

Online Appendix

Trading Integrity for Competence?

The Public's Varying Preferences for Bureaucratic Types across
Government Levels in China

Lin Zhu*

Sun Yat-sen University

Feng Yang[†]

Peking University

6 November 2022

Contents

1	Additional Tables	2
2	Additional Figures	7
3	Additional Information	8

List of Additional Tables

A	Covariate Balance across Eight Groups by F-test ($N=5,527$)	1
B	Demographic Profiles of Interviewees ($N = 32$)	2
C	Proportions of Respondents Supporting Promotion	3
D	Proportions of Respondents Supporting Corruption Reporting	4
E	AMCE of Corruption and Competence, across Government Levels	5
F	Summary of Interview Evidence	6

List of Additional Figures

A	Regression Estimated Preference of CC and HI Officials, Controlling for Covariates	7
---	---	---

*Center for Chinese Public Administration Research, School of Government, Sun Yat-sen University.

[†]Center for Social Research, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University.

1 Additional Tables

Table A: Covariate Balance across Eight Groups by F-test (N=5,527)

	Min	Max	Township Leader				Municipal Mayor				p-value
			CI [N=699]	CC [N=687]	HI [N=721]	HC [N=681]	CI [N=675]	CC [N=707]	HI [N=677]	HC [N=680]	
Male	0	1	0.685	0.681	0.703	0.692	0.677	0.661	0.669	0.659	0.626
Han	0	1	0.9	0.889	0.878	0.919	0.898	0.907	0.898	0.903	0.338
Age	1	6	2.672	2.63	2.548	2.589	2.594	2.586	2.567	2.518	0.428
Higher education	0	1	0.289	0.282	0.298	0.294	0.289	0.327	0.307	0.296	0.737
Annual income	1	7	4.308	4.192	4.276	4.16	4.11	4.147	4.208	4.181	0.431
Party member	0	1	0.215	0.179	0.175	0.184	0.203	0.191	0.192	0.178	0.568
Urban resident	0	1	0.655	0.61	0.621	0.604	0.628	0.62	0.643	0.626	0.56
Hometown (same municipality)	0	1	0.82	0.795	0.809	0.783	0.794	0.799	0.792	0.776	0.572
Urban <i>hukou</i>	0	1	0.472	0.438	0.483	0.442	0.447	0.468	0.476	0.474	0.569
Gov. and public employee	0	1	0.14	0.138	0.096	0.116	0.144	0.129	0.118	0.119	0.089
Township gov't perception:											
clean	0	1	0.621	0.658	0.638	0.642	0.644	0.605	0.632	0.66	0.43
corrupt	0	1	0.332	0.306	0.316	0.311	0.311	0.332	0.325	0.279	0.452
don't know	0	1	0.047	0.036	0.046	0.047	0.044	0.062	0.043	0.06	0.375
Municipal gov't perception:											
clean	0	1	0.565	0.571	0.569	0.604	0.593	0.554	0.56	0.532	0.22
corrupt	0	1	0.368	0.362	0.358	0.335	0.32	0.368	0.384	0.384	0.159
don't know	0	1	0.067	0.067	0.074	0.062	0.087	0.078	0.056	0.084	0.298
Gov't interaction freq.	1	3	1.577	1.579	1.551	1.571	1.585	1.574	1.563	1.556	0.976

Note: Group means and p-values corresponding to F-tests of all eight group indicators are shown. CI = corrupt and incompetent; CC = corrupt yet competent; HI = honest yet incompetent; HC = honest and competent.

Table B: Demographic Profiles of Interviewees ($N = 32$)

<i>Male</i>	47%
<i>CCP member</i>	9.38%
<i>Urban hukou</i>	68.75%
<i>Occupation</i>	
Public sector	6.25%
Professionals	21.88%
Clerk	40.62%
Labor	12.50%
Individual business	6.25%
Retired	12.50%
<i>Annual income (RMB yuan)</i>	
< 30,000	18.75%
30,000-50,000	28.12%
50,001-100,000	21.88%
100,001-150,000	25.00%
> 150,000	6.25%
<i>Age</i>	
18-24	6.25%
25-34	43.75%
35-44	25%
45-54	12.5%
55-64	9.38%
≥ 65	3.12%
<i>Education</i>	
High school	28.13%
Junior college	31.25%
Undergraduate or above	40.62%

Note: This table shows the background of the subjects of 32 interviews conducted by the researchers in 2020. A telephone survey company used random digit dialing to reach interviewees, undertook a screening procedure based on the quotas, and recruited them to participate in our interviews.

Table C: Proportions of Respondents Supporting Promotion

	Township Leader			Municipal Mayor		
	Bad performance (Incompetent)	Good performance (Competent)	<i>Column Diff.</i>	Bad performance (Incompetent)	Good performance (Competent)	<i>Column Diff.</i>
Corrupt	0.056	0.227 [CCT]	0.171*** (0.018)	0.087	0.222 [CCM]	0.135*** (0.019)
Honest	0.178 [HIT]	0.736	0.558*** (0.022)	0.248 [HIM]	0.750	0.502*** (0.023)
<i>Row Diff.</i>	0.122*** (0.017)	0.509*** (0.023)		0.161*** (0.020)	0.528*** (0.023)	

Note: For each of the eight vignette officials, we report the proportion of respondents that supported promoting the official. *Diff* reflects column comparisons between officials with the same integrity but different competence, or row comparisons between those with the same competence but different integrity. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$.

Table D: Proportions of Respondents Supporting Corruption Reporting

	Township Leader			Municipal Mayor		
	Bad performance (Incompetent)	Good performance (Competent)	<i>Column Diff.</i>	Bad performance (Incompetent)	Good performance (Competent)	<i>Column Diff.</i>
Corrupt	0.943	0.905 [CCT]	-0.037*** (0.014)	0.950	0.909 [CCM]	-0.040*** (0.014)
Honest	0.938 [HIT]	0.921	-0.017 (0.014)	0.905 [HIM]	0.899	-0.007 (0.016)
<i>Row Diff.</i>	-0.005 (0.013)	0.015 (0.015)		-0.044*** (0.014)	-0.011 (0.016)	

Note: For each of the eight vignette officials, we report the proportion of respondents that supported reporting the official's corruption. *Diff* reflects column comparisons between officials with the same integrity but different competence, or row comparisons between those with the same competence but different integrity. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$.

Table E: AMCE of Corruption and Competence, across Government Levels

VARIABLES	Demotion	Promotion	Reporting	Demotion	Promotion	Reporting
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Corrupt (Ref.: Not Corrupt)	0.328*** (0.011)	-0.329*** (0.011)	0.011 (0.007)	0.302*** (0.016)	-0.312*** (0.015)	-0.005 (0.010)
Competent (Ref.: Incompetent)	-0.361*** (0.011)	0.341*** (0.011)	-0.025*** (0.007)	-0.380*** (0.016)	0.366*** (0.015)	-0.027*** (0.010)
Municipality (Ref.: Township)	-0.017 (0.011)	0.028*** (0.011)	-0.011 (0.007)	-0.062*** (0.021)	0.070*** (0.019)	-0.029** (0.012)
Corrupt×Municipality				0.051** (0.023)	-0.035 (0.021)	0.032** (0.014)
Competent×Municipality				0.038* (0.023)	-0.049** (0.021)	0.003 (0.014)
Constant	0.636*** (0.012)	0.292*** (0.011)	0.934*** (0.007)	0.658*** (0.014)	0.271*** (0.013)	0.943*** (0.008)
Observations	5,527	5,527	5,527	5,527	5,527	5,527
R-squared	0.248	0.261	0.003	0.249	0.262	0.004

Marginal effects conditional on the government level:

Township level:

Corrupt	0.302*** (0.016)	-0.312*** (0.015)	-0.005 (0.010)
Competent	-0.380*** (0.016)	0.366*** (0.015)	-0.027*** (0.010)

Municipality level:

Corrupt	0.353*** (0.016)	-0.347*** (0.016)	0.027*** (0.011)
Competent	-0.342*** (0.016)	0.317*** (0.015)	-0.024** (0.011)

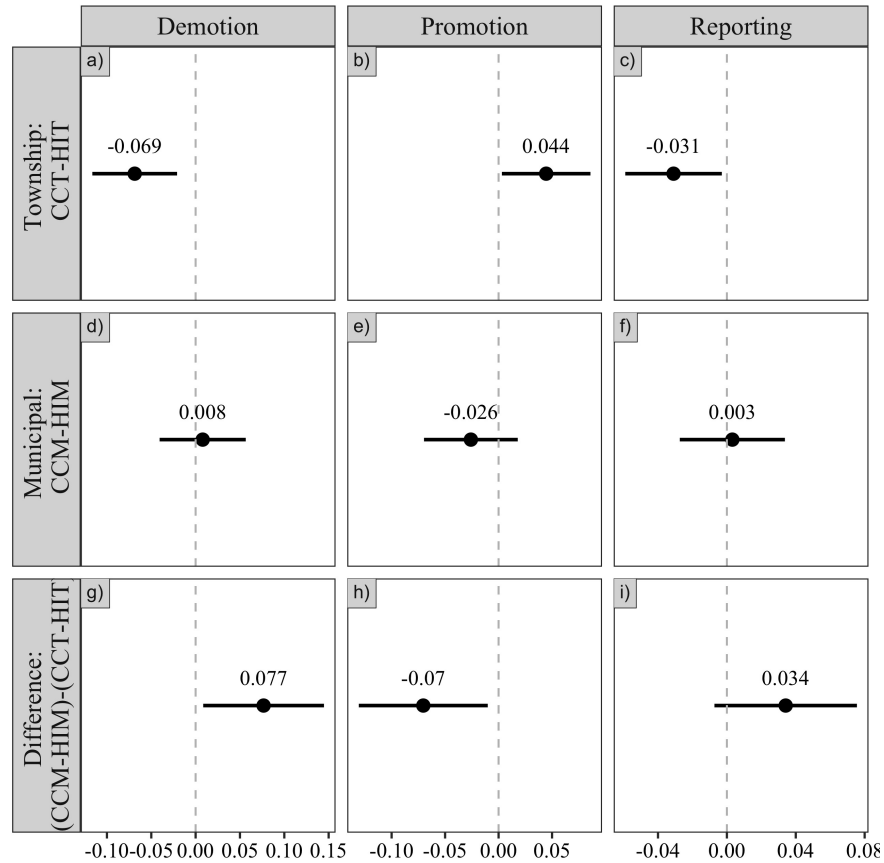
Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table F: Summary of Interview Evidence

Mechanisms		Quotes
<p>Competence is more consequential at the lower level.</p>	<p>Position in Hierarchy: The incompetent low-level officials are more unpopular because they lack promotion incentives to improve performance; meanwhile, their unsatisfactory performance is not punished as strictly as corruption is.</p>	<p>“You can report corruption if you collect some evidence. Although it is not necessarily useful, they [the corrupt officials] get scared in such an anti-corruption climate. However, if the official is incompetent and slack, it makes no sense to file a complaint.”</p>
	<p>Proximity: Lower-level official’s competence is perceived more valued due to their proximity to ordinary people.</p>	<p>“We have more contacts with street-level officials. Their ability directly affects our daily interactions with the government. On the contrary, provincial and municipal governments are distant from us. They have less impact on our daily lives. Even if we file a petition, we have to visit the government from the grassroots.”</p>
<p>Corruption is more consequential at the higher level.</p>	<p>Position in Hierarchy: Corrupt high-level officials are more damaging due to their high position in the power hierarchy.</p>	<p>“If the upper beam is not straight, the lower ones will go aslant (<i>shangliang bu zheng, xialiang wai</i>). So, if the mayor is corrupt, he sets a bad example followed by subordinates.”</p>
	<p>Proximity: It is more difficult for ordinary citizens to monitor high-level officials and report corrupt behavior than it is to detect corruption among grassroots-level officials.</p>	<p>“It is hard to collect evidence of a high-level official’s corruption. Even if we have [the evidence], we don’t know where to file a report against such a high-ranking official.”</p>

2 Additional Figures

Figure A: Regression Estimated Preference of CC and HI Officials, Controlling for Covariates



Note: $N = 5527$. This figure presents regression estimates after controlling for a set of covariates, including gender, ethnicity (Han), age, education, income, CCP membership, urban residence, hometown (same municipality), urban *hukou*, government and public employees, perceived corruption in township government, perceived corruption in municipal government, and the frequency of interacting with government. For each column, the first and second rows display estimated differences between corrupt-yet-competent and honest-yet-incompetent officials (i.e., CC - HI) at the township and municipality levels for the indicated outcome variable. The bottom row further compares the two estimated differences across government levels. Horizontal lines denote 95% confidence intervals based on robust standard errors.

3 Additional Information

3.1 Data on the Promotion of Local Officials

In Section 2.2, we compared the promotion rate of local officials investigated for corruption and the average rate. Below provides more details about the data.

We compiled a data set of all county Party secretaries from 2000 to 2011. On average, it takes them 18 years to advance into the county-level party standing committees. We then collected 1,484 corruption cases committed by province-supervised officials from the website of the Chinese Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) from 2015 to April 2020. Of these accused officials, 637 worked in a county Party standing committee or directly advanced to a municipality Party standing committee. After dropping those accused of buying official titles, we find that 44% of them took less than 18 years to become a county Party standing committee member.