

The Logic of Authoritarian Political Selection: Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment in China

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Appendix

In the appendix, I provide additional information on the design of the conjoint experiment, details of survey implementation, description of the data collected, robustness checks on the main results, as well as additional analyses referenced in the paper.

A Experiment Design

A.1 Attributes and Values

In the conjoint experiment, seven attributes are incorporated to constitute a hypothetical NCSE candidate profile, and each attribute is varied into several values. The attributes and values are designed to test the three preference dimensions of interest, namely personal competence, loyalty to the regime, and political connections. Below, I provide a description of each attribute and its values, as well as the rationale for including it in the conjoint table.

1. **Gender:** The two values of this attribute are *male* and *female*. Given the unequal gender representation in the Chinese government, especially among leaders of all levels, there is reason to believe that government officials take gender into account when recruiting new civil servants. I do not, however, consider gender a signal of competence, loyalty or political connections. This attribute is also included to make the hypothetical profiles more realistic for respondents.
2. **Political Affiliation:** The two values in this attribute are *none* and *CCP member*. Since the 1990s, the CCP has made an effort to recruit more college students into the party; membership has become less competitive and more common on university campuses. The question of whether to join the CCP, therefore, is now largely a choice for college students, especially those in elite universities. Those who are more supportive of the regime or contemplate a career in the government are more likely to become party members. Relative to *none*, *CCP member* is thus a signal of loyalty to the regime.

3. **College Attended:** The two values in this attribute are *elite university* and *general college*. College admission in China is strictly based on student performance in a national examination that is offered only once a year to high school graduates. The system of admission provides a singular incentive to all students, which is to study hard and do well academically. The admission scores for elite universities are substantially higher than that for general colleges, thus separating students of higher aptitude from the rest.¹ The type of college attended by a candidate is therefore a reliable indicator of his or her academic merit and ability to learn on a new job. Relative to *general college*, *elite university* a clear signal of competence.
4. **Education Level:** The two values in this attribute are *bachelor's degree* and *master's degree*. According to the eligibility requirements, all NCSE candidates must be college educated, which means that any candidate has at least a bachelor's degree.² Compared to candidates with a bachelor's degree, those who have obtained a graduate degree are more specialized in their fields of studies and tend to bring more expertise to the job. In fact, in recent years, a graduate degree has become a requisite for promotion at many government leadership positions.³ Through the accumulation of human capital, *master's degree* signals competence when compared to *bachelor's degree*.
5. **Award Won in College:** This attribute has five values, including *no award*, *artistic talent*, *community outreach*, *academic excellence*, and *student leadership*. College students in China compete for various awards while in school. Some of the awards are common in most universities and their selection criteria nearly universal. As a result, they are viewed as reliable signals of certain qualities of the recipients when compared to those who have received

¹The original wording for “elite university” in Chinese used in the survey is “985 Project” Key University, which is a list of 39 higher education institutions - arguably the most prestigious in China - out of some 2,500 universities in total nationwide. For more details on Chinese universities, please see <http://edu.people.com.cn/n/2015/0528/c244541-27071607.html> (accessed December 29, 2016).

²There are candidates with doctorate degrees applying to join the civil service. Given the small number, however, doctoral degree is not included as an attribute value.

³It should be noted that, although many leadership positions are now only open to contenders with graduate degrees, since civil servants often have the option of doing a part-time graduate program while on the job, it is not imperative that they first enter the civil service with a graduate degree.

none.

Artistic talent is an award for students who are active on the cultural or arts scene on campus. Recipients of this award generally possess good inter-personal skills that could be useful on a civil service job. They are, however, not necessarily more competent for government jobs or more loyal to the regime. This award category is included as a placebo to test if survey respondents respond to *any* award category even when it does not reflect any of their preference dimensions.

Community outreach is an award for students who excel in activities that have broader social impact beyond the university campus. Participants in these activities gain hands-on experience and develop skills for problem solving. Recipients of this award typically include students who are involved in community service programs or apply their classroom knowledge to real-world problem solving, and they are generally considered to be more competent. Moreover, many community outreach programs on campus – especially those that are more likely to be recognized with an award – are sponsored by the university under the guidance of the CCP committee and the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL). These programs are part of the party's effort to co-opt social activism among students. Students who choose to participate in these programs demonstrate a higher degree of willingness to work within the current social and political framework than those who choose to launch their independent initiatives. This award, therefore, signals loyalty as well as competence.

Academic excellence is awarded to students who perform exceptionally in academic work. Since academic merit is an indicator of intellectual capacity and learning ability, this award signals competence.

Student leadership is awarded to students who have rendered excellent service in their capacity as student leaders on campus. Recipients are usually leaders of student union or the CCYL in the university, who not only display outstanding leadership quality in their service but also assist the university in managing student affairs under the guidance of the

CCP committee. This award is thus a signal of both competence and loyalty.

6. **Prior Work Experience:** The three values in this attribute are *no experience*, *company job*, and *government job*. Work experience generally represents human capital accumulation where an individual develops professional skills. *Government job* is hence a signal of competence. To the extent that skills are heterogeneous and not always transferable, work experience at a *company job* does not necessarily signal competence for a civil service job; it is included as a placebo as well as to make the survey more realistic for respondents.
7. **Father's Occupation:** Unlike the previous six attributes that represent some *intrinsic qualities* of a candidate (i.e. competence and/or loyalty), this attribute is intended to reflect a candidate's political connections as a result of his or her family background. Kinship ties is possibly among the strongest kinds of personal connection; having kinship ties to political insiders is hence a clear signal of political connections. The four values included are *private sector worker*, *SOE worker (CCP member)*, *private entrepreneur*, and *government official*.

Government official is a strong signal of political connections, relative to the reference category *private sector worker*. Having a father who is a government official clearly indicates that the candidate is connected to the political elite class.

In addition, two other values, *SOE worker (CCP) member* and *private entrepreneur*, are included as placebos to test possible causal mechanisms of political connections on NCSE recruitment. If political connections serve as a cue of a candidate's loyalty to the regime, we would expect *SOE worker (CCP) member* to have similar functions. If political connections influence selection because of the strong social networks possessed by the candidate, we would expect *private entrepreneur* to have similar effect as well.

A.2 Statistical Approach

According to Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014), a fully randomized conjoint analysis *nonparametrically* identifies the average marginal component effect (AMCE) for each of the attribute values on the probability of a profile being chosen. By using respondents' observed choice responses as the basis of inference, conjoint analysis is able to estimate the causal effects of many treatment components simultaneously and without resorting to functional form assumptions. In other words, I can estimate how much a particular attribute value on average influences a candidate's chance of selection without assuming how the respondent evaluates all attribute values in the profile as a whole. Also, since the AMCE is estimated on the same scale for all attribute values, I can compare the effect magnitudes and make inference about the relative importance of each.

I estimate the AMCE of each attribute value using a regression-based estimator. With attribute values randomized independently from one another, the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression produces unbiased and consistent estimates of AMCEs. The data is fit using the following linear model,

$$Y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \sum_{l=1}^7 \sum_{d=2}^{D_l} \beta_{ld} X_{ldijk} + \epsilon_{ijk} \quad (1)$$

where $Y_{ijk} \in \{0, 1\}$ is the binary outcome variable indicating whether profile j in task k of respondent i is chosen, X_{ldijk} is the dummy variable for the d th value of attribute l , β_{ld} is the corresponding coefficient, and ϵ_{ijk} is the error term, which is statistically independent of the regressors due to randomization of attributes. Note that the seven attributes are indexed by $l \in \{1, 2, \dots, 7\}$ and the values in each attribute l are indexed by $d \in \{1, \dots, D_l\}$, where D_l equals the total number of values in attribute l and $d = 1$ is taken as the reference category. The OLS estimate of β_{ld} is thus the estimate of AMCE for the d th value of attribute l , with White cluster-corrected standard errors to account for within-respondent correlation of preferences.⁴ The same approach is used in

⁴Due to possible within-respondent correlation, the White cluster-corrected standard errors are larger in size, making the resultant p -values for AMCEs more conservative.

analyzing rating-based responses, where the outcomes of interest are continuous instead of binary.

The estimation of AMCEs relies on several assumptions, which are either guaranteed to hold by design or can be partially tested with data. First, it assumes that there are no carry-over effects between pairs, i.e. a respondent's choice in a particular pair of profiles does not affect his choice in subsequent pairs. Second, it assumes that there are no profile-order effects, i.e. the order of the two profiles within a pair does not affect response. Last, it assumes that potential outcomes are statistically independent of profiles. I perform robustness checks on the first two assumptions by estimating AMCEs for each task number and profile position separately. The third assumption holds when the experiment properly randomizes attribute values. As reported in [Table A2](#), attribute values are well balanced in survey implementation, both for the whole sample and across various respondent characteristics, indicating full randomization of attribute values.

B Survey Implementation

The conjoint survey experiment was implemented between August and November in 2015. It was administered both online and offline, using different methodologies. The content and layout of the survey was kept consistent in both forms. [Figure A1](#) shows an example of the survey design in the original Chinese language, and [Figure A2](#) is a translated version in English.

Considering that the prospective respondents were government officials, who were generally cautious about answer questions about government matters, I partnered with the Research Center of Contemporary China (RCCC) in Peking University, a leading political science research institution using survey methodologies in China, and obtained the permission to conduct the survey in their name. In the preface of the survey, RCCC was identified as the principal investigator of the project, which both lent credibility to the project in the eyes of the respondents and created a space for them to express their opinion as compared to a government-commissioned survey. The research design was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Columbia University.

B.1 Online Implementation

The online survey was hosted on www.qualtrics.com. A short URL to the survey was created to be shared via the Chinese mobile application WeChat. To disseminate the survey, the author's professional and personal contacts who are known government officials were contacted and asked to participate in the survey on their mobile phones. In addition, they were asked to share the survey *exclusively* with their colleagues at work and invite them to take the survey. As a measure to ensure that all respondents to the online survey were government employees, the author's contacts were specifically asked *not* to disseminate the survey further via their colleagues. The online survey was also sent to the author's professional contacts who are journalists and university researchers to be shared with their contacts and friends who are government officials.

The recruitment method for online survey subjects, as described above, was not a snowball approach. All respondents were either a known contact of the author or a known contact of the author's contact. This approach was adopted as a way to make sure that all potential respondents were verifiable government employees. As an additional measure, the survey included in its demographic background section one question that asked the respondent to report the nature of his or her workplace. Employees of non-government sectors were subsequently removed from the sample.

B.2 Offline Implementation

The conjoint survey was also implemented offline using paper questionnaires. In order to maintain the maximum degree of consistency between online and offline implementation, paper questionnaires were generated using the same Qualtrics survey online. For each paper questionnaire, a new response to the Qualtrics survey was opened, and the conjoint tables were copied and pasted from the new online questionnaire to a Word document, which was later formatted and printed out. This way, I made sure that the attribute values were fully randomized in the offline survey implementation. By copying and pasting conjoint tables from the Qualtrics survey online, I was also able to ensure that the row positions of attributes were randomized *across* questionnaires but kept fixed

for all five pairs of candidates *within* each questionnaire.

The survey was administered in five cities in China.⁵ Recruitment of survey respondents took advantage of the fact that local universities in these cities regularly hosted cadre training workshops and/or Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs that were attended by government officials *exclusively*.

Professors teaching these workshops and programs were contacted in advance with a request to conduct the survey in their classes. Permissions were granted after each professor had learned the content and purpose of the survey. The classroom setting offered an opportunity to access a large number of government officials at once. In addition, respondents appeared to be more relaxed than they otherwise would be in a work setting. Implementation of the survey in each classroom typically took about 15 to 20 minutes, usually during the break time of a class. Each respondent filled out his or her survey questionnaire independently and returned it to the numerator.

B.3 Response Rate

For online implementation, 121 responses were returned, of which eight were incomplete. Among them, 7 responses were blank, indicating that they may have been created by accident (e.g. clicking on the URL by mistake or unintentional duplicates); only one response was half complete, suggesting that the respondent left the survey halfway. The attrition rate (i.e. one out of more than a hundred), therefore, is low. The eight incomplete responses were subsequently removed, leaving 113 valid online responses for analysis.

For offline implementation, out of all students in the surveyed classes, only three declined to participate; the rest were very cooperative. Some respondents left unprompted, candid, handwritten remarks on the paper questionnaires discussing their preference and decision-making rationale when choosing candidates, and a few others approached the numerator afterwards to share their thoughts. These are evidence that respondents were relaxed and willing to reveal their true

⁵To protect the human subjects in the experiment, the names of the cities are not disclosed.

opinion during the survey. In total, 219 valid responses were collected from offline survey implementation.

Combined, the survey collected 332 valid responses and 11 non-responses. Even if we account the seven blank responses from online implementation as refusals to participate, the response rate for the survey was still very high at 96.8%. The high level of response indicates that the vast majority of government officials recruited as respondents were willing to engage on the topic of political selection, and the sample is not systematically biased by those who dropped out.

C Data Description

Since the survey was not conducted using a probability sample, a detailed description of the data is necessary to determine whether, and to what degree, the experiment has any external validity.

C.1 Geographical Representation

Roughly two thirds of the responses are from the offline portion of the sample, which was collected from five cities in China. Although the cities were not selected at random, together they exhibit a considerable degree of heterogeneity in terms of a geographical location, political stature, administrative rank, and level of economic development.

- **Geographical location:** Among the five cities, two are inland and three are coastal. Each city is located in a different province or municipality.
- **Political stature/administrative rank:** All five cities are large urban centers in China, but there is considerable variation in terms of their rank and political importance. One of the cities is a province-level municipality; two are provincial capitals that enjoy a sub-provincial administrative rank; the fourth city is the largest in its province and also enjoys a sub-provincial rank; and the fifth city is an important economic power house in its province and has a prefectural rank.

- **Economic development:** Although none of the five cities are located in the undeveloped parts of China, they vary significantly in terms of economic development. The provinces where they each are located are ranked between the 2nd and the 14th among all 31 Chinese provinces in terms of GDP per capita in 2015.

The online portion of the sample covers more localities in China. By matching respondents' IP addresses to geolocations, it is found that 30 cities in 16 provinces are represented. As shown in [Figure A3](#), the survey sites – both online and offline – are spread all over the country and there is significant degree of variation in terms of geographical location, administrative rank and level of economic development. To the extent that government officials are heterogeneous across the types of cities they work in, the sample collected here accounts for that heterogeneity. The results in this survey should thus bear external validity beyond the respondents themselves.

C.2 Respondent Characteristics

Due to the different recruitment methods used in online and offline implementation, it is imperative to check if the two groups of respondents in the sample exhibit similar demographic characteristics. In juxtaposition, it is found that the online group is slightly older and more senior in rank and leadership position than the offline group (see [Table A1](#)). This is expected, as MPA programs are mostly attended by younger government cadres who hope to advance their career by getting a postgraduate degree. The online implementation also targeted more senior government official.

One concern with the sample is that it may suffer from several unobserved selection biases. One possible selection bias is that government officials who agreed to participate in the survey might be different from those who declined. Though there is no way to formally test for this bias, the low attrition rate in both online and offline implementation, as discussed earlier, gives some confidence regarding the representativeness of the sample. Another possible bias is that government officials who attend cadre training workshops and MPA programs might be different from those who do not. This concern is warranted, but it should be noted that only government officials of a certain rank

or above are eligible to attend cadre training workshops and that those enrolled in MPA programs are often hopeful of future promotions. In other words, these are government officials who are more likely to have authorities over personnel selection in their work units. Given that this study is interested in understanding how selection decisions are made by political elites in the government, this bias in the sample does not hurt the validity of the results.

Lastly, I check the balance of attribute values to make sure that randomization was done properly in this survey experiment. As shown in [Table A2](#), not only are the attribute values evenly distributed across the sample, they are also balanced across respondent characteristics.

D Robustness Checks

One indication that the main results presented in the article are robust is that the AMCE estimates across different outcomes exhibit similar patterns, which suggests that respondents' multidimensional preference is stable when evaluating candidates in various aspects. To ensure that the results are not driven by any particular respondent groups, I estimate the heterogeneous effects on probability of selection across several theoretically relevant subgroups. The four panels in [Figure A5](#) report AMCE estimates for respondent subgroups divided by gender, age, bureaucratic rank, and authority over personnel decision, respectively. They are highly consistent with the main results, indicating that the effects are not sensitive to particular respondent characteristics. It also means that there is wide consensus within the political elite class regarding preference in entry-level political selection.

To examine different ways of addressing the clustering of profiles by respondents, I replicate the analysis on candidate choice while adding respondent fixed effects and respondent random effects ([Figure A6](#)). The results are nearly identical to the benchmark model.

Moreover, given that the sample comprises online and offline respondents who were recruited using different methods, I estimate the AMCEs for these two groups separately, which again are highly consistent with the main results (see [Figure A7](#)). Estimates for the online group have slightly

larger 95% confidence intervals due to smaller sample size.

Figure A7 shows that there is no significant difference between how online and offline respondents answered the questions, which is another indication that they were not too concerned with social desirability. Because offline respondents were in a peer environment when taking the survey, we can reasonably argue that they might have been more pressured by social desirability; in contrast, online respondents had the luxury of privacy when answering the questions. If respondents were sufficiently concerned with social desirability, we would expect offline respondents to exhibit weaker preference for candidates with political connections. However, as shown in Figure A7, this was not the case.

Lastly, I perform diagnostic tests on some of the assumptions entailed by the conjoint design, including no carry-over effects and no profile-order effects, by estimating AMCEs by task number and by profile position separately. Figure A8 and Figure A9 show that the results do not differ significantly, thus further validating these assumptions.⁶

⁶Amid the highly consistence results in Figure A8, AMCE estimates for Pair 1 are more subdued than that for the other pairs. This is likely caused by respondents' lack of familiarity with survey questions at the beginning rather than any carry-over effects. As respondents proceed to evaluate subsequent pairs of profiles, they become more familiar with the tasks and, as a result, their preference more stabilized.

Table A1: Respondent Characteristics by Sample Subgroup

	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
<i>Offline Sample</i>					
Male	219	.539	.499	0	1
Age	208	32.6	8.28	22	56
CCP Membership	219	.827	.379	0	1
Bureaucratic Rank	215	1.53	.924	1	5
Leadership Position	216	.227	.419	0	1
Interviewer Experience	217	.198	.399	0	1
<i>Online Sample</i>					
Male	113	.655	.476	0	1
Age	106	41.0	9.70	23	59
CCP Membership	113	.796	.403	0	1
Bureaucratic Rank	108	2.97	1.48	1	6
Leadership Position	112	.438	.496	0	1
Interviewer Experience	112	.268	.443	0	1

Table A2: Balance of Attribute Values

Attributes Values	Obs. in Sample			Means of Respondent Characteristics					
	(1) Overall	(2) Offline	(3) Online	(4) Male	(5) Age	(6) CCP	(7) Rank	(8) Leader	(9) Interview
<i>Gender</i>									
Female	1,621	1,048	573	.587	35.4	.810	2.01	.297	.214
Male	1,699	1,142	557	.570	35.4	.822	2.01	.301	.230
<i>Political Affiliation</i>									
None	1,601	1,037	564	.573	35.6	.802	2.05	.307	.215
CCP Member	1,719	1,153	566	.583	35.2	.830	1.98	.291	.228
<i>College Attended</i>									
General College	1,694	1,107	587	.570	35.6	.817	2.02	.310	.212
Elite University	1,626	1,083	543	.587	35.1	.815	1.99	.287	.232
<i>Education Level</i>									
Bachelor's Degree	1,640	1,060	580	.585	35.6	.815	2.01	.312	.226
Master's Degree	1,680	1,130	550	.571	35.2	.817	2.01	.286	.217
<i>Award Won in College</i>									
No Award	690	464	226	.584	35.4	.799	1.98	.304	.234
Artistic Talent	651	420	231	.584	34.8	.796	2.03	.303	.208
Community Outreach	631	419	212	.597	35.8	.834	2.06	.309	.232
Academic Excellence	687	461	226	.568	36.0	.822	1.97	.287	.213
Student Leadership	661	426	235	.560	35.0	.832	2.01	.293	.223
<i>Prior Work Experience</i>									
No Experience	1,135	744	391	.583	35.4	.827	2.06	.311	.240
Company Job	1,111	728	383	.584	35.3	.815	1.98	.296	.210
Government Job	1,074	718	356	.567	35.5	.806	1.99	.288	.214
<i>Father's Occupation</i>									
Private Sector Worker	809	536	273	.583	35.4	.818	1.99	.296	.215
SOE Worker (CCP Member)	848	540	308	.575	35.8	.807	2.05	.316	.211
Private Entrepreneur	852	575	277	.588	35.7	.843	2.04	.307	.251
Government Official	811	539	272	.566	34.7	.797	1.95	.276	.209

Note: This table reports the number of observations for each candidate attribute value (column 1), as well as the means of respondent characteristics for each attribute value, including respondent's gender, age, CCP membership, bureaucratic rank, leadership position, and interviewer experience (columns 2-7). As shown, attributes are well balanced in the sample and across all respondent characteristics.

Table A3: Estimated AMCEs on Choice Outcome and Rating Outcome

	(1)		(2)	
	Prob. of Being Selected		“Suitable & Qualified”	
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	0		0	
Male	.0650	(.0192)***	.0323	(.0366)
<i>Political Affiliation</i>				
None	0		0	
CCP Member	.0793	(.0187)***	.0623	(.0384)
<i>College Attended</i>				
General College	0		0	
Elite University	.115	(.0189)***	.179	(.0345)***
<i>Education Level</i>				
Bachelor’s Degree	0		0	
Master’s Degree	.0487	(.0174)***	.100	(.0358)***
<i>Award Won in College</i>				
No Award	0		0	
Artistic Talent	.0189	(.0309)	.0744	(.0592)
Community Outreach	.201	(.0290)***	.273	(.0507)***
Academic Excellence	.0914	(.0274)***	.147	(.0552)***
Student Leadership	.234	(.0286)***	.275	(.0544)***
<i>Prior Work Experience</i>				
No Experience	0		0	
Company Job	.0129	(.0215)	.0563	(.0432)
Government Job	.158	(.0227)***	.199	(.0461)***
<i>Father’s Occupation</i>				
Private Sector Worker	0		0	
SOE worker (CCP Member)	-.00290	(.0315)	-.0130	(.0506)
Private Entrepreneur	.00310	(.0306)	-.0602	(.0470)
Government Official	.217	(.0285)***	.178	(.0486)***
Obs.	2958		2813	

Note: Column (1) reports AMCE estimates on the probability of being selected for the civil service job (i.e. choice outcome); column (2) reports AMCE estimates on the rating of being “suitable and qualified” for the civil service job (i.e. a rating outcome). Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model; standard errors clustered at the respondent level are shown in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A4: Estimated AMCEs on Specific Competence Qualities

	(1)		(2)	
	Leadership Quality		Task Implementation	
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	0		0	
Male	.0134	(.0335)	-.025	(.0353)
<i>Political Affiliation</i>				
None	0		0	
CCP Member	.0558	(.0374)	.0176	(.0380)
<i>College Attended</i>				
General College	0		0	
Elite University	.158	(.0344)***	.133	(.0344)***
<i>Education Level</i>				
Bachelor's Degree	0		0	
Master's Degree	.0657	(.0340)*	.0451	(.0337)
<i>Award Won in College</i>				
No Award	0		0	
Artistic Talent	.0141	(.0604)**	.0434	(.0638)
Community Outreach	.230	(.0551)***	.303	(.0542)***
Academic Excellence	.135	(.0557)**	.193	(.0560)***
Student Leadership	.403	(.0582)***	.290	(.0603)***
<i>Prior Work Experience</i>				
No Experience	0		0	
Company Job	.00104	(.0417)	.0478	(.0431)
Government Job	.131	(.0227)***	.114	(.0413)***
<i>Father's Occupation</i>				
Private Sector Worker	0		0	
SOE worker (CCP Member)	.00710	(.0315)	-.0613	(.0480)
Private Entrepreneur	.0703	(.0306)	-.0607	(.0467)
Government Official	.215	(.0285)***	.0431	(.0508)
Obs.	2783		2796	

Note: Column (1) reports AMCE estimates on the rating of a candidate's "leadership quality"; column (2) reports AMCE estimates on the rating of a candidate's ability for "task implementation". Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model; standard errors clustered at the respondent level are shown in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A5: Correlations across Survey Outcomes

	Binary Outcomes		Continuous Outcomes (scale of 1-5)		
	Chosen	Rated Higher	Rating	Leadership	Implementation
<u>Binary Outcomes</u>					
Chosen	1				
Rated Higher	0.517***	1			
<u>Continuous Outcomes</u>					
Rating			1		
Leadership			0.732***	1	
Implementation			0.695***	0.689***	1

Note: The table reports the pairwise correlations across all four outcomes in the survey, namely the choice outcome (binary), the rating outcome (continuous), candidate's leadership quality (continuous), and candidate's ability for task implementation (continuous). The top panel of the table presents the correlation between the binary choice outcome and a dichotomized rating outcome (i.e., coded as 1 when a candidate is given a higher score by than the other in the pair, and coded as 0 when a candidate is given an equal or lower score than the other); the bottom panel presents correlations among the three continuous variables.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Figure A1: Design of Conjoint Table & Questions (Original Version in Chinese)

情景题

您所在的工作单位今年计划通过公务员考试招录一名新人，派您代表单位作为考官，面试考核已经通过笔试的五名候选人。

假如两名候选人在面试中的表现同样出色，综合以下的个人情况，您更倾向挑选谁？共五组。请在适合的选项上打钩（√）。

请仔细阅读并认真考虑后再作答。

第一组

	考生 1	考生 2
在校荣誉	学习标兵	优秀学生干部
父亲职业	政府官员	私企普通员工
基层经验	无(应届毕业生)	基层行政工作
政治面貌	中共党员	中共党员
毕业院校	985 重点高校	普通地方院校
性别	女	男
教育程度	硕士研究生	大学本科

1a. 您更倾向挑选谁？

 考生 1

 考生 2

1b. 您是否认为上述两名考生**适合并胜任**公务员工作？

请为他们打分。1 代表完全不适合、不胜任；5 代表非常适合、非常胜任。

	1	2	3	4	5
考生 1					
考生 2					

1c. 请为他们在今后工作中的**领导力**打分。1 代表完全没能力；5 代表非常有能力。

	1	2	3	4	5
考生 1					
考生 2					

1d. 请为他们在今后工作中的**执行力**打分。1 代表完全没能力；5 代表非常有能力。

	1	2	3	4	5
考生 1					
考生 2					

Figure A2: Design of Conjoint Table & Questions (English Translation)

	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
Award Won in College	Academic Excellence	Student Leadership
Father's Occupation	Government Official	Private Sector Worker
Prior Work Experience	No Experience	Government Job
Political Affiliation	CCP Member	CCP Member
College Attended	Elite University	General College
Gender	Female	Male
Education Level	Master Degree	Bachelor Degree

a. Which candidate are you more inclined to choose?

 Candidate 1

 Candidate 2

b. Do you think they are suitable and qualified for the civil service job?

Please rate each candidate respectively.

1 means completely unsuitable and unqualified; 5 means highly suitable and highly qualified.

	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate 1					
Candidate 2					

c. Please rate each candidate on leadership quality that he/she is likely to demonstrate on the job.

1 means no leadership quality; 5 means very high leadership quality.

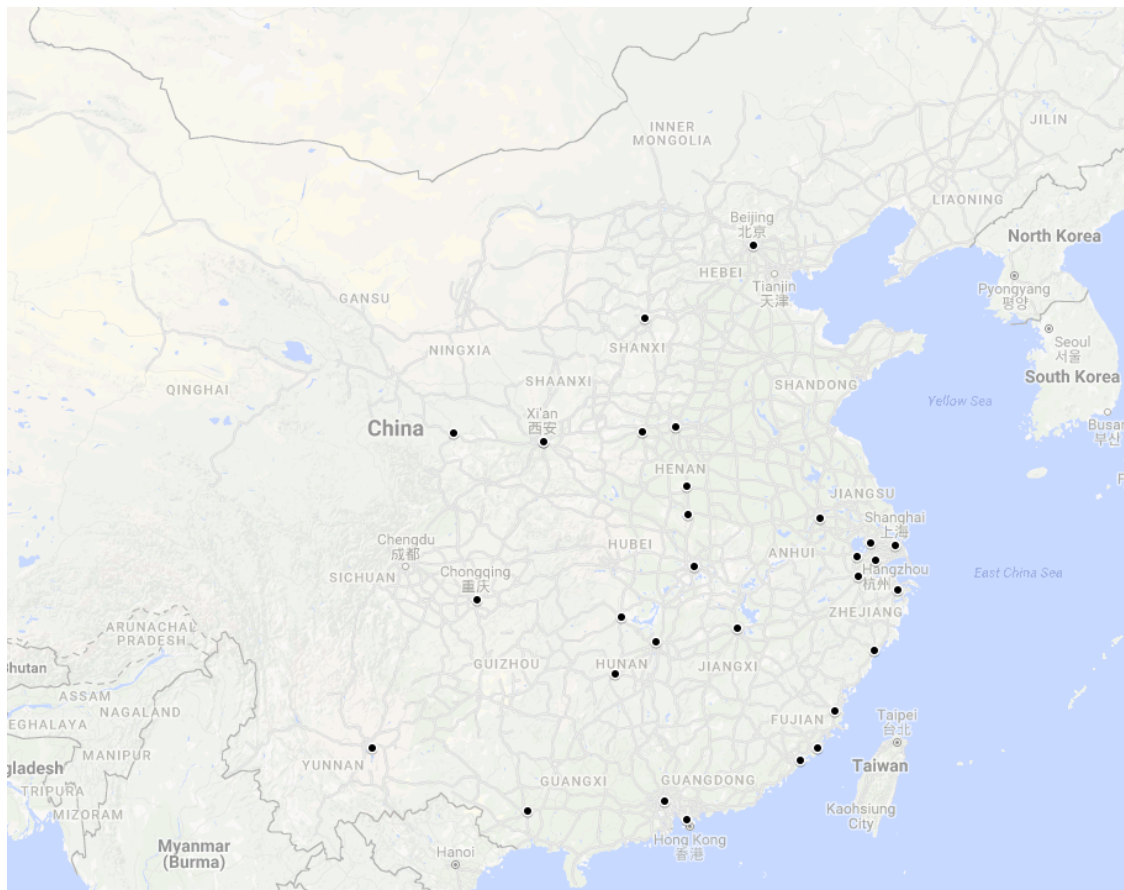
	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate 1					
Candidate 2					

d. Please rate each candidate on task implementation ability that he/she is likely to demonstrate on the job.

1 means no task implementation ability; 5 means very high task implementation ability.

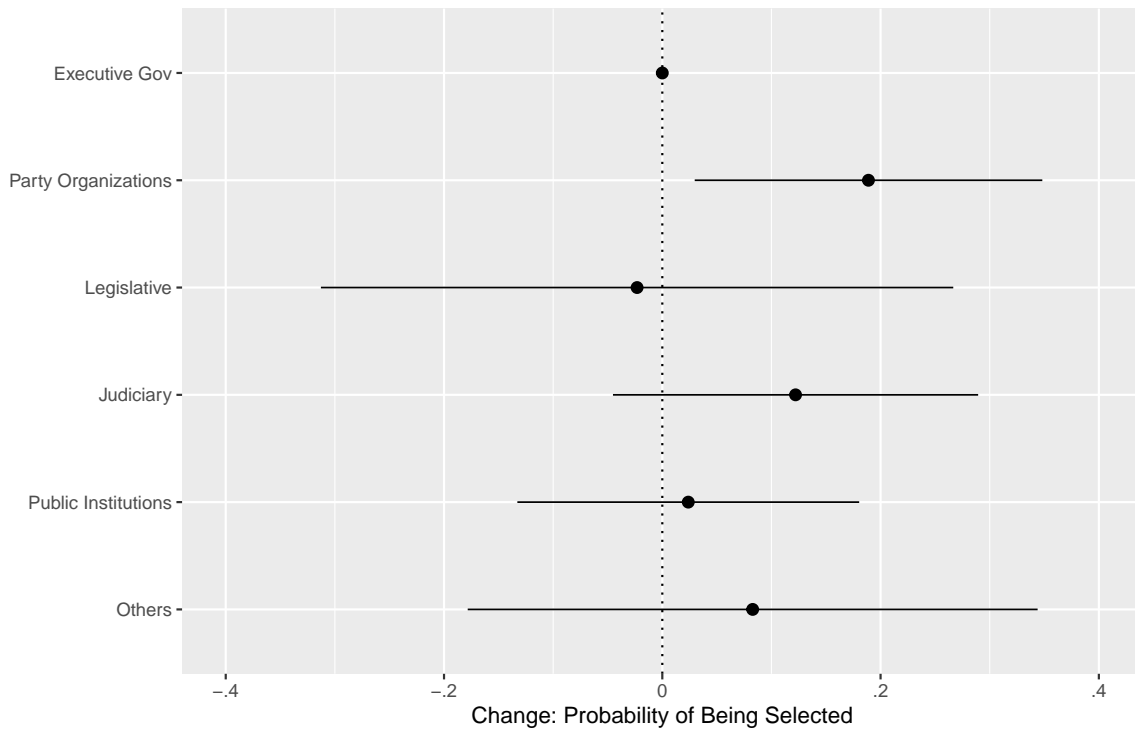
	1	2	3	4	5
Candidate 1					
Candidate 2					

Figure A3: Cities Represented in Survey



Note: This map shows the geographical locations where the survey experiment was implemented. To protect the human subjects, the names of the cities are not disclosed, nor are they identified as online or offline survey sites.

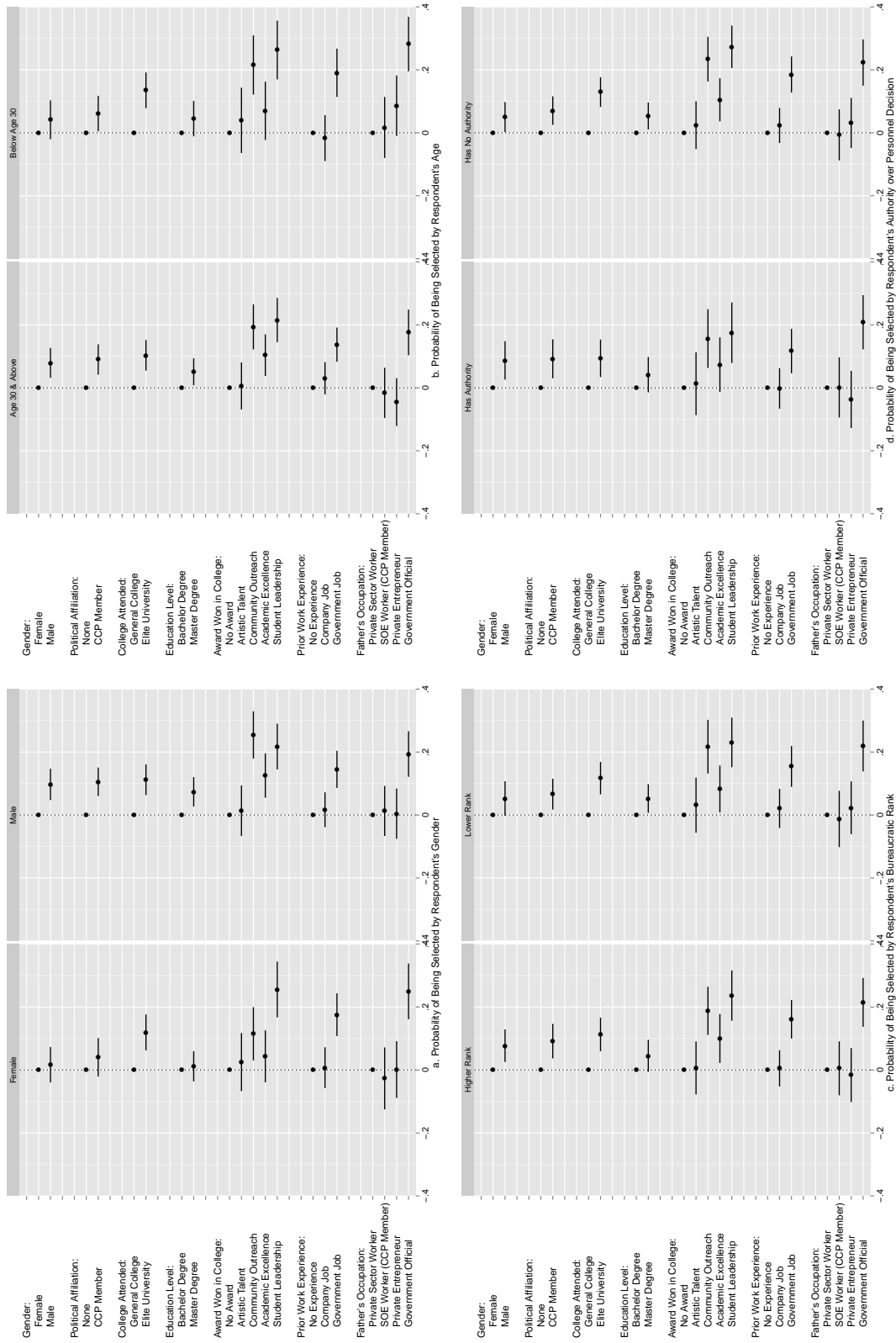
Figure A4: Interaction Effects of Candidate's Political Connections with Respondent's Work Unit



Note: This plot shows the estimated average component interaction effects (ACIEs) of a candidate's political connections with a respondent's work unit on the candidate's probability of being selected for the civil service job. Estimates are based on an OLS model including all attribute values as well as an interaction term between a dichotomous variable for candidate's political connections (measured by *government official* in father's occupation) and respondent's work unit. Standard errors are clustered at the respondent level. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

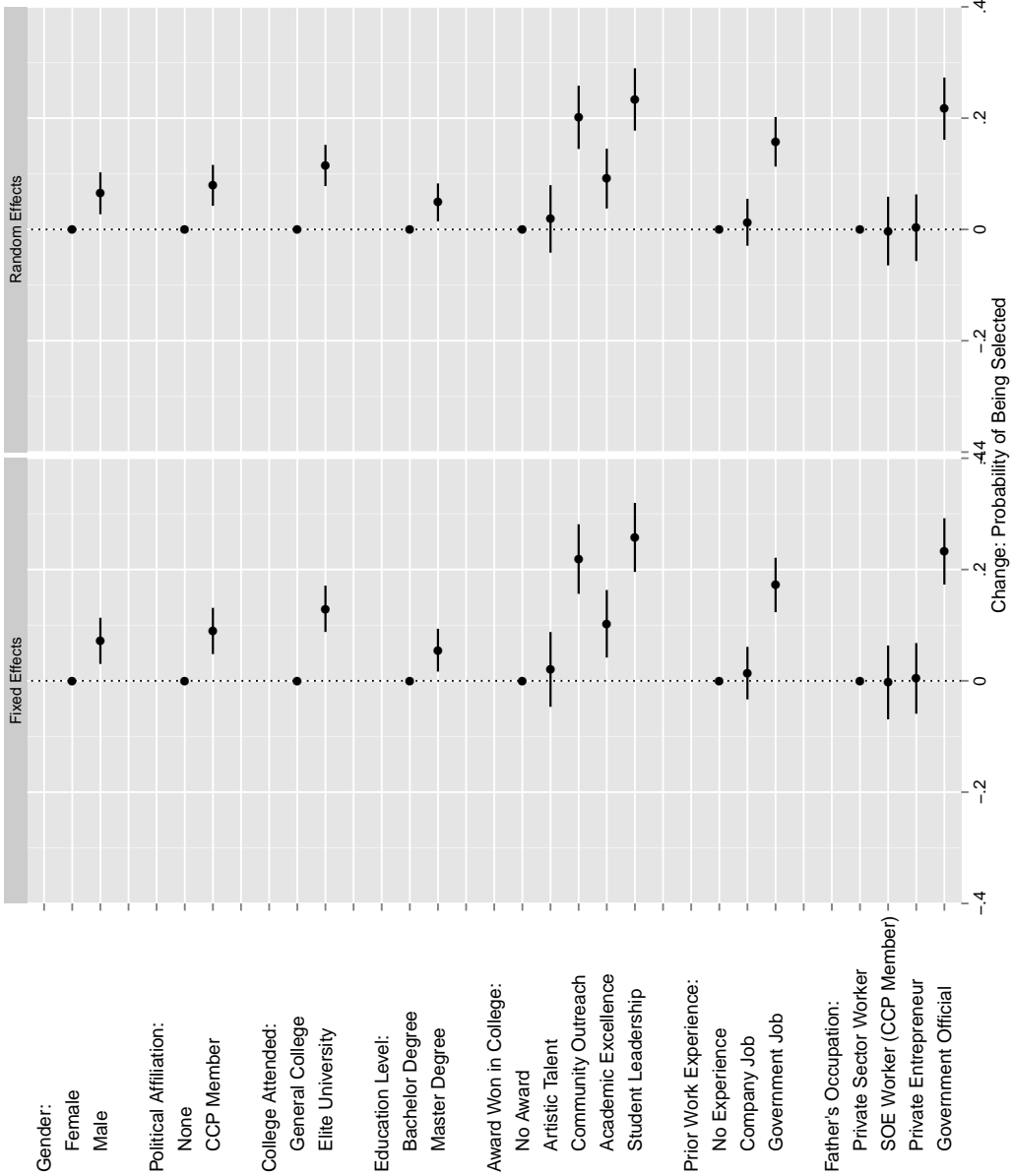
The baseline estimate for the reference category, *executive government branch*, is denoted by a point without horizontal bars; it has a value of 0.262.

Figure A5: Heterogeneous Effects of Candidate Attributes on Probability of Selection



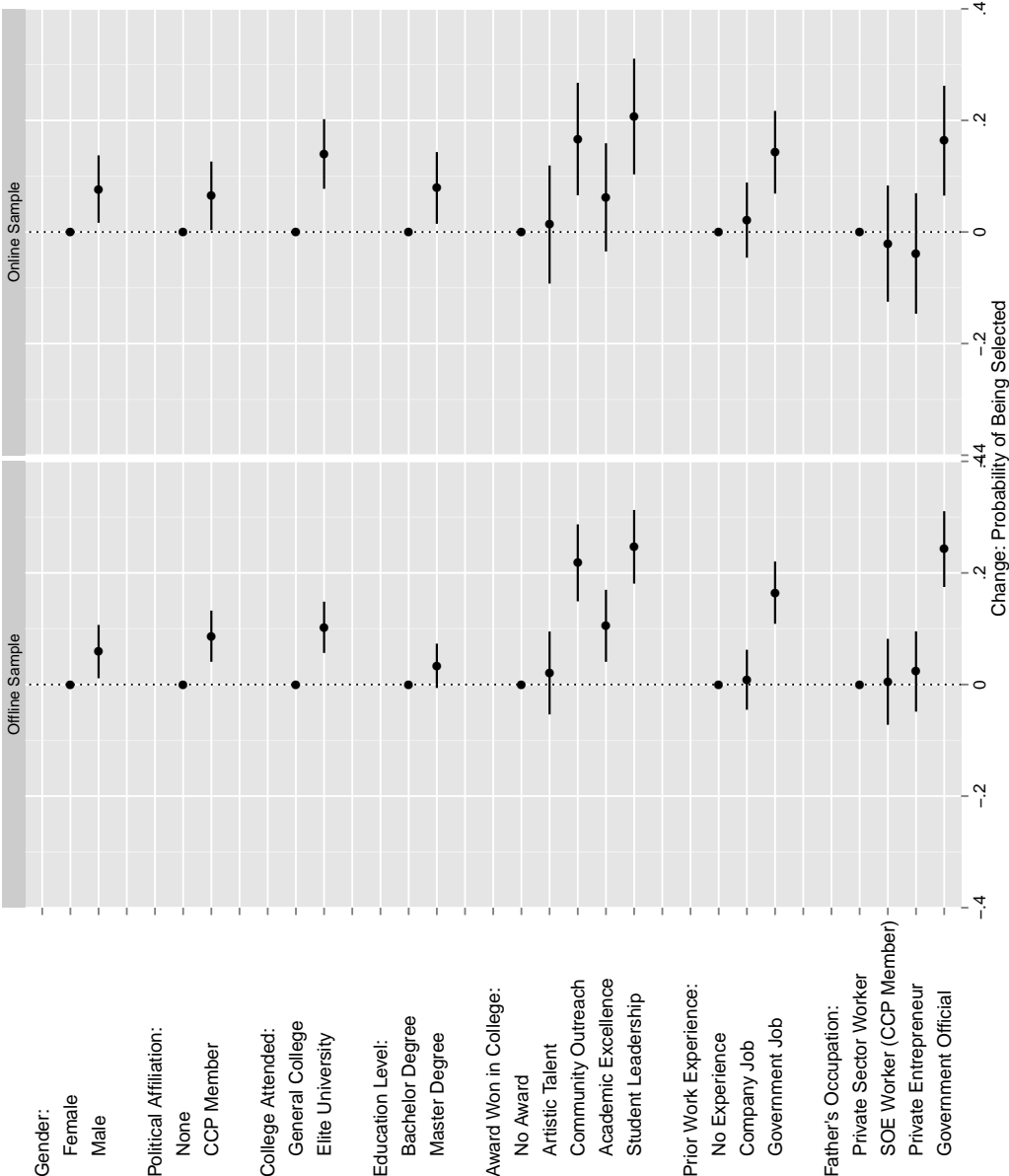
Note: These plots show the estimated AMCEs of attribute values on a candidate's probability of selection for various respondent subgroups. Panel (a) divides the sample by respondent's gender, panel (b) by respondent's age at 30, panel (c) by respondent's bureaucratic rank at deputy section chief (*fukeyi*), and panel (d) by whether a respondent has authority over personnel decision (by either occupying a leadership position or having experience of being an NCSE interviewer). Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with standard errors clustered at the respondent level. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A6: Effects of Candidate Attributes on Probability of Selection with Respondent FEs and REs



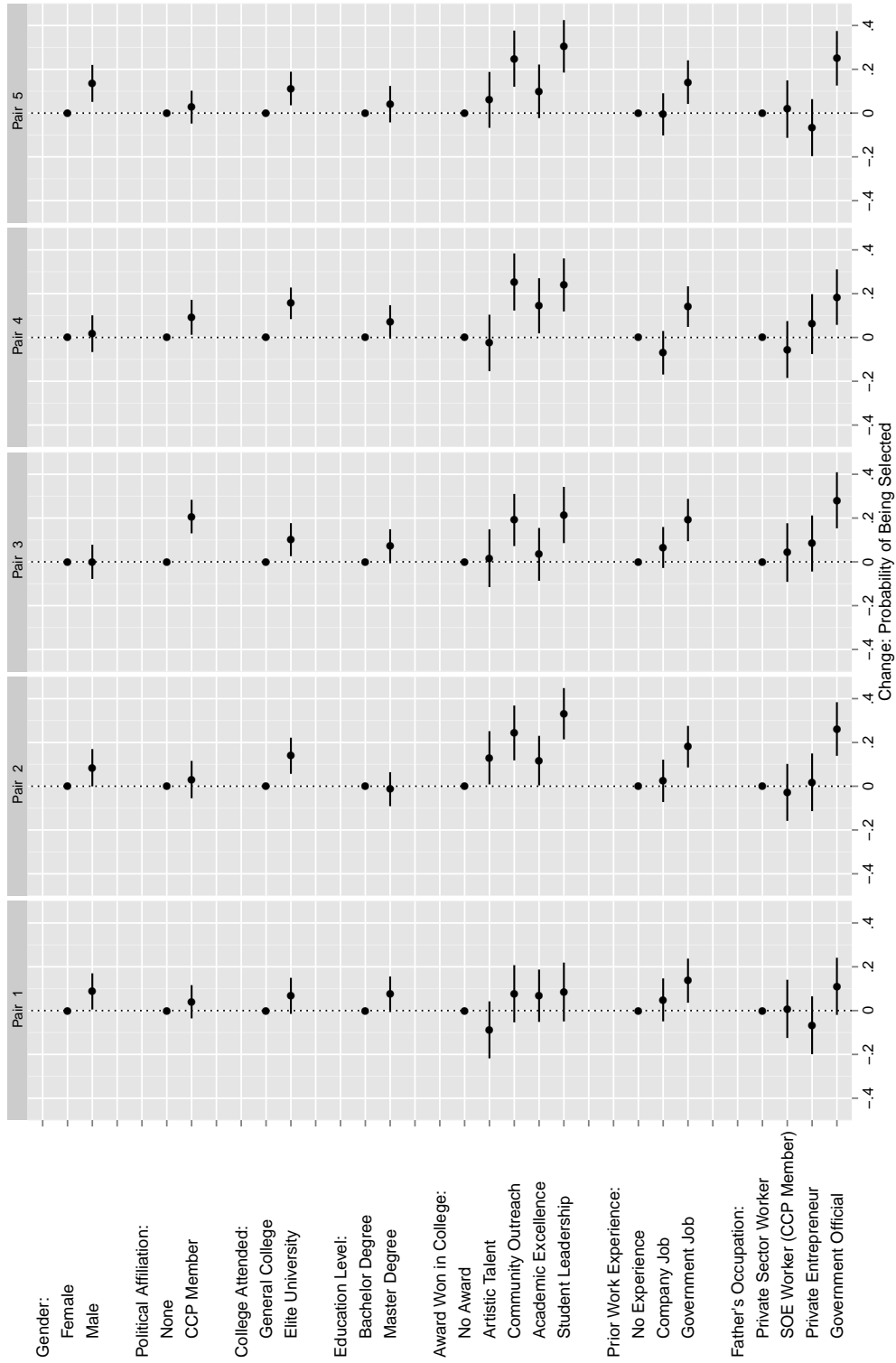
Note: These plots show the estimated AMCEs of attribute values on a candidate's probability of selection using respondent fixed effects and respondent random effects respectively. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with standard errors clustered at the respondent level, while adding respondent fixed effects (the left panel) or random effects (the right panel). Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A7: Effects of Candidate Attributes on Probability of Selection for Online and Offline Subgroups



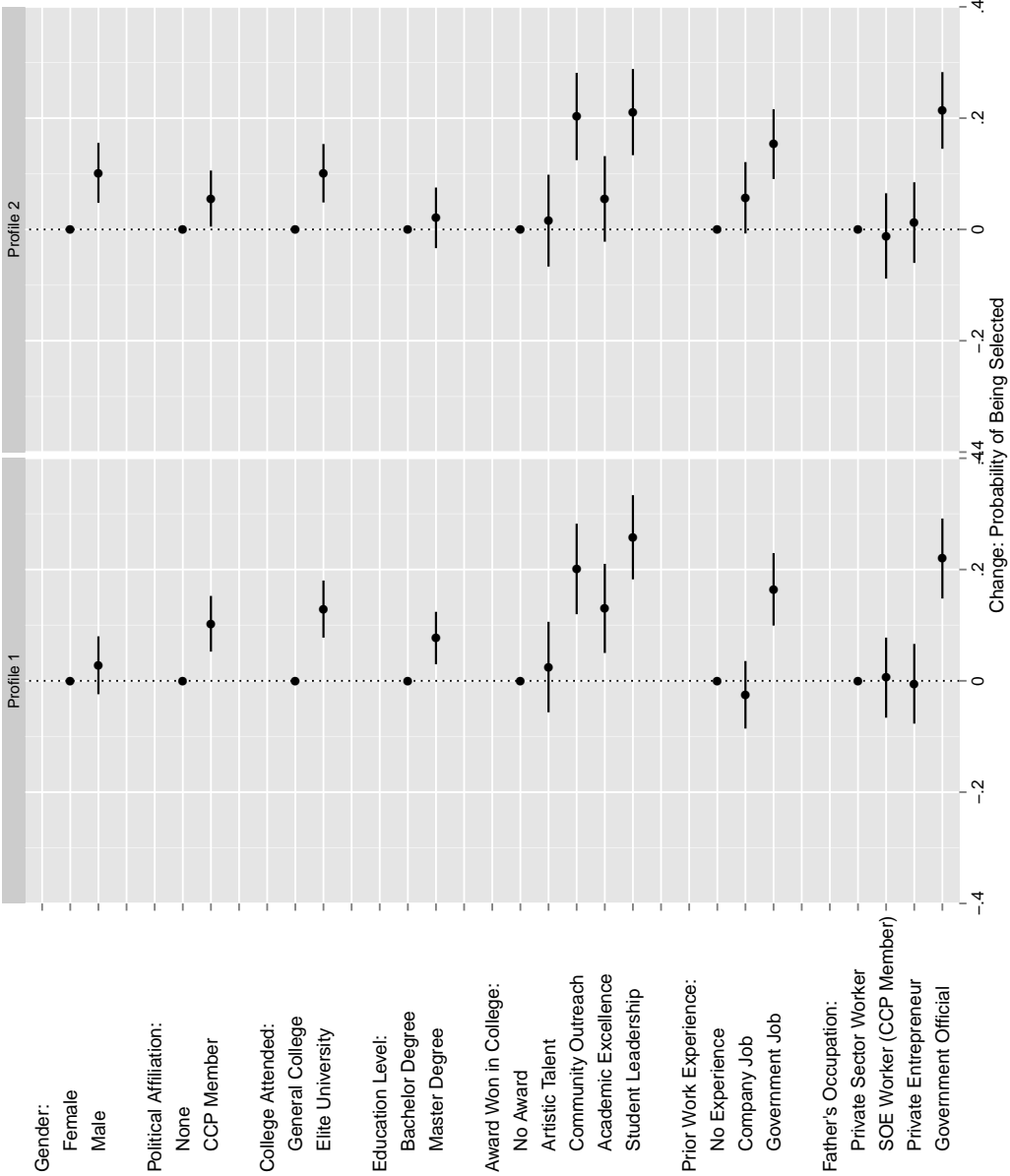
Note: These plots show the estimated AMCEs of attribute values on a candidate's probability of selection for the online respondent group and offline respondent group respectively. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with standard errors clustered at the respondent level. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A8: Effects of Candidate Attributes on Probability of Selection by Task Number



Note: These plots show the estimated AMCEs of attribute values on a candidate's probability of selection for each of the five pairs in the survey. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with standard errors clustered at the respondent level. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A9: Effects of Candidate Attributes on Probability of Selection by Profile Position



Note: These plots show the estimated AMCEs of attribute values on a candidate's probability of selection for different profile positions within a pair. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with standard errors clustered at the respondent level. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.