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Identifying Charged Immigrant Attributes: Evidence from the U.S. and India Surrounding Citizens' Attitudes Toward Foreign Nationals

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Abstract

Identifying Charged Immigrant Attributes: Evidence from the U.S. and India Surrounding
Citizens' Attitudes Toward Foreign Nationals

By Zachary David Atlas

Many scholars from countless disciplines have investigated the root of anti-immigrant sentiment. Some argue that economic fears are the primary driver, while others contend that social-psychological influences are to blame. Yet prior research often confounds multiple variables, such as which immigrants to admit, how many immigrants to admit, and how to address immigrants who are already present in the host country. This paper focuses on the question of which immigrants to admit. Using a conjoint experiment, we examine the impact five immigrant attributes have in engendering support or opposition for immigrants in the United States and India; both countries have large foreign born populations and have seen a recent surge in anti-immigrant sentiment. Drawing on a sample of respondents from Amazon Mechanical Turk, we find that both American and Indian respondents view immigrants who are religiously and linguistically similar more favorably, while an immigrant's area of origin and reason for immigrating do little to improve their acceptance levels. Amongst Americans, there are varying levels of support depending on partisan lines but a broad consensus exists regarding which immigrants are the most desirable. Data from India suggests widespread agreement, too, with some variance in approval depending on caste. The results point to societal norms as a strong indicator of immigration attitudes. Our paper leaves room for further research. Utilizing more specific immigrant attributes to create a more extensive survey, we can paint a clearer picture of what drives anti-immigrant sentiment.

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I.   Introduction

Immigration is perhaps the most polarizing element of globalization. Even

within ideologically connected groups, such as the U.S. Republican party, conflicting

opinions surface (Daniller 2019). The debate over immigration has done nothing to halt

its progress, however. Since 1950, the foreign-born population in the U.S. has more than

doubled, while countries like Australia, Italy, and the United Arab Emirates have seen

even more growth as a percentage (International Migrants by Country 2019). These

massive inflows are an increasingly critical element of the political landscape, as

democratic governments evaluate policies to control immigration and effectively

assimilate foreign nationals. Indeed, the populism and anti-immigrant sentiment of

recent years rival that seen during the years preceding the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

and the Immigration Act of 1924. Though attitudes towards immigration are hostile, it

is unclear what drives xenophobic attitudes towards foreign nationals—*why do people*

favor or oppose immigration?

Data from recent survey experiments have produced conflicting results and no

general agreement amongst political scientists. Some studies emphasize economic

factors, such as labor market competition or the increased burden on public services,

as the primary driver behind nationalism. Others suggest that resistance towards

immigration results from cultural and ethnic tensions between domestic and

foreign-born populations; citizens often fear that immigrants will alter their way of life.

Oftentimes, fear of foreign cultures, or ethnocentrism, is further exacerbated by

politicians and mass media. There are several theories about what causes anti-immigration sentiment.

As Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015) note, the majority of prior research has confounded three specific questions in its pursuit of an explanation for anti-immigrant sentiment: Which types of immigrants should be admitted, how many immigrants should be admitted, and how should the United States address those immigrants who are already here (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). In this examination, we intend to separate these questions from one another, choosing to focus strictly on determining what kinds of immigrants receive broad support for admission to the host nation.

My research is also unique in that it examines the immigration preferences of Indians. Unlike the U.S., which has a net positive intake of migrants, India loses far more residents to immigration than it gains. Thus, immigration to India is far less politically charged than in the U.S. India's ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is exceedingly nationalistic, though. Despite low immigration to India, nationalistic fervor may drive resentment toward perceived outsiders in my experimental survey. Comparing data from the U.S. and India will also provide interesting insights as to how increased immigration impacts a populace's attitudes toward immigrants.

II.   Literature Review

Contemporary survey experiments and economic models on immigration have examined ethnocentrism, concerns about national identity, economic competition, and several other factors as possible drivers for anti-immigrant sentiment. This literature review breaks down prior research into two broad categories: economic factors and psychological factors.

A. Economic Approaches

Here, we will examine the economic factors that influence anti-immigration sentiment. Prior research is underscored by its discussion of financial self-interest, generally through labor market competition or taxes, public services, and social safety net programs.

<u>Labor Market Competition</u>

Within the literature that focuses on economic drivers of anti-immigration sentiment, one critical article is Scheve & Slaughter (2001), which analyzes the determinants of individual partiality over immigration policy in the U.S. Using the factor proportion model, an economic model that presupposes immigrants are a flawless alternative to native laborers, they predict that a flood of less-skilled laborers will increase not only the stock of blue-collar workers but also lower wages and employments for less-skilled citizens while boosting wages for more high-skilled workers. An increase in the stock of highly skilled workers will do the opposite. By linking this information to three years of data from the American National Election

Study, Scheve & Slaughter conclude that blue-collar workers are more likely to favor restricting the number of foreign nationals in the U.S.

In another notable paper, Mayda (2006) uses the factor proportion model in an international context. Drawing on data from the International Social Survey Program, she observes a positive correlation between more highly skilled workers and immigration endorsement. In other words, countries with high-skilled natives demonstrate stronger support for immigration. Indeed, countries with a highly skilled domestic labor market, such as Luxembourg or Singapore, are situated to benefit from cheap labor for menial jobs and increased wages otherwise.

There are hypothetical and empirical reasons to question this supposition, however. As Hainmueller & Hiscox (2007) note, well-studied models observing immigration's economic influences on wages are rather ambiguous. These models include several factors not accounted for by the factor proportion model, such as country size, factor mobility, and present product diversity. Hainmueller & Hiscox (2010), a study that concludes wage effects are minor or intangible in the U.S., demonstrates the equivocal nature of these models. Furthermore, Hainmueller & Hiscox (2007) note that prior studies have not effectively utilized the factor proportion model. Neither Scheve & Slaughter (2001) nor Mayda (2006) differentiate between lower and higher skill immigrants, which is an essential conceptual distinction. Employing data from the 2003 European Social Survey (ESS), Hainmueller & Hiscox (2007) reveal that, contrary to the factor proportion model's expectations, highly skilled natives respond favorably to all immigration.

These conclusions are bolstered by Hainmueller & Hiscox (2010), who embedded a survey experiment in a nationwide U.S. survey. By randomly altering the skill-level of immigrant profiles in the survey, the experiment showed no indication that U.S. citizens demonstrate increased opposition to foreign nationals with a skillset similar to their own. Matching Hainmueller & Hiscox's (2007) findings, highly educated U.S. citizens responded favorably to both less-skilled and more highly skilled immigrants. This is indicative that a lack of support for immigration is likely derived from differences in cultural values, not financial self-interest. Additionally, the use of low or high-skilled labor, not education level, as a measure of utility is crucial. While earlier studies of immigration attitudes often used education as the principal consideration, its correlation with various other factors (e.g., race or gender) render its use crude and outdated.

More recently, Hainmueller et al. (2011) conducted an extensive examination of the labor market competition theory. Using a directed survey of American workers across 12 industries, selected for their variability across pertinent elements, Hainmueller et al. concluded that concerns over labor market competition do not appear to have a noticeable influence on immigration attitudes. Rather, workers across the board prefer highly skilled immigrants to blue-collar immigrants, regardless of immigrant penetration in their industry. The reality that workers in drastically different segments of the labor market demonstrate comparable immigration preferences contradicts the previously touted factor proportion model.

Clearly, there is no consensus amongst economists or political scientists who have studied anti-immigration sentiment about the impacts of immigration on labor market surplus, scarcity, and wages. Evidence is mounting, however, that a citizen's situation in the labor market is not a good predictor of their attitude towards foreign nationals.

Public Service Burden

In addition to labor market competition, federal taxes, social safety net programs, and other public services as a measure of economic self-interest may also drive citizens' views on immigration. Newer literature on anti-immigration increasingly focuses on its fiscal implications. One noteworthy article in this realm is Hanson et al. (2007). Utilizing the same framework as Scheve & Slaughter (2001) and Mayda (2006), they assume immigration will impact citizens' post-tax income. Suppose less-skilled immigrants are a net negative for the public purse, an influx of less-skilled immigrants would either necessitate higher taxes or reduced transfers for public programs.

Conversely, highly skilled immigrants allow for lower taxes and greater public spending. Thus, a citizen is likely to favor an immigrant if that individual will contribute more to public funds than the citizen themselves. In a country like the U.S., this effect will be more pronounced in states with greater public spending, like California and Oregon. Indeed, Hanson et al. (2007) observe that data from the American National Election Studies reinforce their theory; wealthier individuals in states with more generous fiscal policies are less likely to favor immigration and vice versa for wealthy individuals in more fiscally conservative states.

Facchini & Mayda (2009) use a comparable model to explore this phenomenon in an international context. Congruous with the theory that wealthier citizens agonize over immigration's fiscal repercussions, affluent individuals surveyed demonstrated less support for immigration. The effect was particularly strong in nations with a high percentage of high-skilled immigrants, like Cyprus and Greece.

Hainmueller & Hiscox (2010) advise skepticism of these theories, however, as there is not widespread agreement regarding the impact of fiscal considerations on anti-immigration sentiment. Indeed, they note that from 1990-2004, U.S. states with rapidly growing foreign-born populations, such as Florida and Nevada, saw minute growth, or cuts, in state income taxes and per capita public transfers. This would indicate that immigration has the opposite effect, reducing spending. Hainmueller & Hiscox (2010) observes that wealthy and poor citizens alike oppose low-skilled immigrants. In fact, states with more generous fiscal programs are more in favor of immigration, perhaps a result of left-leaning constituents. This conclusion runs contrary to claims that economic self-interest regarding an increased tax burden fuels anti-immigration sentiment.

B. Social-Psychological Approaches

Here, we will examine how anti-immigration sentiment is impacted by the actual, imagined, and implied presence of immigrants. Perceptions are profoundly important in shaping attitudes towards immigrants, and the literature provides a variety of explanations for what drives views on immigration.

Observational Studies of Social-Psychological Influences

One pioneering observational study, Espenshade & Calhoun (1993), observes southern California residents' perspectives on illegal immigration. The study finds that broad measures of economic well-being, such as employment and income, do not affect anti-immigration sentiment; however, more well-educated individuals demonstrate reduced concern. Ensuing studies have opted to employ national samples.

Citrin et al. (1997) utilize data from the American National Election Studies to examine the relationship between perspectives on favorable levels of immigration and distribution of government funds to immigrants. Like Espenshade & Calhoun (1993), Citrin et al. (1997) conclude that economic self-interest has little influence on anti-immigration sentiment. Instead, fears about the health of the national economy and xenophobic attitudes towards Asian Americans and Latinos are better indicators of restrictionist convictions. Perceptions of national economic performance predominate personal economic conditions.

Still, these findings indicate some capacity for economic drivers of anti-immigration sentiment. Lapinski et al. (1997) note that poor economic performance in the early 1980s coinciding with increased immigration drove negative perceptions of immigrants. Likewise, Wilkes et al. (2008) observe that a weak Canadian national economy in the last quarter of the 20th century propelled anti-immigration sentiment. Nevertheless, Citrin et al. (1997) introduce a unique approach to the issue that undermines the economic self-interest argument. Constituents' immigration

judgments are rooted in their effect on the overall economy, not their own financial well-being.

Sides & Citrin (2007) demonstrate that these patterns are not exclusive to the U.S. Utilizing data from the European Social Survey, they pinpoint several predictors of immigration sentiment. Those who cherish ethnic homogeneity appear to be exceptionally anti-immigration. Still, measures of individual economic status appeared to have little or no relationship, and in this case, neither did national-level data. Instead, public perceptions of a country's immigration acceptance are crucial. If a respondent believes their country accepts more immigrants relative to other nations, they are more likely to demonstrate anti-immigration sentiment.

In another study, Citrin & Sides (2008) use the 2005 Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy Survey to analyze the similarities and differences between the U.S. and European countries. Both assume that the immigrant population is more substantial than reality. By analyzing the 2003 British Social Attitudes Survey, McLaren & Johnson (2007) drew similar conclusions; self-interest is not a good predictor of immigration preferences, but perceived threats of immigration's impacts on ethnic and cultural heritage are.

Experimental Studies of Social-Psychological Influences

It is well established that observational studies, while excellent for building on real-world scenarios, are limited in their ability to draw causal inference—especially when examining the interaction of several different variables.

In the momentous book, *The Outsider: Prejudice and Politics in Italy*, Sniderman et al. (2002) discuss their experiment on Italian perspectives on immigrants and immigrants. In their research, Sniderman et al. (2002) intended to examine the importance of homogenous ethnicity in marking immigrants as outsiders. Employing a nationally representative survey, respondents were queried about cultural issues stemming from Eastern European or African immigrants. Then, they were asked to distinguish between the two groups and label each with specific attributes. Despite expectations that African immigrants would be viewed more negatively, respondents viewed them as essentially equal. Sniderman et al. (2002) also observe that individuals who are intolerant of one group are probably uncompromising with the other. Indeed, those who harbor prejudices against one group likely disprove of other groups, too, demonstrating that immigration attitudes are driven by a view of immigrants as the "other." In this case, the categorization of who is an insider—and who is an outsider—is the principal motivation of attitudes.

In Sniderman et al. (2004), a similar experimental method is used during a telephone survey in the Netherlands to examine the personal predispositions of respondents. One line of questioning examined the relative impact of cultural and fiscal threats and revealed that cultural threats, such as an immigrant who does not speak the language, are more impactful. Certainly, this result strengthens the claim that anti-immigration sentiment is primarily driven by cultural differences. Also, like Sniderman et al. (2002), the Dutch study revealed that immigrant prejudice remains

across different minority groups. Xenophobia is not directed at a particular minority group but at all perceived outsiders.

Contrary to Sniderman et al. (2004), Choi et al. (2020) found that an immigrant's ability to speak the local language makes no difference to locals' acceptance of them. By conducting a large-scale field experiment in 30 German cities—a country with a large immigrant and refugee population—Choi et al. (2020) found that linguistic assimilation does not reduce discrimination against Muslim immigrants.

Ethnocentrism, Stereotypes, and Public Perception

Like Sniderman et al. (2002), Kinder & Kam's (2010) examination of ethnocentrism notes that anti-immigrant sentiment appears to be relatively consistent across different minority groups; residents view all minority groups with equal contempt. Based on data from the American National Election Studies, Kinder & Kam (2010) find that, as we would expect from individuals with ethnocentric values, whites share a similar view of all minority groups. Along with Sniderman et al. (2002), this conclusion reveals that ethnocentrism is a strong predictor of anti-immigration sentiment, and there is little capacity for minority-specific disdain.

However, anti-immigration sentiment, prejudice, and ethnocentrism can be examined through minority-specific stereotypes demonstrated throughout history. One study, Ford (2011), observes British Social Attitudes Surveys from 1983 to 1996, demonstrating an indisputable preference for white, culturally similar immigrants amongst Britons. Plus, Ford et al. (2012) show that immigrant ethnicity (and skin color) are especially important to Britons forming an impression of low-skilled immigrants.

Some scholars assert that 21st-century anti-immigration sentiment is rooted in stereotypes of specific ethnic groups and representations of them by politicians and the media. For example, in Hainmueller & Hangartner's (2013) study of Swiss elections in the 1990s, they observe that amidst a flurry of negative coverage on Turkey and Yugoslavia, voters were far more likely to dismiss immigrants from those countries than the rest of Europe. Similarly, Branton et al. (2011) utilize data from the American National Election Studies to show how white nationals' immigration stances changed after 9/11. Post-event data reveals an increase in media exposure and anti-Latino sentiment, indicating media coverage (and representation) of immigration grew increasingly negative in the aftermath of the attacks.

The credence that media is especially influential for immigration attitudes is furthered by Abrajano & Singh (2009). They observe that Spanish-language news sources take a more favorable stance on immigration and that Latin viewers who generally get their news from these sources have a more positive outlook on immigration than those who do not.

Psychology, Emotions, and Identity

Experimental and observational studies demonstrate that immigration sentiment is likely tied to ethnocentrism and prejudices. It is possible, however, that there are other psychological processes that may explain why natives of a country react adversely to foreign-born immigrants.

Using 2003 data from a Knowledge Networks experiment, which questioned white American respondents about immigration attitudes, Brader et al. (2008)

investigated how elite discourse shapes public opinion on immigration. By altering the tone of a presented news article, and varying the immigrant group being discussed, Brader et al. (2008) pinpoint anxiety as an instrument linking perceptions of immigrant groups and fears over immigration. For example, when respondents read articles that embodied a negative characterization of Latino immigrants, the reader showed more concern. The pattern did not hold when the Latino immigrant was replaced with a European. Unlike Sniderman et al. (2002) and Sniderman et al. (2004), in this study, the immigrant's country of origin mattered.

A similar study by Gadarian & Albertson (2013) used a Knowledge Network experiment to further examine the relationship between anxiety and immigration. Observing an all-American sample, they find that anxious respondents have a penchant for remembering frightening, demonstrating "biases in information processing" that can spur anxiety.

Recognizing who is frightened by immigrants may provide some indication of what sets them off. One possible factor stems from natives' perceptions of what it means to be a resident of that country. Some features of what constitutes an acceptable member of a community are flexible, while other differences—like religious beliefs—are not always accommodated. Using data from the 1996 U.S. General Social Survey, Schildkraut (2007) tests this theory. Her analysis reveals that citizens who have the aforementioned conception of what it means to be American (e.g., Americans should be born in the U.S., live in the U.S., and practice Christianity) view limiting immigration to the United States favorably.

III. Theoretical Argument

For decades, scholars have touted financial self-interest as one of the primary drivers behind anti-immigrant sentiment. On the surface, this argument has merit. Natives are anxious and worried that immigrants will provide cheap labor, putting them out of a job. As researchers have investigated this theory, however, it has become apparent that material self-interest is not the primary driver, nor does it appear to be influential whatsoever. Indeed, broader economic interests do play a role in anti-immigrant perceptions. The fiscal burden on wealthier citizens and fears of immigrant labor on the national economy seems to have some influence over immigration sentiment. These broader economic factors do not seem to be the key driver behind negative views of immigrants.

As outlined in the literature review, scholars have examined numerous possibilities in seeking to determine what motivates anti-immigrant sentiment. Though contemporary literature is somewhat divided over what fuels native fear of foreign-born individuals, there is increasingly a consensus that the contempt some citizens have for immigrants is driven by ethnocentrism and cultural differences.

Native-born individuals harbor disdain for immigrant populations largely because of ethnocentrism and fear of "the other." In most countries and cultures, there are certain beliefs about what constitutes an insider. For example, Schildkraut (2007) notes that for a large percentage of Americans, that means being born in the U.S., living in the U.S., and practicing Christianity. A similar pattern may emerge for a country like the U.K. We believe this, which may be described as xenophobia, propels negative

perceptions of immigrants. For many, "they are not like us" is enough to engender resentment.

In some countries, like Western democracies, immigrants from certain countries have not only been otherized but labeled as especially dangerous. It is well known that some Americans, for example, are especially fearful of immigrants from the Middle East (Telhami 2016). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks and the U.S. war on terror, anxiety surrounding immigrants from countries like Iraq and Iran persists. More recently, President Trump has characterized countries in Africa and the Caribbean as "shithole" countries sending undesirable immigrants. The same applies to Mexican immigrants who have been labeled "rapists" and "criminals" regardless of personal background (Romero 2018). For other parts of the world, these same theories apply to immigrants from different countries. For example, citizens of more affluent countries in the E.U., like Britain and France, fear the presence of undesirable immigrants from countries like Poland and Moldova. The fear of Middle Eastern and African terrorism extends to these countries, too.

It is abundantly clear that ethnocentrism and fear of foreign cultures are the main motivators of anti-immigrant sentiment. Drawing on inspiration from Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015), we employ a conjoint analysis, which is useful for identifying how individuals value—or do not value—certain attributes. However, unlike Hainmueller and Hokpins (2015), who only sample American citizens, we poll a population-based sample of citizens from both India and the U.S.

Both countries have seen a recent surge in anti-immigrant sentiment. Former President Trump helped engender hostility toward select groups of foreign nationals early in his presidency when he issued an executive order banning visitors from seven predominantly Muslim countries (Fox 2020). He also complained about a supposed illegal migrant crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border, dispatching the military to assist the Border Patrol and emphasizing the need for a security wall. Trump's support base demonstrated enthusiasm for his nationalistic policies, triggering widespread disdain for immigrants (Fox 2020).

In India, ethnocentrism is crucial to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP's platform, too. Indian parliament recently passed the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, which creates an expedited route to citizenship for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (Maizland 2020). The exclusion of Muslims from the law provoked outrage. Critics note that the bill marks the first time the Indian government has ever linked religion to citizenship, something many argue is inherently discriminatory (Gettleman and Abi-Habib 2019). The Modi government counters that the law is intended to shield vulnerable religious minorities from persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, three Muslim-majority countries (Maizland 2020).

Examining the U.S. and India, two countries with large foreign-born populations and widespread contempt for certain immigrants provides an excellent opportunity to measure what exactly citizens do not like about foreign nationals.

IV.   Hypotheses

The purpose of this experimental study is to simultaneously examine how each of the variables we have selected affects immigration sentiment. We will examine five variables: education level, gender, country of origin, language skills, and reason for application. By observing how the variables interact with each other, we will be able to determine which factors play the most prominent role in encouraging or discouraging the acceptance of immigrants.

A. Nationalism and Discrimination

The majority of today's immigrants to the United States come from Latin America and Asia, making them markedly different from the country's non-Hispanic white majority. Findings from the literature review drive expectations that respondents will likely place significant emphasis on immigrants' countries of origin when determining their worthiness of admission. Respondents' race, gender, age, income, and a host of other factors will likely influence the level of importance they place on country of origin, too.

> **U.S. H$_1$:** Area of origin will have an outsized impact on American approval or disapproval of certain immigrants. Immigrants from western European countries will face higher levels of approval relative to immigrants from non-western developing countries.

The impact of ethnocentrism will likely be especially pronounced for immigrants from Muslim majority countries. As previously mentioned, the demonization of Arab countries by American politicians and media outlets

means the average American views immigrants from countries in the Middle East as inherently undesirable.

In India, an immigrants' country of origin will likely play an important role, too. Since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India in 2014, bullheaded members of his BJP have increasingly espoused the dominance of Hindus, a group that accounts for 80 percent of the population (Charnysh et al. 2014). The BJP dominated parliament recently passed the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, too, which prioritizes citizenship for "persecuted" non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan (Chaudhary 2020). The law also sparked fears of massive migrant inflows.

> **India H_1:** Area of origin will have an outsized impact on Indian approval or disapproval of certain immigrants. Immigrants from neighboring countries will face higher levels of disapproval and lower levels of admittance relative to immigrants from other countries.

Like the U.S., ethnocentrism in India will measurably affect respondents' desire to admit immigrants from Muslim countries, too. Ardent nationalism amongst a broad swath of Indian citizens means an increasing disdain for Muslims—residents, and migrants. The BJP, which holds the majority of seats in the Indian parliament, is the only major political party with no Muslim members of parliament (Chaudhary 2020).

B. Desire for Specialized Knowledge

In economically advanced countries, citizens demonstrate strong support for the immigration of highly skilled workers (Connor and Ruiz 2019). Almost 80 percent of American adults, for example, agree that the government should encourage

well-educated, highly skilled workers to immigrate to and work in the U.S. Even among U.S. citizens who want fewer immigrants, nearly two-thirds support the immigration of high-skilled laborers (Connor and Ruiz 2019). Prior research also indicates that people who are younger, more well-educated, and more affluent tend to be more supportive of highly skilled immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010).

> **U.S. H_2:** More well-educated, more affluent respondents and less well-educated, poorer respondents alike will favor immigrants who are better educated. More well-educated respondents will demonstrate stronger overall support for immigrants, though.

The disconnect in support for immigrants between affluent and poor individuals stems from the theory of economic self-interest. The premise holds that natives view immigrants as job market competitors and will oppose their entry if they are concerned about occupational security (Mayda 2006; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Prior research finds that the economic self-interest theory only applies to blue-collar workers (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007), hence why better educated, wealthier respondents are predicted to exhibit stronger overall support for immigrants.

India will reflect a similar trend, albeit, with lower overall support for immigrants relative to the U.S. While Indians are increasingly well educated, the average citizen only goes to school for five years (Trines 2018). Urban areas like Mumbai and Delhi are well-educated islands amongst a desert of the rural, poorly educated majority.

> **India H_2:** More well-educated, more affluent respondents and less well-educated, poorer respondents alike will favor immigrants who are better educated. More

well-educated respondents will demonstrate stronger overall support for
immigrants, though.

India's economy is still developing, signaling that respondents there will

not view immigrants in the same light as Americans. Indian citizens that are

poorly educated are predicted to exhibit less enthusiasm for immigration, while

well-educated Indians in urban centers will likely want higher levels of

immigration.

C. Ability to Assimilate Linguistically

One theoretical approach about how people evaluate immigrants stems from the

notion that adherence to norms is crucial. Things that are viewed as unequivocally

American must be adopted by immigrants to engender positive attitudes from natives

(Theiss-Morse 2009). Indeed, there is widespread concern in the U.S. that immigration

will dilute the collective national identity (Citrin et al. 1997; Schildkraut 2011).

According to Americans, one important element of this supposed national identity is

the ability to speak English. While the U.S. does not have an official language, over 90

percent of Americans indicate that speaking English is an important aspect of their

identity, suggesting that approval of immigrants may hinge on their ability to speak the

language (Wong 2010).

> **U.S. H$_3$:** Fluency in English will positively impact potential immigrants' prospects
> of being approved for admission.

Unlike the U.S., India lists English as an official language (in addition to Hindi).

As a medium of communication, however, it is highly stratified based on location and

socioeconomic class. The Lok Foundation found that four times as many urban Indians

speak English relative to their rural counterparts, while "rich" Indians are 20 times more likely to speak English compared to "poor" Indians (Shrinivasan 2019). Because of this, immigrants to India who speak English may generate vastly different outcomes than immigrants to the U.S. who speak English. In India, the language is more an indicator of educational achievement and class than one's ability to assimilate.

> **India H$_3$:** Fluency in a major Indian language will positively impact potential immigrants' prospects of being approved for admission.

While fluency in English amongst potential immigrants to India may trigger a different initial reaction from respondents, we hypothesize the result will be the same. As noted in the section on educational achievement, Indians will be more eager to admit immigrants they view as potential high-level contributors to the Indian economy. Fluency in English will prompt a positive response from Indian respondents.

D. Religious Uniformity

Christian nationalism—affirming Christian superiority in the public realm—is an excellent predictor of anti-immigration sentiment (Stroope et al. 2021). Moreover, commitment to Christianity has been linked to negative dispositions toward Muslim immigrants, specifically (Sherkat and Lehman 2018).

> **U.S. H$_4$:** Christian immigrants will see comparatively higher levels of admission relative to Muslim immigrants. Christian respondents will favor Christian immigrants, while all other respondents will not favor Christians or Muslims.

A growing body of research shows that Christians who attend religious services more often are more likely to have their anti-immigrant fervor tempered, though. It is the so-called "secular Christians" that are more likely to harbor disdain for immigrants, especially those who are Muslim (Sherkat and Lehman 2018).

Despite having the third-largest Muslim population in the world, Muslim communities in India face prejudice as well. Discrimination in education and employment has created significant barriers for Muslims to amass wealth and attain political power. Muslims are also disproportionately more likely to experience communal violence. Strong nationalism maintained by Prime Minister Modi and the BJP means pushback against the immigration of Muslims to India, too. Indeed, Muslims are vastly outnumbered in the Hindu majority country. The previously discussed National Citizenship Act of 2019 is viewed by many as an attack on Muslims and an indication that India is increasingly nationalistic (Maizland 2020).

> **India H$_4$:** Hindu immigrants will see comparatively higher levels of admission relative to Muslim immigrants. Hindu respondents will favor Hindu immigrants, while all other respondents will not favor Hindus or Muslims.

The BJP also promised to create a National Register of Citizens, a move that would render many Muslims stateless because they lack the necessary documentation to prove their citizenship. And, because Muslims were omitted from the National Citizenship Act, they would not be eligible for expedited citizenship, either. The Indian government has also deported Muslim Rohingya to Myanmar, where they face persecution (Maizland 2020).

E. Sympathy and Solicitude

Sensitivity toward the plight of migrants can also play a small but measurable role in decisions about admission. Economic refugees do not generate increased support, but those fleeing political and religious persecution garner sympathy and a

broader willingness to assist (Verkuyten 2004). Immigrants leaving behind ethnic conflict, civil war, and other unwelcome circumstances not related to economic hardship engender compassion.

U.S. H$_5$*:* Immigrants seeking to escape political/religious persecution will generate comparatively higher levels of admission.

In India, a country with its own ethnic and religious cleavages and conflicts, the effect may be more muted. India is more religiously homogeneous than the U.S., and ardent nationalists are fiercely opposed to religions other than Hinduism (Chaudhary 2020). As a result, there may be lower levels of sympathy for those fleeing religious persecution in India. The impact of commiseration should still be present, though.

India H$_5$: Immigrants seeking to escape political/religious persecution will generate comparatively higher levels of admission.

Political and religious persecution often present especially difficult predicaments, which should ensure a more compassionate reaction from respondents.

V.   Experimental Design, Data, and Measurement

A. Conjoint Analysis

We employ a conjoint analysis survey design to obtain an overarching picture of citizens' opinions on which immigrants to admit to their country. Conjoint analyses are widely used for marketing analytics but have only recently been adopted by political scientists (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). Conjoint analyses work by separating a broadly defined person or thing—in this case, an immigrant—into the individual components (immigrant attributes) that comprise the whole. Then, by testing different combinations of these attributes—through different randomly computer-generated immigrant profiles—we can identify citizens' preferences in immigrants.

My experiment asks respondents to offer ratings for potential immigrants and give their opinion on whether or not the foreign national should be admitted. Following an introduction explaining the experiment and a series of demographic questions, we show respondents five consecutive immigrant profiles. Figure 1 displays an example from the U.S. survey; Figure 2 displays an example from the India survey. The unit of analysis is the respondent profile.

Following the immigrant profiles, we measure the outcome in two ways. The first question asks respondents whether or not they would offer support for the presented immigrant. This variable is my secondary outcome of interest, as some respondents may be exceedingly anti-immigrant and choose to reject everyone, while others may view immigration as necessary in all forms and choose to admit everyone. The second question asks respondents to rank immigrants on a scale from 0-5 stars.

This variable is my primary outcome of interest as it allows me to determine the marginal benefit of each immigrant attribute (i.e., if an immigrant has a certain characteristic, on average, they receive X amount more support).

Figure 1 — Experimental Design (U.S.)

Figure 2 — Experimental Design (India)

Note: These questions are drawn from the Qualtrics survey answered by respondents

For each of the five immigrant profiles respondents evaluate, we randomly vary the immigrant profiles on five attributes that previous studies identify as significant. For both the U.S. and India, respondents observe *education level, area of origin, language, reason for application, and religion.* Gender was not varied, with respondents only evaluating male immigrants.

Each attribute was coded as a dummy variable. For example, Indian *education level* has two values, "equivalent to completing high school or less in India" or "equivalent to completing a college degree or more in India." Table 1 contains the full

list of attribute values for the U.S. Table 2 contains the full list of attribute values for

India.

Table 1 — Attributes for Immigrant Profiles
*List of all potential variables/immigrant attributes included in the **U.S.** version of the experimental survey*

Education Level	Equivalent to completing high school or less in the U.S. Equivalent to completing a college degree or more in the U.S.
Gender	Male
Area of Origin	Western Europe Non-Western Developing Country
Language	During the admission interview, this applicant spoke English During the admission interview, this applicant did not speak English
Reason for Application	Seek a better job/life in the U.S. Escape political/religious persecution
Religion	Christian Muslim

Table 2 — Attributes for Immigrant Profiles
*List of all potential variables/immigrant attributes included in the **India** version of the experimental survey*

Education Level	Equivalent to completing high school or less in India Equivalent to completing a college degree or more in India
Gender	Male
Area of Origin	Country neighboring India Country not neighboring India
Language	During the admission interview, this applicant spoke a major Indian language During the admission interview, this applicant did not speak a major Indian language
Reason for Application	Seek a better job/life in India Escape political/religious persecution
Religion	Hindu Muslim

The conjoint design has some advantages over previously used observational

and experimental approaches. As immigrant attribute values are randomly varied, we

can evaluate the average regression coefficient gain. The average regression coefficient

gain represents the causal effect of altering a single profile attribute while averaging

over the remaining attributes. Using the average regression coefficient gain, we can determine—relative to one another—how valuable each of the attributes is. For example, we can compare the effect of being Muslim with that of having a college education. The conjoint design also allows us to examine interactions between respondent and immigrant attributes (e.g., do Republicans care more about immigrants' religion?).

B. Sample

Using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platform, we collected survey data from 1,036 U.S. respondents and 1,050 Indian respondents in March 2021. MTurk provides a cheap, easy way to access respondents but limits the ability of surveyors to poll a random sample. The result is respondents who may skew more or less in favor of immigrants than the average person. For example, 94 percent of respondents to the India survey had at least a bachelor's degree, indicating that they are more well-educated than the average Indian. In the U.S. survey, there was not a normal distribution of respondents relative to the American political spectrum. Responses to the Likert scale question demonstrated a propensity for respondents to be more liberal. In both the U.S. and India, Mturk respondents were more likely to be male, too. Nearly 70 percent of respondents in the India survey were men.

C. Manipulation Checks and Data Cleaning

The nature of Amazon MTurk is such that the collection of survey data is vulnerable to manipulation by bots, partial completion, and hasty responses. As such, multiple criteria had to be fulfilled for a response to count.

First, some MTurk users began the survey but did not look at all of the immigrant profiles presented. Data from these responses were not included in the final results. Some users also completed the survey but did not consent to data collection. These results were omitted, too.

Second, the survey platform we used to collect the data, Qualtrics, keeps track of how long each participant takes to complete the survey. Some responses were submitted rapidly enough that they were deemed rushed. Any responses completed in under 60 seconds are not included in the analysis.

Figure 3 — Manipulation Check (U.S.)   *Figure 4 — Manipulation Check (India)*

Which food do you most associate with the U.S.? No matter what, select the first answer choice.

Cheeseburger

Steak

Turkey dinner

Maine Lobster

Which food do you most associate with India? No matter what, select the first answer choice.

Tandoori chicken

Samosa

Naan bread

Seekh kebab

Note: These questions are drawn from the Qualtrics survey answered by respondents

Third, to ensure respondents were carefully reading each question, we included a manipulation check in both the U.S. and India surveys. Figure 3 displays an example from the U.S. survey; Figure 4 displays an example from the India survey. The question was noticeably different from other questions in the survey, and respondents were asked in the question to choose the first option no matter what. Those that failed to do so had their response data omitted from the analysis.

VI.   Results and Analysis

As discussed in the experimental design section, by utilizing a simple regression analysis, we can approximate the average regression coefficient gain. The random assignment of attributes to immigrants ensures that all attributes will receive even distribution. The average regression coefficient gain is indicative of the average difference in the likelihood of being favored for admission when examining two different attribute values—for example, an immigrant from "Western Europe" versus a "non-Western developing country"—where the average is the total number of stars an immigrant garners from a specific attribute.

Note that because the unit of analysis is the immigrant profile and respondent ratings, we have over 5,000 observations for both the U.S. and India. In the U.S. survey, 1,036 respondents rated five immigrants. In the India survey, 1,050 respondents rated five immigrants.

A. United States — Attributes' Effect on Support for Immigrants

Figure 5 displays the results for all respondents in the U.S. survey. The plot uses dots to indicate star estimates and lines to display 95% confidence intervals for the average regression coefficient gain of each attribute value. The average regression coefficient gain value displayed on the left side of the figure is the total number of stars an immigrant's rating increased given the presence of a particular attribute. For example, immigrants that speak English get a rating from respondents that is, on average, 0.80 stars higher. Contrary to prior research, my findings indicate that the

ability for immigrants to assimilate linguistically is important to respondents. Indeed, the language component had the largest impact on respondent support for immigrants.

Figure 5 — Attributes' Effect on Support for Immigrants (U.S)
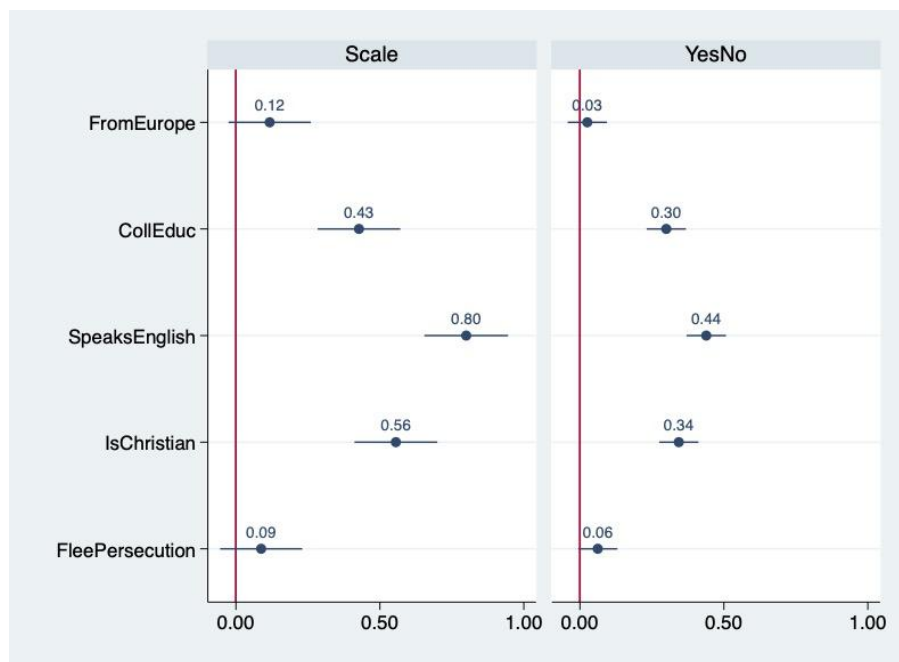
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The left side displays the regression coefficient, while the right side shows the logit coefficient. The discussion focuses on the regression coefficient, not the logit coefficient, because the regression coefficient is far easier to interpret and understand. They present the same information.

In Hainmueller and Hopkins' (2015) conjoint study of immigrant attribute preferences in the United States, they found that the ability to speak English was the expectation for immigrants. Those who were fluent in English received the equivalent bonus of zero stars (i.e., they were neither approved of nor disapproved). Those who spoke broken English, however, were deemed undesirable. Immigrants who spoke "broken English," "tried English but unable," or "used interpreter" were all impacted negatively. Sniderman et al. (2004) drew similar conclusions, finding that only the inability to speak the local language affected immigrant approval. It is important to

note that my survey experiment used a dummy variable, though, while Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015) provided respondents with four possible options for immigrant linguistic capability. The number of possible variables may help explain the vastly different results.

Confirming prior research, though (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Sniderman et al. 2004), my study found that respondents prefer immigrants with higher levels of education. Observe the left side of figure 5, which displays the average regression coefficient gain. Immigrants who "[completed a college degree or more in the U.S." received an average of 0.43 additional stars. There are likely marginal benefits for being especially well educated, too. As Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015) point out, the more educated the immigrant, the more likely they are to see strong support. In other words, someone with a master's degree will see further support, and someone with a Ph.D. will see increased support beyond that. The dummy variable does not account for the marginal increase or decrease in support depending on total years of schooling and degree achievements.

My findings also demonstrate that given the opportunity to choose between a Christian or Muslim immigrant, Americans strongly prefer the Christian. Christian immigrants received an average of 0.56 additional stars. The effect was even more pronounced among Republicans, who gave Christian immigrants an average boost of 0.71 additional stars (more on this in figure 6). Republicans' relatively monolithic base affirms findings from Sniderman et al. (2002) and Ford (2011) that ethnocentrism is a strong predictor of anti-immigration sentiment, especially as it pertains to Muslims.

Immigrants from "Western Europe" and immigrants "[escaping political/religious persecution" also saw small bumps in support, with Western Europeans receiving an additional 0.12 stars, and those fleeing persecution receiving an additional 0.09 stars.

Figure 6 — Respondent Party Identification and Immigrant Approval
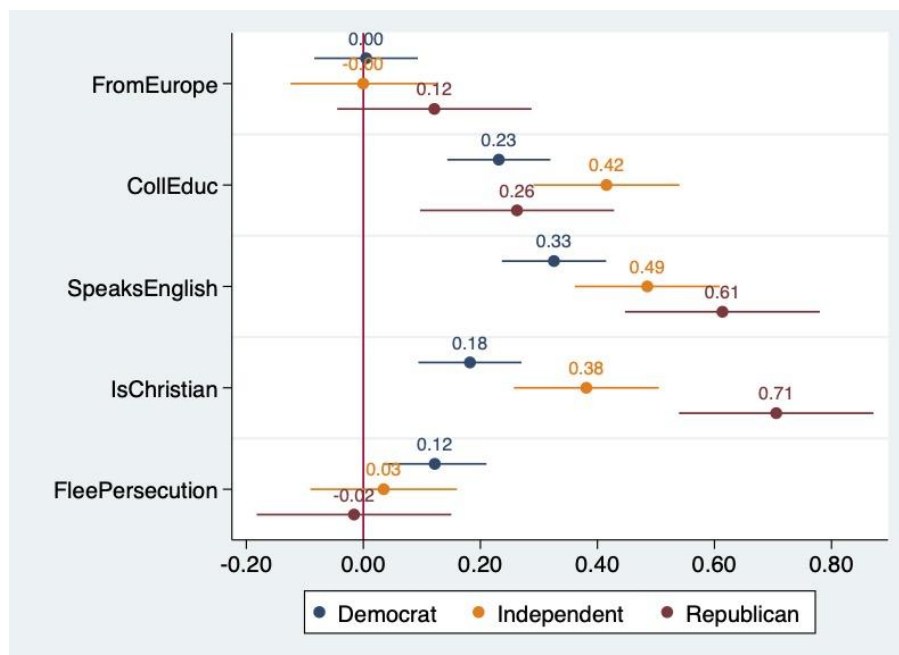
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. This chart omits those who identified as independent on the Leikert scale.

My research also establishes strong ties between party identification and preference for specific immigrant attributes. Visible in figure 6, Republicans strongly preferred Christians to Muslims. By contrast, Democrats exhibited a far more muted preference for Christians, as they only received a 0.18 star boost. In the case of religion, then, we can conclude that Republicans place far more emphasis on immigrants'

religion than Democrats. Independents fell in between the two groups, awarding 0.38 additional stars to Christian immigrants.

In line with their ethnocentric tendencies, the survey results also reveal that Republicans prioritized immigrants' ability to speak English. Republicans gave English-speaking immigrants an average of 0.61 additional stars, while Democrats only awarded them 0.33 additional stars. My findings regarding the ability of immigrants to assimilate linguistically echo findings from Sniderman et al. (2004) that conservatives place more importance on immigrants' ability to speak the local language than do progressives. Independents prioritized linguistic assimilation, too, awarding an average of 0.49 additional stars to English-speaking immigrants.

Republican ethnocentrism is reflected in approval scores for Western Europeans, too. When presented with a choice between immigrants from "Western Europe" or a "non-Western developing country," Republicans awarded Western Europeans an additional 0.12 stars, whereas Democrats and Independents favored neither group. We see that Democrats (0.26 additional stars) and Republicans (0.23 additional stars) valued education roughly equally. Independents emphasized education to a greater extent, awarding 0.42 additional stars to college-educated immigrants.

Republicans were also less sympathetic toward those fleeing persecution, with affected immigrants seeing slight opposition to their arrival. Republicans detracted an average of 0.02 stars from this group, perhaps indicating an association between immigrants escaping war-torn nations and Republican perceptions of immigrants from

those countries. Democrats, on the other hand, were somewhat sympathetic to immigrants fleeing persecution, awarding them an additional 0.12 stars. Independents demonstrated low-level sympathy (0.03 additional stars).

In figure 7, we observe the relationship between respondents' education level and their approval of immigrant attributes. As noted in the literature review, more highly educated U.S. citizens generally favor both less-skilled and more highly skilled immigrants, while poorly educated U.S. citizens tend to only favor highly skilled immigrants (Espenshade & Calhoun 1993; Hainmueller & Hiscox 2007, 2010).

Figure 7 — Respondent Education Level and Immigrant Approval
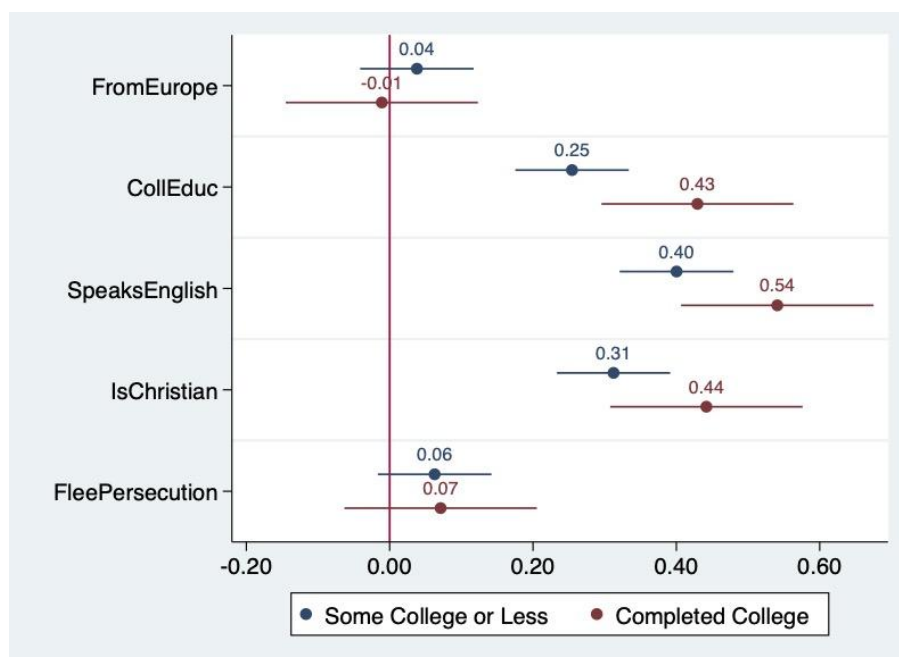
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Our survey findings affirm widespread preference for well-educated immigrants, with respondents who "completed college" awarding an average of 0.43 additional stars

to college graduates and respondents who "complete[d] some college or less" awarding 0.25 additional stars.

Contradicting prior research (Espenshade & Calhoun 1993; Hainmueller & Hiscox 2007, 2010; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015), though, we find that more well-educated respondents also demonstrate favoritism toward English-speaking immigrants and Christian immigrants. Respondents who "completed college" awarded English speakers an additional 0.54 stars and Christians an additional 0.44 stars. Compare this with respondents who "complete[d] some college or less"; they only doled out an additional 0.40 and 0.31 stars to English speakers and Christians, respectively. Previous research indicates an expectation of the opposite, with less well-educated respondents prioritizing language and religion more.

B. India — Attributes' Effect on Support for Immigrants

Figure 8 displays the results for all respondents in the India survey. The plot uses dots to indicate star estimates and lines to display 95% confidence intervals for the average regression coefficient gain of each attribute value. The average regression coefficient gain value displayed on the left side of the figure is the total number of stars an immigrant's rating increased given the presence of a particular attribute. It is important to note that Indian Mturk respondents were far from representative of the population. About 25% of Indians aged 18-24 go to college (Gohain 2020). Compare this to my sample, where 80% hold a bachelor's degree and 14% possess a postgraduate degree.

Indian respondents placed significant emphasis on the religion of potential immigrants, with Hindus receiving an average of 0.46 additional stars. Though the immigrant attribute for religion was coded as a dummy variable, with the only two options being "Hindu" or "Muslim," these choices are roughly in line with Indian demographic trends; 94 percent of Indians are either Hindu or Muslim (Connor 2017). In line with previous findings of religion and immigration (Schildkraut 2007), Indians—even those who are well-educated—are increasingly nationalistic and demonstrate a strong preference for immigrants of the religious majority.

Figure 8 — Attributes' Effect on Support for Immigrants (India)
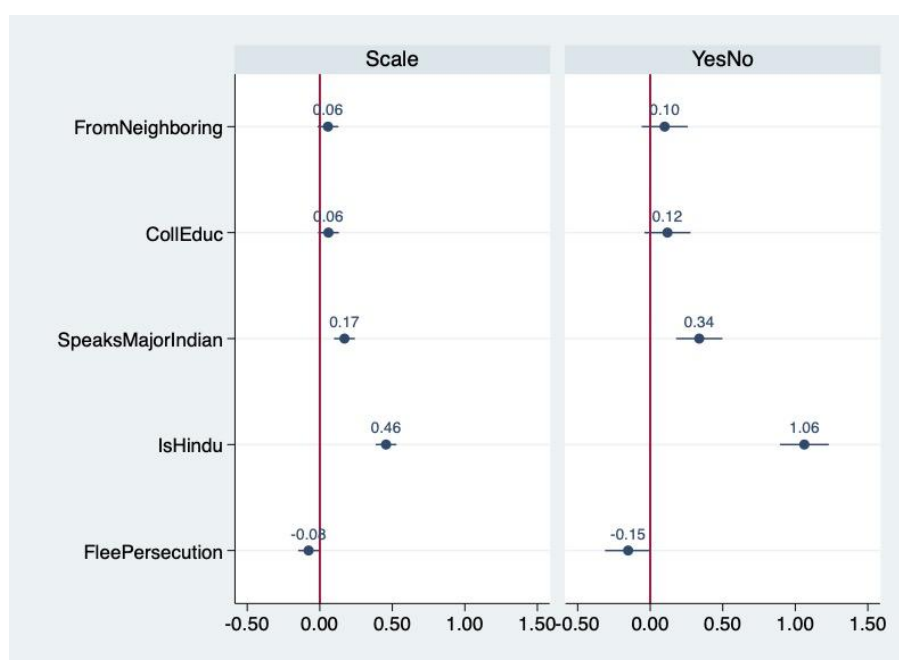
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The left side displays the regression coefficient, while the right side shows the logit coefficient. The discussion focuses on the regression coefficient, not the logit coefficient, because the regression coefficient is far easier to interpret and understand. They present the same information.

Those who spoke a major Indian language also saw increased approval from respondents, receiving an average of 0.17 additional stars. Similar to our findings from

the U.S. survey, but challenging prior research (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Sniderman et al. 2004), Indian respondents' proclivity for immigrants who speak a major Indian language indicates a preference for foreign nationals who can assimilate linguistically. If coded by specific languages as opposed to "a major Indian language," there would likely be additional stratification. Forty-four percent of Indians identify Hindi as their mother tongue, followed by eight percent Bangla and seven percent Marathi (Jain 2018). Hindi speakers, then, have the highest likelihood of linguistic assimilation and would likely see higher approval rates. Though our sample of Indians with a "high school education or less" is too small to evaluate their attitudes toward linguistic assimilation, there is a strong probability that poorly educated Indians place even greater emphasis on immigrants' ability to speak a major language.

The nature of the survey respondents may offer an explanation as to why the area of origin variable provided no real benefit or penalty for immigrants. The countries surrounding India are largely Muslim (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.), which we would expect to generate negative sentiment toward immigrants coming from those countries. The highly educated sample likely negated this expectation, as well-educated individuals tend to support all immigrants regardless of religious or ethnic background (Espenshade & Calhoun 1993; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). The same is true for education level, where more well-read immigrants generally receive strong approval from lower-income, less well-educated individuals (Espenshade & Calhoun 1993; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014, 2015).

Well-educated natives do somewhat favor well-educated immigrants compared to poorly educated immigrants, but not to the same extent as poorly educated natives. Hence, the effect is muted with a sample of 94% college graduates. A representative sample of India would likely find a disadvantage for immigrants from countries surrounding India and a substantial benefit for well-educated immigrants.

Figure 9 displays respondent results based on whether they thought the Indian government's social spending should increase, decrease or remain the same.

Figure 9 — Social Spending and Immigrant Approval
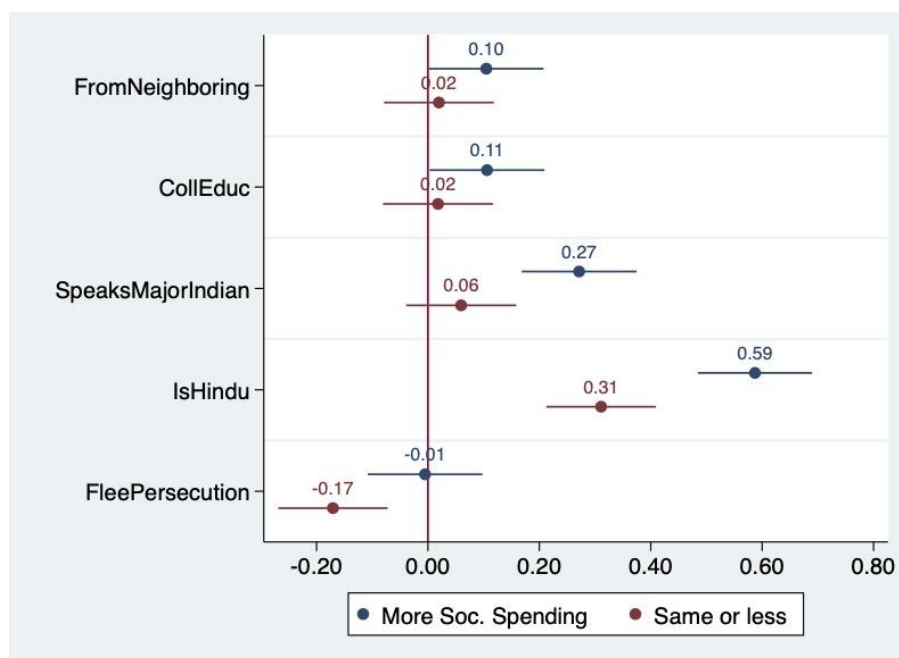
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Unlike the U.S. system, where most voters fall neatly into three categories (Republican, Democrat, Independent), India utilizes a multi-party system. Generally speaking, Democrats favor increased government spending and intervention, while

Republicans favor reduced government spending and intervention. Asking a question about social spending was intended as a proxy for respondents' attitudes regarding increased government presence or limited government presence.

In contrast to the U.S., where Republicans—who are more nationalistic—favor less government spending, Indian nationalists appear to support increased government spending. Note that those advocating for increased government spending also preferred immigrants who were Hindu (0.59 additional stars) and spoke a major Indian language (0.27 additional stars). Strong support from nationalists for increased government spending is likely indicative of a desire to improve outcomes for all Indians. That is, nationalists want the government to consider the needs of Indians first.

Figure 10 displays respondent results based on caste. A 2,000-year-old system of social stratification, caste still plays a critical role in marriage, educational achievement, and economic inequality (Chaudhary 2019). The caste system divides into four main categories—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—and subdivides into thousands more depending on individual occupation (Chaudhary 2019).

To understand figure 10, one must simply recognize that members of a high caste are, generally speaking, more affluent and more well-educated, while members of a low caste are not as well-off and less well-educated. Interestingly, the data show that members of high and low castes alike are largely in agreement about the importance of specific immigrant attributes. There is almost no divergence between the two groups regarding approval for immigrants who are college graduates or speak a major Indian

language. The variance between the two groups on attitudes toward immigrants from neighboring countries and those fleeing persecution is minimal. The only category in which caste makes a noticeable difference is religion. Higher caste individuals, such as Brahmins, stressed the importance of Hinduism to a greater extent than lower caste members.

Figure 10 — Respondent Caste and Immigrant Approval
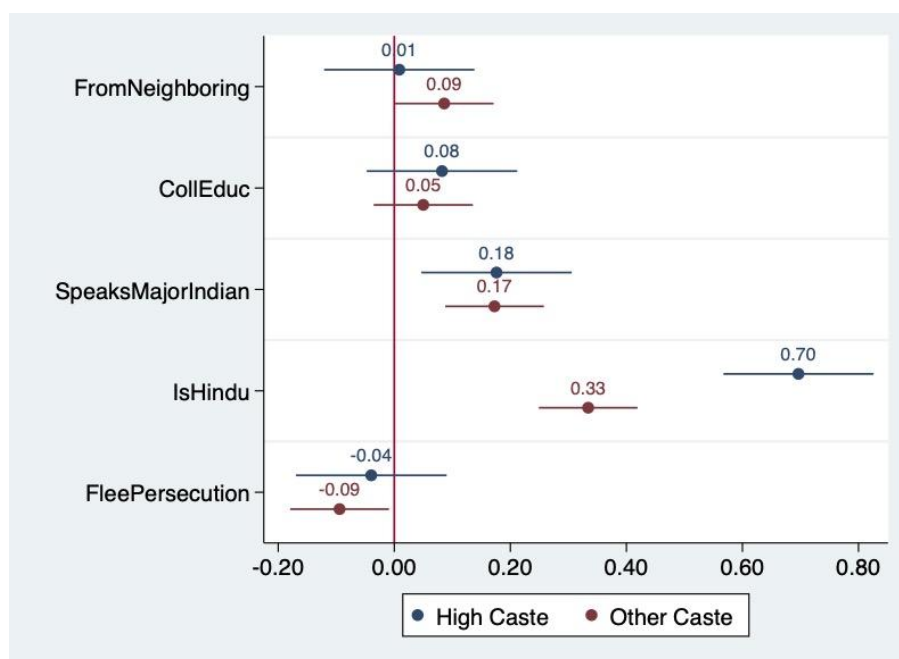
Note: This plot shows the estimated effect of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Those in high castes awarded an average of 0.70 additional stars to Hindu immigrants, while low caste respondents only doled out an average of 0.33 additional stars. In other words, religion was more than twice as important to Indians in high castes compared to individuals in low castes.

VII.   Discussion and Conclusion

Survey experiments, especially those employing unique methods such as conjoint analysis, are critical to advancing our understanding and identification of immigrant attributes that shape opinions on immigration. Decades of prior research have examined all sorts of economic and social-psychological factors and their impact on immigration. As the number of survey experiments multiplies, though, the explanatory capacity of evaluating multiple immigrant attributes simultaneously on a consistent scale is crucial. Drawing on inspiration from Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015), this paper analyzes five dummy variable attributes in two countries to draw conclusions about the explanatory strength of several hypotheses.

In the U.S. survey, immigrants that fit societal norms received strong support. Americans demonstrated notable partiality toward immigrants who are well-educated, speak English, and are Christian. We find that area of origin makes little difference to Americans; however, respondents were only asked to evaluate immigrants from Western Europe and non-Western developing countries. As noted in Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015), country of origin does matter, with respondents reacting adversely to countries like Iraq and Somalia. Given specific countries with negative connotations, Americans do care about immigrants' area of origin.

Our results also indicate some agreement between Democrats, Republicans, and Independents about the importance of various attributes. Though each group assigned varying levels of importance to each immigrant attribute, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike noted a preference for college-educated, English-speaking,

Christian immigrants. Based on our findings, there is a general consensus amongst Americans about what kind of immigrants should be admitted to the U.S.

In the India survey, immigrants that fit the nationalist picture of society garnered firm support. Indians exhibited a notable preference for immigrants who are Hindu and speak a major Indian language. In theory, these two attributes enable immigrants to assimilate into Indian society. We find that Indian respondents did not demonstrate a preference for immigrants from surrounding countries or other parts of the world. We also find that Indian respondents cared little about education level; however, the demographics of our sample (94% college-educated) likely affected approval ratings for college-educated immigrants. As prior research notes (Espenshade & Calhoun 1993; Hainmueller & Hiscox 2007, 2010), well-educated respondents view college-educated immigrants and poorly educated immigrants as similarly desirable.

Results from respondents regarding social spending also demonstrated an interesting difference between Indian and American public opinion. As previously noted, Republicans generally prefer lower taxes, less government spending on social programs, and limited government. Republicans are also, on average, more nationalistic. Democrats, on the other hand, prefer higher taxes, more government spending on social programs, and large bureaucracy. Democrats are also, on average, less nationalistic. Americans base many political decisions on this basic framework.

Indian political thinking does not fall into this neat framework. India's nationalists actually prefer greater government spending, presumably because they

want the government to take better care of Indian citizens. In other words, the goal of Indian nationalists is to improve outcomes for all natives.

Beyond presenting evidence about specific hypotheses, our results illuminate the types of theoretical explanations that are best tailored to explain both American and Indian attitudes toward immigrants. Respondent data tells of some notable differences but also reveals similar thinking across diverse subgroups. For example, poorly educated Democrats and well-educated Republicans both demonstrated a preference for college-educated Christians.

Explanations of immigration sentiment that emphasize individual-level differences face crucial limitations, though. It is not feasible to account for every factor that makes an immigrant unique, and thus painting a perfect picture of what drives attitudes toward immigrants is inconceivable. In this survey, we only examined five dummy variables out of hundreds of potentially charged attributes.

Social scientists usually try to examine multiple hypotheses simultaneously. Survey experiments, however, are typically undertaken to examine the causal effects of a few manipulated treatments. Thus, they are structurally flawed when it comes to testing competing theories. The use of a conjoint analysis helps lessen the rigidity of the survey experiment's theoretical goals and operational tools as it allows us to evaluate competing hypotheses on the same scale. It also urges researchers not to think in binary terms when examining hypotheses but rather on a sliding scale with varying levels of support for claims. As Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014) note, there

are widespread applications for the conjoint technique, and it may help us elucidate

other patterns of political behavior.

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