

Online Appendix

This online appendix of supplementary material presents (A) observational data on candidates and MPs in Japan; (B) additional analyses of the average component interaction effects (ACIEs) for some key attributes; (C) the full text of priming information on electoral system contexts given to each experimental group of respondents, and the full list of attributes and levels; and (D) robustness checks on the main results presented in the text.

A Observed Attributes

Figures [A.1](#) through [A.5](#) show the observed distributions of politicians' attributes across electoral system contexts. Data for the House of Representatives (HR) are from the 2014 election; data for the House of Councillors (HC) are from the 2013 election. Attributes are coded based on profiles listed in newspapers and candidate websites during the elections. Each figure is a mosaic plot, which shows the joint distribution of an attribute and electoral system context — SMD (including dual-listed) versus PR for the House of Representatives (HR); SNTV (including SMDs) versus PR for the House of Councillors (HC). For the HR, we separate PR winners who ran as “pure” PR candidates from the dual-listed candidates who lost in SMD but were elected in PR (“zombies”). The area of each rectangular field is proportional to the fraction of observations belonging to the corresponding category. The numbers on the vertical axis represent the cumulative distributions of the variables in the legend conditional on the types of electoral systems shown on the horizontal axis.

Figure [A.6](#) presents correlation matrices for several of the common attributes of candidates/MPs in the HR and HC. The top two panels present the correlations among candidates in the HR and HC; the bottom two panels present the corresponding correlations for MPs. In each panel, the cells in the matrix give the numerical values of the correlations. The darker blue (red) cells indicate larger positive (negative) correlations.

(a) Gender



(b) Age

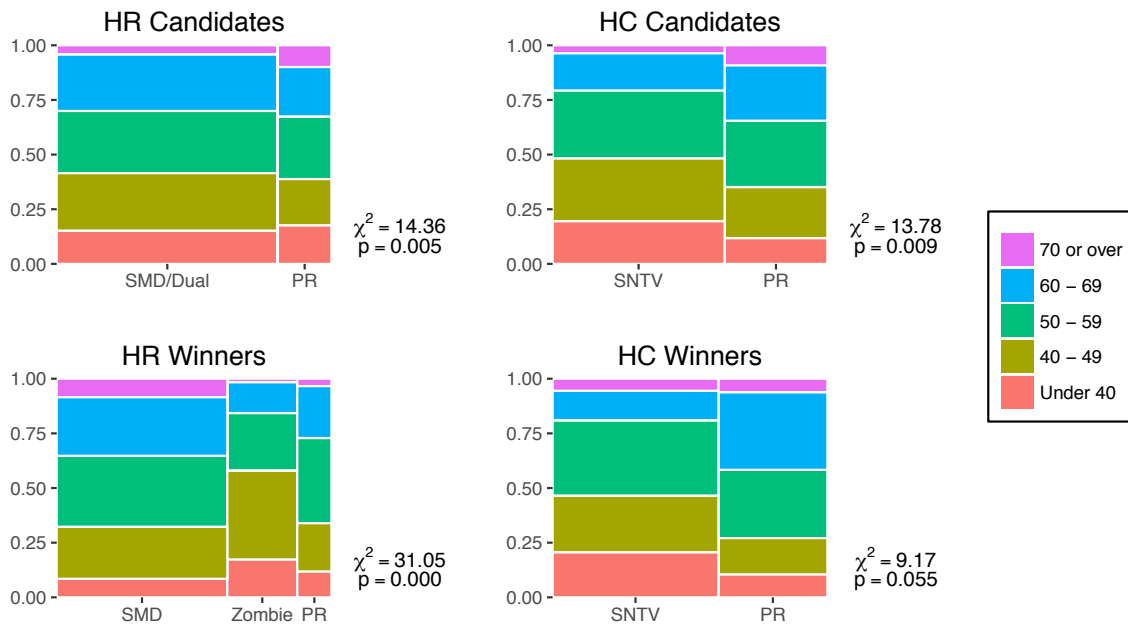
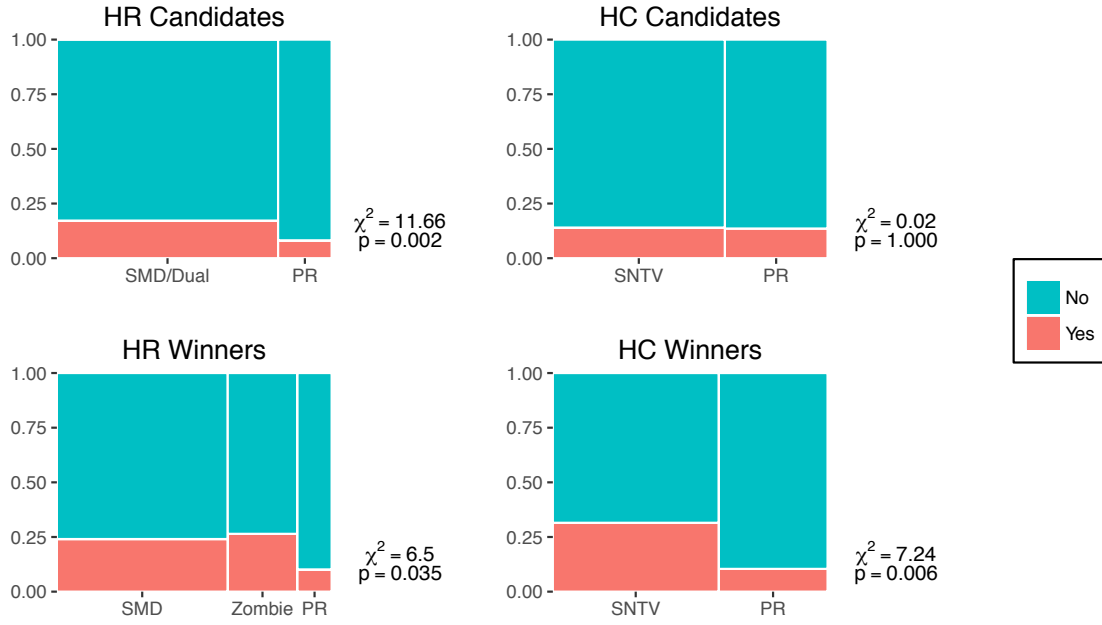


Figure A.1: Personal attributes across candidates, winners, and institutional contexts (1).

(a) Local Assembly Experience



(b) Former National Bureaucrat

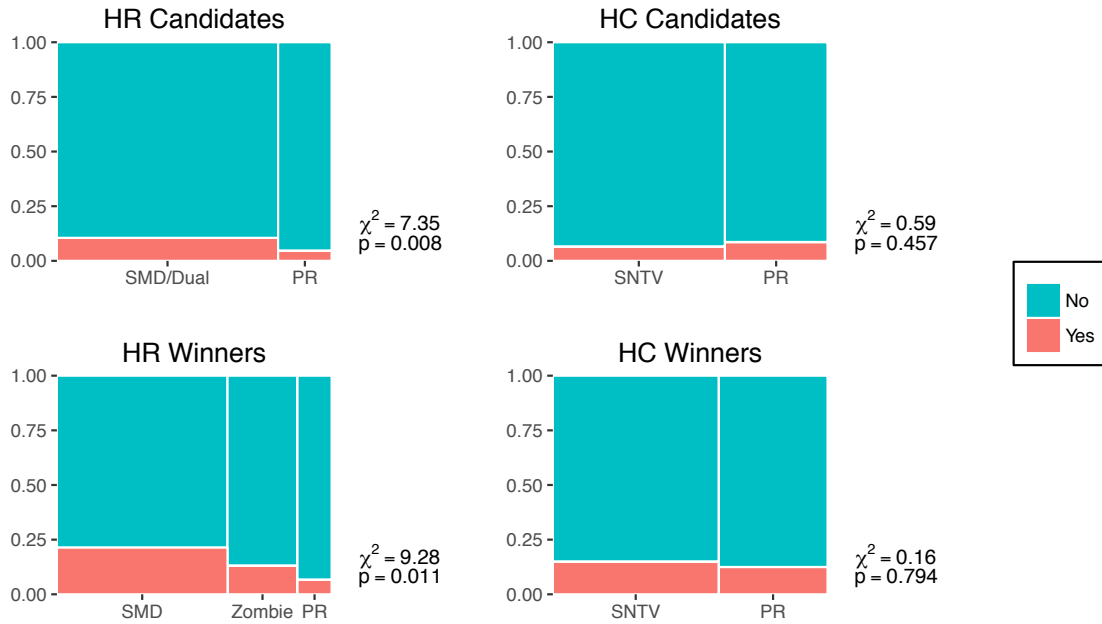
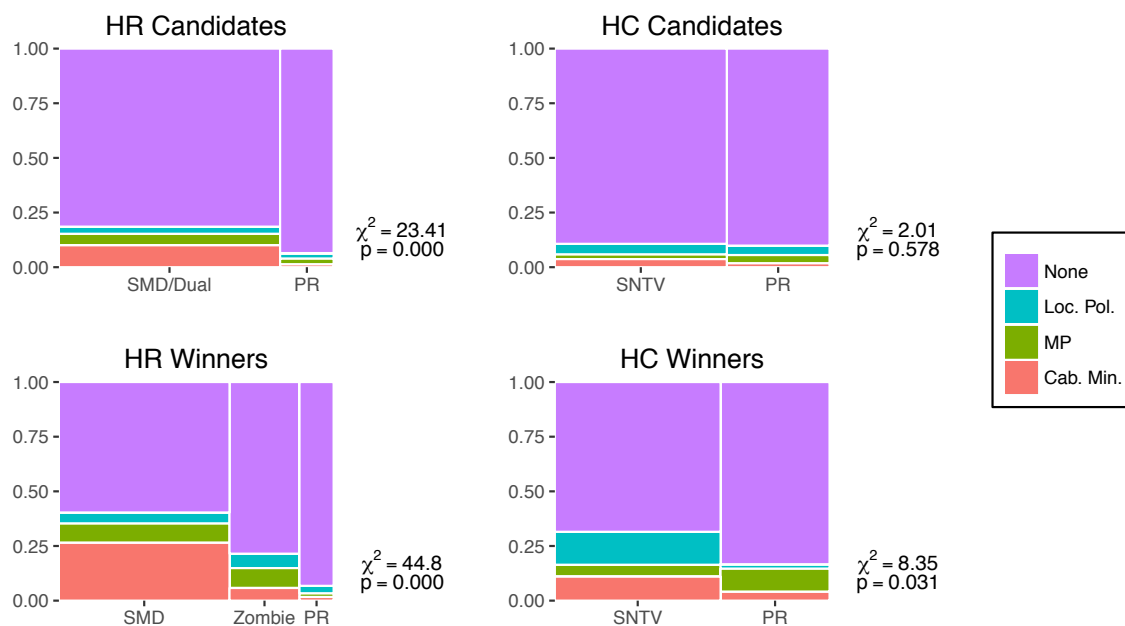


Figure A.2: Personal attributes across candidates, winners, and institutional contexts (2).

(a) Dynastic Family Ties

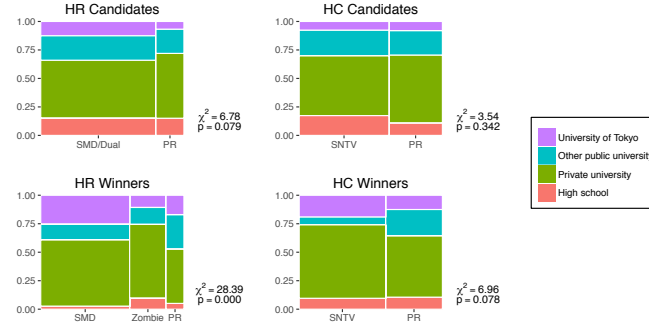


(b) Celebrity Status

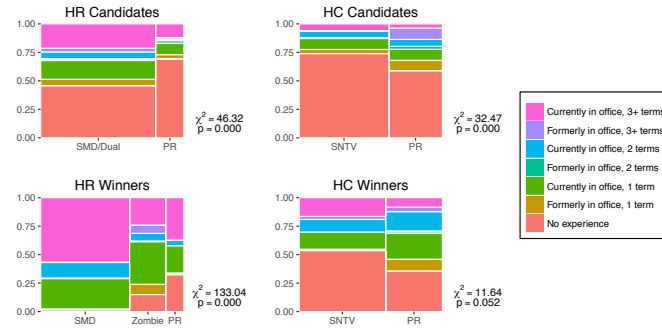


Figure A.3: Personal attributes across candidates, winners, and institutional contexts (3).

(a) Education



(b) Experience



(c) Party

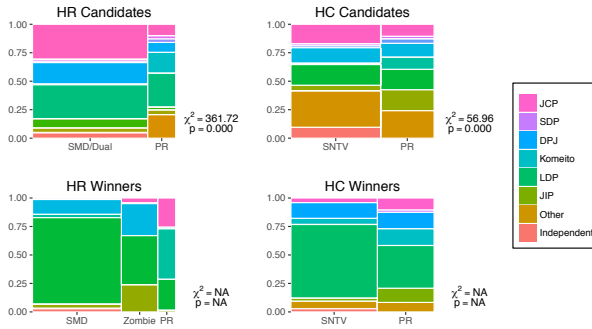
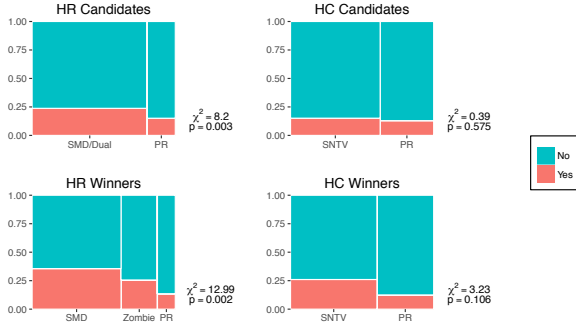
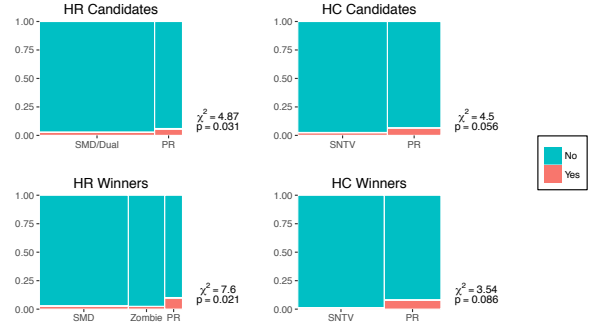


Figure A.4: Personal attributes across candidates, winners, and institutional contexts (4).

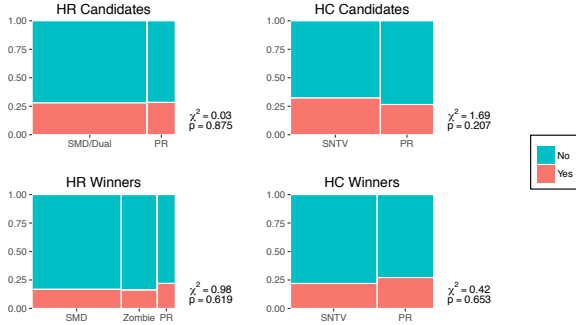
(a) Secretary for MP



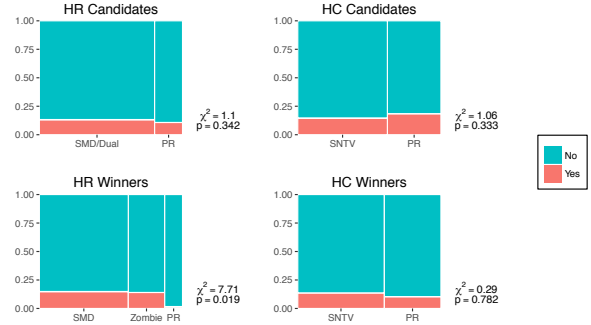
(b) Local Level Bureaucrat



(c) Business Employee



(d) Business Executive



(e) Hometown

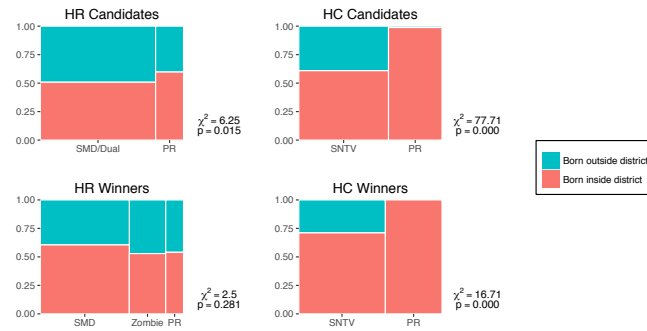


Figure A.5: Personal attributes across candidates, winners, and institutional contexts (5).

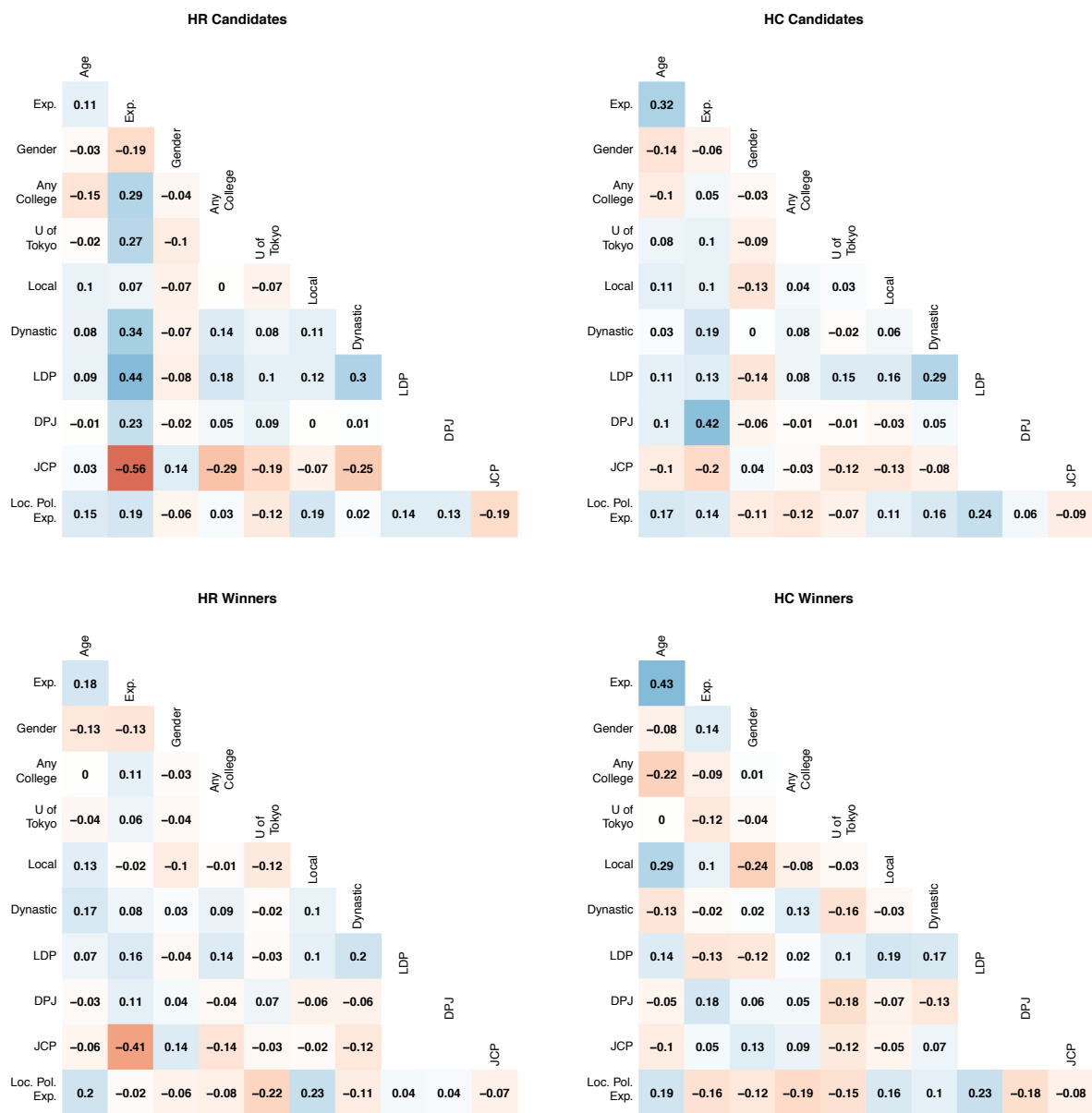


Figure A.6: Correlation matrix of common attributes of candidates (top) and MPs (bottom) in the Japanese House of Representatives (left) and House of Councillors (right).
Note: Each panel presents the numerical values of the correlations along with color coding, with darker blue (red) indicating larger positive (negative) correlations.

B Priming Information and Attribute Levels

Respondents were randomly divided into four groups. Those in the first group were first asked to read the following sentences that highlight the electoral system, the geographical unit/size of the district, and how voters cast a ballot:

The House of Representatives uses two electoral tiers: single-member district and proportional representation. For the single-member district tier, the entire country is divided into 295 districts, and voters write the name of a candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins. On the next five screens, you will see tables featuring hypothetical politicians (or aspiring politicians) in the single-member district tier. Please examine each table carefully before answering the questions that follow.

After completing the first set of five conjoint tasks, these respondents were asked to read the following sentences:

Thank you very much. For the second tier of House of Representatives elections, proportional representation, the entire country is divided into 11 districts, and voters write the name of a party. Seats are allocated to parties based on the party vote. On the next five screens, you will see tables featuring hypothetical politicians (or aspiring politicians) in the proportional representation tier. Please examine each table carefully before answering the questions that follow.

Respondents in the second group were given the same sets of information about the electoral systems for the House of Representatives, but in the reverse order. The respondents in the third group were first asked to read the following sentences:

The House of Councillors uses two electoral tiers: district and proportional representation. For the district tier, each prefecture is a district, and voters write

the name of a candidate. Candidates are elected in the order of who gets the most votes, up to the number of seats up for grabs. On the next five screens, you will see tables featuring hypothetical politicians (or aspiring politicians) in the **district** tier. Please examine each table carefully before answering the questions that follow.

After completing the first set of five conjoint tasks, these respondents were asked to read the following sentences:

Thank you very much. For the second tier of House of Councillors elections, **proportional representation, the entire country is the district,** and voters write **the name of a candidate or the name of a party.** Seats are allocated to parties and then to candidate(s) in the order of votes, up to the number of seats that the party wins. On the next five screens, you will see tables featuring hypothetical politicians (or aspiring politicians) in the **proportional representation** tier. Please examine each table carefully before answering the questions that follow.

Again, similar to the second group in the HR scenario, the respondents in the fourth group were given the same sets of information but in reverse order.

After reading these sentences, study participants were asked to complete a total of ten conjoint tasks. Figure B.1 shows an example of the conjoint task, and Table B.1 shows a complete list of attributes and levels translated into English.

次の2人の人物のうち、どちらがより小選挙区選出の衆議院議員として望ましいと思いますか。もし、どちらが望ましいかはっきりとは言えない場合でも、どちらか一方、あえていえばより望ましいと思われる方を選んでください。

	人物 1	人物 2
最終学歴	地方国立大卒	東大卒
親の政治家経験	国会議員	大臣
過去の当選回数	1回	2回
衆議院議員としての経験	在職中	在職中
性別	女性	男性
職歴	北海道知事	タレント
出身地	北海道	北海道
年齢	42歳	30歳
所属政党	自由民主党	無所属

どちらを望ましいと思うか

人物 1

人物 2

Figure B.1: Example of conjoint table shown to respondents (in Japanese).

Note: Column headers are: “Person 1” and “Person 2.” The text above the table asks: “Which of the following two persons do you think is the more desirable as a single-member district member of the House of Representatives? Even if you are not entirely sure, please indicate which of the two you would prefer.” The first column lists attributes, such as party and former occupation. Full English translations of attributes and levels are in Appendix Table [B.1](#). The text below the table asks: “Which person do you prefer?” and is followed by two buttons for the respondent to use to register his or her choice.

Table B.1: Hypothetical politicians' attributes in the conjoint experiment

Attributes	Levels
Party	<i>Independent</i> DPJ JCP Kōmeitō LDP
Hometown (Birthplace)	<i>Inside prefecture</i> Outside prefecture
Highest Educational Attainment	<i>High school</i> Local public university Prestigious private university University of Tokyo
Prior Occupation	<i>Business employee</i> Business executive Celebrity Local government employee National government employee Prefectural assembly member Prefectural governor
Parental Political Background	<i>None</i> Prefectural assembly member National assembly member Cabinet minister
Previous terms served	<i>None</i> 1 term 2 terms 3+ terms
Experience (Incumbency)	<i>None</i> Formerly in office Currently in office
Age	30, 42, 57, 64, 79
Gender	<i>Male</i> Female

Note: Baseline levels are italicized. The University of Tokyo is the national public university that is widely considered to be the most prestigious in Japan. Local public university refers to all other public universities. Levels for hometown are represented as “[name of prefecture of respondent]” or “outside of [name of prefecture of respondent].” Celebrity is represented by the Japanese word “tarento” (a talent from TV, movies, music, comedy, etc.). Local political offices are represented as “[name of prefecture of respondent] assembly member” and “[name of prefecture of respondent] governor.”

C Additional Analyses of ACIEs

Figure 3 in the main text presents estimated AMCEs for the attributes other than gender conditional on a hypothetical politician’s gender, and the estimated ACIEs with respect to gender and each of the remaining attributes. In Figure C.1, C.2, C.3, we show the corresponding conditional AMCEs and ACIEs for three additional attributes: age, dynastic family ties, and celebrity status. In the main unconditional AMCE results, each of these attributes showed a striking divergence from patterns in the observed attributes of politicians in Japan, so are worth exploring in a bit more detail.

The differences across two age groups (42 and younger versus 57 and older) reveal few meaningful differences. It appears that young politicians are more positively evaluated if they are graduates of the prestigious University of Tokyo, but are more negatively evaluated if they are also business executives or celebrities. The latter effect is also reflected in the ACIE for celebrity status. Voters may be more willing to tolerate very elderly politicians if they are celebrities — although it is important to note that both attributes are highly unpopular. When it comes to parental political background, there are similarly few meaningful differences. Non-dynastic politicians get a slightly larger boost from a University of Tokyo education, and are slightly less popular than dynastic candidates within Komeito. This latter finding is puzzling since dynastic politicians in Komeito are rare.

In Figure C.4, we explore the ACIE of party label. Because the LDP is the largest party, we focus on the difference between LDP politicians and all other parties’ politicians (including independents). There appear to be no substantively meaningful differences in preferences for attributes conditional on party label. This contrasts with the party-level differences reflected in the correlation matrix in Figure A.6. Although actual LDP politicians tend to be more experienced, elderly, male, dynastic, educated, and local, none of these attributes has a different effect for hypothetical LDP politicians compared to hypothetical non-LDP politicians—the significant ACIE for “Formerly in office, 2 (terms)” notwithstanding.

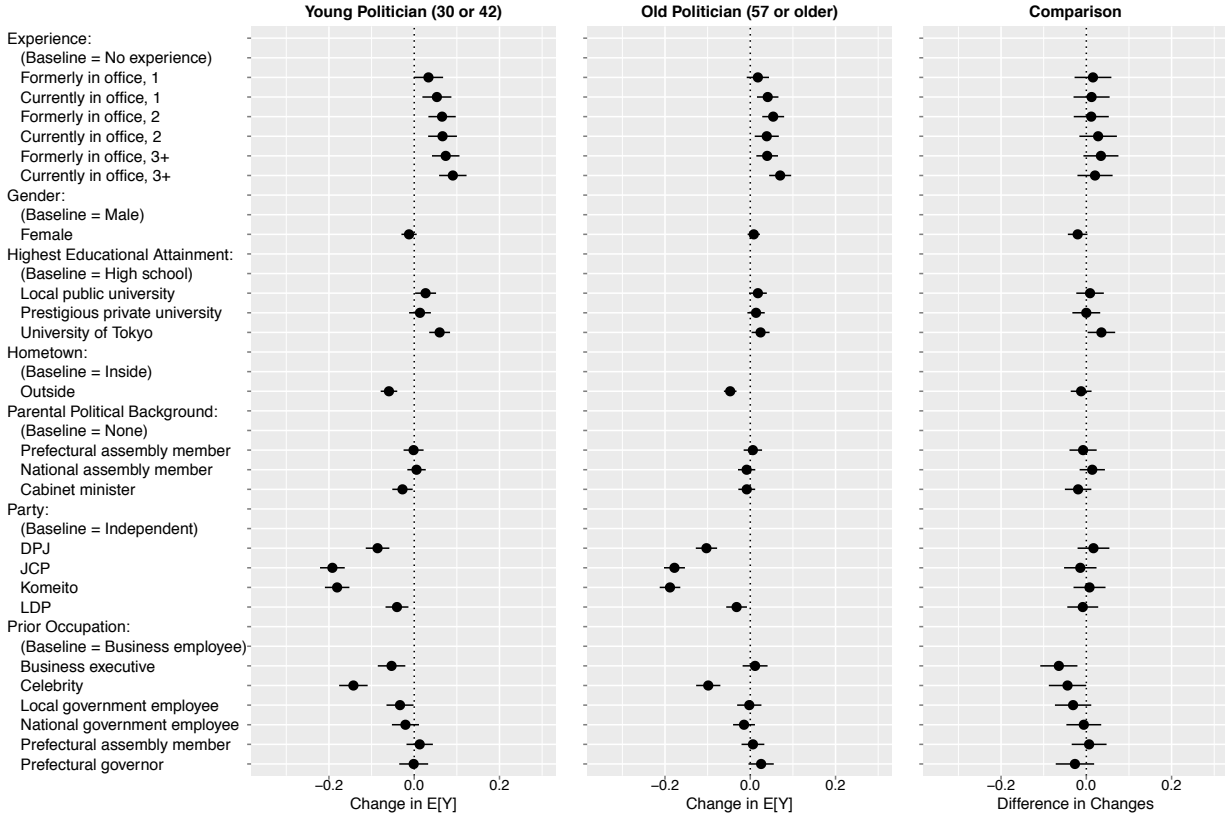


Figure C.1: Average effects of hypothetical politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, given the hypothetical politician's age.

Note: The solid circles in the left and middle panels represent the estimated AMCEs of a hypothetical politicians' attributes other than age, conditional on the politician's binary age group (young on the left; old in the middle). The rightmost panel shows the average component interaction effects (ACIE) with respect to age and each of the other attributes. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals robust to clustering at the respondent level.

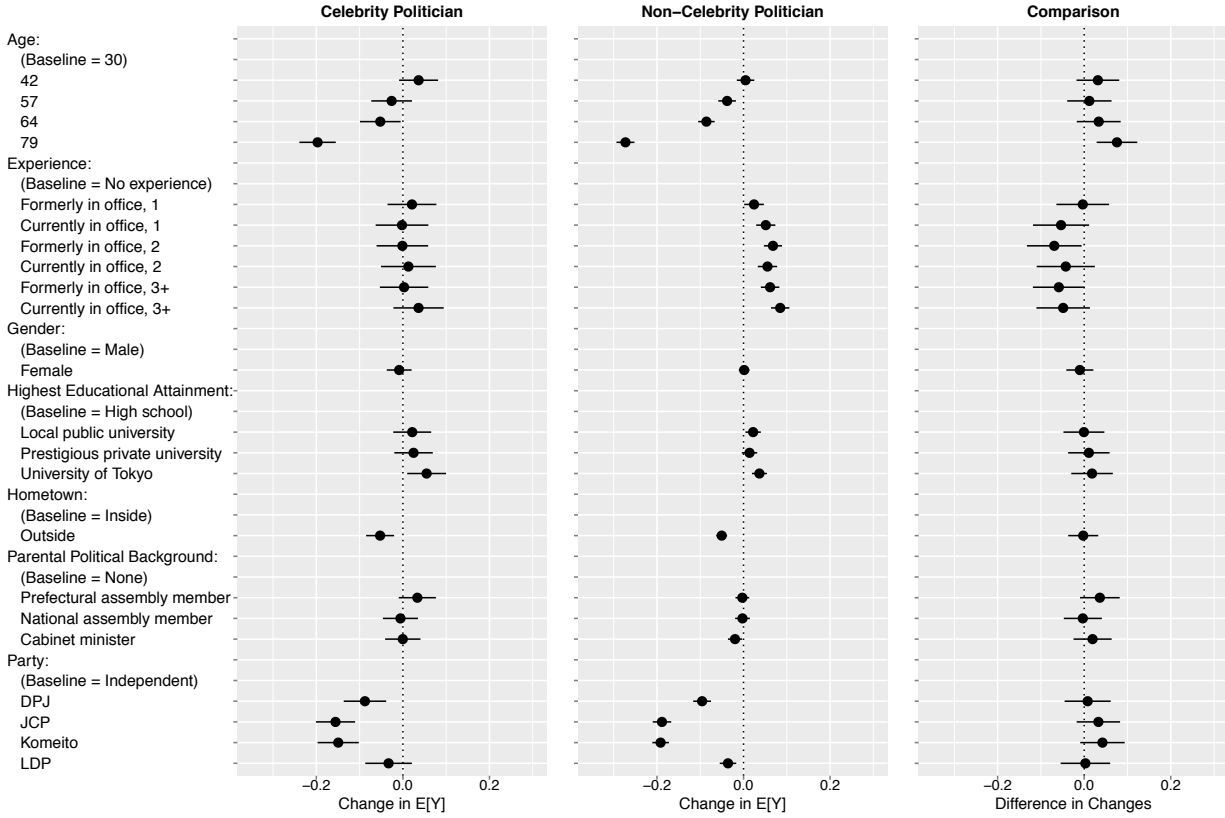


Figure C.2: Average effects of hypothetical politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, given the hypothetical politician's celebrity status.

Note: The solid circles in the left and middle panels represent the estimated AMCEs of a hypothetical politicians' attributes other than celebrity status, conditional on whether the politician is a celebrity (left) or not (middle). The rightmost panel shows the average component interaction effects (ACIE) with respect to celebrity and each of the other attributes. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals robust to clustering at the respondent level.

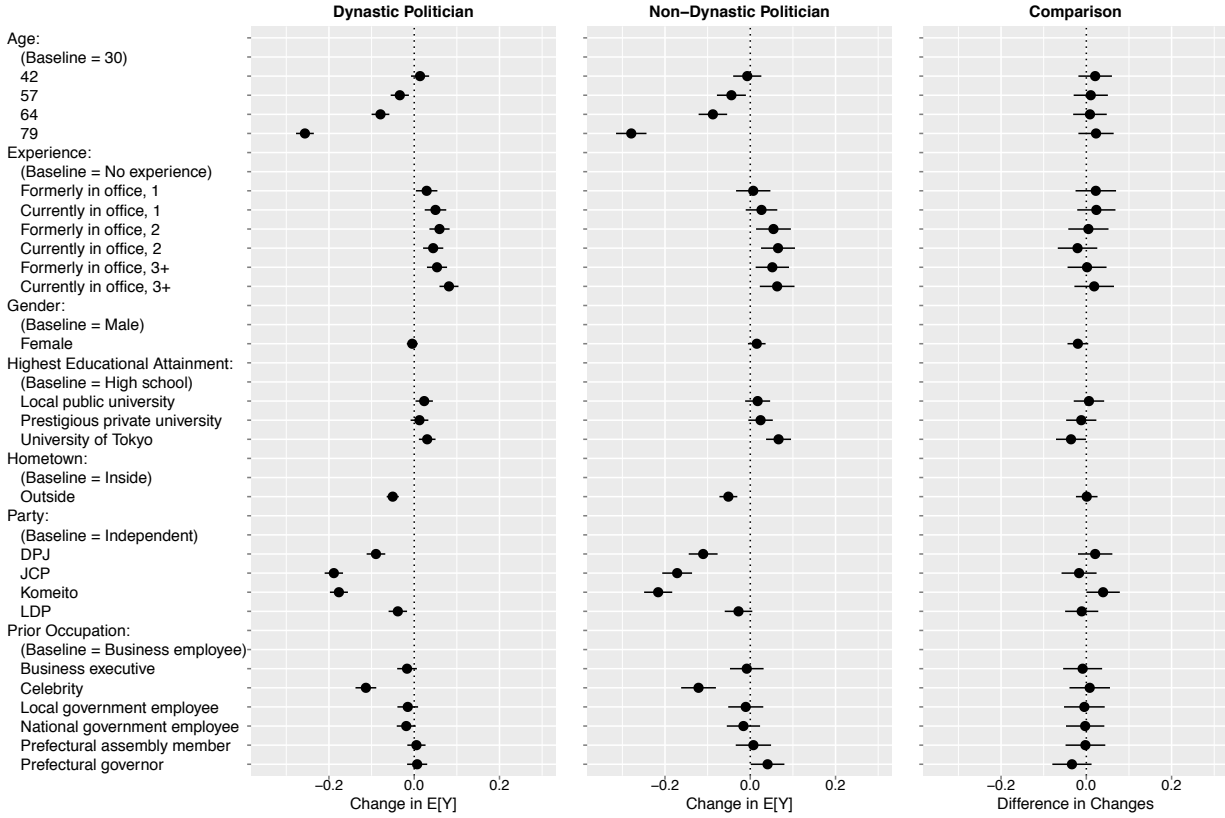


Figure C.3: Average effects of hypothetical politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, given the hypothetical politician's parental political background.

Note: The solid circles in the left and middle panels represent the estimated AMCEs of a hypothetical politicians' attributes other than dynastic status, conditional on whether the politician is dynastic at any level of politics (left) or not (middle). The rightmost panel shows the average component interaction effects (ACIE) with respect to dynastic status and each of the other attributes. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals robust to clustering at the respondent level.

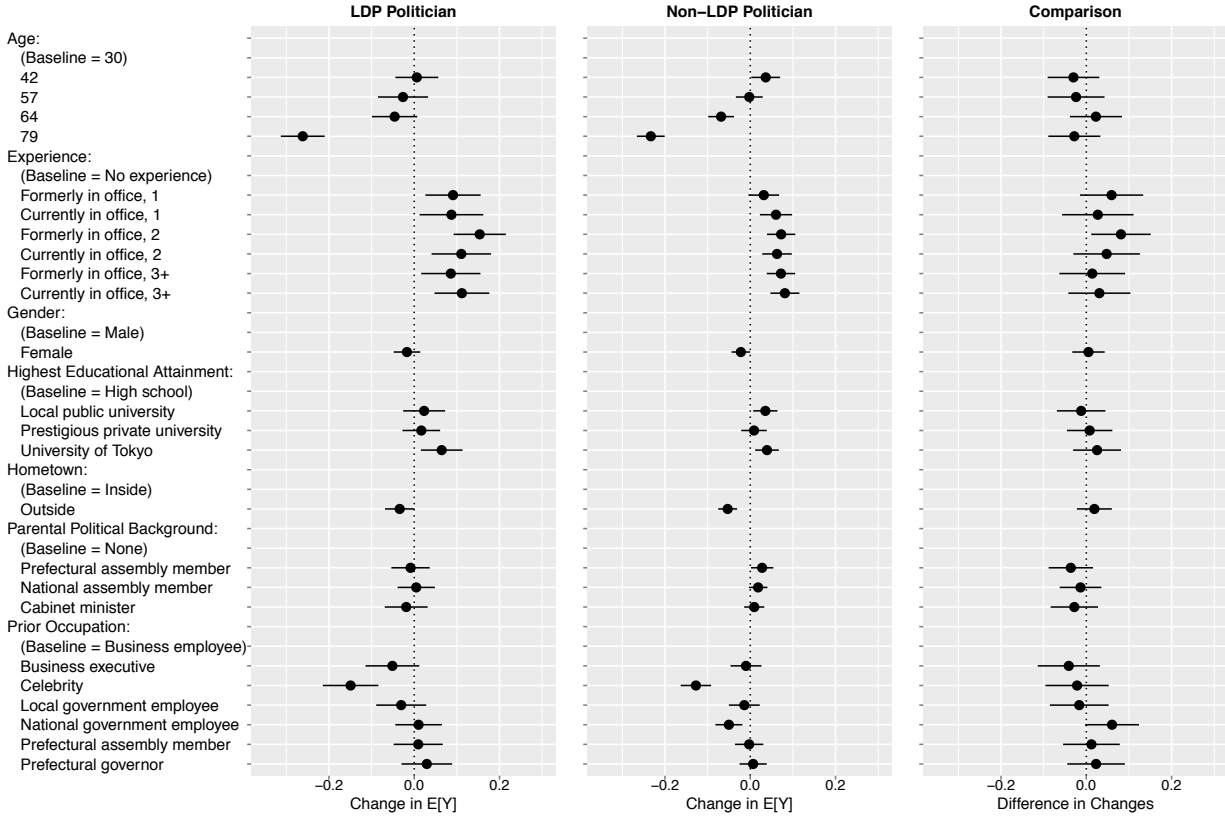


Figure C.4: Average effects of hypothetical politicians' attributes on LDP supporters' preference, given the hypothetical politician's party.

Note: The solid circles in the left and middle panels represent the estimated AMCEs of a hypothetical politicians' attributes other than party, conditional on whether the politician is LDP (left) or not (middle). The rightmost panel shows the average component interaction effects (ACIE) with respect to the LDP indicator and each of the other attributes. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals robust to clustering at the respondent level. Estimates are for the sample of LDP supporters among the respondents.

D Robustness Checks

Figure [D.1](#) shows the estimated AMCEs from our conjoint experiment for each of the two primed dimensions: HC vs. HR (top) and plurality districts vs. PR (bottom), along with the differences in the AMCEs (rightmost plots). The results confirm our conclusion based on the main analysis reported in Figure [2](#): there is no discernible difference in the AMCEs between any of the experimental conditions.

Figures [D.2](#) and [D.3](#) show the results of our tests for whether the overall null findings are due to either a failure of manipulation or lack of engagement among the respondents. For the manipulation check, we included two knowledge questions about each of the treatment conditions the respondents were shown (specifically, we asked questions about the factual details of the electoral rules), and labeled those who answered both of them correctly as “knowledgeable” for the corresponding condition. Figure [D.2](#) shows the result of the same analysis as in Figure [D.1](#) only on the knowledgeable respondents ($N = 604$ for the upper house; 706 for the lower house; 622 for the district tier; and 432 for the PR tier). As in the main analysis, none of the differences in the AMCEs are statistically significantly different from zero.

For the test of respondents’ engagement, we included a pair of screener questions at the end of our survey, and marked those who passed at least one question as “attentive” respondents. We then repeated our analysis on the attentive respondents ($N = 766$, of whom 372 were in the upper house condition). The results, reported in Figure [D.3](#), show that only one out of the 28 comparisons shows a statistically significant difference between the two priming conditions on each dimension, replicating the overall null finding even on the attentive subsample.

Finally, Figure [D.4](#) presents the results of the same set of analyses on the subset of respondents who stated that they had either always or almost always voted in past elections ($N = 687$ for the upper house; 697 for the lower house; 692 for each of the tiers). The

differences are statistically significant for only two of the 56 comparisons, again replicating the main finding on this subgroup of the respondents.

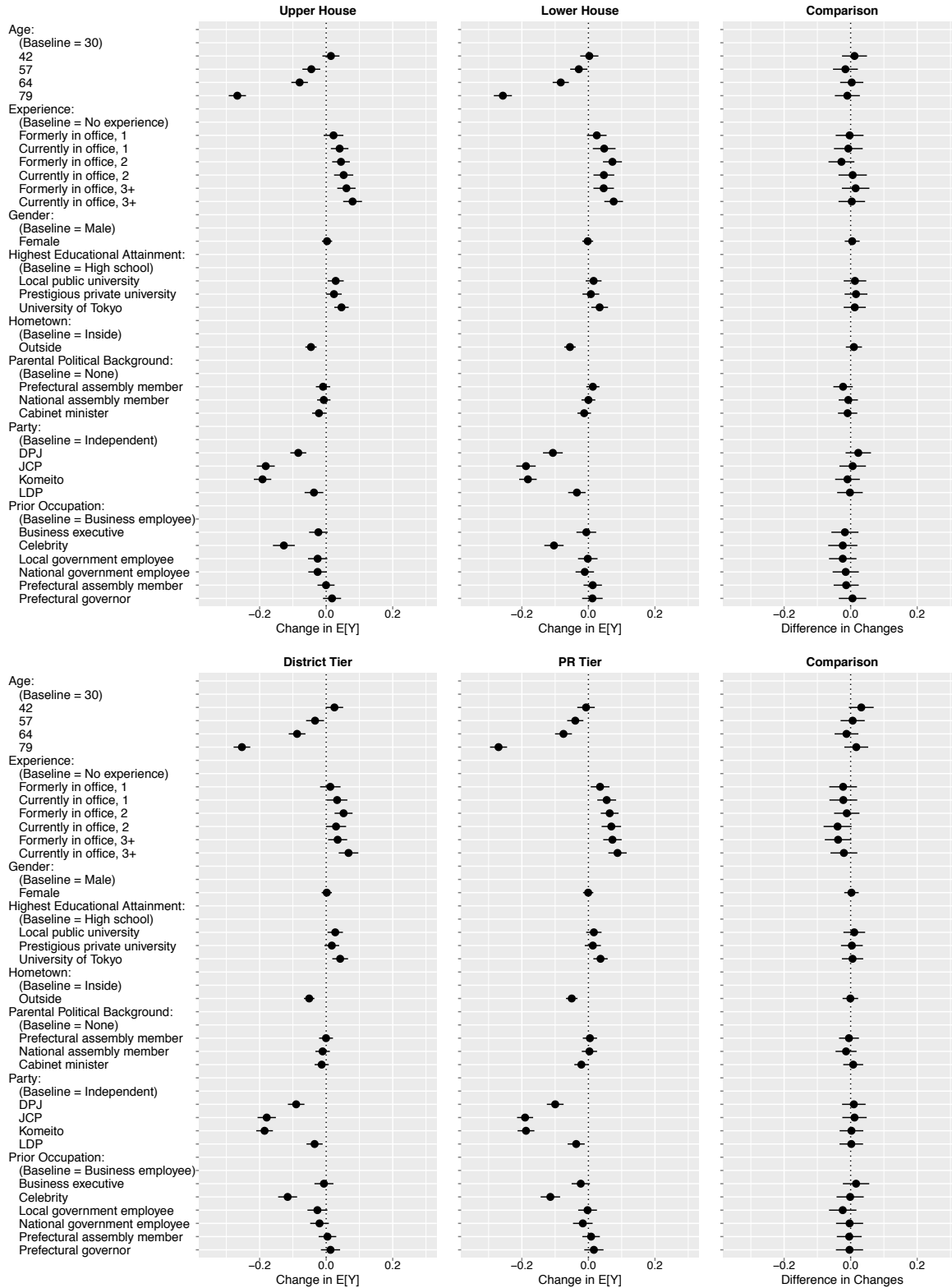


Figure D.1: Effects of politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, by priming conditions (alternate comparisons).

Note: Top panels give the results for the HC vs. HR, pooling across the tier types. Bottom panels give the results for plurality vs. PR, pooling across the houses. The rightmost panel for each shows the difference in the estimated AMCEs.

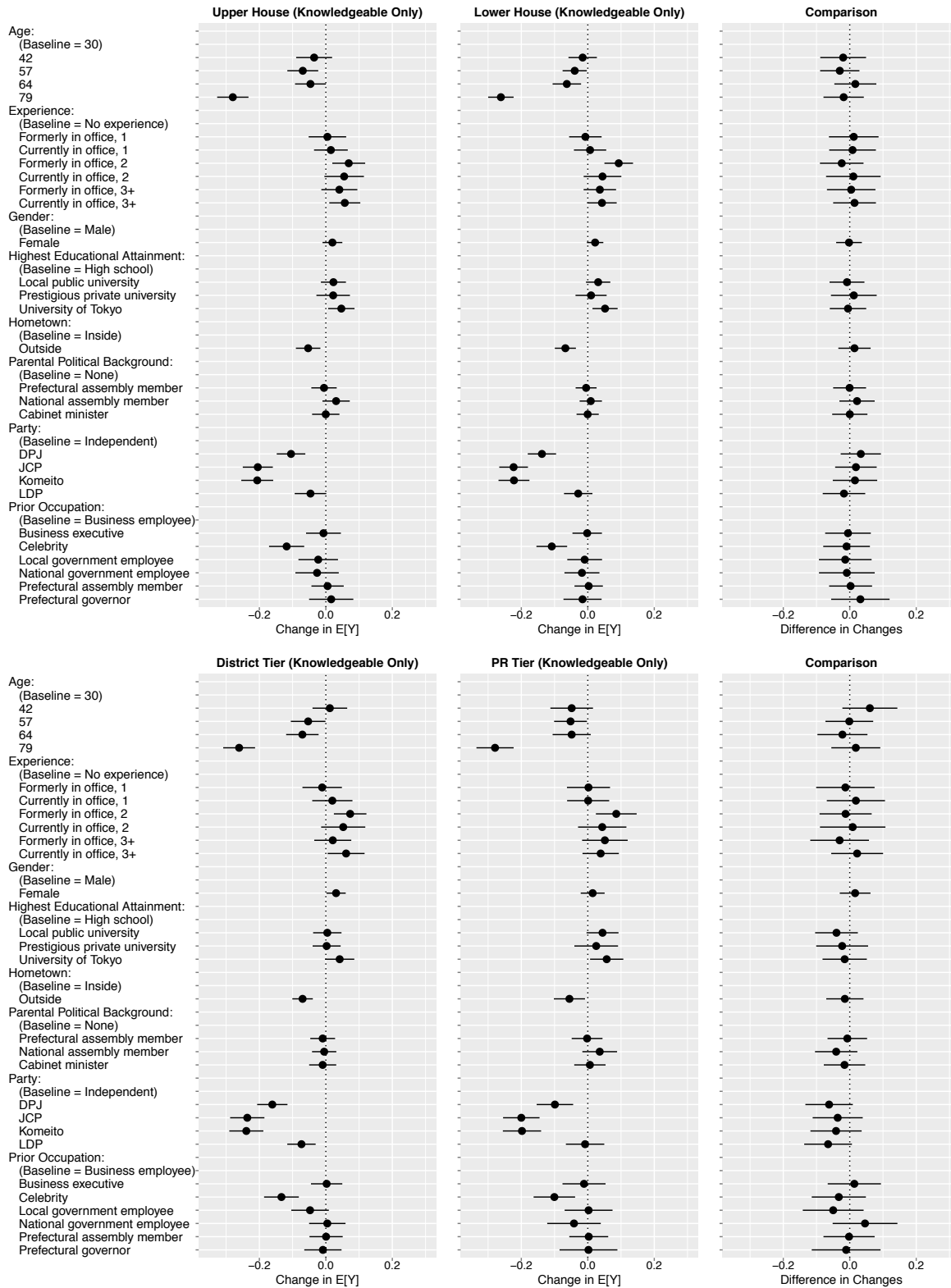


Figure D.2: Effects of politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, by priming conditions (high-knowledge respondents).

Note: Estimates of the quantities equivalent to Figure [D.1](#) on the subsample who passed the manipulation check (knowledge tests on the treatment text).

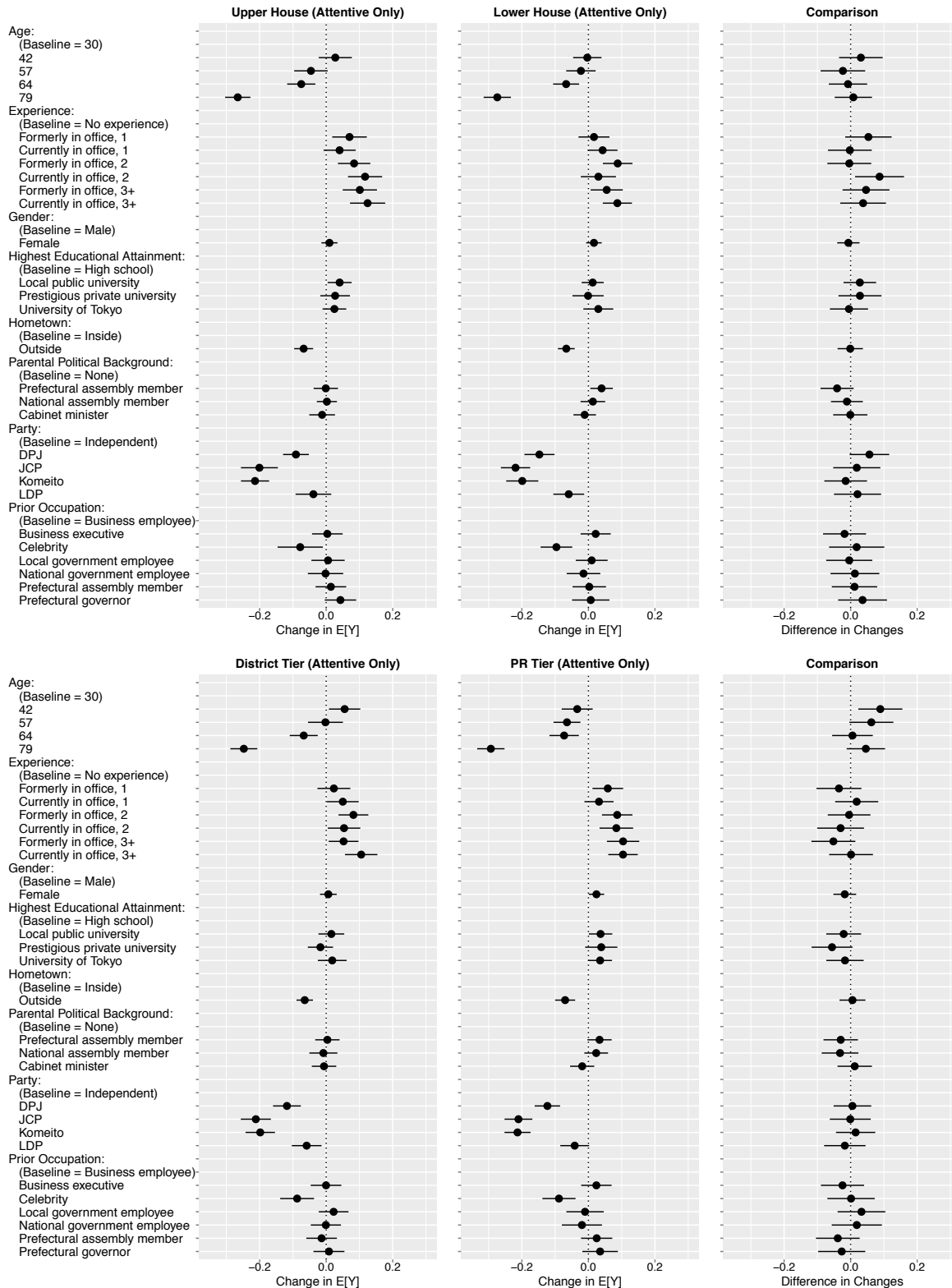


Figure D.3: Effects of politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, by priming conditions (high-attention respondents).

Note: Estimates of the quantities equivalent to Figure [D.1](#) on the subsample who passed the screener questions placed at the end of the survey.

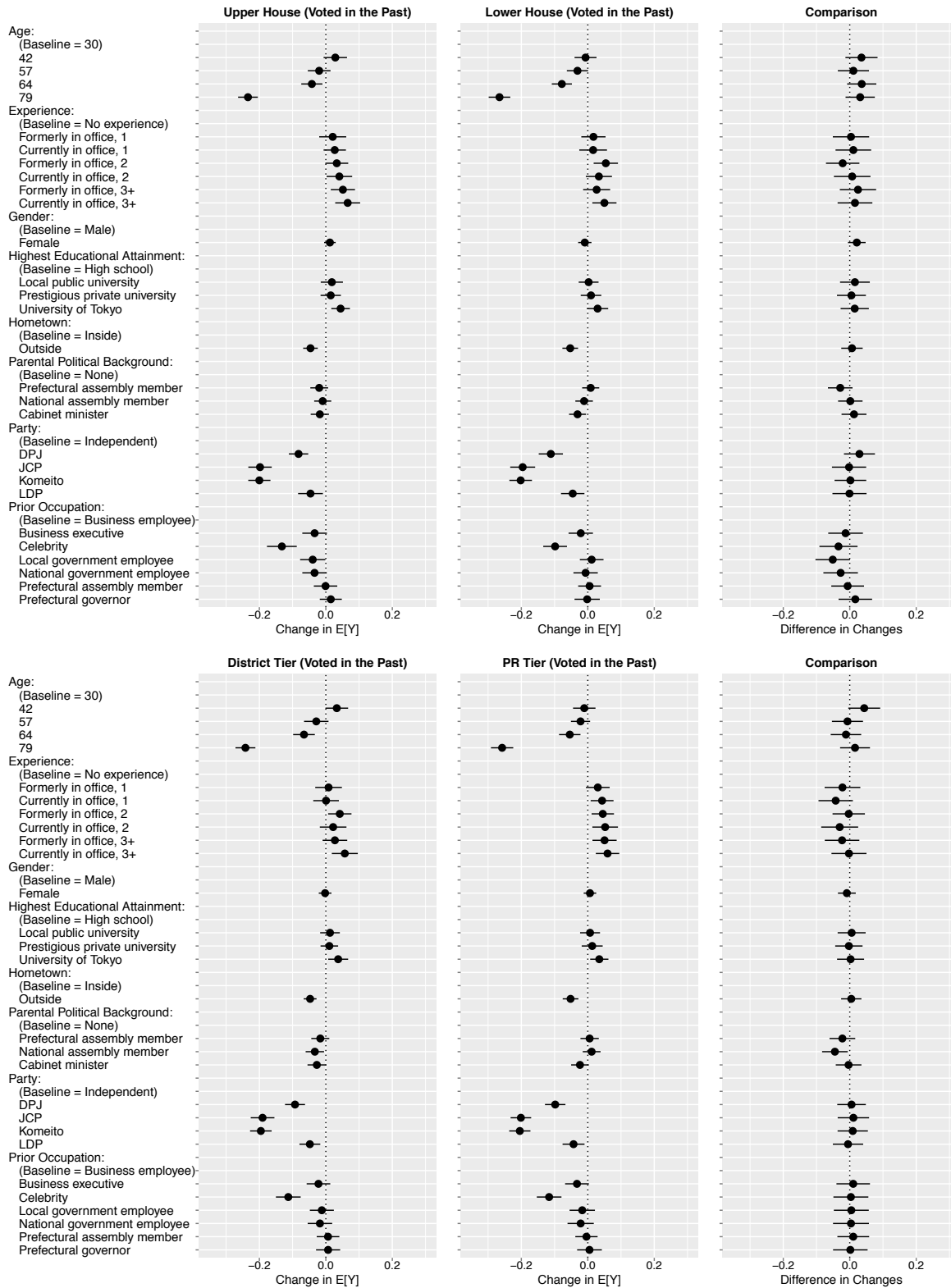


Figure D.4: Effects of politicians' attributes on respondents' preference, by priming conditions (frequent-voter respondents).

Note: Estimates of the quantities equivalent to Figure [D.1](#) on the subsample who reported that they had either always or almost always voted in past elections.