 19, according to Canada's parliamentary legislative tracker. The bill, which implements a DST, is now awaiting royal assent. The DST imposes a 3 percent tax on businesses with global revenue of at least **€750** million and Canadian digital services revenue of over C \$20 million annually.

Canada's parliamentary budget officer estimated that the DST would increase revenue by C \$7.2 billion over five years. The DST targets revenue from social media services, online advertising, user data services, and online marketplaces. The DST will apply retroactively from January 1, 2022.

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- Study analyzes the pass-through of taxes on multiple sides of the digital platform.
- Two tier analysis using Amazon data to assess the pass-through of taxes.
- Results in both tiers show pass-through of the tax in most marketplaces.
- Considerable heterogeneity in the results indicating that pass-through is not uniform in all countries.

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- Special focus on one service called Fulfillment by Amazon(FBA).
- We consider the FBA fee especially for this study because Amazon has a special fee structure which it publishes and are available for public visibility.

Country	DST Date	DST Rate	GT	СТ	DST Impl. Date
France	24/07/2019	3%	€750 mil	€25 mil	01/12/2020
UK	16/07/2020	2%	\pounds 500 mil	$\pounds 25$ mil	01/04/2020
Spain	07/10/2020	3%	€750 mil	€3 mil	16/01/2021
Italy	19/12/2019	3%	€750 mil	€5.5 mil	01/01/2020

Notes: The data is sourced from the latest report 'Taxation of the Digital Economy' of KPMG, dated 22nd January 2024. The DST date represents the date of implementation in the legislature. 'GT' refers to the global threshold that qualifies a firm for DST in that jurisdiction. 'CT' refers to the country threshold, which indicates the amount of revenue that a firm has to make in that particular country for falling under the DST. The DST implementation date refers to the date when the country started collecting DSTs from firms. The dates of signing into the law have been taken from various Section 301 reports of the United States.





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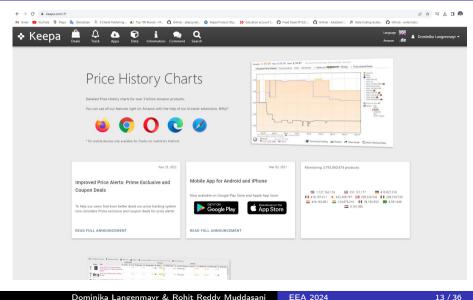
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All tools E-Sign



Calculati	ng your fees	1. Fulfilm													
	gether your fulfilment and nd any optional services you				Cross-border fulfilment (EFN) sold on ³										
	1. Fulfilment Fee		UK²	DE ³ / PL/CZ	DE Only	FR	π	ES	NL	SE	PL	UK²	DE ⁴ /FR/ IT/ES/ NL	SE	PL
	A flat fee per unit, based on • Dimensions	Small Envelop Dimensions: ≤	20 X 15 X												
	 Unit weight 	≤ 80g	£1.46	€ 1.73	€ 2.08	€ 2.37	€ 2.74	€ 2.26	€ 1.62	17.14 kr	4.48 zł	£3.99	€ 4.38	45.94 kr	18.61 zł
	- +	Standard Enve Dimensions: ≤	33 X 23 X	2.5 cm											
	2. Storage Fee (see page 4)	≤ 60g	£1.56	€ 1.88	€2.23	€ 2.52	€2.88	€ 2.51	€ 1.76	18.81 kr	4.53 zł	£4.16	€ 4.55	47.82 kr	19.38 zł
(2. Storage Fee (see page 4) Charged per cubic metre	≤ 210g	£1.66	€ 2.01	€ 2.36	€ 3.01	€ 3.03	€ 2.81	€ 1.93	20.13 kr	4.66 zł	£4.45	€ 4.88	51.21 kr	20.74 zł
	per month or cubic foot per	≤ 460g	£1.77	€ 2.16	€ 2.51	€ 3.38	€ 3.27	€ 3.02	€ 2.05	21.42 kr	4.91 zł	£4.52	€ 4.95	51.96 kr	21.05 zł
	month	Large Envelop Dimensions: ≤	33 X 23 X												
		≤ 960g	£2.21	€ 2.52	€ 2.87	€ 3.96	€ 3.53	€ 3.15	€ 2.48	25.24 kr	5.64 zł	£4.84	€ 5.30	55.65 kr	22.55 zł
0	3. Optional Services Fee	Standard Parc Dimensions: ≤	45 X 34 X												
(\circ)	(see page 4)	≤ 150g	£2.19	€ 2.66	€ 3.01	€ 3.95	€ 3.62	€ 2.99	€ 2.53	26.60 kr	5.35 zł	£4.86	€ 5.32	55.88 kr	22.64 zł
(On	Includes:	≤ 400g	£2.33	€ 2.95	€ 3.30	€ 4.72	€ 4.04	€ 3.50	€ 2.81	29.49 kr	5.66 zł	£5.94	€ 6.50	68.25 kr	27.66 zł
	Returns	≤ 900g	£2.50	€ 3.38	€ 3.73	€ 5.46	€ 4.66	€ 3.78	€ 3.26	33.80 kr	6.48 zł	£7.00	€ 7.66	80.46 kr	32.60 zł
	 Disposal 	≤ 1.4kg	£2.66	€ 3.99	€ 4.34	€ 5.68	€ 5.24	€ 4.25	€ 3.84	39.50 kr	6.75 zł	£7.68	€ 8.42	88.37 kr	35.81 zł
	Labeling Bagging	≤ 1.9kg	£2.91 £4.14	€ 4.30 € 4.77	€ 4.65	€ 5.74	€ 5.47	€ 4.32	€ 4.11	40.99 kr 41.94 kr	6.75 zł	£8.80 £9.79	€ 9.64	101.17 kr	40.99 zł 45.63 zł
	Bubble wrap	≤ 2.9kg	£4.14 £4.53	€ 4.77	€ 5.12	€ 7.45	€ 6.82	€ 6.02	€ 4.69	41.94 kr 43.21 kr	6.83 zł 6.86 zł	£9.79 £11.52		112.64 kr 133.19 kr	45.63 zł 53.96 zł
	Taping	≤ 3.9kg	£4.55 £4.62	€ 5.55	€ 5.87	€ 7.92	€ 7.24	€ 6.02	€4.71	45.21 kr 45.39 kr	6.96 zł	£12.10		135.19 kr 139.83 kr	55.96 Zł
	Opague bagging	≤ 4.9kg	£4.62 £5.12	€ 5.95	€ 6.30	€ 8.63	€ 8.07	€ 6.52	€ 4.72	45.59 Kr 46.86 kr	7.01 zł	£12.10		139.83 kr 139.83 kr	56.65 zł
		≤ 5.9kg ≤ 6.9kg	£5.12 £5.28	€ 5.95	€ 6.30	€ 8.65	€ 8.07	€ 6.64	€ 5.05	46.86 Kr 47.31 kr	7.01 zł	£12.10		139.83 kr 139.83 kr	56.65 zł
		≤ 6.9kg ≤ 7.9kg	£5.42	€ 6.11	€ 6.46	€ 9.42	€ 8.34	€ 7.12	€ 5.05	47.31 ki 51.76 kr	7.36 zł	£12.10		147.92 kr	59.93 zł
		≤ 8.9kg	£5.42	€ 6.11	€ 6.46	€ 9.42	€ 8.37	€ 7.12	€ 5.16	52.8 kr	7.39 zł	£13.12		151.66 kr	



Dominika Langenmayr & Rohit Reddy Muddasani

13/36

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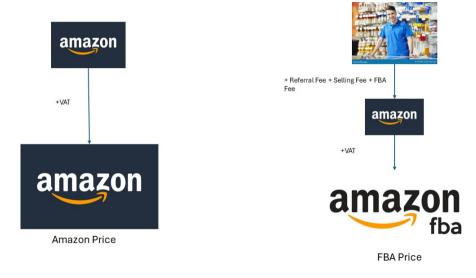
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- **FBA Price**: Lowest price of the product offered by a seller on Amazon availing FBA service.

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- We also download the supplier count of every product.

Pass-Through to Consumers(Example)



Pass-Through to Consumers(Example)



Identification

- Differences-in-differences methodology using standard TWFE model and Callaway/Sant'anna estimator.
- UK, France, Spain and Italy get treated at different time periods. Germany is the only country not treated.

Regression TWFE

$$In(FBAFees)_{jt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DST_{jt} + \theta_j + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{jt}$$
(1)

Regression CSDID

$$InFBAfee^{g,t} = \alpha_1^{g,t} + \alpha_2^{g,t}.G_g + \alpha_3^{g,t}.1\{T = t\} + \beta^{g,t}.(G_g * 1\{T = t\}) + \epsilon^{g,t}$$
(2)

Pass-Through to Consumers (Methodology)

Identification

- Differences-in-differences methodology comparing the FBA price to the Amazon price in the treated countries.
- The Amazon price is the price when Amazon is the seller. This price is not affected by the DST. Serves as the control.
- The FBA price is the price which is affected by DST. This is the treated price.

Regression Model

$$In(Price)_{jt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treat_{jt} \times Post_t + \theta_j + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{jt}$$
(3)

$$log(Price)_{it} = \sum_{k=-12}^{11} \alpha_k D_t^k * Treat_{it} + \theta_i + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{jt}$$
(4)

TWFE using DST rate								
	(1)	(2)	(3)					
VARIABLES	In(FBA fee)	ln(FBA fee)	ln(FBA fee)					
DST	0.011***	0.008***	0.014***					
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)					
Observations	45,900	20,400	25,500					
R-squared	0.992	0.986	0.981					
Cross-section FE	YES	YES	YES					
Time FE	YES	YES	YES					
Size		Standard	Oversize					

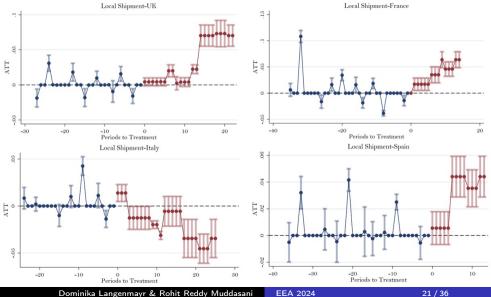
Notes: ***, **, * indicate significance at the 1%, 5%, 10% levels.

Pass-Through to Sellers (Results)

Callaway-Sant'anna estimator								
	(1)	(2)	(3)					
VARIABLES	In(FBA fee)	In(FBA fee)	In(FBA fee)					
GAverage	0.020***	0.023***	0.018**					
Italy	(0.004) -0.018***	(0.004) -0.012***	(0.004) -0.023***					
UK	(0.006) 0.033***	(0.004) 0.052***	(0.005) 0.018***					
France	(0.004) 0.037***	(0.007) 0.030***	(0.004) 0.043***					
Spain	(0.006) 0.028***	(0.004) 0.023***	(0.007) 0.033***					
·	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.007)					
Observations	45,900	20,400	25,500					
Cross-section FE	YES	YES	YES					
Time FE	YES	YES	YES					
Size		Standard	Oversize					

Notes: In panel C, the standard errors are clustered at the cross-sectional level, as the Callaway-Sant'Anna allows only for clustering at a level nesting the cross-sectional identifier, and four clusters are too few. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the FBA fee which is the sum of the shipping fee, the storage fee, the labeling fee, the baggage fee and the taping fee. ***, **, * indicate significance at the 1%, 5%, 10% levels.

Pass-Through to Sellers (Results)



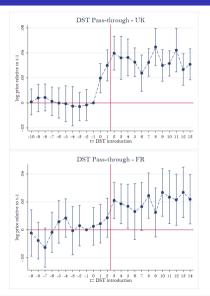
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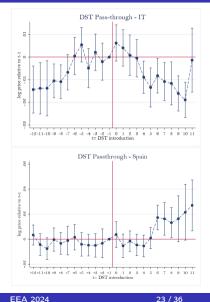
Pass-Through to Consumers (Results weekly data - 24 weeks)

	UK	FR	IT	ES
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	log(price)	log(price)	log(price)	log(price)
Treat x Post	0.032***	0.017***	0.001	0.010***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Observations	1,108,871	344,008	821,117	613,694
R-squared	0.974	0.977	0.977	0.981
Cross-Section FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Time FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: ***, **, * indicate significance at the 1%, 5%, 10% levels.

Pass-Through to Consumers (Event Study - Weekly)





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- In Italy, where we do not observe a pass-through of the tax, we observe Amazon to be considerably inelastic as a seller.
- Introduction of DSTs only beneficial in cases where platform is inelastic to supplier entry/exit?

Appendix

• Current empirical research mostly dedicated to VAT pass-through.(Benzarti and Carloni, 2019; Benzarti et al., 2020 etc.,)

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- There are a few studies which look at incidence of taxes in two-sided market platforms.
- Bibler et al. (2021) using AirBnB data and Lassmann et al. (2020) using Facebook data.

Pass-Through to Sellers (Descriptives)

	railer A. All products									
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Germany	7.88	15.91	19.26	13.93	6.41	14,280				
Spain	7.87	16.98	21.09	15.19	7.68	14,280				
France	9.74	19.25	22.81	17.42	8.37	14,280				
Italy	9.79	19.25	22.36	16.58	7.46	14,280				
United Kingdom	6.59	13.75	16.89	12.18	6.24	14,280				
	Panel B: Standard Size									
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Germany	4.07	6.42	7.16	5.88	1.80	4,080				
Spain	3.96	6.24	7.21	5.90	1.83	4,080				
France	5.05	7.34	9.20	7.28	2.50	4,080				
Italy	4.61	7.03	8.94	6.97	2.35	4,080				
United Kingdom	3.01	3.01 4.67		4.49 1.73		4,080				
		Panel C	C: Overs	size						
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Germany	15.45	17.73	19.95	17.16	4.45	10,200				
Spain	15.84	19.52	22.82	18.91	5.73	10,200				
France	18.25	21.42	24.52	21.48	6.16	10,200				
Italy	17.66	21.20	23.72	20.42	4.88	10,200				
United Kingdom	13.03	15.50	18.38	15.25	4.51	10,200				

Panel A: All products

Notes: FBA fees for Germany, Spain, Italy and France are in \in (Euro). Prices for the United Kingdom are in \pounds (Great Britain Pound). Data Source: Fulfilment by Amazon rate cards downloaded from https://sell.amazon.co.uk/.

Pass-Through to Consumers Pre-Treatment(Descriptives)

Panel A: Average Amazon Price									
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations			
Spain	13.18 20.74		36.45	34.18	42.06	218,140			
France	13.32	20.77	36.15	33.73	41.12	277,841			
Italy	13.39	20.99	37.08	34.64	42.87	320,187			
United Kingdom	7.05	12.30	22.08	21.65	39.41	400,987			
Panel B: Average FBA Price									
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations			
Spain	13.88	21.63	37.99	35.33	44.69	93,197			
France	13.66	22.05	39.14	36.56	47.35	73,331			
Italy	13.69	21.21	36.25	33.77	40.64	204,034			
United Kingdom	6.10	11.63	21.49	20.90	38.70	266,254			
	Pane	I C: Ave	erage N	ew Cou	nt				
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations			
Spain	5.00	9.00	15.00	11.77	10.72	288,902			
France	5.00	9.00	14.00	11.18	9.68	391,693			
Italy	7.00	11.00	20.00	16.09	15.52	463,100			
United Kingdom	8.00	12.00	19.00	14.62	10.17	596,568			

Panel A: Average Amazon Price

Notes: All prices for Spain, Italy and France are in \in (Euro). Prices for the United Kingdom are in \pounds (Great Britain Pound). The count of suppliers is in absolute numbers. **Data Source**: Keepa.com.

Pass-Through to Consumers Post-Treatment(Descriptives)

	Panel A: Average Amazon Price									
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Spain	12.91	20.18	35.25	33.33	41.68	229,619				
France	13.44	21.03	36.83	34.05	41.12	288,278				
Italy	13.47	21.08	37.70	35.20	43.71	310,601				
United Kingdom	7.31	12.97	23.33	22.64	39.88	409,860				
Panel B: Average FBA Price										
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Spain	13.64	21.99	39.90	36.84	47.17	74,684				
France	14.02	22.82	39.93	37.61	48.41	77,225				
Italy	14.10	21.99	37.99	34.86	40.66	183,037				
United Kingdom	6.97	12.92	23.12	22.33	40.92	237,398				
	Pane	C: Ave	erage N	ew Cou	nt					
	p25	p50	p75	Mean	SD	Observations				
Spain	4.00	8.00	13.00	10.45	9.89	312,462				
France	4.00	7.00	11.00	8.82	7.99	406,644				
Italy	6.00	10.00	18.00	14.21	13.39	468,306				
United Kingdom	5.00	8.00	13.00	9.91	7.51	592,362				

Panel A: Average Amazon Price

Notes: All prices for Spain, Italy and France are in \in (Euro). Prices for the United Kingdom are in \pounds (Great Britain Pound). The count of suppliers is in absolute numbers. Data Source: Keepa.com.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)						
VARIABLES	log(FBA Price)	log(FBA Price)	log(FBA Price)	log(FBA Price)						
Supplier_Count	-0.011***	-0.010***	-0.005***	-0.008***						
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)						
Observations	805,573	289,083	568,699	221,410						
R-squared	0.969	0.973	0.968	0.976						
Cross-section FE	YES	YES	YES	YES						
Time FE	YES	YES	YES	YES						
Country										
	Robust sta	ndard errors in pa	rentheses							
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1										

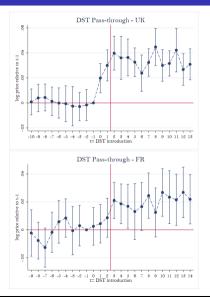
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)					
VARIABLES	log(Amazon Price)	log(Amazon Price)	log(Amazon Price)	log(Amazon Price)					
Supplier_Count	-0.005***	-0.006***	-0.002***	-0.004***					
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)					
Observations	1,360,281	779,168	935,231	619,863					
R-squared	0.973	0.972	0.974	0.975					
Cross-section FE	YES	YES	YES	YES					
Time FE	YES	YES	YES	YES					
Country	UK	France	Italy	Spain					
	Robust	standard errors in pa	rentheses						
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1									

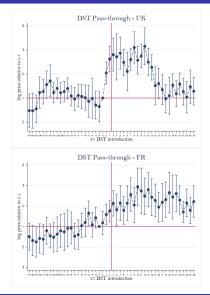
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)						
VARIABLES	log(FBM Price)	log(FBM Price)	log(FBM Price)	log(FBM Price)						
Supplier_Count	-0.013***	-0.013***	-0.006***	-0.009***						
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)						
Observations	1,113,680	389,503	703,590	268,449						
R-squared	0.969	0.972	0.966	0.977						
Cross-section FE	YES	YES	YES	YES						
Time FE	YES	YES	YES	YES						
Country UK France Italy Spain										
	Robust st	andard errors in pa	rentheses							
	*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1									

	UK			FR			ІТ			ES		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
VARIABLES	log(price)											
Treat x Post	0.020***	0.020***	0.040***	0.028***	0.027***	0.043***	0.013***	0.013***	0.015***	0.015***	0.015***	0.020***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.006)
Observations	1,367,785	1,330,418	37,367	735,786	705,615	30,171	974,082	930,219	43,863	630,230	602,611	27,619
R-squared	0.968	0.966	0.979	0.970	0.967	0.981	0.969	0.965	0.980	0.972	0.969	0.979
Cross-Section FE	YES											
Time FE	YES											
Size		Standard	Oversize									

Notes: ***, **, * indicate significance at the 1%, 5%, 10% levels.

Pass-Through to Consumers (Event Study - Longer Period)



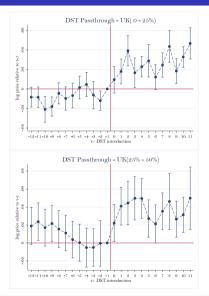


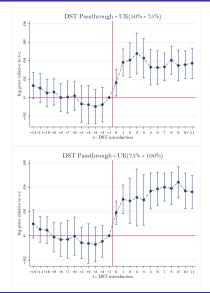
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Pass-Through to Consumers (Event Study - Price variation)

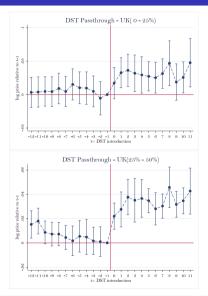


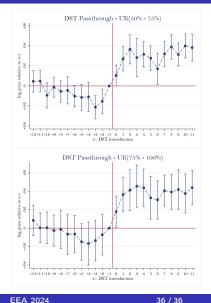


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Pass-Through to Consumers (Event Study - Supplier variation)





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