



RIETI Discussion Paper Series 23-E-074

Unveiling or Concealing Aspirations: How candidate gender influences voter response to political ambition

ENDO, Yuya

Osaka University

ONO, Yoshikuni

RIETI



Research Institute of Economy, Trade & Industry, IAA

The Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry

<https://www.rieti.go.jp/en/>

Unveiling or Concealing Aspirations: How candidate gender influences voter response to political ambition¹

Yuya ENDO
Osaka University

Yoshikuni ONO
Waseda University & Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry

Abstract

Do male and female candidates equally benefit from disclosing their political ambitions during electoral campaigns? Generally, candidates for elective office are politically ambitious individuals vying for positions of power. A pervasive stereotype portrays women as modest and reserved, potentially misaligning with the seemingly masculine nature of political office. Voters swayed by this stereotype may not reward female candidates for openly expressing their political ambitions to the same extent they would male candidates. To investigate this issue, we conducted a vignette experiment where both the candidate's gender and their stated motivation for seeking office were randomly manipulated. Our findings reveal that respondents favored candidates—regardless of gender—who were transparent about their political ambition. Nevertheless, male candidates who openly displayed ambition were perceived as more favorable among voters, whereas female candidates did not receive a comparable boost to their image. These results indicate that the electoral benefits garnered from revealing political ambitions are not equally distributed between men and women.

Keywords: Gender, electoral candidate, political ambition, election, survey experiment

JEL classification: J16, D72, D91

The RIETI Discussion Paper Series aims at widely disseminating research results in the form of professional papers, with the goal of stimulating lively discussion. The views expressed in the papers are solely those of the author(s), and neither represent those of the organization(s) to which the author(s) belong(s) nor the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry.

¹This study is conducted as a part of the Project “Advanced Technology and Democracy: Does new technology help or hurt democracy?” undertaken at the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI). The authors are grateful for helpful comments and suggestions by Discussion Paper seminar participants at RIETI.

Women are increasingly active and successful across various sectors of society. Yet, in the business world, women who ascend to traditionally male-dominated roles, such as management positions, often face unfavorable perceptions from their colleagues—even when their behavior is indistinguishable from that of their male counterparts (Eagly and Karau 2002; Heilman 2001, 2012; Rudman and Phelan 2008). These women are subjected to expressions of disdain and accusations of hostility (Heilman and Okimoto 2007; Heilman et al. 2004). Moreover, studies indicate that such negative attitudes manifest in real-world settings as well as in experimental contexts (Astor 2019; Flegenheimer and Ember 2019). Ambitious women are frequently stigmatized with derogatory labels such as “Dragon Lady,” “Ice Queen,” “Iron Lady,” or “Battle Axe.”

The rising prevalence of female candidates in politics has spurred research into how voters evaluate women with political ambitions. For example, Okimoto and Brescoll (2010) explored the consequences of female candidates being described as having power-seeking intentions, finding that such descriptions negatively affected voters’ preferences. Interestingly, this effect was not observed when the candidate was male. Beyond explicit declarations of ambition, even the mere perception of ambition in the actions of female candidates can result in backlash. Saha and Weeks (2020) found that voters often characterize ambitious candidates as those who propose a comprehensive overhaul of the political agenda, show interest in higher office, or display a strong determination to succeed. Their findings further indicate that right-wing voters are generally less supportive of female candidates with progressive ambitions compared to their left-wing counterparts.

While these studies enhance our understanding of the political ramifications of ambition, it is important to recognize that electoral candidates, both male and female, are inherently ambitious to varying degree as they seek positions of power. Therefore, our attention should turn to how voters evaluate electoral candidates based on the strategic disclosure or concealment of their ambitions during campaigns (i.e., the framing of power-seeking intentions

by candidates). Specifically, we aim to investigate whether an “electoral premium” exists for candidates who openly reveal their ambitions, and if so, whether the effects of this transparency differ by gender.

Given the rising number of women entering the political arena globally, it is imperative to examine the impact of strategically revealing or concealing political ambitions on female candidates. A prevalent gender bias exists among many voters, who often perceive women as humble and reserved. Previous research indicates that deviating from masculine stereotypes can result in voter backlash (e.g., Bauer 2015; Krupnikov and Bauer 2014; Ono and Yamada 2020; Rudman and Glick 1999). Consequently, voters who view politicians as a predominantly masculine profession may penalize female candidates who do not conform to these modest, reserved stereotypes and who are forthright about their ambitions during their electoral campaigns. To address this issue, we conducted a vignette experiment involving more than 3,000 voters, in which we randomly manipulated both the candidate’s gender and the content of their stated motivation for running for office.

To preview our results, we found evidence to suggest that voters evaluate candidates differently based on gender. While candidates who openly disclose their political ambitions are generally favored over those who conceal them, male candidates who do so are perceived as more popular among voters. In contrast, female candidates do not enjoy the same benefit when revealing their ambitions. In essence, there is an electoral premium for candidates who are transparent about their political ambitions; however, the extent to which a candidate can capitalize on this premium is influenced by their gender. Specifically, female candidates do not receive as significant a premium for their transparency as their male counterparts.

Penalty for Ambitious Women

The penalty for ambitious women often arises from the perception that they are violating established gender norms (Rudman and Phelan 2008). Women who deviate from these norms

tend to encounter negative attitudes and hostility in interpersonal relationships. Consequently, women who actively pursue traditionally masculine roles or occupations are more likely to face social sanctions. However, Toneva et al. (2020) suggest that women are less likely to be penalized if they attain masculine status or occupation *through chance or external recommendations* rather than personal ambition. Similarly, Tetlock et al. (2010) contend that women are less likely to be penalized for norm violations in situations where their behavior is perceived as extrinsic and uncontrollable. In contrast, when women’s behavior is seen as intrinsic and within their control, they are more likely to be subject to penalties for violating gender norms.

In the context of electoral competitions, ambition similarly serves as a barrier for female candidates. When terms like “ambitious” or “will to power” are included in their profiles, female candidates tend to receive less support from voters (Okimoto and Brescoll 2010). Saha and Weeks (2020) assert that ambitious women are more likely to face penalties from voters. Based on these observations, we hypothesize as follows:

For male candidates, voters are more favorable to those who reveal their ambition than those who conceal it.

In contrast, for female candidates, voters are less favorable to those who reveal their ambition than those who conceal it.

Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a survey experiment using Lucid Marketplace, an online survey platform increasingly popular among social scientists. Our survey participants consisted of voting-age Japanese adults, aged 18 or older. During recruitment, we applied demographic quotas based on age, gender, and region.² In the survey, an attention-check question was

² To collect a representative sample of voting-age adults in the Japan, we used demographic quotas for age (18–19, 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69 over 70), sex (male, female), and

administered immediately after respondents agreed to participate, allowing us to filter out those who failed to answer correctly. The survey also included a series of questions regarding respondents' demographics (e.g., gender, education, age, current residence), partisanship, and ideology. A total of 3,168 respondents passed the attention check and successfully completed our survey.

In the experiment, respondents were randomly divided into four groups and each group was presented with a short vignette about a hypothetical candidate running for local council at the municipal level. The vignettes were designed to manipulate both the candidate's motivation for running and their gender. The four types of vignettes included: *an ambition-revealing woman*, *an ambition-concealing woman*, *an ambition-revealing man*, and *an ambition-concealing man*. We manipulated the candidate's gender using names—*Yasuko Takabashi* for the female candidate and *Yasubiko Takabashi* for the male candidate. In the *ambition-revealing* scenarios, the candidate was described as having aspired to be a politician since their college days and as having voluntarily chosen to run in the current election. In contrast, in the *ambition-concealing scenarios*, the candidate was depicted as someone who had not previously considered a political career and was running in the current election due to encouragement from others.

The vignette also included additional information about the candidate, such as their educational and professional backgrounds, as well as their policy commitments. This information was kept consistent across all four vignette types. Two versions of the articles—one revealing ambition and another concealing it—are provided below in English translation. Differences between the two versions are italicized for clarity. The original articles, written in Japanese, can be found in Appendix Section A.

region of residence (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kita-Kanto, Tokyo, Minami-Kanto, Hokurikushinetsu, Tokai, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyusyu) when recruiting respondents.

Ambition-revealing article

Yasuhiko (Yasuko) Takahashi is a male (female), currently 35 years old. After graduating from Waseda University, he (she) has worked as a civil servant. Mr. (Ms.) Takahashi *has aspired to be a politician since he (she) was a college student and made various efforts to become a politician*, and decided to run for this election. His (Her) priority policies include (1) improving the support system for the child-rearing generation so that they can continue to work without difficulty, and (2) promoting the revitalization of the local economy by developing the industrial base. In preparation for this election, Mr. (Ms.) Takahashi said, *“I have wanted to become a politician since I was a college student. This time, I volunteered to run for office. My goal is to change society, and I will aim for a politics that is closer to the citizens.”*

Ambition-hiding article

Yasuhiko (Yasuko) Takahashi is a male (female), currently 35 years old. After graduating from Waseda University, he (she) has worked as a civil servant. Mr. (Ms.) Takahashi *was encouraged by his (her) friends and acquaintances in the local assembly to run for office* and decided to run for this election. His (Her) priority policies include (1) improving the support system for the child-rearing generation so that they can continue to work without difficulty, and (2) promoting the revitalization of the local economy by developing the industrial base. In preparation for this election, Mr. (Ms.) Takahashi said, *“I had never thought of becoming a politician before. This time, people around me encouraged me to run for office, so I did. My goal is to change society, and I will aim for a politics that is closer to the citizens.”*

In terms of outcome variables, we assessed each respondent's attitude toward the candidate using two questions. The first question gauged the respondent's level of favorability toward the presented candidate, specifically asking how favorable an impression they had of the candidate. The second question aimed to measure the perceived popularity of the candidate,

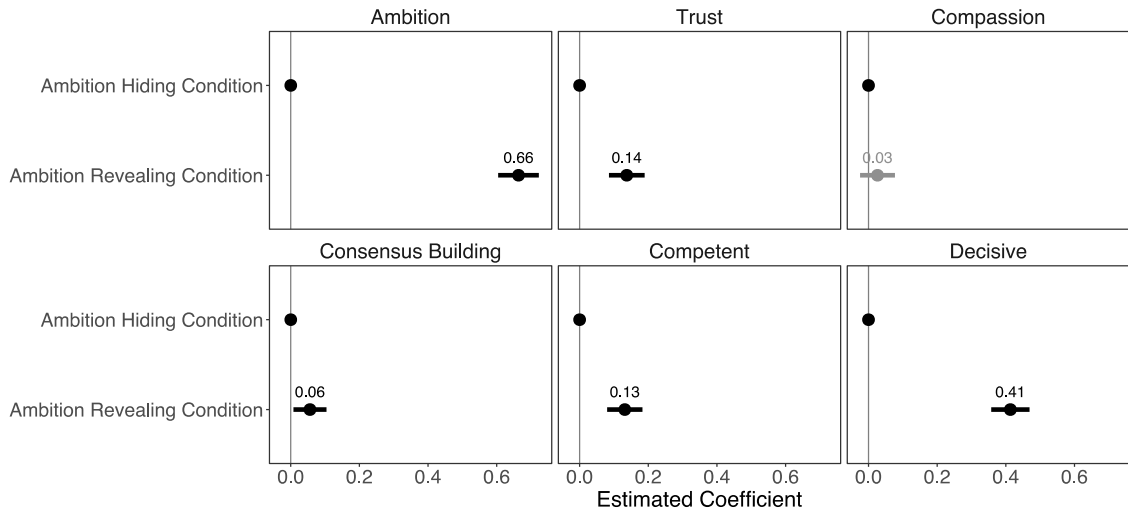
asking respondents how popular they believed the candidate would be among their peers. Both questions were answered using a four-point Likert scale.

In the ambition-concealing condition of our experiment, the candidate was described as running for office due to encouragement from their social circle. While we anticipate that this will lead respondents to perceive the candidate as less ambitious, it may also serve as a cue for other personal characteristics, such as competence, trustworthiness, or decisiveness. To account for this issue, we included a manipulation check in our experiment, asking respondents to evaluate the personal traits of the presented candidate after responding to the primary outcome variable questions.

Results of our analyses

We begin by presenting the results of our manipulation checks. Figure 1 displays the results on perceived personal traits, confirming that our articles successfully influenced respondents' views on the candidate's ambition. The impressions of the candidate's ambitiousness varied significantly between the two types of articles, aligning with our intentions. However, the results also reveal that the candidate's perceived decisiveness, competence, and trustworthiness differed between the two articles as well. Therefore, in subsequent analyses, we controlled for perceptions of the candidate's personal attributes other than ambition.

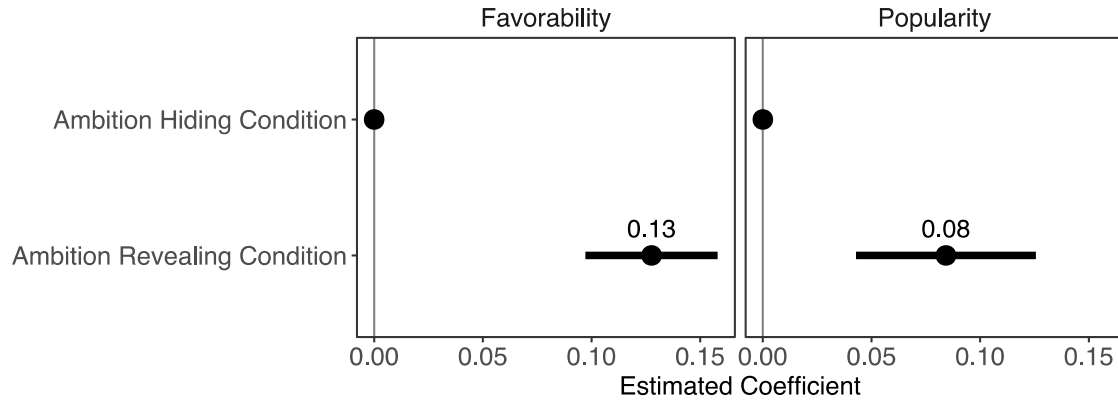
Figure 1: Estimated average treatment effects on the candidate's personal traits



Next, we present the primary treatment effects of our experiment. We employed Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models with robust standard errors to test our hypotheses. These models controlled for the respondent's age, sex, ideology, and the candidate's perceived personal traits, excluding ambition. Figure 2 shows the estimated treatment effects on both favorability and popularity scores. The horizontal bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.³

Figure 2: Estimated average treatment effects on respondents' evaluations of ambition-revealing candidates

³ Appendix Section C and Table C1 in the Supplementary Materials includes regression tables showing the regression results.

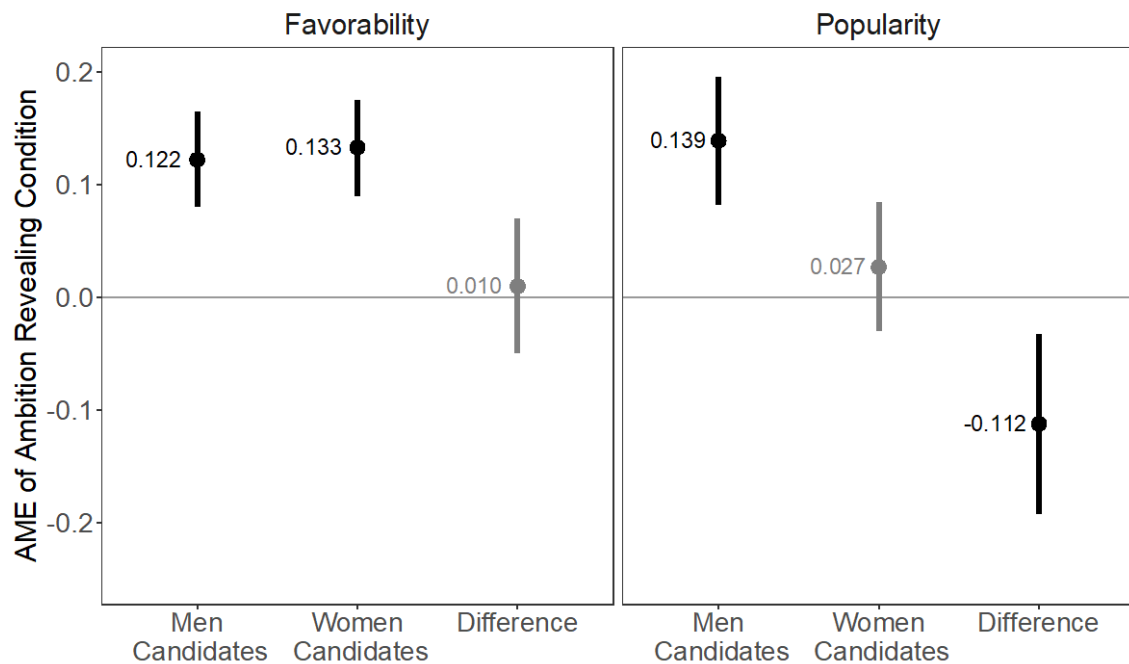


The left panel of Figure 2 reveals a difference of 0.13 in favorability scores between candidates who reveal their ambitions and those who conceal them, statistically significant at the 5% level. This suggests that respondents view the ambition-revealing candidates more favorably than their ambition-concealing counterparts. Similarly, the right panel of Figure 2 shows a difference of 0.08 in popularity scores between the two groups, also statistically significant the 5% level. This finding suggests that respondents perceive candidates who reveal their ambitions as more popular than those who do not.

The evidence suggests that candidates benefit more from openly displaying their political ambitions during electoral campaigns than from concealing them. However, the effect of revealing ambition may vary between male and female candidates. Our main hypothesis focuses on the interaction effects between a candidate's ambition and gender. These interactions effects are shown in Figure 3, where the horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.⁴ Effects that are statistically significant at the 5% level are highlighted in black, while non-significant effects are in gray.

⁴ Section C and Table C2 in the Supplementary Materials includes regression tables showing the regression results.

Figure 3: Estimated average marginal effects of ambitious candidates by candidate's gender



We found no gender-based difference in the effect of revealing ambition on favorability scores. In other words, respondents favored candidates who revealed their ambitions over those who concealed them, irrespective of the candidate's gender. Importantly, however, we found a gender-specific effect when it came to perceived popularity. Our results indicate that female candidates who reveal their ambitions are perceived as less popular among the general populace compared to their male counterparts.⁵ This finding is robust across different respondent characteristics, as shown in the results for subgroups presented in the appendix.

In summary, candidates who reveal their ambitions are generally favored by the electorates. However, the perception of their popularity varies between male and female

⁵ As a robustness test, we estimated the effect of the perceived degree of ambition. The results are shown in Figure D1 in the Supplementary Materials. They are consistent with those shown in Figure 2.

candidates. Unlike their male counterparts, female candidates do not enjoy the same benefit of increased perceived popularity when they reveal their ambitions. This suggests that female candidates may be penalized by voters for a perceived lack of modesty in their campaigns.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined how voters assess female candidates who openly express their political ambitions. Our findings indicate that public attitudes toward such ambition-revealing candidates vary based on the candidate's gender. Although candidates who reveal their ambitions generally receive favorable evaluations, female candidates experience a decline in popularity when they exhibit political ambition, placing them at a disadvantage relative to their male counterparts. This observation aligns with previous research suggesting that female candidates face penalties when they deviate from traditional gender roles (Ono and Yamada 2020).

Contrary to traditional expectations of women's roles, ambitious female candidates present an incongruity that voters may find difficult to reconcile, leading to unfavorable evaluations in electoral contexts. Previous studies have argued that deviations from gender stereotypes could render female candidates less supportable, as they fall outside voters' comfort zones (Krupnikov and Bauer 2014; Rudman and Glick 1999). However, our experimental results suggest that such deviations do not inherently make female candidates less likable. Instead, the drop in support may stem from voters' belief that female candidates who deviate from gender norms are more likely to lose in the election.

Women may be able to advance gender equality in the political sphere by adopting more aggressive campaign strategies. However, such approaches are likely to backfire among traditionally-minded voters who resist deviating from established gender roles. In other words, when female candidates compete against their male counterparts, they might garner more support by downplaying their political ambitions and highlighting endorsements or encouragements from others.

Many voters are motivated by the prospect of aligning themselves with the eventual winner, a phenomenon known as the bandwagon effect.. Indeed, a conjoint experiment that simultaneously presented various candidate attributes found that candidates described as publicly popular garnered more voter support (Ono and Burden 2019). Our experiment shows that ambitious female candidates are perceived as less popular with the general public, even if their favorability ratings remain unaffected. Consequently, those women are less likely to attract voter support in elections.

Future research can extend the insights gained from this study in various ways to deepen our understanding of the subject. Our unresolved question is why ambitious female candidates are not perceived as less likable, a finding that contrasts with previous research in social psychology. In business setting, where ambitious women might become bosses or colleagues, the impact of a woman's ambition has been assessed differently. However, in electoral contexts, candidates do not assume the role of a boss over voters, which may contribute to the divergent outcomes. Future studies should aim to identify the underlying causes of this discrepancy.

References

- Alexander, D., & Andersen, K. (1993). Gender as a Factor in the Attribution of Leadership Traits. *Political Research Quarterly*, 46(3), 527-545.
- Astor, M. (2019). 'A Woman, Just Not That Woman': How Sexism Plays Out on the Trail. *The New York Times*.
- Bauer, N. M. (2015). Emotional, Sensitive, and Unfit for Office? Gender Stereotype Activation and Support Female Candidates. *Political Psychology*, 36(6), 691-708.
- Dolan, K. A. (2014). *When Does Gender Matter?: Women Candidates and Gender Stereotypes in American elections*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders. *Psychological review*, 109(3), 573.
- Flegenheimer, M., & Ember, S. (2019). How Amy Klobuchar treats her staff. Retrieved February, 14, 2020.
- Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent up the Organizational Ladder. *Journal of social issues*.
- Heilman, M. E. (2012). Gender Stereotypes and Workplace Bias. *Research in organizational Behavior*, 32, 113-135.
- Heilman, M. E., & Okimoto, T. G. (2007). Why are Women Penalized for Success at Male Tasks?: The Implied Communality Deficit. *Journal of applied psychology*, 92(1), 81.
- Heilman, M. E., Wallen, A. S., Fuchs, D., & Tamkins, M. M. (2004). Penalties for Success: Reactions to Women Who Succeed at Male Gender-Typed Tasks. *Journal of applied psychology*, 89(3), 416.
- Krupnikov, Y., & Bauer, N. M. (2014). The Relationship Between Campaign Negativity, Gender and Campaign Context. *Political Behavior*, 36(1), 167-188.

- Okimoto, T. G., & Brescoll, V. L. (2010). The Price of Power: Power Seeking and Backlash against Female Politicians. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(7), 923-936.
- Ono, Y., & Burden, B. C. (2019). The Contingent Effects of Candidate Sex on Voter Choice. *Political Behavior*, 41(3), 583-607.
- Ono, Y., & Yamada, M. (2020). Do Voters Prefer Gender Stereotypic Candidates? Evidence from a Conjoint Survey Experiment in Japan. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8(3), 477-492.
- Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (1999). Feminized Management and Backlash toward Agentic Women: The Hidden Costs to Women of a Kinder, Gentler Image of Middle Managers. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 77(5), 1004.
- Rudman, L. A., & Phelan, J. E. (2008). Backlash Effects for Disconfirming Gender Stereotypes in Organizations. *Research in organizational behavior*, 28, 61-79.
- Saha, S., & Weeks, A. C. (2020). Ambitious Women: Gender and Voter Perceptions of Candidate Ambition. *Political Behavior*, 1-27.
- Tetlock, P. E., Self, W. T., & Singh, R. (2010). The Punitiveness Paradox: When is External Pressure Exculpatory—And When a Signal just to Spread Blame? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46(2), 388-395.
- Toneva, Y., Heilman, M. E., & Pierre, G. (2020). Choice or Circumstance: When are Women Penalized for Their Success? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 50(11), 651-659.

Appendix for “Hiding political ambition and voter evaluation”

Yuya Endo

Yoshikuni Ono

A. Vignettes in Japanese

Figure A1: Ambition-revealing article for women candidate

高橋泰子さんは、現在35歳の女性です。早稲田大学を卒業後、公務員として働いてきました。高橋さんは、学生の頃から政治家を志しており、政治家になるために様々な努力をして、今回の選挙に立候補しました。重点政策として、（1）子育て世代が無理なく働き続けられるような支援制度を充実させること、（2）産業基盤を整備し地域経済の活性化を推進すること、などを掲げています。今回の選挙に向けて、高橋さんは「学生の頃から政治家になろうと思っていました。今回、自分から進んで、立候補しました。社会を変えることを目標にし、市民の皆様に寄り添った政治を目指します。」とコメントしました。

Figure A2: Ambition-revealing article for men candidate

高橋泰彦さんは、現在35歳の男性です。早稲田大学を卒業後、公務員として働いてきました。高橋さんは、学生の頃から政治家を志しており、政治家になるために様々な努力をして、今回の選挙に立候補しました。重点政策として、（1）子育て世代が無理なく働き続けられるような支援制度を充実させること、（2）産業基盤を整備し地域経済の活性化を推進すること、などを掲げています。今回の選挙に向けて、高橋さんは「学生の頃から政治家になろうと思っていました。今回、自分から進んで、立候補しました。社会を変えることを目標にし、市民の皆様に寄り添った政治を目指します。」とコメントしました。

Figure A3: Ambition-hiding article for women candidate

高橋泰子さんは、現在35歳の女性です。早稲田大学を卒業後、公務員として働いてきました。高橋さんは、周囲の友人や知り合いの議員から勧められて、今回の選挙に立候補しました。重点政策として、（1）子育て世代が無理なく働き続けられるような支援制度を充実させること、（2）産業基盤を整備し地域経済の活性化を推進すること、などを掲げています。今回の選挙に向けて、高橋さんは「今まで政治家になろうと思っていませんでした。今回、周りから勧められて、立候補しました。社会を変えることを目標にし、市民の皆様に寄り添った政治を目指します。」とコメントしました。

Figure A4: Ambition-hiding article for men candidate

高橋泰彦さんは、現在35歳の男性です。早稲田大学を卒業後、公務員として働いてきました。高橋さんは、周囲の友人や知り合いの議員から勧められて、今回の選挙に立候補しました。重点政策として、（1）子育て世代が無理なく働き続けられるような支援制度を充実させること、（2）産業基盤を整備し地域経済の活性化を推進すること、などを掲げています。今回の選挙に向けて、高橋さんは「今まで政治家になろうと思っていませんでした。今回、周りから勧められて、立候補しました。社会を変えることを目標にし、市民の皆様に寄り添った政治を目指します。」とコメントしました。

B. Descriptive statistics of our sample

Table B1: Descriptive statistics of respondent's age

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	3,867	47.864	15.627	18	80

Table B2: Descriptive statistics of respondent's gender and ideology

	N	Proportion
Ideology		
Conservative	1280	33.10
Liberal	761	19.68
Moderate	1826	47.22
Gender		
Female	1783	46.11
Male	2084	53.89

C. Detailed Results of the Our Experiment

Table C1: The estimated average treatment effects on respondents' evaluation for ambition revealing candidates

	Favorability	Popularity
Treatment	0.128*** (0.016)	0.084*** (0.021)
Age	-0.0003 (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)
Respondent's gender	-0.017 (0.016)	0.072*** (0.022)
Ideology	-0.013 (0.009)	0.009 (0.013)
Trust	0.214*** (0.014)	0.227*** (0.020)
Decisive	0.121*** (0.011)	0.132*** (0.016)
Compassion	0.139*** (0.013)	0.132*** (0.018)
Competent	0.096*** (0.014)	0.183*** (0.020)
Consensus Building	0.066*** (0.014)	0.131*** (0.020)
Constant	0.656*** (0.059)	0.734*** (0.079)
Observations	3,867	3,867
Adjusted R ²	0.461	0.410
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table C2: Results of the OLS including the interaction term between treatment and candidate's gender

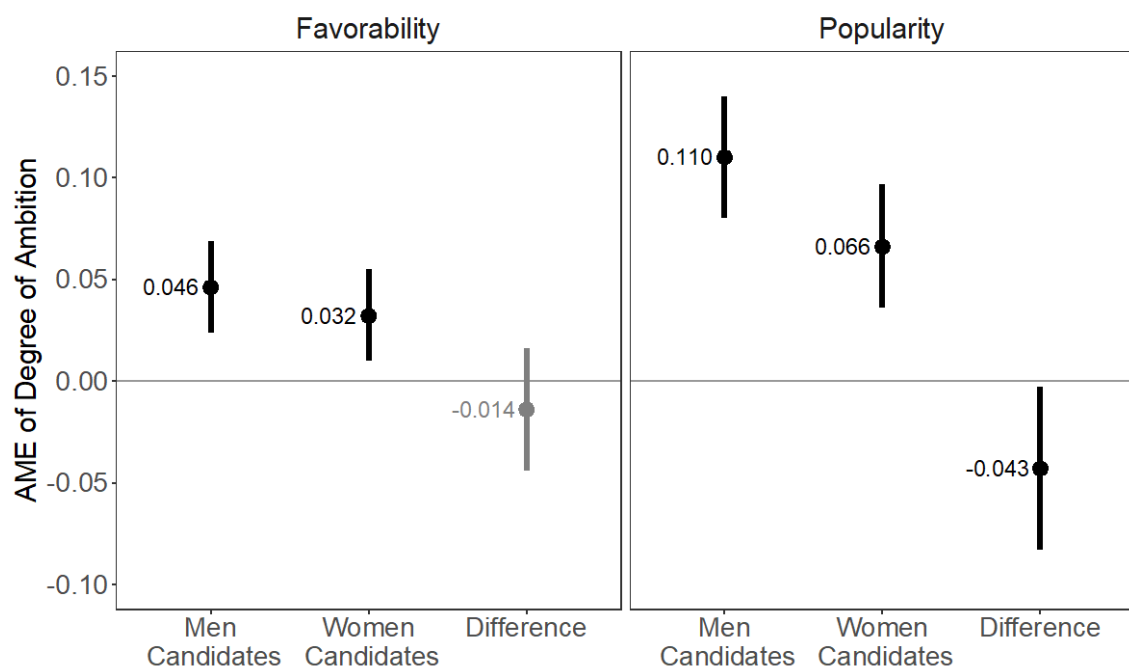
	Favorability	Popularity
Treatment	0.122*** (0.021)	0.139*** (0.029)
Candidate's gender	-0.016 (0.022)	0.016 (0.030)
Respondent's gender	-0.017 (0.016)	0.071*** (0.022)
Age	-0.0003 (0.001)	-0.002*** (0.001)
Ideology	-0.013 (0.009)	0.009 (0.013)
Trust	0.214*** (0.014)	0.226*** (0.020)
Decisive	0.121*** (0.011)	0.135*** (0.016)
Compassion	0.140*** (0.013)	0.133*** (0.018)
Competent	0.096*** (0.014)	0.183*** (0.020)
Consensus Building	0.065*** (0.014)	0.130*** (0.020)
Treatment:Candidate's gender	0.010 (0.030)	-0.112*** (0.041)
Constant	0.664*** (0.060)	0.723*** (0.080)
Observations	3,867	3,867
Adjusted R ²	0.461	0.412

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

D. Robustness Check for Effects of Ambition

We estimated OLS using the perceived degree of ambition as a robustness check. The degree of ambition was asked to the respondents on a 5-point scale after the treatment was presented to them. We ran the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models using robust standard error and including interaction term. The models controlled for a respondent's age, sex, ideology, and perceived personal traits (other than ambition) of the candidate. The results of these interactions are shown in Figure B1. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The statistically significant effects (at the 5% level) are highlighted in black; otherwise, in gray.

Figure D1: The estimated average marginal effects of perceived ambition by candidate's gender.



We found no difference in the effect of ambition between men and women candidates on the favorability scores. In other words, regardless of the gender of the candidate, respondents favored ambitious candidates over those who were not perceived to be ambitious. Importantly, however, we found that the effect of perceived ambition on the candidate's popularity was

different for men and women candidates. The results indicate that when women candidates were perceived as ambitious, they are perceived by the respondents as less popular among people than their men counterparts. This result is consistent with Figure 2.

E. Effect Heterogeneity

Since it is not yet clear what kind of voters punish ambitious women candidates, we engage in additional exploratory analyses by estimating treatment effects conditional on respondent's subgroups. The results are presented in Figures E1, E2, E3 and E4. The horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The statistically significant effects (at the 5% level) are highlighted in black; otherwise, in gray.

These figures illustrate some noteworthy patterns. We do not find much heterogeneity in the average marginal effects of ambition revealing condition among the subgroups of respondents. In most subgroups, men candidates who reveal their ambitions become more favorable and popular. Women candidates become more favorable (significant at the 0.05 level for all subgroups), but not more popular (insignificant at the 0.05 level for all subgroups), when they reveal their ambitions. Overall, we can conclude that our two hypotheses are broadly supported for various types of respondents in our sample.

Figure E1: The estimated average marginal effects of ambitious candidates by respondent's gender

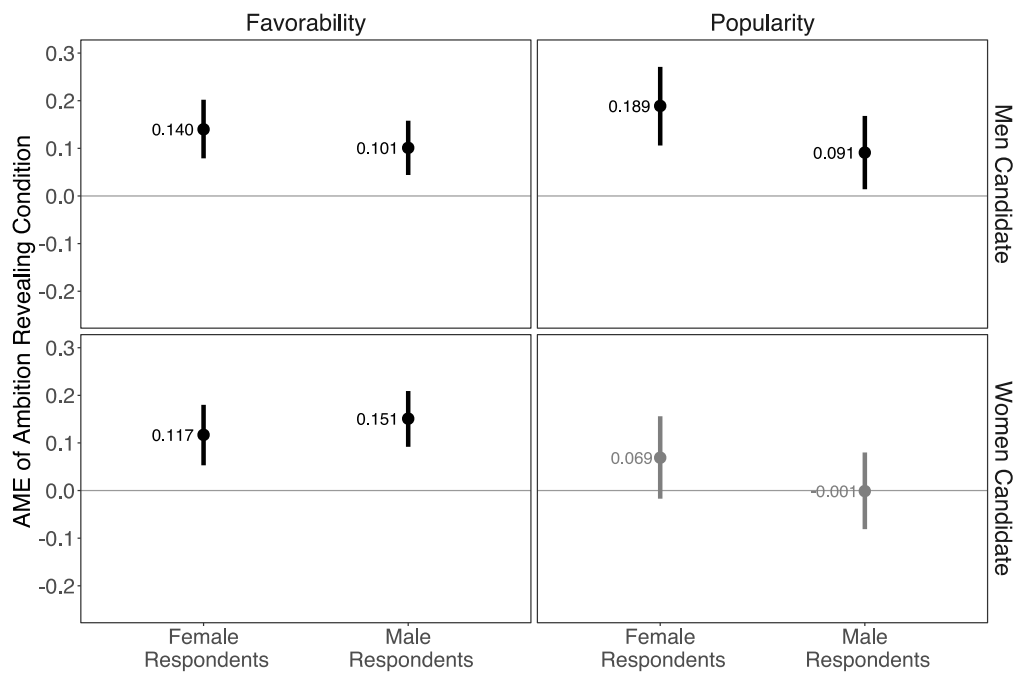


Figure E2: The estimated average marginal effects of ambitious candidates by respondent's age

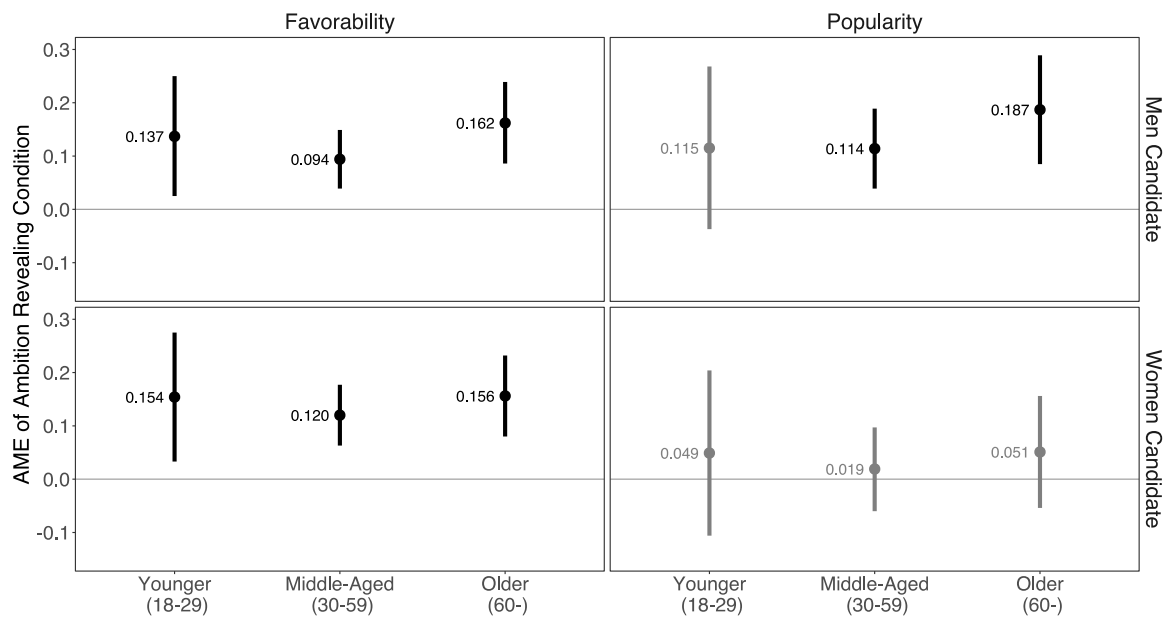


Figure E3: The estimated average marginal effects of ambitious candidates by respondent's education

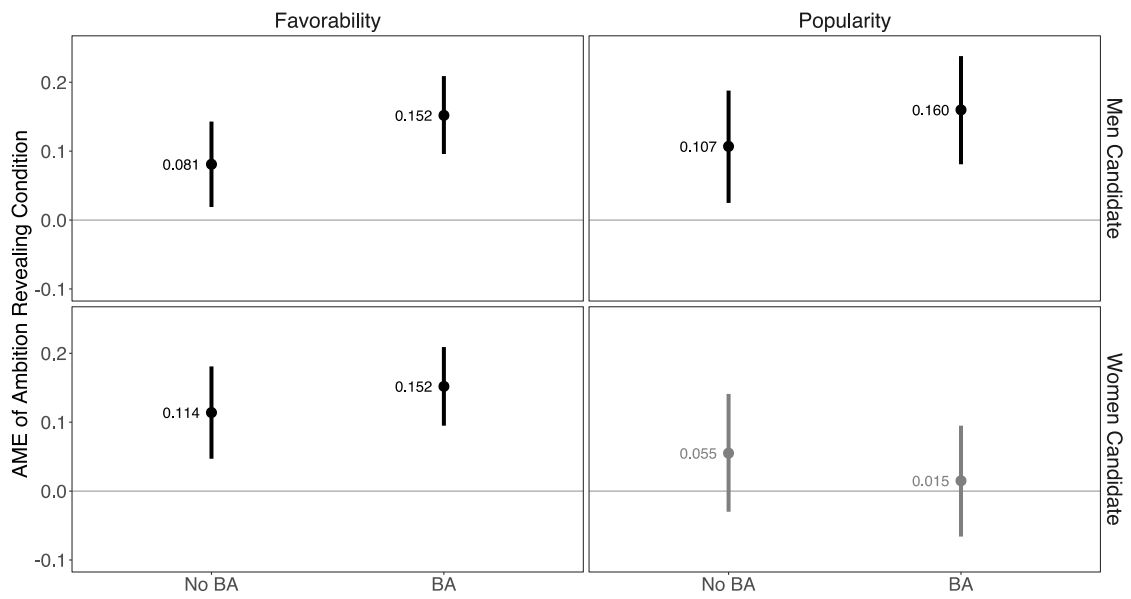


Figure E4: The estimated average marginal effects of ambitious candidates by respondent's support party

