

To be or not to be on social media: How social-media content impacts recruitment

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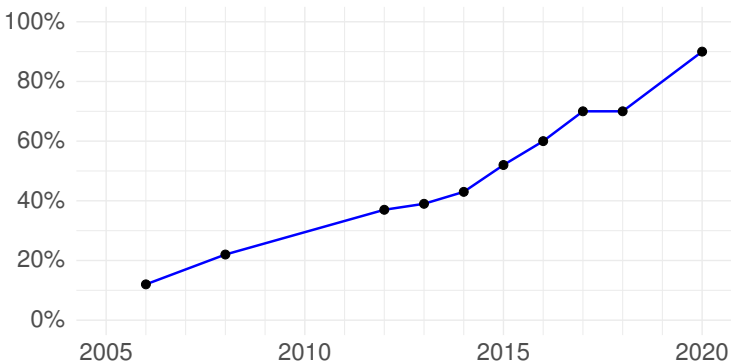
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Motivation

Percentage of employers using social media in the screening process



Data for 2006-2018 - Careerbuilder (2018) surveys - "used social networking sites to research job candidates during the hiring process"

Data for 2020 - The Manifest survey (Mckeeon 2020) - "social media is important when evaluating a job candidate"

Research Questions

How does social media content affect the screening process?

- Unappealing information revealed on social media
- Indications of mental health issues
- Small resume refurbishments revealed through social media
- Lack of social media presence

This Paper

- 1,500 evaluators - Amazon Mturk (general public)
- 500 evaluators - Prolific (experienced recruiters)
- Tailor-made online platform
- Rate randomly created job candidates
- Standard resume + information collected from social media
- Participants are not informed this is an experiment

Preview of the findings

- Crucial effect of social media content on candidates' rating

Preview of the findings

- Crucial effect of social media content on candidates' rating
- Large negative effect of not having a social media profile

Contribution

⇒ **First paper to reveal the negative effect of lacking a social media profile**

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- **Social media content can affect candidate job-market opportunities**

Field - Acquisti and Fong (2020), Baert (2018a), and Manant, Pajak, and Soulié (2019)

Lab - Becton et al. (2019), Bohnert and Ross (2010), Tews, Stafford, and Kudler (2020), and Zhang et al. (2020)

- **Assessment of candidates differs depending on the attributes of the evaluators**

Carlsson and Rooth (2007), Edo, Jacquemet, and Yannelis (2019), Erlandsson (2019), and Oreopoulos (2011)

Novel methodology allows to study impacts of information -

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Carlsson and Rooth (2007), Edo, Jacquemet, and Yannelis (2019), Erlandsson (2019), and Oreopoulos (2011)

Novel methodology allows to study impacts of information -

⇒ Across the **skills spectrum**

⇒ Across a diverse range of **evaluator characteristics**

Contribution

- Correspondence audit studies used to investigate labor market discrimination

Baert (2018b), Bertrand and Duflo (2017), Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), and Neumark (2018)

⇒ **Future studies should include social media profiles**

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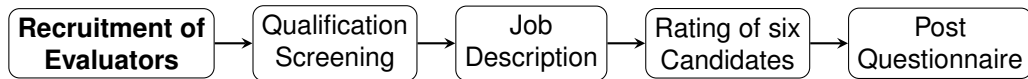
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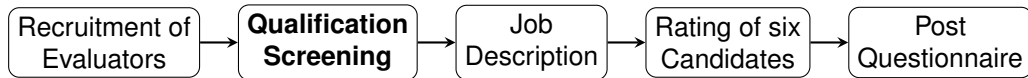
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Participants



- 2,000 US residents recruited
- Amazon Mechanical Turk - workers for small online tasks
- Prolific - research-oriented platform
- Only informed this is a long task (40 minutes)

Qualification Screening

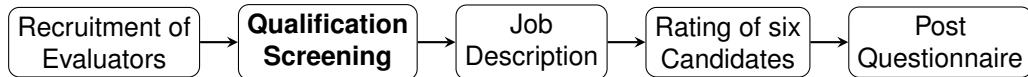


English proficiency and concentration test

Amazon Mturk -

- **4,390 accessed**
- 544 rejected by IP
- 537 gave up before attempting
- 931 failed - just clicked continue
- 740 failed - didn't properly answer
- **1,638 passed, 1,500 completed**

Qualification Screening



Verification of recruitment experience

Prolific -

- **3,200 - qualified for the first survey**
- 1868 - completed the first survey
- 1176 - qualified for the task
- **500 - completed the evaluation task**

Part 2

Of which of the following tasks do you have experience in, and how much -

	None	Some	A lot
Translation from German to English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Media Product Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Renovation of apartments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>Screening job applicants</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing code for games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programming in qualtro	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data analysis project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing a project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

Job description



Place of Work: Luxury Retreat and Wellness Resort

Our beach-side resort offers 100 luxury rooms nestled in tranquil surroundings allowing our guests to unwind and get away from it all and enjoy the area. We offer a spa, a wellness center, yoga classes and our restaurant offers a wide range of local and seasonal cuisine. Nearby beaches, trails, wine tastings, and golf opportunities are all on our doorstep.

Job Description: Office Manager

The Office Manager will be responsible for the daily management of all administrative and office support operations. We are looking for an experienced manager with excellent customer service skills who will fit well into our team. Candidates should be hard-working, organized and reliable.

Duties Include:

- Overseeing office activities
- Dealing with guests in courteous and timely manner
- On-boarding of new employees
- Coordinating and creating agenda for monthly staff meetings
- Promoting a friendly and welcoming environment for guests

Each application has a **résumé**.

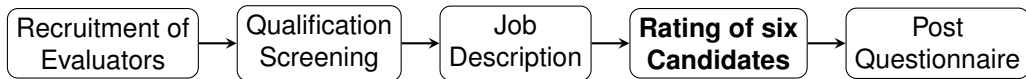
In addition we provide data **scraped from publicly available social media** accounts.

You can use this to get a second opinion of the candidate but bear in mind this information was not submitted by the candidate.

Please use both resources to score the candidate as you see fit.

Submit

Evaluation Screen



Applicant Screening
Please give each application a unique score between zero and ten.

Instructors	Applicant 1	Applicant 2	Applicant 3	Applicant 4	Applicant 5	Applicant 6
	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score

Notes about Applicant 1: Use this box to make notes about applicant 1.

Résumé

Social Media Data

– Drag to resize window.

Standard

- 2011 - 2012 - Office Manager - Green Hill Group
- 2007 - 2012 - Office Assistant - Intercontinental Hotel

Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users

- Teamwork: 3
- Time Management: 16
- Microsoft Office: 2
- Administration: 7
- Customer Service: 19

Most used Hashtags & Keywords

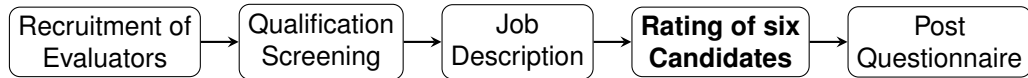
- #tagline
- #recruiting
- #hrand
- #tagline

Most Active Groups / Pages

- Depression and Anxiety Talk
- Armed and Operational Support Group
- The Orange-Hill Job
- Weekly Lounge

Buttons: Instructors, Applicant 1, Applicant 2, Applicant 3, Applicant 4, Applicant 5, Applicant 6, Submit

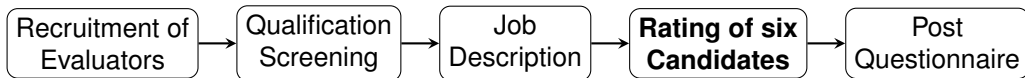
Resume



Randomly assigned -

- Experience
- Education
- Skills
- Interests

Social Media content



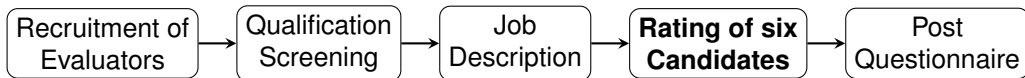
- **Gender** (random)
- **Experience** (as resume)
- **Endorsements** (random)
 - Teamwork, Microsoft Office
- **Hashtags** (by treatment)
 - #Blessed, #Nature
- **Active groups** (by treatment)
 - Adele, The Simpsons, Rate my plate
- **Automatic report** (by treatment)
 - Language, Interactions, Spelling

Social Media Data

Gender	Female
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 - 2022 : Seeking Employment• 2014 - 2020 : Housekeeping Supervisor , Holiday Inn• 2012 - 2014 : Housekeeping , Americas Best Value Inn
Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teamwork: 30• Time Management: 30• Microsoft Office: 25• Administration: 25• Customer Service: 25
Most used Hashtags & Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• #blessed• #fitness• #teamwork• #Nature
Most Active Groups / Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking and talking• NowThis• The Simpsons• Rate My Plate Group• Adele
Automatic Screening Report on SM Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media language: generally positive• Interactions: generally positive• Spelling and grammar: very good

▶ Example

Social Media content



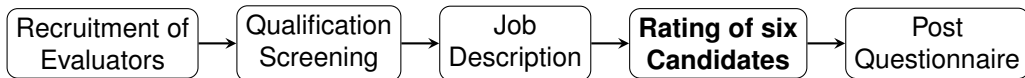
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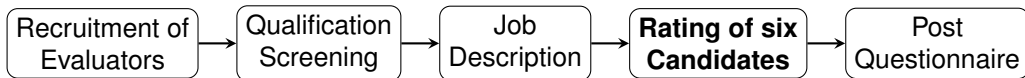
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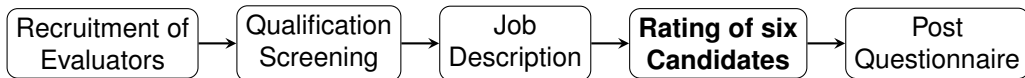
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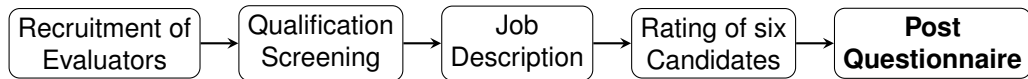
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▶ Example

Post task questionnaire



- Personal characteristics

- Demographics
- Liberal vs. Conservative
- Social Media usage

- Opinions

- What is important for a candidate
- On social media use

Treatments

- **Unappealing**
- Mental Health
- Gap
- Gap + Lie
- No Content

Social Media Data

Gender f i s t w	Female
Experience i	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2013 - 2022 : Office Manager , Dream Hotel Group• 2007 - 2013 : Office Assistant , Intercontinental Hotel
Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users i	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teamwork: 3• Time Management: 8• Microsoft Office: 9• Administration: 2• Customer Service: 6
Most used Hashtags & Keywords f i s t	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• #nosleep• #tired• #xbox• #weekendvibes
Most Active Groups / Pages f	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Borderlands• I Love/Hate My Job• grand theft auto V• Work Sucks Meme Factory
Automatic Screening Report on SM Activity f i s t w	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media language: generally neutral• Interactions: sometimes negative, sometimes offensive language• Spelling and grammar: bad

Treatments

- Unappealing
- **Mental Health**
- Gap
- Gap + Lie
- No Content

Social Media Data

Gender	Male
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2016 - 2022 : Supervisor , Redd's Restaurant, Bar and Catering
Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teamwork: 17• Time Management: 11• Microsoft Office: 14• Administration: 16• Customer Service: 18
Most used Hashtags & Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• #bipolar• #recovery• #summer• #community
Most Active Groups / Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defeat Depression• Anxiety Lounge• Depression and Anxiety Talk• Philly Social Adventures
Automatic Screening Report on SM Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media language: generally positive• Interactions: generally positive• Spelling and grammar: very good

Treatments

- Unappealing
- Mental Health
- **Gap**
- Gap + Lie
- No Content

Résumé

Enthusiastic and reliable hotel manager with nearly twenty years experience in hospitality. Excellent organizational and social skills as both a team leader and provider of dedicated customer service. Motivated to provide memorable experiences for guests.

Experience

MANAGER OCEAN PLACE RESORT AND SPA
Nov 2003 - Mar 2020

- Oversee day-to-day operations in the front office
- Implemented award-winning programs throughout the resort
- Improved staff morale with a positive work environment
- Provided exceptional customer service
- Cultivated a welcoming environment for guests

ASSISTANT FRONT OFFICE MANAGER HOMEWOOD SUITES BY HILTON
Jun 1999 - Nov 2003

- Front desk responsibilities and scheduling
- Prioritized good customer service
- Assisted in onboarding of new employees
- Responsible for sale and distribution of appropriate literature.
- Attended Leadership Development classes

Education

CERTIFICATE IN HUMAN RESOURCES ROWEN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Sep 1998 - Jun 1999

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ST. HUBERT'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
Sep 1994 - Jun 1998

ST.H.

← Drag to resize window.

Social Media Data

Gender Male

- 2020 - 2022 : Seeking Employment
- 2003 - 2020 : Manager , Ocean Place Resort and Spa
- 1999 - 2003 : Assistant Front Office Manager , Homewood Suites by Hilton

Experience

Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users

- Teamwork: 19
- Time Management: 13
- Microsoft Office: 12
- Administration: 11
- Customer Service: 17

Most used Hashtags & Keywords

- #Happy
- #collaborationiskey
- #photooftheday
- #photography

Treatments

- Unappealing
- Mental Health
- Gap
- **Gap + Lie**
- No Content

Résumé

Profile
I am goal oriented, able to work in a fast paced environment and meet deadlines. I am reliable and experienced. I am currently in search of a full-time work opportunity in an environment where I can use my management skills.

Experience
November 2014 - Present
HOUSEKEEPING SUPERVISOR HOLIDAY INN
Keep area presentable for guests and clients.
Inspect rooms and correct mistakes.
Assignment and project coordination.
Ensure all issues resolved

←Drag to resize window.

Social Media Data

Gender Female
f i s t in

Experience
in

- 2020 - 2022 : Seeking Employment
- 2014 - 2020 : Housekeeping Supervisor , Holiday Inn
- 2012 - 2014 : Housekeeping , Americas Best Value Inn

Treatments

- Unappealing
- Mental Health
- Gap
- Gap + Lie
- **No Content**

← Drag to resize window.

Social Media Data







Gender 	no data: unable to locate social media account
Experience 	no data: unable to locate social media account
Selected Skills and Number of Endorsements from Other Users 	no data: unable to locate social media account
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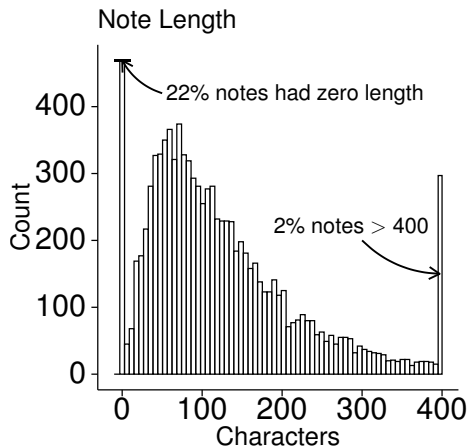
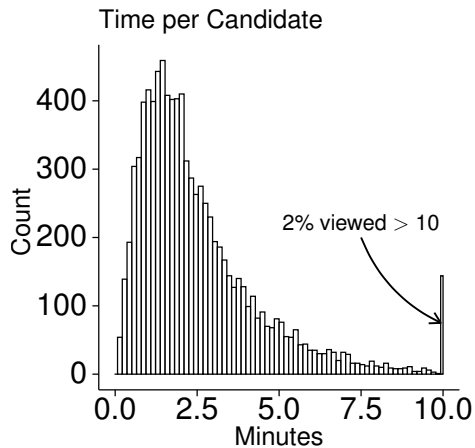
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Data

- **Dependent variable - candidate rating** (on a scale of 1 to 10)
- **Candidate variables** - experience, education, skills, interests, gender, order (of six), LinkedIn endorsements.
- **Evaluator characteristics** - age, ethnicity, education, marital status, employment status, political orientation, activity on social media.
- **Evaluator opinions** - toward social media, privacy, noticed things about candidates.
- **Evaluator engagement** - time reading instructions, clicks on a candidate, number of characters in notes, time spent on each candidate.

Evaluator engagement



Empirical framework

$$Rating_i = \beta_0 + T_{ki}\beta_k + X_i\gamma + \epsilon_i$$

- $Rating_i$ - score of candidate i
- T_k - treatment dummies (*Mental Health, Gap, Gap+Lie, Bad SM, No SM*)
- X_i - candidate characteristics (*Experience, Education, Skills, Interests, Gender, Order, Endorsements*)
- ϵ_i - error term, clustered by evaluator
- β_k 's - coefficients of interest - impact of SM content compared to baseline

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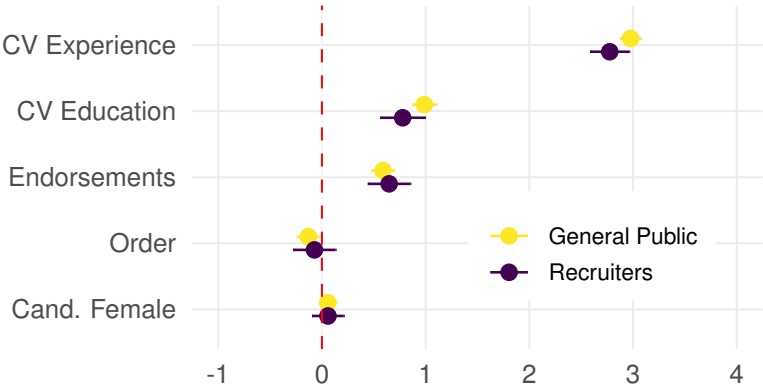
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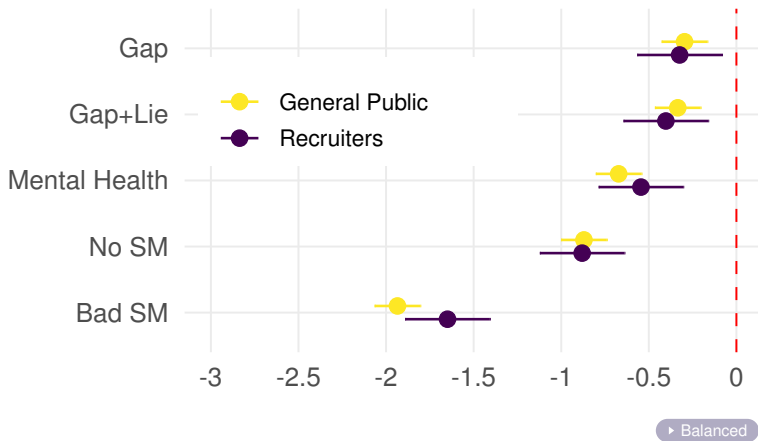
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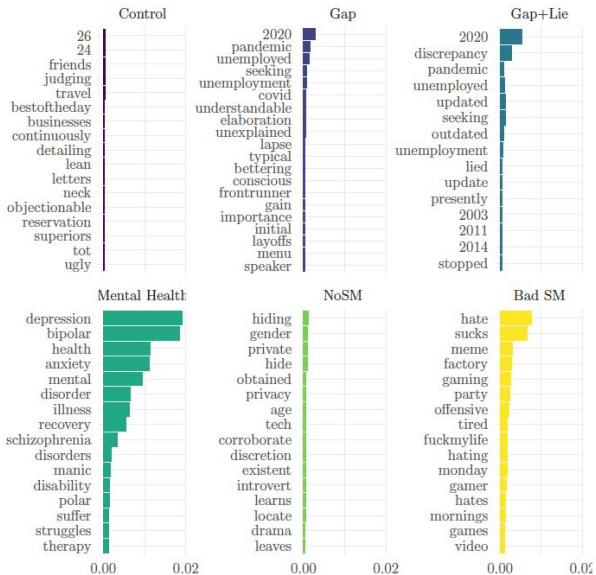
Covariates



Results



Mechanism



Heterogeneity

- Some interaction between treatment effects and candidate characteristics

	Gap	Gap+Lie	Mental Health	No SM	Bad SM
CV Experience	0.08	0.03	-0.27*	0.41***	-0.33**
CV Education	0.01	0.08	-0.12	0.28	0.03
Endorsements	-0.16	-0.01	0.03		-0.01
Order	0.06	0.1	0.06	-0.24	-0.02
Cand. Female	-0.04	-0.14	-0.15		0.22*

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Heterogeneity

- Also, some interesting interactions with evaluator characteristics

	Gap	Gap+Lie	Mental Health	No SM	Bad SM
Eval. Female	-0.03	-0.13	-0.13	0.03	<u>-0.56</u>***
Age	0.09	0.17	-0.16	0.08	-0.16
Eval. 'Conservative'	-0.16	0.22	<u>-0.36</u>**	0.2	0.18
Active on SM	0.08	-0.03	0.27	<u>-0.7</u>***	0.28

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Robustness

Unappealing social media content has the largest effect on rating, while a gap in employment years has the smallest effect

- Across candidates and evaluators characteristics [▶ Details](#)
- Using Non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test
- Using entropy balancing (Hainmueller 2012) [▶ Details](#)

Validity

- Strongly resembles a real-life recruitment task
- Real workers or experienced recruiters, high engagement
- General qualifications job
- Findings are robust to evaluator composition (only in the US)
- Findings hold for the general public and experienced recruiters

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Summary

- Social media content significantly affects job candidates' evaluation
- Unappealing profile - negative effect, equivalent to 9 years of experience
- No profile - worst than employment gap or mental health problems
- No effect for small resume refurbishments revealed on social media

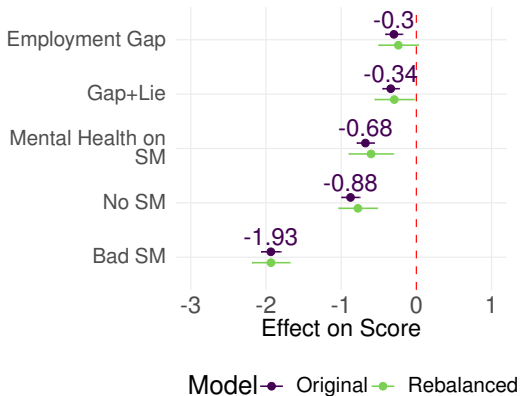
Conclusion

- Job-seekers - be on social media (carefully)
- Employers - is this desired?
- Researchers - should include social media
- Policymakers - are current laws enforceable?

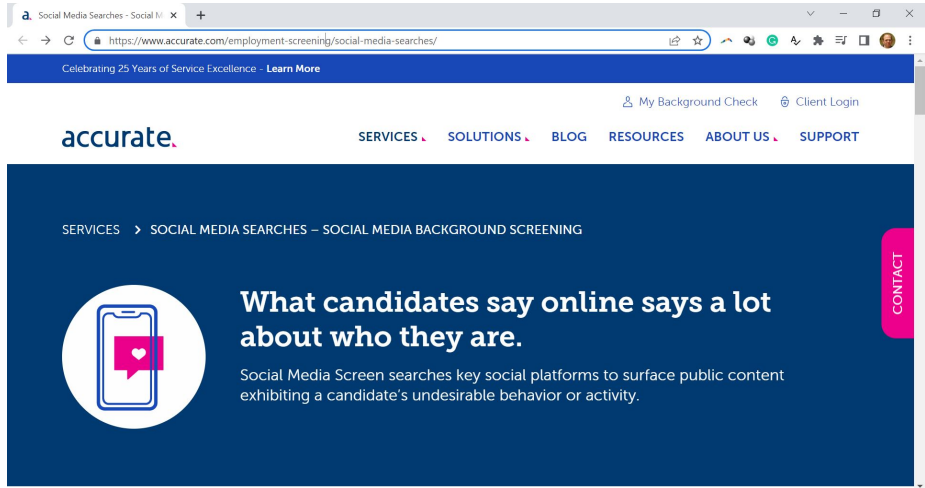
Thank You

Results comparable to US population

Using entropy balancing (Hainmueller 2012) on the general public sample.



Example - social media screening services



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.accurate.com/employment-screening/social-media-searches/>. The page features a blue header with the Accurate logo and navigation links: SERVICES, SOLUTIONS, BLOG, RESOURCES, ABOUT US, and SUPPORT. Below the header, there are links for "My Background Check" and "Client Login". The main content area has a dark blue background with the breadcrumb "SERVICES > SOCIAL MEDIA SEARCHES – SOCIAL MEDIA BACKGROUND SCREENING". A circular icon on the left depicts a smartphone with a pink speech bubble containing a white heart. To the right of the icon, the text reads: "What candidates say online says a lot about who they are." Below this, a paragraph states: "Social Media Screen searches key social platforms to surface public content exhibiting a candidate's undesirable behavior or activity." A vertical pink button labeled "CONTACT" is positioned on the right side of the main content area.

▶ Back

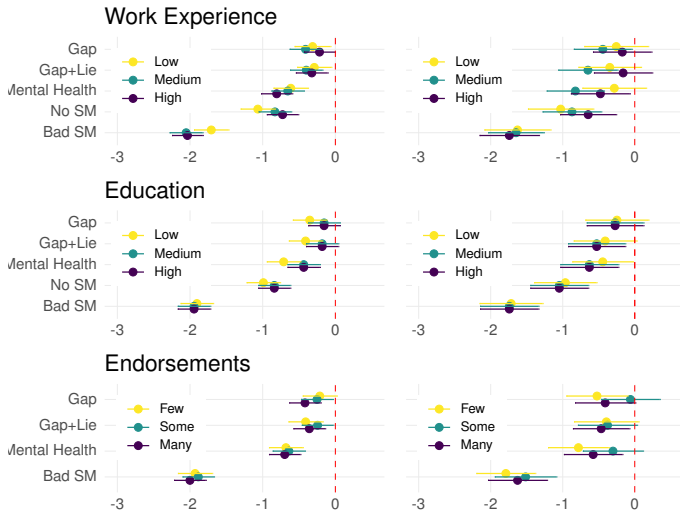
Example - social media screening services

The screenshot shows a web interface for social media screening. At the top, it says "Social Media Screening" and "This Week". Below this, the name "Mike Jones" is displayed. A list of screening categories is shown, each with a result count. The categories are: Extreme Views / Opinions (0 Results), Hate & Discriminatory Behaviour (2 Results), Illegal Activities (0 Results), Inappropriate / Undesirable Content (3 Results), Sexually Explicit Content (0 Results), Violent Content (0 Results), and Other (0 Results). A "Back" button is located at the bottom right.

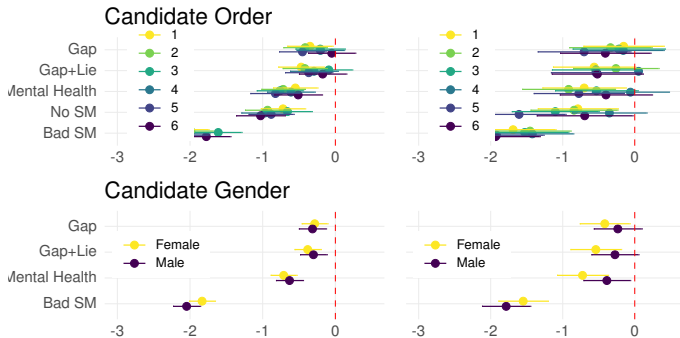
Category	Results
Extreme Views / Opinions	0 Results
Hate & Discriminatory Behaviour	2 Results
Illegal Activities	0 Results
Inappropriate / Undesirable Content	3 Results
Sexually Explicit Content	0 Results
Violent Content	0 Results
Other	0 Results

▶ Back

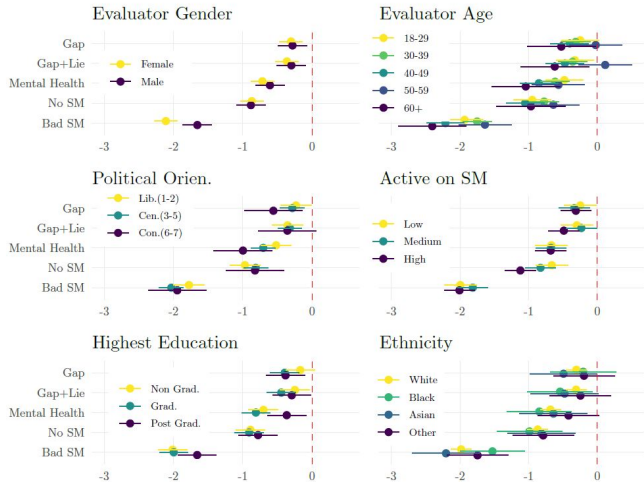
Effects are robust to candidate types



Effects are robust to candidate types



Effects are robust to evaluator types



Evaluators Sample and the U.S. Population

	Our Evaluators (N=1500)	U.S. Population
Age		
- Mean (SD)	39.833 (12.029)	38.2
- Range	18.000 - 78.000	
Eval. Gender		
- Female	932 (62.1%)	50.8%
- Male	551 (36.7%)	49.2%
- Other	17 (1.1%)	
Eval. Ethnicity		
- Asian	95 (6.3%)	5.9%
- Black or African American	126 (8.4%)	13.4%
- White	1156 (77.1%)	60.1%
- Other	123 (8.2%)	20.6%
Education		
- Graduate	912 (39.2%)	37.8%
- Not Graduate	588 (60.8%)	62.2%
Eval. Marit. Stat.		
- Married or Domestic Partnership	741 (49.4%)	47.8%
- Not Married	759 (50.6%)	52.2%
Eval. Employ. Stat.		
- Employed for wages	918 (61.2%)	41.57%
- Out of work	97 (6.5%)	5.9%
- Retired	72 (4.8%)	29.4%
- Self-employed	257 (17.1%)	8.75%
- A homemaker	70 (4.7%)	4.28%
- Other	86 (5.7%)	10.1%

Evaluators Sample and the U.S. Population

Eval. 'Conservative'		
- Mean (SD)	3.411 (1.628)	3.366
- Range	1.000 - 7.000	0.000 - 7.000
Twitter		
- Mean (SD)	3.348 (2.132)	1.864
- Range	1.000 - 7.000	1.000 - 7.000
Instagram		
- Mean (SD)	3.819 (2.087)	2.612
- Range	1.000 - 7.000	1.000 - 7.000
Facebook		
- Mean (SD)	4.555 (2.029)	4.105
- Range	1.000 - 7.000	1.000 - 7.000
Snapchat		
- Mean (SD)	2.141 (1.827)	2.0375
- Range	1.000 - 7.000	1.000 - 7.000