Where will the British Go? And Why?

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Abstract

Objective: Immigration is a highly salient political issue. We examine the migration preferences of potential emigrants from the UK to determine whether the migration calculus is primarily economic or political.

Methods: A conjoint survey experiment conducted with UK subjects drawn from the CESS, Nuffield College, Oxford University, student subject pool to identify causal drivers of emigration preferences.

Results: Logit estimation of emigration preferences indicates that economics and politics matters. Anti-immigrant rhetoric, 'Trumpian policies, and the USA deter high-skilled UK potential emigrants; economic growth, education, and social benefits attract them. Politics and social benefits are more important for those on the political left while economics and education weigh more heavily for those on the right.

Conclusion: What will attract the highly-skilled migrants from a post-Brexit UK? Economics matters of course but for many of these potential emigrants politics is important – they are particularly sensitive to anti-immigrant rhetoric.

High-skilled immigration has been shown to positively affect the labor market, national finances, economic growth, and innovation (Chaloff and Lemaitre 2009, Hunt 2010, OECD 2014), and states have increasingly enacted immigration policies to attract the highly skilled (Betts and Cerna 2011). However, those actions may be ineffective if placed alongside populist or nativist immigration policies. Such policies (and the anti-immigrant sentiment associated with them) can reduce the country's attractiveness to highly skilled immigrants.

In the future post-Brexit era, with freedom of movement to European Union countries potentially curtailed, high-skilled emigrants from the United Kingdom might increasingly look beyond Europe. The US has historically attracted many high-skilled UK emigrants (Khoo 2014). However, this might be changing (USCIS 2017). Visa quotas and non-point-based systems make it harder to immigrate and the political sentiment, particularly political populism, nativism, and anti-immigrant rhetoric – 'Trumpian policies' – may convince highly skilled to emigrate to other countries (Czaika, Parsons and Parsons 2017, Czaika and Haas 2017). They might also increase emigration of foreign-born high-skilled labor from the USA. First signs of the 'Trump effect' seem to support both conjectures (Murnane 2017). Are these 'Trumpian policies' discouraging high-skilled UK labor from emigrating to the US?

Countries likely incur significant economic costs from declining rates of high-skilled immigration. Hence the importance of understanding whether the preferred emigration destinations of high-skilled migrants are influenced by the type of anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies recently favored by President Trump. This study uses conjoint survey experiments to identify political and economic drivers that explain emigration preferences of current and former Oxford University students

– generally considered 'desirable' high-skilled migrants.

Our findings indicate that politics matters, especially for those on the political left. However, economic considerations matter for everyone. The 'Muslim ban', deportation of illegal immigrants, and identifying a potential destination as being in the 'USA' are deterrents for potential UK emigrants. Generous social benefits increase the destination's appeal, especially for those on the political left or center.

Motivation and Conjectures

There has been considerable recent scholarship that focuses on explaining attitudes towards immigrants, particularly anti-immigrant sentiment, which appears to have grown in a variety of countries over the past decade (Bohman and Hjerm 2016). A key issue is whether anti-immigrant attitudes and immigration policy preferences are determined primarily by economic or socio-cultural factors. If self-interested economic concerns about labor market competition shape immigration attitudes then high (low) skilled natives will favor low (high) skilled immigration. Native workers will oppose immigrants who would compete with them in the labor market. Alternatively, attitudes towards immigrants may have little to do with economic self-interest but rather result from social or cultural values and beliefs.

A recent comprehensive review of the literature notes that both political economy and psychological studies find little evidence of an association between personal economic circumstances and immigration attitudes (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). Individuals in Europe and the USA, regardless of skill level, seem to favor high-skilled over low-skilled immigration due to the anticipated positive fiscal impact. Sociotropic cultural and economic concerns – such as national identity and

the effect of immigration on state finances – seem to weigh more heavily in the formation of immigration attitudes than do egocentric economic concerns. Konitzer et al. (2018) document cross-national variation in ethnic stereotyping and its importance for immigration policy preferences. They find that immigration policy preferences are not driven by general antipathy towards all outsiders but rather by negative attitudes towards the most salient immigrant group. Valentino et al. (2017) conduct an extensive cross-national vignette study, including over 18,000 interviews across eleven countries on four continents, and provide strong support for the sociotropic economic argument; high-skilled immigrants are preferred to their low-skilled counterparts and this preference is independent of the respondent's socio-economic status. They conclude that the public, in different national contexts, value skilled immigration. In addition, though, they find that cultural and racial attitudes, as well as immigrants' religious affiliations, seem to influence immigration attitudes. In particular, immigrants from Muslim-majority countries are opposed at a higher rate.

The positive attitudes towards high-skilled immigration may reflect high-skilled immigration's positive net fiscal impact (OECD 2014); its ability to relieve pressure on welfare states and to defer demographic change (Gagnon 2014); its contribution to research, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Hunt 2010, Kerr and Lincoln 2010, Wadhwa 2009); and to alleviate skills shortages (Chaloff and Lemaitre 2009). There clearly is evidence that the public recognizes some of the fiscal benefits from skilled immigration. And many, if not most, governments signal their enthusiasm for high-skilled immigration.

Our conjecture is that skilled migrants take into account the destination country's public sentiment towards immigrants; skilled migrants are aware of official

immigration policies; and these political factors shape their preferences over emigration locations. With post-Brexit changes regarding the freedom of movement of UK citizens on the horizon, we examine what factors shape the emigration destination preferences of UK high-skilled labor. In particular, we are interested in how political versus economic signals shape their emigration preferences.

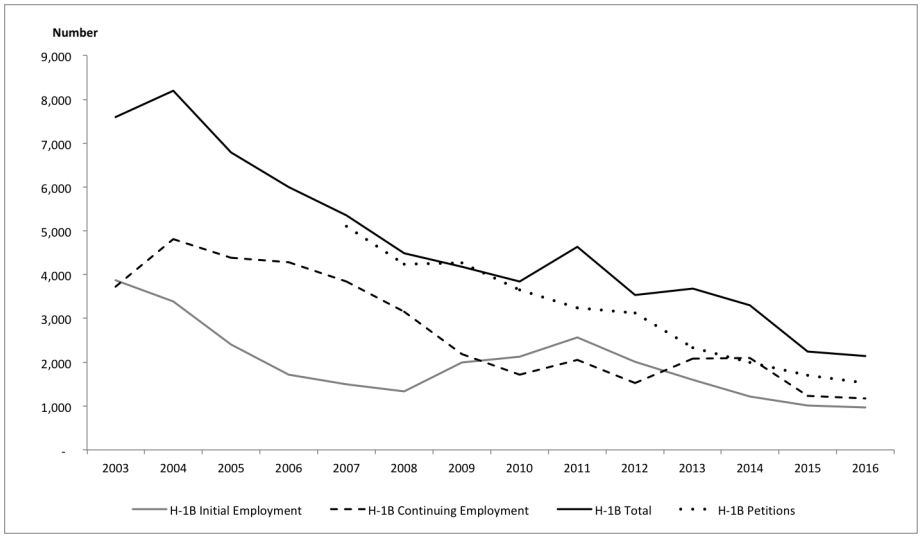


Figure 1: H-1B visa petitions and approvals for UK citizens in the USA, FY 2003-2016. Source: USCIS (2017) and Annual USCIS Reports to Congress

Do the preferences of emigrants matter? There is a high demand in most developed economies for high-skilled immigration to fill skill shortages (Chaloff and Lemaitre 2009). While the US has historically attracted a large proportion of the world's highly skilled migrants, other countries, such as Australia and Canada, have increasingly tried to replace the US by enacting immigration policies favoring the highly skilled (Betts and Cerna 2011, Czaika, Parsons and Parsons 2017, Karaca 2018). More than 120,000 British citizens have emigrated in the year following the Brexit referendum in June 2016; the US has been a favorite destina-

tion for high-skilled UK labor emigrants, alongside Australia and Western Europe (ONS 2017). However, the attractiveness of the US seems to be in decline, as indicated by fewer H-1B visa petitions for UK high-skilled workers (Figure 1).[1] We provide insights into these trends by implementing an experiment designed to explore the factors shaping the demand (on the part of skilled potential emigrants) for migration destinations.

Social Welfare. There is mixed evidence suggesting that emigration decisions of high-skilled individuals are determined by social welfare policies, such as after-tax wages, the wage premium for education, welfare benefits, and health and education systems. (Boeri et al. 2012, Czaika, Parsons and Parsons 2017, Geis, Uebelmesser and Werding 2013).[2] For example, De Giorgi and Pellizzari (2009), Boeri (2010) and Borjas (1999) find that generous welfare states attract more (and predominantly lower skilled) immigrants. However, Giulietti et al. (2013) conclude that there is no significant relationship between welfare and immigration.

The politics of emigration decisions. Other aspects that potentially shape emigration decisions are social attitudes and the political discourse around immigration in the destination country. Assuming equal socio-economic benefits from migration, migrants would presumably relocate to a country where they feel

[1]The H-1B visa is employer-sponsored and the largest visa program for temporary skilled immigration to the US. For an overview of the program see Kerr and Lincoln (2010).

[2]Policies to facilitate or restrict emigration could also affect migration decisions but have received little academic attention (McKenzie and Yang 2013).

welcome rather than to one where they are greeted with hostility.

President Trump seems to be shutting the door to (high-skilled) immigration, despite individual attitudes in the US in favor of high-skilled immigration (Iyengar et al. 2013, Valentino et al. 2017); a widening gap between demand and supply of skilled labor (Chaloff and Lemaitre 2009); and job openings at record high levels and low unemployment (Desilver 2017). Strict immigration policies, alongside political populism, nativism, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and xenophobia might deter or deflect the highly skilled (Czaika and Haas 2017).

Nativism, "an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state" (Mudde 2012, p.2) has been on the rise in the US (Wadhwa 2009). The 'Muslim ban' – immigration restrictions for Muslim-majority countries; defamations of Hispanics and African Americans as criminals and rapists; the claim that immigrants take American jobs; that Mexico is sending their criminals to the US; and Trump's alleged dismissal of Haiti, El Salvador, and African nations as "shithole countries" are all examples of nativist frames in contemporary US discourse.

This anti-immigrant discourse is clearly not aimed at high-skilled UK emigrants. Our contention is that, nevertheless, this intolerant rhetoric creates a general perception of hostility towards immigrants, irrespective of their country of origin. There are signs that the 'Trump effect' has already led to decreased interest in American jobs from foreign high-skilled individuals (Murnane 2017). Although the British continue to have a favorable view of the US, the majority have negative views about Trump and his policies (de Vries and Hoffmann 2018, Wike et al. 2017). These findings further indicate that individuals from countries

with higher average skill levels, the young, those on the political left, and women are more critical of Trump's policies. The 'Trump effect' might therefore particularly discourage young female leftist high-skilled UK emigrants from relocating to the US.

Populism and nativism might not only deter foreign high-skilled immigration, they might also encourage foreign high-skilled workers already in the destination country to emigrate. There are signs that 'Trumpian' immigration policies have contributed to high-skilled individuals' intentions to leave the USA (Wadhwa 2009).

Having highlighted early signs that nativism and populism might have a detrimental effect on the preferences of foreign high-skilled labor to immigrate to the USA, we aim to causally identify their effect – as well as the effect of classic migration drivers – on emigration preferences of high-skilled UK citizens. We make two contributions. First, a novel quantitative measure of the importance of different migration drivers, including salary, welfare benefits, education opportunities, nativist immigration policies, and the destination country itself. Second, our findings could help to inform post-Brexit immigration policy and give insight into future migration flows between the US and the UK. We summarise our conjectures below.

Politics: Nativist Policy Cues. Our core contribution is to isolate the causal effect of strident anti-immigration rhetoric and policies on the migration decisions of highly skilled potential immigrants. Given the above discussion we expect that:

1. The US may no longer be the only (or the most) preferred destination for high-skilled foreign individuals. High-skilled UK citizens might increasingly prefer to relocate to Australia or Canada;

2. Associating "US" with skilled job offers significantly reduces their appeal to prospective employees in highly skilled foreign labor pools;

3. Associating 'Trumpian' immigration policies with skilled job offers significantly reduces their appeal to prospective employees in highly skilled foreign labor pools; and,

4. These effects are stronger for high-skilled UK citizens with less favorable views of the US and who are more critical of Trump's policies (e.g. those on the political left, the young, and women).

Socio-economic conditions shaping migration decisions. As pointed out earlier, there are also socio-economic characteristics of destination countries that make them more, or less, attractive to migrants. Our estimation strategy will allow us to assess the extent to which these factors, compared to the nativist policy signals described above, shape the migration decision. Our conjectures are the following:

5. Economic self-interest should certainly play a role in the emigration decision. Countries with higher average salaries are expected to be more appealing; as are countries that have experienced above average rates of GDP growth. Higher levels of economic growth should signal greater prospects for suitable employment. And since our focus is on high-skilled potential U.K. emigrants, the expectation is that levels of salaries in the service sector would be of particular interest.

6. The generosity of country's welfare benefits can be a positive signal for many potential migrants, particularly those emigrating from countries with a gen-

erous welfare state. Government policies, such as a guaranteed monthly family allowance and a generous minimum wage, may significantly increase a country's appeal to prospective employees in highly skilled foreign labor pools. While it is true that these high-skilled UK migrants will not benefit from these welfare policies, we know that they receive strong support from a large majority of the U.K. population and particularly from the highly skilled and educated segments of society (Heath, Evans and Martin 1994).

7. High-skilled emigrants are expected to give considerable weight to the quality of the education infrastructure in the countries to which they are considering migrating. Countries that rank at the top of the international league tables for education, such as is the case for US universities, should weigh significantly in the migration decisions of high-skilled potential migrants.

Experiment Design

Our intuition is that highly skilled potential emigrants from the UK will seek out, and be exposed to, various characteristics of destination countries. And again our intuition here is that the messages that resonate will be primarily economic and political. We focus on three economic characteristics: welfare benefits, educational opportunities, and salary levels. With respect to politics, we are interested in whether strident anti-immigrant messages play a relatively important causal role in forming emigration preferences compared to the other salient information potential migrants acquire. We believe that conjoint survey experiments might be ideal for teasing out the causal effect of this strident anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The power of conjoint survey experiments for identifying the causal effect of dif-

ferent choice attributes has been extensively developed in political science (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto 2013, Hainmueller, Hangartner and Yamamoto 2015). But of course conjoint experiments have a long history and have been widely implemented in the social sciences.

Our conjoint design has the following features: Subjects choose between Employment Destination 1 and Employment Destination 2 (those exact choice names are provided). Each employment destination has five attributes and each attribute has three values. The values associated with each attribute are randomly assigned to each of the two destinations for each choice set presented to the subjects. There are three conjoint experiments, which vary the attributes displayed to the participant. Subjects make three choices per conjoint, for a total of nine choices. The five attributes of the conjoint design correspond to the factors we conjectured drive the migration decision for skilled labor. Table 1 summarizes the attributes and their values. Screenshots of the conjoint treatments are presented in the online appendix.

We have implemented different immigration treatments to tease out the immigration rhetoric, or simple country cues, that might cause potential high skilled immigrants to avoid migrating to specific destination countries. There are four treatments designed to capture the classic factors that might affect emigration preferences of high-skilled labor: social benefits, the economy, education opportunities, and the attractiveness of service sector jobs. These treatments are implemented in all three conjoint experiments. There are three different immigration treatments corresponding to the three conjoint experiment columns in Table 1. The first two conjoint experiments simply vary the nature of the anti-immigration rhetoric or policy. In the third conjoint, we vary the country name – the idea

Table 1: Immigration Conjoint Experiment Treatments

	Conjoint 1	**Conjoint 2**	**Conjoint 3**
Social Benefits			
Generous guaranteed monthly family allowance (+)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basic hourly minimum wage (neutral)	Yes	Yes	Yes
No state minimum wage or income support (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Economy			
Annual GDP Growth of 6 percent (+)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual GDP Growth of 4 percent (neutral)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Annual GDP Growth of 2 percent (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education (Average international rank)			
Universities: 90th Percentile (+)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Universities: 60th Percentile (neutral)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Universities: 40th Percentile (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Service Jobs (Average international rank)			
Service salaries: 90th Percentile (+)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Service salaries: 70th Percentile (neutral)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Service salaries: 50th Percentile (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Immigration One			
Implementation of point-system (positive) (+)	Yes	No	No
Change in visa processing centres (neutral)	Yes	No	No
Restriction on Muslim immigration/tourist visas (-)	Yes	No	No
Immigration Two			
Implementation of point-system (positive) (+)	No	Yes	No
Change in visa processing centres (neutral)	No	Yes	No
Deportation of all illegal immigrants (-)	No	Yes	No
Country			
USA (-)	No	No	Yes
Australia (neutral)	No	No	Yes
Canada (+)	No	No	Yes

is that the US 'brand' has been sufficiently tarnished by 'Trumpian' policies and rhetoric to cause potential highly skilled migrants to avoid the US.

Subject Pool. The subject pool plays a critical element in our experimental design. Our goal is to identify economic and political factors that could influence high-skilled migration to the US. The subjects in this experiment are drawn from a convenience sample consisting of University of Oxford students who are registered in the Nuffield College Centre for Experimental Social Sciences subject pool. These students have the high-skilled labor profiles that would be of interest to US firms. Table B1 (online appendix) summarizes the subject profiles for this experiment. The experiments were conducted with Nuffield CESS Online facilities and implemented on Qualtrics. In addition, the experiments were incentivized and offered subjects proper compensation for their time. On average, subjects took 18 minutes and earned £5. All participants are 18 or older, each of them signed a consent form before taking part in the survey, and no deception was used.

Participants in the study are predominantly young (mean age = 26, standard deviation = 8.6), as expected with a (current and former) student subject pool that includes post-graduates. Female participants (56 percent) slightly outnumber males. The ideological self-placement of subjects follows a fairly normal distribution, although, as we expected with student subjects, the distribution is skewed to the Left. Participants' interest in migrating is relatively high, with a mean of 5.5 in a 1–7 point scale, indicating the relevance of the subject pool as representatives of potential high-skilled migrants. The self-reported likelihood of emigrating is also high, with a mean of 4.9 in a 1–7 point scale, however, somewhat lower than interest in migration. Including these variables as controls does not alter the results

of the estimation (see Table D3, online appendix). The full summary statistics (Table B1) and relevant density plots are available in the online appendix.

Overall, participants rated Canada and Australia more favorably than the US ($p < 0.000$ and $p = 0.000137$ for pairwise t-tests). This result possibly stems from the slight over-representation of females and those who identify as on the political left in the subject pool. However, the negative evaluation of the US brand persists in the logit estimations that control for age and gender (Table D3, online appendix).

Balance tests were carried out to evaluate adequate implementation of the randomization protocol (Tables E8-E12, online appendix). Multinomial logit estimations of the likelihood of observing a specific attribute indicate that people most interested in migrating were presented the Canada attribute a significantly lower amount of times. Given the importance of having a balanced potential migrant sample across treatments, we included this variable as a control in the estimations. However, it is not a substantive or consistent predictor of destination choice and omitting it does not alter results (data in replication material). Age also has a significant association with the likelihood of observing "No state minimum wage," however, it is not associated with any other of the conjoint attributes and including "Age" as a control does not alter the results of the estimations. This could be caused by the existence of a few older participants in the sample. The "Other" gender category also appears significant in the balance tests but is because only one person identified as such.

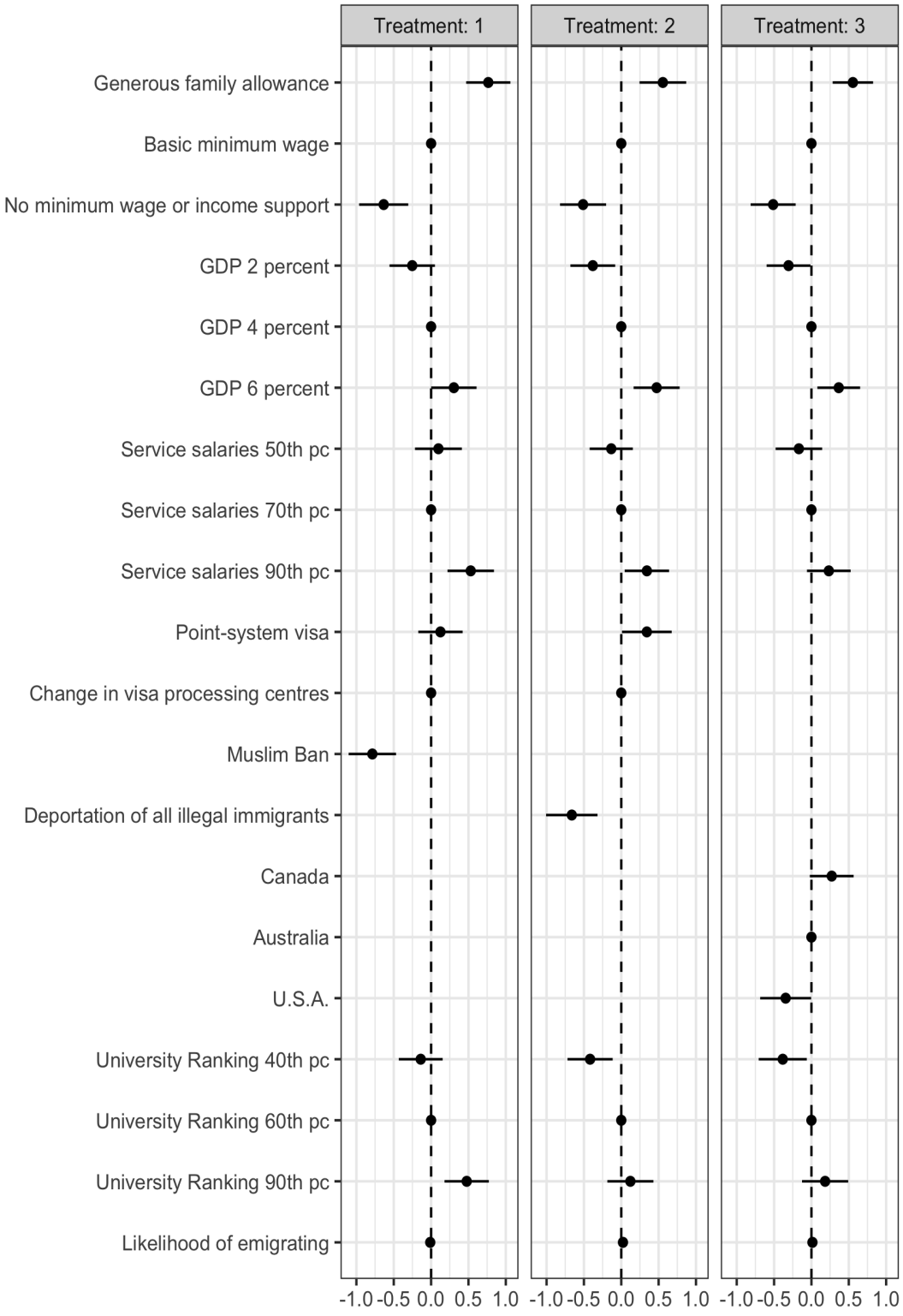
Estimation strategy and results

We adopt a very simple strategy for recovering the causal effects of the specific characteristics of emigration destinations: we estimate a logistic regression of destination choice (whether subjects choose or do not choose any of the destination choices) with clustered standard errors at the individual level. Recall that subjects make choices for nine two-destination choice sets – each subject makes three dichotomous choices for each of the three conjoint treatments. Figure 2 presents graphical summaries of the estimated effects of the regression coefficients with 95 percent confidence intervals – see the full regression table in the online appendix. The reference categories for the conjoint attributes are the neutral categories indicated in Table 1 and they are included as dots with coefficient zero in Figure 2.

The logit results nicely confirm our expectations regarding immigration policy. In the first Immigration Treatment, the "Muslim Ban" attribute has a large negative coefficient. In the second Immigration Treatment the "Deportation" treatment is negative and large, while the "Point-system" treatment is positive. In the third Treatment, the US label has a negative coefficient, indicating a large negative country brand effect (relative to the baseline Australia).

In line with expectations, the destination's economic conditions are relevant. Oxford subjects clearly preferred destinations with higher economic growth and those with higher service sector salaries. Also as expected, the generosity of social welfare benefits shape migration decisions: the Oxford subjects favor destinations with generous family allowances and they are less attracted by those with no minimum wage or income support. Overall, socio-economic and political factors

Figure 2: Conjoint Results



have a similar effect size on the migration preferences of the highly skilled. In particular, the spread in effect size between the "No minimum wage/no income support" value and "Generous family allowance" is quite large – more than the immigration policy effect.

The pattern of effects in the second Immigration Treatment is very similar to Treatment one. Socio-economic factors matter but immigration policy clearly influences migration destination choice. In fact, the spread between the positive "Point system visa" and negative "Deportation of illegal immigrants" immigration policies is slightly wider than was the case in the first immigration treatment.

The negative values for the two immigration policy attributes were meant to reflect some of President Trump's nativist rhetoric. Our intuition is that potential high-skilled immigrants to the US are quite informed of this nativist rhetoric and this has tarnished (at least for certain elements of the highly skilled foreign labor pools) the US brand. Our expectation is that we would see exactly the same outcome if we replaced the immigration policy attribute with a country name attribute that included the US as one of the randomly assigned values. The right panel of Figure 2 presents the results from the third immigration treatment. While the US's political disadvantage is large (coefficient of -0.345), this effect is roughly half of the other politics treatments – the "Muslim Ban" has a coefficient of -0.787, relative to the neutral baseline "Change in visa processing centres," and "Deportation of illegal immigrants" has a coefficient of -0.662, relative to the same baseline. These results suggest that while the content of 'Trumpian' rhetoric is a strong deterrent for potential UK migrants, the US brand itself does not deter high skilled UK immigrants as much as the specific nativist policies and proposals advocated by President Trump.

The highly skilled potential UK emigrants that took part in this experiment express a strong and significant preference to migrate to countries with generous social policies. Certainly with respect to the UK, the US does not have such generous social benefits. This would represent an additional disadvantage for trying to attract high-skilled migrants to the US (at least for emigrants from the UK.)

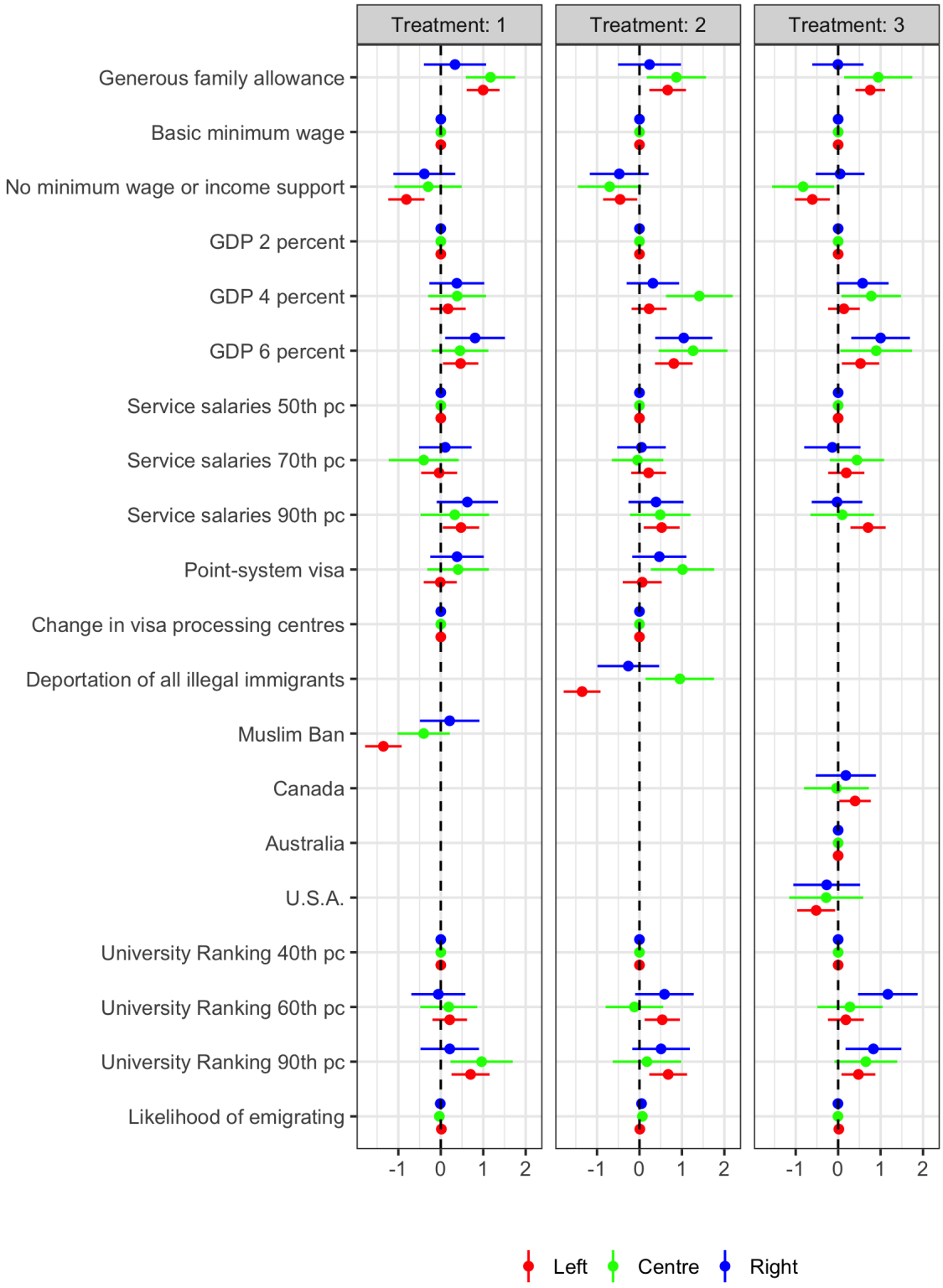
Left-Right Divide. We conjectured above that potential emigrants may have partisan leanings that might affect their preferences for different employment destinations. Table B1 (online appendix) suggests that the Oxford current and former student subject pool had a slightly disproportionately large number of subjects that identify as Left on the Left-Right self-placement scale. The tendency for subjects to self-place on the Left may partly explain the preferences for destination countries with generous welfare benefits as well as the antipathy for countries with anti-immigrant policies.

We divided the subjects into Left, Center, and Right groups and then estimated the same conjoint models that were presented in Figure 2.[3] Figure 3 presents the graphical results from these three models.[4] Clearly, politics matters! Participants who self-identify as on the political right are almost exclusively concerned with economic performance in all three immigration treatments – they favor employ-

[3]Participants on the Left were operationally defined as those who indicated they were 4 or lower on an 11-point scale, Center those who selected 5, and Right those who selected 6 or more.

[4]The numeric logistic estimations are presented in Tables D5–D7 in the online appendix.

Figure 3: Conjoint Treatments: Left-Right Divide



ment destinations that have high GDP growth and high service sector salaries. In addition to these economic factors, Left-leaning subjects appear to be very much concerned about immigration policy and social welfare. They were clearly put-off by the immigration treatments that mentioned a "Muslim Ban" and "Deportation of Illegal Immigrants," and they were deterred by the US as a migration destination. Finally, they responded positively to destinations with highly ranked universities, albeit less so than Right-leaning subjects.

Conclusion and Discussion

The UK has historically witnessed comparatively high levels of emigration to countries throughout the world (in particular to its former colonies). And in a post-Brexit world some expect these numbers to rise. Where will the British go? Traditionally, the United States has been a favored destination for UK emigrants, particularly the highly skilled. This essay examines whether the recent immigration politics and policies in the US have negatively affected its ability to attract high skilled immigrants.

The findings from our conjoint experiment suggest that both the economy and politics matter for UK emigrants. Politics is of particular concern to potential emigrants on the Left and Center while economic considerations shape the destination preferences of all potential emigrants.

In general, anti-immigrant rhetoric seems to discourage highly skilled potential emigrants from the UK. Moreover, the 'Trumpian' policies and rhetoric seem to have tarnished the US brand, at least for the highly skilled participants in our sample. In line with our conjectures, the US is not currently viewed as favorably as

Canada or Australia and associating the "US" with skilled job offers significantly reduces their appeal to prospective high-skilled employees.

Furthermore, associating 'Trumpian' immigration policy proposals, such as the "Muslim Ban" and "Deportation of illegal migrants," with an employment destination strongly reduces its attractiveness to potential high-skilled immigrants. However these predispositions have a strong partisan flavor, with those on the political left less likely, than those on the right, to choose the US as an emigration destination and less likely to select one associated with 'Trumpian' immigration policies.

Consistent with our conjectures, destinations with higher economic growth and better universities are more attractive – though education is not a strong driver of these choices. These results suggest that countries like the US with high salaries and universities of excellence, are attractive destinations for high-skilled labor, especially for potential migrants on the political right. There are, on the other hand, aspects of the US economy and current immigration policies that will dissuade highly skilled immigrants from the UK: skilled migrants from the UK, on both the political left and right, prefer destinations with generous social benefits; and high-skilled migrants are dissuaded by populist or nativist politics.

Our effort to understand how US politics and economic fundamentals shape the migration decision of highly skilled immigrants is based on potential skilled migrants from the UK. Ongoing research will explore whether these migration preferences generalize to the broader global talent pool from which the USA attracts skilled immigration.

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Appendix A Screenshots

Figure A1: Screenshot conjoint treatment 1

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	Employment Destination 1	Employment Destination 2
New Immigration Policies	Implementation of point-system	Implementation of point-system
Economic Performance	Annual GDP Growth of 2%	Annual GDP Growth of 2%
Education Opportunities	Average international ranking of universities: 40th Percentile	Average international ranking of universities: 40th Percentile
Service Sector Salaries	Average international ranking of service salaries: 50th Percentile	Average international ranking of service salaries: 90th Percentile
Social Benefits	Basic hourly minimum wage	No state minimum wage or income support

On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates that you strongly disapprove of the employment destination and 7 indicates that you strongly approve of the employment destination, how would you rate Employment Destinations 1 and 2?

1 = you strongly **disapprove** of the employment destination
7 = strongly **approve** of the employment destination

	Strongly Disapprove 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Approve 7
Employment Destination 1	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employment Destination 2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Figure A2: Screenshot conjoint treatment 2

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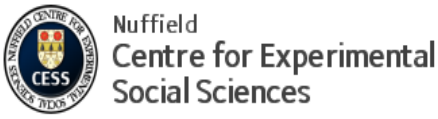
Social Sciences

	Employment Destination 1	Employment Destination 2
Education Opportunities	Average international ranking of universities: 40th Percentile	Average international ranking of universities: 60th Percentile
Social Benefits	Basic hourly minimum wage	No state minimum wage or income support
Economic Performance	Annual GDP Growth of 6%	Annual GDP Growth of 4%
New Immigration Policies	Deportation of all illegal immigrants	Implementation of point-system
Service Sector Salaries	Average international ranking of service salaries: 70th Percentile	Average international ranking of service salaries: 90th Percentile

Figure A3: Screenshot conjoint treatment 3



	Employment Destination 1	Employment Destination 2
Social Benefits	No state minimum wage or income support	No state minimum wage or income support
Service Sector Salaries	Average international ranking of service salaries: 50th Percentile	Average international ranking of service salaries: 70th Percentile
Education Opportunities	Average international ranking of universities: 90th Percentile	Average international ranking of universities: 40th Percentile
Economic Performance	Annual GDP Growth of 2%	Annual GDP Growth of 4%
Country	Canada	Australia

Appendix B Descriptives

Table B1 presents summary statistics for age, gender and ideological self-placement of the participants, as well their interest in emigrating, their likelihood of emigrating and how favorably they rate Australia, Canada, and the USA as employment destinations. As expected with a current and former student subject pool, participants are predominantly young, but there are a few older participants in the sample. Female participants (56 percent) slightly outnumber males. The ideological preferences of subjects has a fairly normal distribution although, as we expected with student subjects, these are skewed somewhat to the left. Density plots of age and ideological self-placement are below. Participants' interest in migration is relatively high, with a mean of 5.5 on a 1–7 point scale, indicating the

relevance of the subject pool as representatives of potential high skilled migrants. The self-reported likelihood of emigrating is also high, with a mean of 4.9 on a 1–7 point scale, however, somewhat lower than interest in migration. Including a control for the likelihood of migration in the logit analysis does not alter the results of the estimation (see Table D3).

The overall employment destination perceptions (middle section Table B1) indicate that participants significantly favored Canada and Australia, relative to the US ($p < 0.000$ and $p = 0.000137$ for pairwise comparisons). This is possibly associated with the slightly more female and left wing composition of the subject pool. However, the negative evaluation of the US brand is also present in the logit estimations in Table C2 and is sustained when we incorporate controls for age and gender (Table D3).

The bottom section of the table presents the proportion (exemplified by the mean) of the participants that observed each attribute in the conjoint experiments. Roughly 1/3 of the participants saw each of the socio-economic alternatives. Since the immigration alternatives were varied across the three treatments, we expect to see the country label and negative treatment attributes roughly 1/9 of the time. However, the neutral ('Change in visa processing centers') and positive alternatives ('Implementation of point-system') were held constant across immigration treatments one and two. These attributes should therefore have been presented twice as often (2/9). The proportions of observed attributes (Table B1) are in line with expectations of a successful randomization. Further balance tests on randomization of conjoint attributes (see online appendix) indicate that socio-demographic variables are not significant predictors of observing an attribute. One notable exception is the lower probability of observing Canada for those most interested in migrating. Given this significant association, we included migration interest as a control variable in the models. However, it is not a substantive or consistent predictor of destination choice and omitting it does not alter the results (data in replication material).[5]

[5]The 'Other' gender category also appears significant in the balance tests, as merely one respondent selected this category. Age has a significant association with the likelihood of observing 'No state minimum wage' relative to 'Basic minimum wage'; however, it is not associated with any other of the conjoint attributes and including 'Age' as a control does not alter the results of the estimations.

Table B1: Characteristics of the Subject Pool and summary statistics

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**N**
Age	25.81	8.6	19	68	196
Female	0.56	0.5	0	1	196
Ideology	4.1	1.84	0	10	196
Interest in emigrating	5.48	1.48	1	7	195
Likelihood of emigrating	4.91	1.76	1	7	195
Employment destination perceptions:					
Australia	5.18	1.26	1	7	196
Canada	5.6	1.27	1	7	196
U.S.A.	4.61	1.65	1	7	196
Conjoint attribute variables					
Basic hourly minimum wage	0.32	0.46	0	1	1112
Generous guaranteed monthly family allowance	0.34	0.47	0	1	1212
No state minimum wage or income support	0.34	0.47	0	1	1204
Annual GDP Growth of 2%	0.34	0.47	0	1	1200
Annual GDP Growth of 4%	0.34	0.47	0	1	1191
Annual GDP Growth of 6%	0.32	0.47	0	1	1137
Service salaries: 50th Percentile	0.35	0.48	0	1	1236
Service salaries: 70th Percentile	0.33	0.47	0	1	1168
Service salaries: 90th Percentile	0.32	0.47	0	1	1124
Change in visa processing centres	0.22	0.41	0	1	776
Implementation of point-system	0.22	0.41	0	1	770
Restriction on Muslim immigration/tourist visas	0.11	0.32	0	1	397
Deportation of all illegal immigrants	0.12	0.32	0	1	409
Country label: Australia	0.12	0.32	0	1	413
Country label: Canada	0.11	0.31	0	1	392
Country label: U.S.A.	0.11	0.31	0	1	371
Ranking of universities: 40th Percentile	0.34	0.47	0	1	1195
Ranking of universities: 60th Percentile	0.33	0.47	0	1	1164
Ranking of universities: 90th Percentile	0.33	0.47	0	1	1169

Figure B4: Age Distribution of UK Subject Pool

Figure B5: Gender Distribution of UK Subject Pool

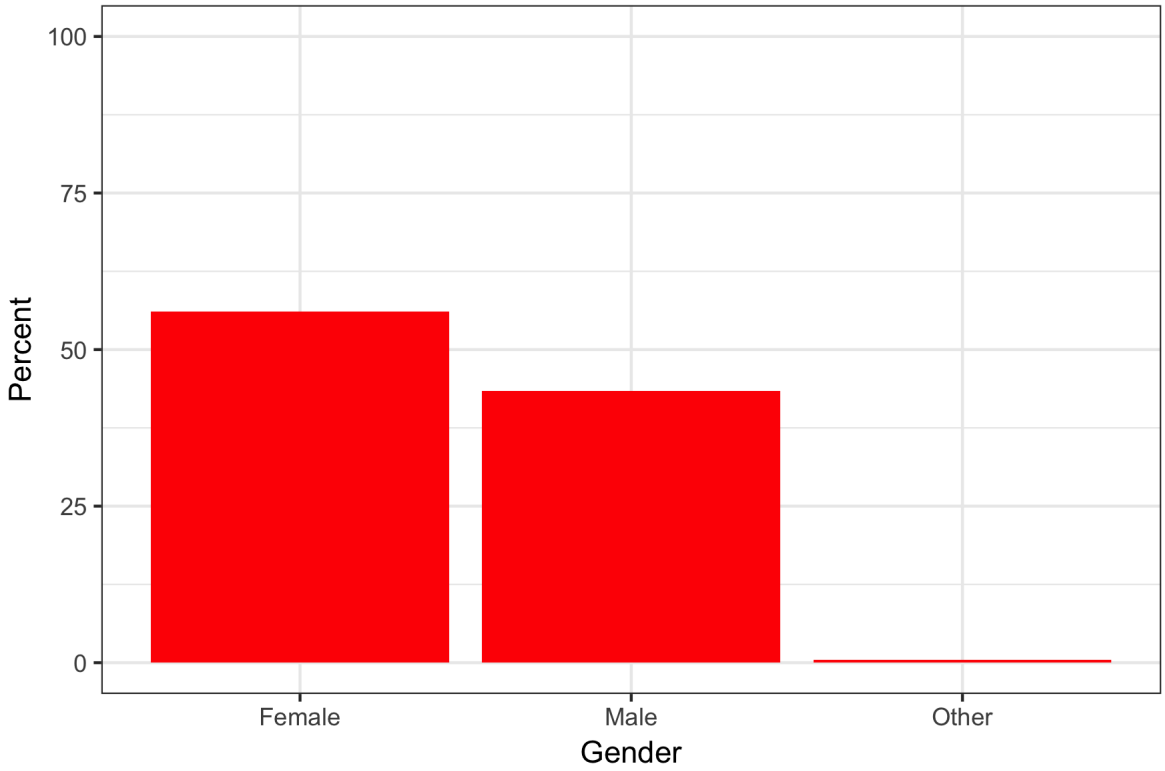
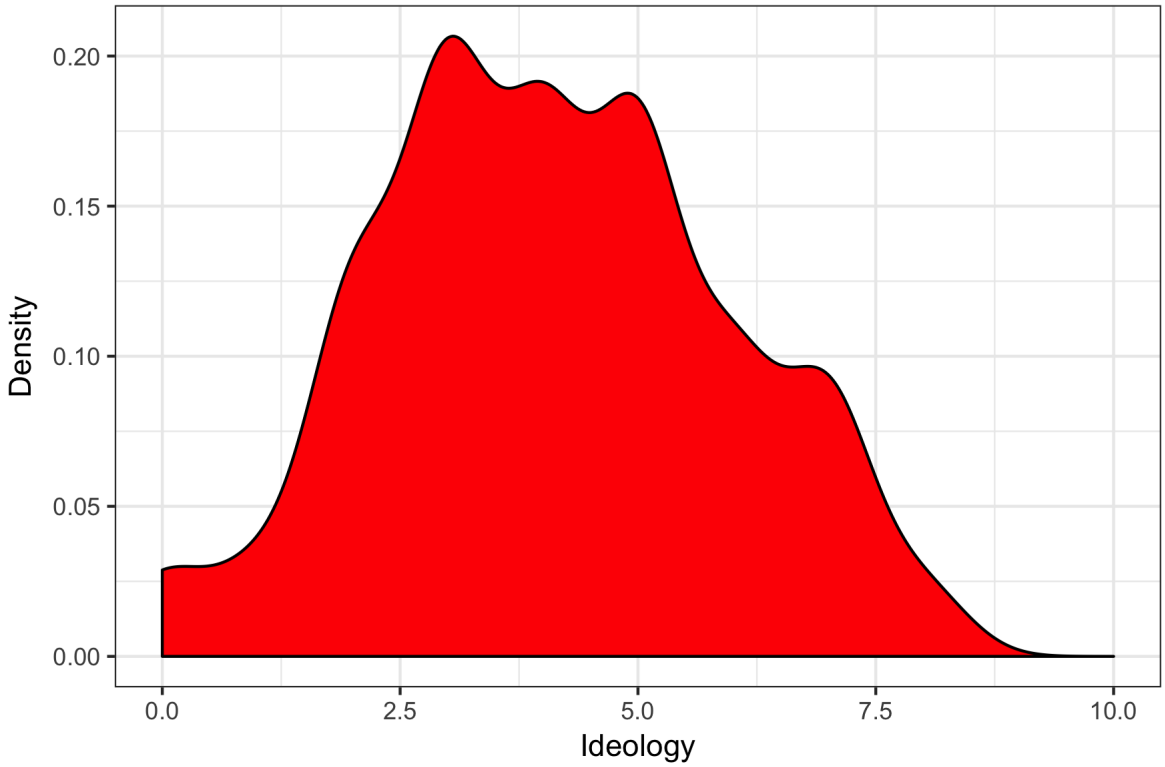


Figure B6: Ideological Distribution of UK Subject Pool



Appendix C Main model table

Table C2: Logistic regression results

	Immigration Treatment		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Generous family allowance	0.765***	0.557***	0.555***
	(0.151)	(0.159)	(0.138)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.635***	−0.511***	−0.513***
	(0.168)	(0.157)	(0.154)
GDP 2 percent	−0.253	−0.381**	−0.307**
	(0.155)	(0.153)	(0.150)
GDP 6 percent	0.304**	0.473***	0.366**
	(0.155)	(0.157)	(0.146)
Service salaries 50th pc	0.098	−0.134	−0.168
	(0.160)	(0.148)	(0.159)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.530***	0.343**	0.233
	(0.159)	(0.152)	(0.149)
Deportation of all illegal immigrants		−0.662***	
		(0.176)	
Point-system visa	0.125	0.342**	
	(0.151)	(0.170)	
Muslim Ban	−0.787***		
	(0.162)		
Canada			0.272*
			(0.150)
U.S.A.			−0.345**
			(0.174)
University Ranking 40th pc	−0.139	−0.417***	−0.384**
	(0.150)	(0.154)	(0.164)
University Ranking 90th pc	0.476***	0.122	0.183
	(0.151)	(0.157)	(0.158)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.012	0.023*	0.014
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Constant	−0.092	0.003	−0.019
	(0.213)	(0.199)	(0.201)
Observations	1,170	1,170	1,170
Log Likelihood	−731.956	−740.916	−759.410
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,487.913	1,505.832	1,542.820

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Standard errors clustered by participant

Appendix D Additional models

Table D3: Logistic regression results including control variables

	Immigration Treatment		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Generous family allowance	0.769***	0.556***	0.557***
	(0.153)	(0.160)	(0.138)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.637***	−0.514***	−0.527***
	(0.169)	(0.158)	(0.155)
GDP 2 percent	−0.252	−0.383**	−0.303**
	(0.155)	(0.153)	(0.150)
GDP 6 percent	0.307**	0.478***	0.370**
	(0.156)	(0.158)	(0.146)
Service salaries 50th pc	0.102	−0.136	−0.174
	(0.161)	(0.148)	(0.160)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.528***	0.339**	0.235
	(0.159)	(0.152)	(0.150)
Deportation of all illegal immigrants		−0.662***	
		(0.176)	
Point-system visa	0.131	0.346**	
	(0.152)	(0.170)	
Muslim Ban	−0.790***		
	(0.162)		
Canada			0.281*
			(0.150)
U.S.A.			−0.346**
			(0.175)
University Ranking 40th pc	−0.141	−0.418***	−0.389**
	(0.150)	(0.155)	(0.165)
University Ranking 90th pc	0.482***	0.126	0.175
	(0.152)	(0.158)	(0.158)
Age	−0.006**	−0.001	−0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Gender: Male	0.020	−0.025	−0.013
	(0.047)	(0.046)	(0.040)
Gender: Other	−0.196	0.346***	0.735***
	(0.127)	(0.094)	(0.145)
Ideological self-placement	−0.005	−0.013	−0.001
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.012	0.023*	0.015
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.011)
Constant	0.077	0.100	0.071
	(0.231)	(0.219)	(0.208)
Observations	1,170	1,170	1,170
Log Likelihood	−731.562	−740.666	−758.904
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,495.124	1,513.333	1,549.808

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Standard errors clustered by participant

Table D4: Comparison of logistic results for treatment 3 by country pair

	Country Pair	
	Non-identical	Identical
Generous family allowance	0.338*	0.961***
	(0.177)	(0.267)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.409**	−0.755***
	(0.193)	(0.264)
GDP 2 percent	−0.248	−0.235
	(0.176)	(0.279)
GDP 6 percent	0.433**	0.448
	(0.172)	(0.280)
Service salaries 50th pc	−0.112	−0.278
	(0.184)	(0.281)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.258	0.208
	(0.180)	(0.277)
Canada	0.381*	0.142
	(0.225)	(0.111)
U.S.A.	−0.508**	0.001
	(0.245)	(0.119)
University Ranking 40th pc	−0.531***	−0.184
	(0.204)	(0.272)
University Ranking 90th pc	−0.065	0.648**
	(0.194)	(0.270)
Age	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.003)	(0.005)
Gender: Male	0.012	−0.058
	(0.045)	(0.102)
Gender: Other	0.495***	1.036***
	(0.162)	(0.310)
Ideological self-placement	−0.004	−0.014
	(0.012)	(0.024)
Likelihood of emigrating	0.010	−0.002
	(0.014)	(0.024)
Constant	0.211	−0.171
	(0.271)	(0.365)
Observations	772	398
Log Likelihood	−503.758	−244.928
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,039.515	521.855

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Standard errors clustered by participant

Table D5: Model breakouts by gender and ideology (Treatment 1)

	Breakout				
	Gender		**Ideology**		
	Male	*Female*	*Left*	*Centre*	*Right*
Generous family allowance	0.949***	0.622***	0.997***	1.172***	0.335
	(0.233)	(0.213)	(0.198)	(0.297)	(0.374)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.451*	−0.834***	−0.811***	−0.298	−0.388
	(0.272)	(0.209)	(0.218)	(0.405)	(0.372)
GDP 4 percent	0.380*	0.160	0.170	0.384	0.377
	(0.225)	(0.220)	(0.213)	(0.348)	(0.330)
GDP 6 percent	0.743***	0.428**	0.467**	0.453	0.807**
	(0.251)	(0.203)	(0.213)	(0.341)	(0.360)
Service salaries 70th pc	−0.119	−0.113	−0.039	−0.403	0.106
	(0.238)	(0.221)	(0.217)	(0.421)	(0.316)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.551**	0.400*	0.476**	0.329	0.626*
	(0.246)	(0.222)	(0.219)	(0.412)	(0.369)
Point-system visa	0.220	0.102	−0.013	0.407	0.382
	(0.196)	(0.223)	(0.199)	(0.370)	(0.322)
Muslim Ban	−0.186	−1.260***	−1.353***	−0.403	0.209
	(0.238)	(0.219)	(0.220)	(0.315)	(0.358)
University Ranking 60th pc	0.221	0.092	0.210	0.187	−0.058
	(0.238)	(0.199)	(0.208)	(0.343)	(0.325)
University Ranking 90th pc	0.685***	0.593***	0.702***	0.962**	0.211
	(0.252)	(0.228)	(0.229)	(0.374)	(0.352)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.008	−0.012	0.014	−0.034	−0.013
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.042)	(0.024)
Constant	−0.925***	−0.008	−0.303	−0.790*	−0.781
	(0.327)	(0.295)	(0.284)	(0.419)	(0.512)
Observations	510	654	684	222	264
Log Likelihood	−320.449	−397.813	−402.620	−137.496	−174.728
Akaike Inf. Crit.	664.898	819.627	829.239	298.992	373.455

Note: Standard errors clustered by participant; *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table D6: Model breakouts by gender and ideology (Treatment 2)

	Breakout				
	Gender		**Ideology**		
	Male	*Female*	*Left*	*Centre*	*Right*
Generous family allowance	0.307	0.713***	0.665***	0.869**	0.237
	(0.247)	(0.214)	(0.220)	(0.357)	(0.378)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.676***	−0.437**	−0.456**	−0.702*	−0.476
	(0.249)	(0.202)	(0.205)	(0.382)	(0.354)
GDP 4 percent	0.307	0.419**	0.228	1.410***	0.316
	(0.222)	(0.212)	(0.211)	(0.401)	(0.315)
GDP 6 percent	0.842***	0.808***	0.810***	1.264***	1.044***
	(0.257)	(0.223)	(0.227)	(0.414)	(0.344)
Service salaries 70th pc	−0.027	0.279	0.215	−0.045	0.048
	(0.213)	(0.206)	(0.209)	(0.309)	(0.292)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.352	0.569***	0.523**	0.489	0.389
	(0.249)	(0.217)	(0.216)	(0.364)	(0.330)
Point-system visa	0.868***	−0.033	0.065	1.015***	0.468
	(0.254)	(0.225)	(0.234)	(0.380)	(0.326)
Deportation of all illegal immigrants	−0.335	−0.883***	−1.352***	0.951**	−0.263
	(0.253)	(0.246)	(0.221)	(0.412)	(0.371)
University Ranking 60th pc	0.369	0.388*	0.537**	−0.119	0.589*
	(0.239)	(0.204)	(0.212)	(0.346)	(0.352)
University Ranking 90th pc	0.488**	0.510**	0.677***	0.177	0.509
	(0.249)	(0.224)	(0.227)	(0.412)	(0.346)
Likelihood of emigrating	0.030	0.022	0.009	0.068*	0.049*
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.023)	(0.041)	(0.026)
Constant	−0.966***	−0.850***	−0.633**	−2.054***	−1.232**
	(0.370)	(0.328)	(0.311)	(0.617)	(0.577)
Observations	510	654	684	222	264
Log Likelihood	−320.405	−411.187	−414.744	−132.023	−170.605
Akaike Inf. Crit.	664.811	846.373	853.488	288.046	365.209

Note: Standard errors clustered by participant; *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table D7: Model breakouts by gender and ideology (Treatment 3)

	Breakout				
	Gender		**Ideology**		
	Male	*Female*	*Left*	*Centre*	*Right*
Generous family allowance	0.627***	0.485**	0.757***	0.945**	−0.006
	(0.182)	(0.212)	(0.178)	(0.409)	(0.308)
No minimum wage or income support	−0.126	−0.882***	−0.607***	−0.825**	0.047
	(0.218)	(0.216)	(0.211)	(0.373)	(0.293)
GDP 4 percent	0.222	0.368*	0.135	0.780**	0.577*
	(0.236)	(0.191)	(0.191)	(0.359)	(0.312)
GDP 6 percent	0.823***	0.555**	0.528**	0.897**	1.001***
	(0.260)	(0.225)	(0.225)	(0.431)	(0.353)
Service salaries 70th pc	0.355	0.086	0.192	0.443	−0.137
	(0.241)	(0.219)	(0.218)	(0.326)	(0.338)
Service salaries 90th pc	0.487**	0.365*	0.705***	0.096	−0.026
	(0.234)	(0.215)	(0.212)	(0.383)	(0.304)
Canada	−0.002	0.524***	0.399**	−0.040	0.182
	(0.239)	(0.194)	(0.189)	(0.390)	(0.362)
U.S.A.	−0.280	−0.393	−0.518**	−0.282	−0.270
	(0.252)	(0.243)	(0.228)	(0.445)	(0.402)
University Ranking 60th pc	0.495**	0.261	0.182	0.278	1.171***
	(0.251)	(0.217)	(0.216)	(0.393)	(0.359)
University Ranking 90th pc	0.549**	0.583***	0.478**	0.653*	0.831**
	(0.255)	(0.196)	(0.204)	(0.378)	(0.335)
Likelihood of emigrating	0.012	0.005	0.016	−0.004	−0.005
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.036)	(0.032)
Constant	−1.090***	−0.664**	−0.821***	−0.958*	−1.102**
	(0.327)	(0.287)	(0.305)	(0.523)	(0.507)
Observations	510	654	684	222	264
Log Likelihood	−335.061	−412.989	−429.735	−137.432	−170.784
Akaike Inf. Crit.	694.123	849.978	883.470	298.864	365.567

Note: Standard errors clustered by participant; *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix E Balance Tests

Table E8: Balance test: Social Benefits

	Dependent variable:	
	Generous family allowance	No state minimum wage
	(1)	(2)
Age	−0.001	−0.009*
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Gender: Male	−0.025	−0.056
	(0.085)	(0.085)
Gender: Other	−2.010*	0.241
	(1.073)	(0.501)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.006	0.004
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Ideology	0.027	0.013
	(0.023)	(0.023)
Constant	0.055	0.248
	(0.194)	(0.197)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,716.613	7,716.613
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table E9: Balance test: Economy

	Dependent variable:	
	GDP 2%	GDP 6%
	(1)	(2)
Age	−0.001	0.004
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Gender: Male	−0.054	0.036
	(0.084)	(0.085)
Gender: Other	−0.088	−1.346*
	(0.508)	(0.795)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.015	−0.010
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Ideology	−0.011	−0.010
	(0.023)	(0.023)
Constant	0.168	−0.067
	(0.194)	(0.195)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,726.969	7,726.969
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table E10: Balance test: Service Jobs

	Dependent variable:	
	Service salaries ranking: 50th pc	Service salaries ranking: 90th pc
	(1)	(2)
Age	0.001	−0.004
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Gender: Male	0.098	0.053
	(0.084)	(0.086)
Gender: Other	0.551	0.572
	(0.633)	(0.633)
Likelihood of emigrating	0.015	−0.015
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Ideology	−0.014	−0.0001
	(0.023)	(0.024)
Constant	−0.030	0.116
	(0.192)	(0.197)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,725.379	7,725.379
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table E11: Balance test: Education

	Dependent variable:	
	Ranking of universities: 40th pc	Ranking of universities: 90th pc
	(1)	(2)
Age	−0.006	−0.0001
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Gender: Male	−0.006	−0.125
	(0.084)	(0.085)
Gender: Other	1.060	1.565**
	(0.821)	(0.780)
Likelihood of emigrating	0.010	−0.037
	(0.024)	(0.024)
Ideology	0.001	0.038
	(0.023)	(0.023)
Constant	0.125	0.081
	(0.195)	(0.193)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,718.298	7,718.298

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

Table E12: Balance test: Immigration

	Dependent variable:					
	Point-system	Muslim Ban	Deportation of illegal immigrants	Australia	Canada	U.S.A.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age	0.006	−0.010	−0.002	−0.010	0.007	0.002
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Gender: Male	0.019	0.012	−0.105	−0.007	−0.025	−0.00002
	(0.104)	(0.127)	(0.126)	(0.125)	(0.127)	(0.130)
Gender: Other	−0.825	−1.398	−1.409	−0.577	−11.112***	0.196
	(0.699)	(1.077)	(1.077)	(0.813)	(0.00002)	(0.641)
Likelihood of emigrating	−0.028	−0.055	−0.012	0.053	−0.084**	−0.031
	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Ideology	0.014	0.017	−0.007	−0.002	−0.010	0.032
	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Constant	−0.083	−0.221	−0.448	−0.633**	−0.391	−0.771***
	(0.239)	(0.294)	(0.290)	(0.299)	(0.285)	(0.296)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	13,325.390	13,325.390	13,325.390	13,325.390	13,325.390	13,325.390

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