What Explains US Local Government Officials' Receptivity to New Refugees?

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While scholars have investigated citizen attitudes towards refugees across a variety of national contexts, we know less about the corresponding attitudes of their elected representatives. Local elected officials possess significant and growing authority to recruit and support new migrants. In this article, we use a conjoint experiment to evaluate how the attributes of hypothetical refugee groups influence local policymaker receptivity to refugee resettlement. We sample from a panel of current elected local government officials, such as mayors and county commissioners, who represent a broad range of urban and rural communities across the US. We find that many local officials are receptive towards local resettlement regardless of refugee attributes. However, officials are most supportive of refugees whom they perceive as economic contributors and—to a lesser extent—as a strong fit with local values.

1. Introduction

What factors lead local elected officials to support refugee resettlement in their communities? Local leaders' attitudes towards refugees significantly influence refugee resettlement outcomes. Sympathetic local elites can facilitate the social and economic transition for resettled refugees by easing access to social services and economic assistance. By contrast, less receptive local officials can make refugees' lives more difficult by introducing hostile regulations or fanning resident resentment (1, 2). Since newly settled refugees are more reliant than established residents on community assistance, these obstacles represent real barriers for successful resettlement.

Recent executive actions have expanded US local elected officials' already-critical role in the refugee resettlement process. In September 2019, President Donald Trump signed an executive order requiring the federal government to obtain consent from states and local governments before settling refugees in their jurisdictions. In the following months, local governments in North Dakota, Minnesota, Virginia, Colorado, and beyond voted on whether to consent to refugee resetttlement.[1] Due to legal challenges, the final status of the executive order is uncertain. However, regardless of outcome, the order highlights the importance of local policymakers' decisions to support refugees throughout the initial resettlement process. And, due to the United States's prominent position in the refugee resettlement ecosystem, these decisions have global implications. Until 2018, the United States accepted the most refugees of any country,[2] with at least 500 US cities accepting over 100 refugees from 2002-2018.[3]

This article investigates the factors that affect local elected officials' receptivity towards potential refugees. While scholarship exists on public attitudes toward individual migrants, our study is the first to specifically examine the views of *local elected officials* on refugee resettlement. To do so, we fielded a conjoint survey experiment asking local elected officials to read pairs of randomly-generated refugee group profiles, and recorded whether respondents were receptive to such groups settling in their communities. This design allows us to build on existing knowledge while generating novel insights into the views of the population of local elected officials, who exert a powerful influence over refugee resettlement outcomes.

We find that many local elected officials support refugee resettlement, regardless of refugee characteristics. While substantial variation in preferences exists, approximately half of our respondents supported all refugee group profiles they considered, while approximately one in ten opposed all such profiles (see also 3). Though local officials in Democratic-voting counties supported refugee groups at a higher rate, their counterparts in Republican-voting counties also supported over half of the profiles they viewed.

However, this pattern of support conceals differential receptivity towards some attributes. Local officials, on average, favor refugee groups that are better-educated, possess stronger English skills, are predominantly female, and identify as Christian. Local officials are also more likely to support refugees who are sponsored by a business compared with refugees without sponsorship. Descriptive data from an open-ended

Significance Statement

The recent global surge in forcibly displaced persons has had grave humanitarian consequences. This surge has highlighted debates over refugee policy among the national governments and mass publics of recipient countries. Yet, less attention has been paid to local governments, despite the important authority they wield over refugee resettlement. We provide the first experimental study of US local elected officials' attitudes towards refugee resettlement. We find that local elected officials support a broad range of refugee groups, though they are most supportive of refugees they believe will contribute to the local economy and fit with community values. Our results offer guidance to advocates seeking to improve resettlement outcomes and a rejoinder to national-level suspicion towards refugee resettlement.

[1] Field, Andy Tsubasa. "Burleigh County OKs refugee resettlement after passionate testimony." *The Bismark Tribune* December 10, 2019; Kaul, Greta and Tom Nehil. "How every Minnesota county has voted on refugee resettlement so far." *The Minnesota Post* January 16, 2020; Tyree, Elizabeth, Valencia Jones, and Kaicey Baylor. "Appomattox Co. passes resolution refusing to become refugee sanctuary." *WSET* December 16, 2019; Aguilar, John. "Colorado communities welcome refugee resettlement." *The Denver Post* January 8, 2020.

[2] Radford, Jynnah and Phillip Connor, "Canada now leads the world in refugee resettlement, surpassing the U.S." Pew Research Center, June 19, 2019.

[3] See the New American Economy Research Fund's data for details.

J.C. and L.P. led on initial project development. J.C., L.P., R.S., and B.S. contributed to research design. J.C. led on design of the questionnaire. R.S. programmed the survey. J.C., L.P., and R.S. contributed to pilot and final data collection. L.P. and R.S. analyzed data. L.P. and R.S. led on writing the manuscript. J.C., L.P., R.S., and B.S. all provided critical feedback and survey/manuscript revisions, and shaped the research, analysis, and writing.

Author order was determined randomly and does not reflect degree of contribution. Please see note for description of contributions.

follow-up question suggest that many respondents focus on refugees' economic contributions, potentially eroding the humanitarian purposes of the resettlement program. Of the 75% of respondents who offered open-ended responses, approximately half mentioned economic contributions or local resource constraints, compared with approximately one-third who mentioned refugees' social or cultural fit.

Our study should encourage researchers to pay closer attention to the role of local governments in refugee resettlement, and the ways in which the preferences of local elites align or diverge from those of their constituents. Though we caution against re-orienting resettlement policy discussions towards refugees' economic contributions, our research provides actionable guidance for advocacy groups seeking to bolster local support for refugee resettlement.

2. Policy Context

A refugee is "any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality [...] and who is unable or unwilling to return to [...] or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."[4] Refugee resettlement in the United States is a multi-stage, multi-level process. Each year, the US government sets a cap for refugee admissions. Based on this cap, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees submits cases to the US from a pool of approved applicants. Upon referral, potential refugees undergo an interview, security clearance, and assignment process. Successful applicants are paired with one of nine non-governmental resettlement agencies, which coordinate with federal agencies on location selection and services.

Before 2019, US law required the Department of Health and Human Services's Office of Refugee Resettlement to regularly consult state and local governments about the process and geographic distribution of refugees prior to their resettlement.[5] Local governments occasionally used this consultation process to express grievances with resettlement decisions. For example, after the 2008 Financial Crisis, local leaders in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Manchester, New Jersey requested a moratorium on local refugee resettlement due to funding constraints and a lack of economic opportunity (4). But formal state or local consent was not required for refugee resettlement.

More recently, local policymakers have assumed new, formal powers over refugee resettlement decisions. In September 2019, President Donald Trump issued an executive order directing the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to create a process for states and localities to provide written consent for initial resettlement of refugees.[6] Starting July of 2020, the order directed federal agencies to resettle refugees only with the consent of *both the state and local governments*.[7] Refugee advocacy groups sued to block the order,[8] which led to a preliminary injunction halting implementation[9,10] and a subsequent appeal.[11] Nevertheless, more than 111 localities gave written consent for refugee resettlement ahead of the preliminary injunction Some forty-one states also provided affirmative consent.[12] Texas was the only state to explicitly refuse.[13]

Whether or not the executive order stands, the political debate surrounding the order highlights the importance of local governments in the refugee resettlement process.[14] Deliberations and votes on refugee resettlement by local elected officials represent an important statement of community priorities.[15] Since community preferences may not focus on the legal criteria for refugee admission, empowering local leaders to debate and vote on refugee resettlement could affect resettlement outcomes for refugees within and beyond the US.

3. Determinants of Officials' Refugee Attitudes

Elected Officials and their Jurisdictions. In this study we examine officials' attitudes towards refugee resettlement in their communities. We might expect the average local constituency's—and therefore the average official's—views on refugee resettlement to resemble the preferences of the broader US public. However, this may not be the case for two reasons. First, local government officials represent jurisdictions, and rural, sparsely-populated localities are more common than denser ones. As a result, the average local official's district is older, whiter, poorer, and has lower educational attainment compared to the overall US population.[16] Local jurisdictions also are more conservative, contain more Christian constituents,[17] and are more ethnoracially homogeneous than the broader US public (6). Furthermore, imbalances in political participation lead to overrepresentation of white, wealthier, more educated, and older voters within these relatively rural and poorer districts (7–10). These demographic and turnout patterns likely bias officials' attitudes towards their more politically engaged constituents, and away from those of the overall US population.

Second, owing to their professional responsibilities and experiences, local officials may differ systematically from the citizens they represent. Because they manage their governments' personnel and budgets, local officials are likely to be acutely aware of the resource constraints their communities

[4] 8 USC §1101(a)(42)(A).

[5] 8 U.S.C. § 1522(a)(2)(A).

[6] Trump, Donald J. "Executive Order 13888 of September 26, 2019, Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement," *Federal Register* 84(190):52355-52356.

[7] However, the order allows the federal government to override a locality's decision in order to remain consistent with other federal laws.

[8] Rose, Joel. "Advocates Challenge Trump Administration Plan To Let States and Towns Block Refugees." *NPR* November 21, 2019.

[9] Jordan, Miriam. "Judge Halts Trump Policy That Allows States to Bar Refugees." *The New York Times* January 15, 2020. Monyak, Suzanne. "Md. Judge Says Trump Can't Let States Refuse Refugees." *Law360* January 15, 2020.

[10] The Trump administration has since noted to the Fourth Circuit that the executive order is not a veto since it provides a "mechanism for the Secretary [of State] to resettle refugees in nonconsenting jurisdictions" Dreid, Nadia. "Gov't Tells 4th Circ. Refugee Order Gives States Input Not Veto." *Law360* March 25, 2020.

[11] Kunzelman, Michael. "Feds Appeal Order Blocking Trump Refugee Resettlement Limit." *The Associated Press* February 12, 2020.

[12] "Latest Developments on Refugee Resettlement Consent." *Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service*.

[13] Monyak, Suzanne. "Texas Is First To Refuse Refugees Under Trump Order." *Law360* January 15, 2020.

[14] An earlier executive order stated that "state and local jurisdictions [should] be granted a role in the process of determining the placement or settlement in their jurisdictions of aliens eligible to be admitted to the United States as refugees." Trump, Donald J. "Executive Order 13769 of January 27, 2017, Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States," *Federal Register* 82(20):8977-8982.

[15] For example, during public debates on a refugee resettlement consent vote, citizens in Burleigh County, ND emphasized the need to create a welcoming community for refugees, and worried about the impact of a negative vote on integration. Field, Andy Tsubasa. "Burleigh County OKs refugee resettlement after passionate testimony." *The Bismark Tribune* December 10, 2019.

[16] See CivicPulse Omnibus Survey Reference Guide in SI, and (5)'s Appendix B.

[17] As of 2019, approximately two-thirds of Americans identified as Christian, with higher rates in rural and suburban communities overrepresented in our sample. See "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace." Pew Research Center, October 17, 2019.

face. Since rural communities tend to face tight budget constraints (11), the average local government official might be more sensitive than ordinary citizens to how refugees might impact municipal budgets and the local economy.

Table 1. Demographics of Localities Represented by Sample

Demographics	Counties	Municipalities & Towns
Population	221,973	38,007
Proportion Urban	48%	72%
2016 GOP Vote Share	59%	52%
Proportion College Educated	24%	29%
# of Gov. Official Respondents	100	474

To study local elected officials' views on refugee resettlement, we contracted with CivicPulse to deploy an online survey experiment to a sample of local government officials in the United States in the first half of April, 2020.[18] Our sample of jurisdictions was randomly drawn from the population of all US town, municipal, and county governments with populations above 1,000 (see Table 1). Geographically, our 574 respondents are divided across 48 states. More than 60% serve in municipalities, with the rest split almost equally between townships and counties. The localities represented by officials in our sample are modestly larger, more urban, more educated, and less conservative than the average locality in the United States.[19] However, the average locality represented in our sample is still much less urban, less educated, and more conservative than the population of the United States as a whole. Individual respondents display a similar pattern. Compared with the American public, our sample of local government officials is conservative-leaning with 39% of respondents self-identifying as conservative, 30% as moderate, and 29% as liberal. 66% received at least a college degree and 69% identify as male, with an average 12 years of experience in the government.[20]

Predictors of Officials' Attitudes Towards Refugees. The unique attributes and preferences of local government officials imply two sets of overlapping expectations for their attitudes towards refugee resettlement. First, since we expect local elected officials to be budget- and resource-conscience, local elected officials should favor refugee groups that can participate in and contribute to the local economy (see, e.g., 12–14, for related findings).[21] We expect signals of employability to be especially positive attributes for materially oriented officials. Refugee education, business sponsorship, language skills, and status as working-age adults are likely to influence perceptions of refugee economic contributions and reduce concerns that newcomers might create a fiscal burden for local governments.

Second, we expect local elected officials to favor refugee groups they view as a good cultural or social fit for their communities. Whether because of in-group favoritism or out-group bias, members of the public have been found to favor migrants who share their religion, language, and other attributes associated with the presence of shared values (see, e.g. 12–14, 16, 17). Since rural communities like those in our sample contain relatively homogeneous social networks (6), our respondents are likely to be especially sensitive to how refugees will be received by and assimilate into their communities. In the context of our survey, refugees' language skills, religion, religious sponsorship, age, and gender/family composition should be most influential on this count. Since English and Christianity are the modal language and religious categories in communities like those in represented in our sample, we predict that local elected officials will favor refugees with strong English skills, Christian-identifying refugees, and refugees that are sponsored by faith-based organizations. We further predict that local officials will be more inclined to support older and female migrants compared with younger male migrants, since residents might associate an influx of young, male residents with a higher probability of criminal activity. This expectation also reflects conventional gender-based notions of vulnerability ("women and children first"), which advocates and refugee resettlement organizations have been known to replicate (18).

An additional possibility is that local officials may be biased against some regional origins but we do not view this scenario as likely once education, language skills, religion, and other demographic attributes are taken into account.[22] Generally speaking, refugees are a highly vulnerable migrant population, who are likely to attract sympathy from survey respondents regardless of their region of origin. As a result, we expect the influence of regional origin *per se* to be minimal.

4. Experimental Design

We use a paired conjoint design to identify the causal effects of group-level attributes on local elected officials' receptivity towards refugee resettlement. Though officials are not provided with the demographic characteristics of potential refugee groups when voting to allow refugee resettlement, basic demographic information about past and current refugees is publicly available and often informs public discourse surrounding refugee resettlement decisions. As a result, this design presents respondents with an externally valid experimental design while allowing us to identify key concerns that underlie respondents' preferences.

Survey respondents first read a short prompt, which included a definition of a "refugee," and then viewed two randomly generated refugee group profiles, labeled "Group A" and "Group B." These profiles consisted of one randomly selected value for each of seven theoretically relevant attributes that might affect a local government official's receptivity towards refugee group resettlement: education, sponsorship status, language skills, religion, gender/family makeup, age, and region of origin.[23] Respondents then indicated whether they were receptive to either group, Group A only, Group B only, or neither group settling in their community. We coded the responses to this question as a binary variable—*Refugee Group Receptivity*—which took a value of 1 if a given refugee group profile or "either group" was chosen, and 0 for other responses.[24] We

[18] Prior to the receipt of the data, this design was registered with EGAP (#20200417XX). This study qualifies for exemption to human subjects review under 45 CFR 46 101(b)(2). The University of Pennsylvania's Human Subject Committee granted exemption on March 30, 2020 (UPenn HSC Protocol #842736).

[19] See CivicPulse Omnibus Survey Reference Guide in supplementary materials.

[20] See Appendix 1 for survey administration details and additional sample demographics.

[21] Alternatively, local elected officials may be more skeptical of refugees who may compete for their constituents' jobs. However, (15) report that fears of individual-labor competition have a limited influence over perceptions of potential migrants. We therefore view this possibility as unlikely.

[22] Members of the American public express little preference for migrants of any specific ethnicity or national origin (12), though results from Europe are more mixed (contrast 13, 19).

[23] See Appendix 2 for question wording, survey delivery, design, and randomization.

[24] This design also acknowledges the set of preferences respondents are likely to possess. When asked whether they are receptive to two refugee groups, local elected officials can express opposition, support regardless of group attribute, or selective support for refugees with certain attributes. Our design offers all of these options, rather than forcing a relative choice between profiles.

repeated this process two additional times, yielding three total paired-conjoint tasks for each respondent.

Compared with other immigration conjoint surveys (e.g. 13, 19, 20), our design is parsimonious. We chose this design to optimize for our specific target population and policy scenario. Since local elected officials are difficult to contact and time-constrained, we were limited in both the number of responses we could collect and the number of tasks we could serve to each individual. And, since we ask respondents to consider *groups* of refugees rather than *individuals*, including some standard conjoint attributes in our experiment would have presented respondents with an implausible hypothetical. We discuss our specific choices in more detail in Appendix 2, but we believe our design respects respondents' time and real-world policy experience while allowing us to build on existing results.

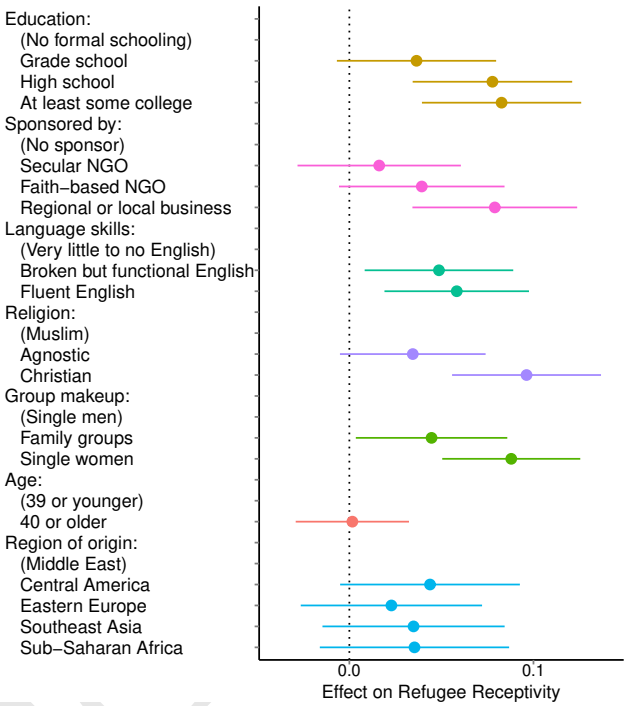
5. Results

Conjoint Findings. Our survey reveals that elected local officials generally support a broad range of refugee profiles. Of the 534 respondents who answered all three paired-profile questions, 51% indicated that they would accept any of the six profiles that they were presented with, compared with less than 13% who were unwilling to accept any of the six profiles. The remaining 36% of respondents varied substantially, with a roughly even distribution over the remaining set of values.[25]

Figure 1 reports the effect of each attribute value on the respondent's probability of receptivity towards a refugee group—the average marginal component effect (AMCE).[26,27] Estimates are drawn from a regression model in which *Refugee Group Receptivity* is regressed on indicator variables for each level of each refugee group attribute, with baseline categories excluded and standard errors clustered by respondent.

We find strong evidence that US local government officials are more receptive towards refugees with greater potential for a positive economic impact. First, local officials are significantly more receptive towards potential refugee groups with higher levels of education. Respondents are 7.7 and 8.3 percentage points more likely to support refugee groups with a high school education and at least some college, respectively, compared with refugee groups with no formal schooling. This relationship may suggest that respondents view more educated groups as more likely contributors to the local economy. Second, local elected officials are 7.9 percentage points more likely to support refugee groups sponsored by a regional or local business compared to refugees with no sponsor, which suggests respondents are likely prioritizing economic integration for refugees. Though secular and faith-based NGOs frequently offer sponsored refugees employment assistance through skills and language training, direct sponsorship from a business group may be associated with employment opportunities.[28] Third, respondents are 4.8 and 5.8 percentage points more likely to support refugee groups with fluent or broken but functional English skills, compared with a baseline of "very little to no English." English-language proficiency is associated

Fig. 1. Estimated effects of refugee profile attributes on local leaders' receptivity



Dots mark point estimates and lines indicate cluster-robust 95% confidence intervals for the AMCE of each attribute value on the probability that respondents were receptive to a particular refugee group. The comparison category's AMCE is the difference in the probability of receptivity between that category and the baseline category in parentheses (observations= 3324; respondents= 574).

both with officials' perceptions of refugees' social and cultural fit and their ability to participate in the local economy.

We also find some evidence that local officials are more likely to support refugees they believe will integrate more easily into their communities. First, respondents are 9.6 percentage points more likely to support Christian refugees settling in their communities compared with Muslim refugees. While officials prefer agnostic refugees to Muslim refugees (3.4 percentage points more), this difference is not statistically significant at the .05 level. This evidence is consistent with a preference for Christian refugees, rather than an aggregate preference against Muslim refugees, in particular. Respondents are not significantly more likely to favor refugees sponsored by religious groups compared to refugees with no explicit sponsorship, which suggests that respondents may focus more on refugees' personal beliefs than those of their sponsors. Second, local officials are 4.4 and 8.8 percentage points more likely to support refugee groups primarily consisting of families and single women, respectively, compared with the baseline group of single men. This difference likely results from a perception that single men are more likely to participate in socially disruptive behavior (see §6 for further discussion). The support for family groups over single men suggests that respondents are focused on the societal fit of the group's composition rather than the potential fiscal burden of families alone.

Local officials do not appear to possess a significant preference with respect to refugee age. This null effect may be due to the particular age cutoff we use in our study. Since adults

[25] See Appendix 3 for further details.

[26] The average marginal treatment effects of each component are identifiable under a set of assumptions likely to hold in a typical conjoint experiment (20).

[27] See Appendix 3 for marginal means.

[28] Business sponsorships are not currently part of the refugee resettlement process in the United States. However, we included the option in our profile design since other countries, including Canada, allow for private sponsorship.

above or below age 40 can plausibly be within prime economic productivity years, if respondents prioritize refugee economic contributions they may be roughly indifferent between these two categories (see, e.g. 13).

We also do not find significant differences in receptivity based on regional origin. Holding all other attributes constant, local officials may not have sufficient knowledge or information about specified regional groupings to express a preference.

Open-Ended Responses. We concluded our survey with an open-ended question, in which we asked local elected officials to identify the most important issues to consider when assessing how a group of refugees might settle into their community. Out of the 574 respondents who answered at least one conjoint question, some 439 (76%) offered at least some response to this question, providing us with substantial additional information on respondents' attitudes. Since open-ended responses are necessarily unstructured, any analysis of their contents is exploratory by nature. However, examining open-ended responses can reinforce the findings we describe in the previous sections and reveal the logic that underlies them.

To summarize these responses, we nonexclusively coded each response based on two sets of categories. The first set consisted of the seven conjoint attributes we describe in the previous section. The second set consisted of four abstract categories, which we termed "Economy," "Social/Cultural," "Process," and "Public Order." These four categories represented the four most prominent themes we identified by reading a sample of open-ended responses. All responses were double-coded, with disagreements adjudicated by a third coder.[29]

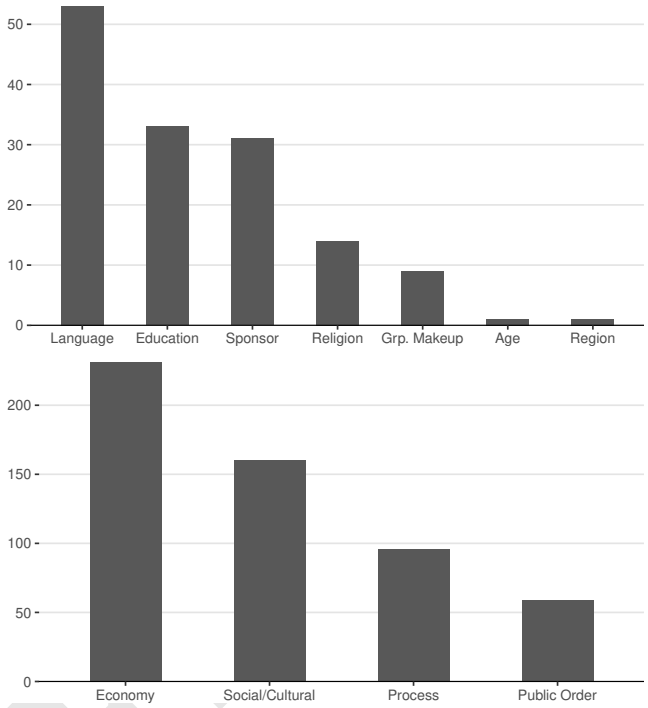
Figure 2 shows that respondents most frequently identify refugee language skills as a key area of concern, followed by education and sponsorship status. These three attributes reaffirm the list of influential attributes identified in the conjoint portion of the survey. Surprisingly, gender/family group makeup and religion were not frequently mentioned despite their high importance in the conjoint portion of the survey. One possible explanation for this divergence is social desirability bias. Though some respondents may be wary of primarily Muslim or male refugee groups, they may be more willing to express this preference in the conjoint portion of the survey than in an open-ended response (21).

We also coded several substantive policy concerns distinct from the conjoint attributes. Figure 2 shows that the most common issues respondents raise are economic in nature. Nearly half of all open-ended comments mentioned some kind of economic issue with respect to refugee resettlement, while approximately one-third mentioned concerns related to social/cultural fit. Since these categories are broad, the particular concerns within most of these categories varied substantially. For example, some 60% of respondents who raised economic concerns cited availability of jobs in their community, while 29% mentioned suitability of housing, transportation, or other physical infrastructure concerns. The much smaller "process" category primarily consisted of responses that took issue with the broader American immigration system.

Open-ended responses also allow us to explore context for our experimental findings. As we show in Appendix 4, local officials most frequently mentioned education and sponsorship in combination with economic concerns, which suggests

[29] See Appendix 4 for definitions, examples, intercoder reliability, and per-attribute summary statistics.

Fig. 2. Frequency of descriptive categories in open-ended responses



For each category, each local government official's response was scored 1 if the respondent mentioned that a category was important, 0 if the category was not mentioned, and -1 if the respondent described a category as unimportant. Scores were then aggregating by summing per-response scores for all open-ended responses ($n = 574$).

that respondents evaluated these categories primarily through their association with refugees' perceived economic contributions. By contrast, respondents mentioned language skills in combination with all of our abstract categories. This finding suggests that language plays a more complex role, which spans respondents' perceptions of refugee contributions to the local economy, the social/cultural milieu, and public order.

Subgroup Analyses. We also explore whether local officials' refugee receptivity preferences differ by their county's partisanship, their own level of interaction with non-Americans, and the locality's population.[30,31] First, we compare officials by whether their jurisdiction is located in a county that voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential election. We observe significant differences—ranging from 7.9 to 22.8 percentage points—between the two groups of respondents on every attribute, with officials in Republican-leaning areas showing a lower level of support across all attributes. Second, local government officials who interact more with non-US citizens are significantly more receptive to all refugee group attributes, with differences ranging from 6.7 to 18.3 percentage points. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting personal interaction with immigrants moderates preferences (19). Third, officials in more populous localities express more support for most refugee group attributes than officials in less populous localities, though not all differences are significant. Across all three subgroup divisions, we find wide divergences in levels of

[30] We follow (19, 22) and use marginal means to compare subgroups instead of AMCEs.

[31] See Appendix 3 for subgroup variables, marginal mean plots, and F-test results for each subgroup.

support in essentially *all* attributes, instead of concentrating in attributes associated with economic impact or social fit.

6. Implications

This analysis of local government officials' receptivity towards refugees offers two primary conclusions. First, we find that many local elected officials are supportive of refugee resettlement regardless of refugee group attributes. Approximately half of all local policymakers favor refugee admission for all groups viewed, and almost all favor refugee admission for at least some types of refugee groups. Though officials in Democratic-voting counties support the broadest range of refugee profiles, their counterparts in Republican-voting counties still support over half of all refugee group profiles they view. Future research should work to connect this broad pattern of support for refugee resettlement expressed by local elected officials to more qualified patterns of support expressed by members of the general public (23).

One possible explanation for this limited level of attribute-based discrimination is social desirability bias. However, if local officials are concerned with the social acceptability of their answers in an anonymous survey, they are also likely to modulate their answers in public-facing policy discussions. Though the answers to our survey might potentially overestimate respondents' "sincere" support for refugee admissions, they provide a reasonable representation of respondents' publicly expressed beliefs.

Second, we find that local policymakers are concerned both with refugees' ability to fit with local values and participate in the local economy. We cannot adjudicate between respondents' motives, on average, for preferring refugees with particular attributes. Such preferences could reflect apprehension towards refugees or concern for their community's ability to provide the necessary resources and/or support needed. However, regardless of the source of respondents' attitudes, we find that our respondents are most consistently influenced by refugees' perceived economic contributions. In both our conjoint experiment and open-ended responses, officials highlight refugee attributes that evidence concerns about economic impacts on their prospective new communities. Certainly, local officials are also concerned with factors related to refugees' perceived fit with community values, such as religion or gender/family makeup. But, both the conjoint section of our survey and follow-up open-ended responses suggest that economic issues may be more important.

Local officials are crucial to refugee resettlement, and yet their attitudes have been understudied. We find that community leaders are keenly sensitive to the potential economic impacts of refugee resettlement, including effects on the labor market, housing, and infrastructure capacity. Based on our findings, emphasizing business sponsorship programs, skill development, and explicit financial support to local communities likely represent a high-impact public engagement strategies for refugee advocacy organizations. Since far less than half of all arriving refugees speak any English (24), language training should form a key part of a programs of this kind. Such an engagement strategy could also highlight how refugees make a positive net fiscal impact across levels of government.[32]

Finally, we emphasize that concerns about economic contribution and community fit are neither legal nor normative reasons for rejecting refugees, who are allowed to resettle once the United States determines their claim of persecution in their home or other country is well-founded. Engagement strategies that focus on these factors should not undermine the humanitarian purposes of the refugee resettlement program, which is designed to settle the most vulnerable. We do not contest a robust right to seek asylum or apply for refugee status to the United States or any other country. However, our results do reveal policy-relevant information about the attitudes of increasingly important gatekeepers of the resettlement process. We find that officials across the political spectrum are receptive to a broad range of refugee groups, which offers a timely rejoinder to suspicion towards refugee resettlement prevalent in national-level US politics.

[32] US Department of Health and Human Services draft report. July 29, 2017.

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Supplementary Information for

What Explains US Local Government Officials' Receptivity to New Refugees?

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Figs. S1 to S8
Tables S1 to S12
SI References

1. Survey administration and sample

Procedure and response rates. Survey administration was contracted to CivicPulse, a nonprofit organization that administers surveys to US local government officials. Before being fielded, our survey instrument was subjected to peer review conducted by both CivicPulse and a panel of academic reviewers. Once approved, CivicPulse distributed our survey via email to the local policymakers. See (1) for an example study that uses CivicPulse data.

In total, 574 local officials responded to at least one of our conjoint questions. Of these 574 respondents, 534 answered all three conjoint profile questions, 20 answered two questions and the remaining 20 answered only one. In addition to the 574 respondents included in our analysis, 83 respondents did not answer any of the three conjoint questions, and 31 encountered internet connectivity issues that prevented the conjoint portion of our survey from loading. As shown below, we observe no statistically significant differences between respondents with missing and complete outcome data on observable locality-level, coarsened demographic characteristics. We include locality-level variables in this comparison since locality-level demographic characteristics are drawn from data sources outside the survey and cover all but three respondents out of the 688. Respondents who did not answer conjoint questions were also less likely to self-report individual-level demographics, reducing the use of reporting similar results at the individual level.

Table S1. Locality-level demographics do not predict probability of response.

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	0.7842	0.0658	11.92	0.0000
Population_median	-0.0230	0.0303	-0.76	0.4494
Urban_prop_3	0.0202	0.0203	0.99	0.3221
Votes2016_majority_trump	0.0202	0.0316	0.64	0.5245
College_prop_3	0.0024	0.0194	0.12	0.9016
N = 685 respondents				

OLS regression. Dependent variable is *Any Answer*, which is a binary variable that takes on a value of 1 if a respondent answered at least one conjoint question, and 0 otherwise.

Table S2. Locality-level demographics do not predict the number of conjoint profile responses

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)	4.5095	0.4027	11.20	0.0000
Population_median	-0.1599	0.1858	-0.86	0.3897
Urban_prop_3	0.1176	0.1245	0.94	0.3452
Votes2016_majority_trump	0.0949	0.1938	0.49	0.6246
College_prop_3	0.0391	0.1190	0.33	0.7423
N = 685 respondents				

OLS regression. Dependent variable is *Answer Count*, which denotes the number of conjoint questions a respondent chose to answer. Ranges from 0 to 3.

Demographic data. Table S3 provides an overview of the sample's personal and professional demographics, while Table S4 provides an overview of descriptive statistics focused on the localities in which respondents are based.

Table S3. Summary Statistics of Respondent Demographics

	Overall (N=574)
Birth, yr	
N-Miss	97
1926 - 1930	1 (0.2%)
1931 - 1935	1 (0.2%)
1936 - 1940	10 (2.1%)
1941 - 1945	30 (6.3%)
1946 - 1950	69 (14.5%)
1951 - 1955	85 (17.8%)
1956 - 1960	68 (14.3%)
1961 - 1965	59 (12.4%)
1966 - 1970	52 (10.9%)
1971 - 1975	37 (7.8%)
1976 - 1980	25 (5.2%)
1981 - 1985	24 (5.0%)
1986 - 1990	14 (2.9%)
1991 - 1995	1 (0.2%)
1996 - 2000	1 (0.2%)
Sex	
N-Miss	6
Female	177 (31.2%)
Male	391 (68.8%)
Education	
N-Miss	63
College graduate	122 (23.9%)
Graduate degree	169 (33.1%)
High school graduate	41 (8.0%)
Less than high school	2 (0.4%)
Some college	106 (20.7%)
Some graduate school	44 (8.6%)
Technical/trade school	27 (5.3%)
Ideology	
N-Miss	79
Moderate, middle of the road	151 (30.5%)
Not sure	9 (1.8%)
Somewhat conservative	140 (28.3%)
Somewhat liberal	92 (18.6%)
Very conservative	52 (10.5%)
Very liberal	51 (10.3%)
Party Id	
N-Miss	82
Democrat	175 (35.6%)
Independent	102 (20.7%)
Other party (please specify):	21 (4.3%)
Republican	194 (39.4%)
Party Id Lean	
N-Miss	451
Democratic Party	41 (33.3%)
Neither	39 (31.7%)
Republican Party	43 (35.0%)
NonHispanic White	
N-Miss	66
Mean (SD)	0.854 (0.353)
Range	0.000 - 1.000
Level of Government	

county	100 (17.4%)
municipality	356 (62.0%)
township	118 (20.6%)
Government Experience, yrs	
N-Miss	80
Mean (SD)	12.962 (12.315)
Range	0.000 - 63.000
Electoral Competition	
N-Miss	82
No	193 (39.2%)
Other	16 (3.3%)
Yes	283 (57.5%)
Ambition	
N-Miss	83
I am actively considering running for elected office.	215 (43.8%)
I am open to the possibility of holding elected office in the future.	227 (46.2%)
I have no interest in holding elected office at any time in the future.	49 (10.0%)
Professionalization	
N-Miss	84
Full-time salary	50 (10.2%)
No salary	76 (15.5%)
Other	70 (14.3%)
Part-time salary	294 (60.0%)

Table S4. Summary Statistics of Respondent's Locality Demographics

	Overall (N=574)
Population, median split	
Mean (SD)	0.495 (0.500)
Range	0.000 - 1.000
Prop. of residents residing in an urban area, terciles	
N-Miss	1
Mean (SD)	2.257 (0.777)
Range	1.000 - 3.000
Prop. of residents who have completed a 4-year college degree, terciles	
N-Miss	2
Mean (SD)	2.182 (0.804)
Range	1.000 - 3.000
2016 GOP Presidential majority vote share	
N-Miss	1
Mean (SD)	0.590 (0.492)
Range	0.000 - 1.000
State	
AK	2 (0.3%)
AL	7 (1.2%)
AR	3 (0.5%)
AZ	2 (0.3%)
CA	36 (6.3%)
CO	6 (1.0%)
CT	4 (0.7%)
FL	15 (2.6%)
GA	15 (2.6%)
IA	11 (1.9%)
ID	3 (0.5%)
IL	26 (4.5%)
IN	15 (2.6%)
KS	7 (1.2%)
KY	11 (1.9%)
LA	4 (0.7%)
MA	9 (1.6%)
MD	8 (1.4%)
ME	8 (1.4%)
MI	52 (9.1%)
MN	16 (2.8%)
MO	12 (2.1%)
MS	1 (0.2%)
MT	3 (0.5%)
NC	17 (3.0%)
ND	3 (0.5%)
NE	6 (1.0%)
NH	3 (0.5%)
NJ	13 (2.3%)
NM	5 (0.9%)
NV	4 (0.7%)
NY	27 (4.7%)
OH	25 (4.4%)
OK	2 (0.3%)
OR	16 (2.8%)
PA	45 (7.8%)
RI	2 (0.3%)
SC	3 (0.5%)
SD	2 (0.3%)
TN	16 (2.8%)

TX	24 (4.2%)
UT	13 (2.3%)
VA	17 (3.0%)
VT	9 (1.6%)
WA	10 (1.7%)
WI	33 (5.7%)
WV	2 (0.3%)
WY	1 (0.2%)

2. Survey instrument design

Randomization, prompts, and directions. See below for screenshots of example conjoint prompts and profiles. Each respondent viewed the introductory prompt, then three replicates (with randomly drawn values) of the conjoint comparison profiles and question, and finally the open-ended response question. In line with the ethics of voluntary participation, our IRB exemption application, and CivicPulse's omnibus guidelines, respondents were not forced to answer and could skip questions if desired. As a nudge, Qualtrics requested that respondents confirm their selection before proceeding if they left a question blank. For the conjoint comparison profiles, the order of the conjoint attributes was randomized across respondents but fixed within respondents, such that the conjoint attributes were ordered in the same fashion for all three profiles pairs that any given respondent viewed. The attribute values were fully randomized for each conjoint profile.

The "group size" value in the explanation for each paired profile comparison was determined based on the size of the constituency each respondent represents. To convert constituency sizes into refugee group sizes, we used a simple step function, which mapped binned population values to a set of five possible group sizes. We set cutoff points for this function to roughly correspond to five-year average refugee resettlement data for California's county-level refugee resettlement dataset, which was the most comprehensive source for local-level refugee resettlement data we were able to locate.

The specific values in this function are in Table S5. In our sample, the overwhelming majority of respondents viewed group sizes of 10, 25, or 50.

Table S5. Survey prompt refugee group size values.

Locality Size	Refugee Group Size
<= 50,000	10
> 50,000 & <= 250,000	25
> 250,000 & <= 400,000	50
> 400,000 & <= 750,000	100
> 750,000 & <= 750,000	250

Local governments play an important role in determining how refugees settle in the United States. Refugees are people who have fled their country to escape persecution, war, or violence.

Next, we will show you the profiles of hypothetical refugee groups, and ask whether you would be receptive to settling any of them into your community. We will show you three pairs of profiles.

Each profile will describe several attributes, some of which may be important to you, while others may not (see below). We understand that this is a complex decision, but given the information we provide you, try to imagine whether you would be receptive to any of these groups.

Attributes
Language skills
Sponsored by
Religion
Group makeup
Age
Region of origin
Education

Below are two potential refugee groups. There are 50 refugees in each group, and all of them have been approved with background checks by the US government.

Most of the adults in each group have the following attributes:

	Group A	Group B
Education	At least some college	High school
Language skills	Broken but functional English	Broken but functional English
Sponsored by	Regional or local business	Faith-based NGO
Region of origin	Central America	Sub-Saharan Africa
Age	39 or younger	40 or older
Religion	Christian	Muslim
Group makeup	Single women	Family groups

Would you be receptive to either, one, or neither of these refugee groups settling in your community?

- Either group
- Group A only
- Group B only
- Neither group

Now, we'd like to ask you a general question about refugees. In your opinion, what are the most important issues to consider when assessing how a group of refugees might settle into your community?

Conjoint design. See below for a list of conjoint attributes and values. We chose these attributes and values to build on existing immigration conjoint studies while balancing constraints imposed by external validity, respondent political knowledge, and statistical power. Since local elected officials (as opposed to the general public) are difficult to contact and limited in the time they are willing to devote to an academic survey, we were constrained both in the number of individual respondents we could contact and the number of conjoint profile replicates we could serve to each individual. As a result, we designed a more parsimonious experiment than other studies in the literature, which limited both the number of conjoint attributes and the number of values within each attribute.

Our first point of departure was to have local officials compare the profiles of groups of refugees rather than individual refugees. We made this design choice for reasons of external validity. When US local communities consider resettlement proposals, they are generally thinking in terms of a group rather than single refugee, unlike in other country-contexts like Sweden.

Turning to the specific attributes, of the attributes we included, all attributes besides sponsorship are standard in immigration conjoint studies, and have been shown to influence respondents' choices in at least some situations. Education, language skills, age, gender/family status, and place of origin are all included as attributes in some form in nearly all immigration conjoint studies of which we are aware. Occupation is a standard additional category in immigration conjoint studies. However, since we did not believe it would be plausible that a local elected official would be asked to compare a *group* of (say) 10-50 doctors to a *group* of 10-50 construction workers, we chose to eliminate this category. Since education is strongly associated with occupation, we believe that education largely captures occupation-based variation in respondent preferences. We also eliminated extreme attribute levels in the age and education categories, since we viewed refugee groups consisting of mostly people with professional degrees and mostly very young or very old people as similarly implausible.

Since our focus in this study is on refugees—who usually enter the United States with explicit support from the US government and a sponsor NGO—we included sponsorship as an additional attribute in our study. Under the current system, refugees are paired with one of nine secular or religious refugee resettlement agencies. Officially, all refugees are paired with a resettlement agency, but we included "no sponsor" as an additional option to capture hypothetical scenarios in which a refugee's resettlement organization either is not known to local elected officials or chooses not to advocate strongly on the refugee's behalf. Business sponsorships are not officially available as an option to refugees in the current United States refugee resettlement process. However, official sponsorship by private groups was previously an option in the United States from 1986-1995, and private sponsorships remain an option in Canada. As a result, we viewed this hypothetical attribute as plausible enough—and policy-relevant enough—to warrant inclusion in our design.

A final area in which our design departs somewhat from the conventional conjoint design is in our "region of origin" category. Typically, immigration conjoint designs provide an explicit list of countries of origin as potential attribute values. However, in our case, we chose to coarsen countries to regions of origin. We made this choice for two reasons. First, not all individuals may be familiar with all refugee-sending countries, and perceptions of specific countries may shift substantially in response to current events. Relatedly, while people may not have impressions/stereotypes/etc. about specific countries (e.g., Ukraine), they are more likely to make judgments based on their impressions/stereotypes/etc. about regions (e.g., Eastern Europe). These factors may all dramatically increase the variance of country-level treatment effects relative to region-level treatments, both across individuals and within individuals over time. Second, not all countries are compatible with all combinations of other attributes. For example, Afghanistan is a major refugee-sending country with very few individuals who identify as Christian. As a result, by specifying country of origin, we risk presenting respondents with implausible attribute combinations, which impacts the external validity of our experiment. Coarsening "country of origin" to "region of origin" addresses both of these problems.

Table S6. Conjoint attributes and values.

Attribute	Values
Education	No formal schooling, Grade school, High School, At least some college
Sponsored by	No sponsor, Faith-based NGO, Regional or local business, Secular NGO
Language	Very little to no English, Broken but functional English, Fluent English
Religion	Agnostic, Christian, Muslim
Group makeup	Family groups, Single men, Single women
Age	39 or younger, 40 or older
Region of origin	Central America, Eastern Europe, Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia

3. Conjoint analysis

Descriptive information. Figure S1 illustrates the frequency with which conjoint attributes were randomly assigned to respondents. Figure S2 illustrates the number of respondents who supported each number of profiles, among respondents who answered all three conjoint questions.

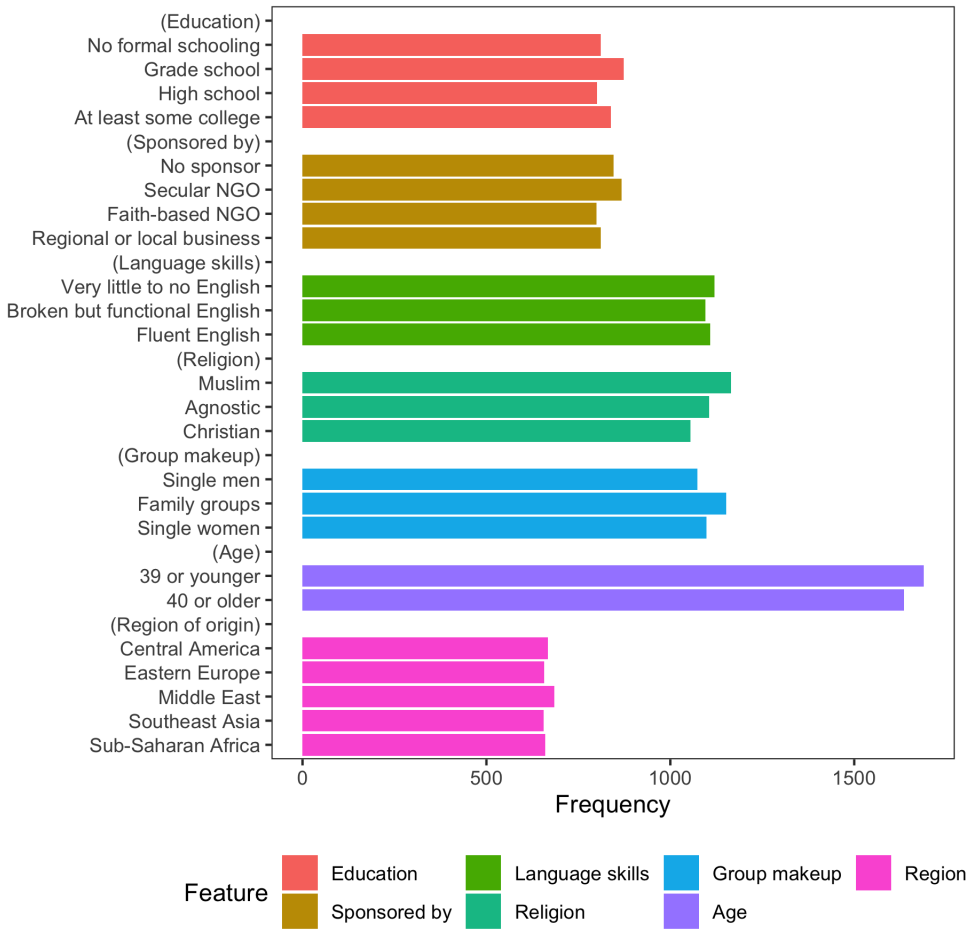
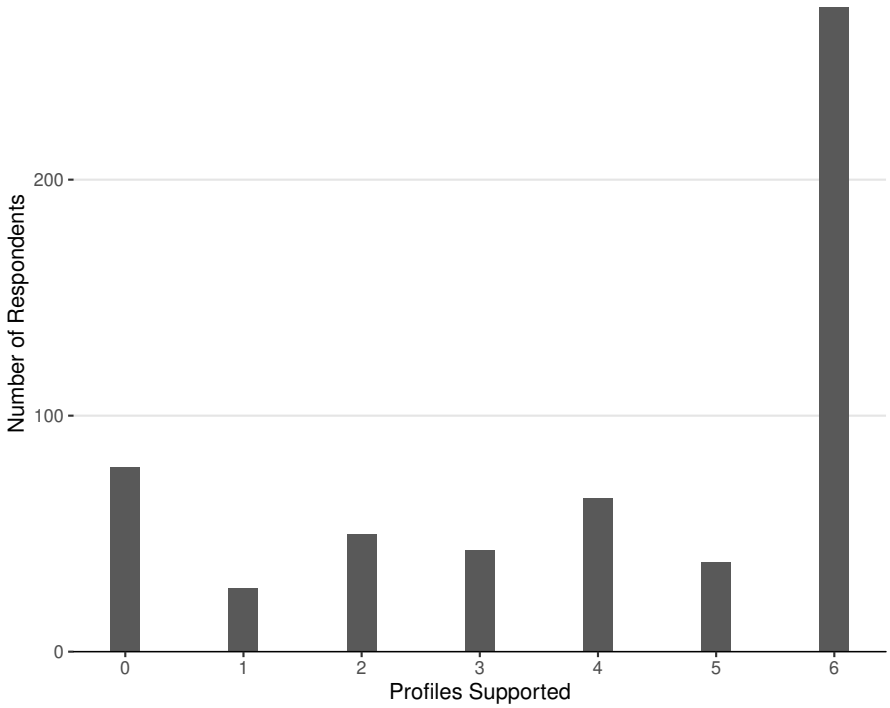


Fig. S1. Frequency of Conjoint Attribute Assignment

Fig. S2. Number of Profiles Supported by Each Respondent ($N = 534$)



In-text model supplements. Figure S3 illustrates the marginal means of *Refugee Group Receptivity* for each attribute value (point estimates and 95% confidence intervals). These values can be interpreted as the average probability that a respondent will support each profile with a given attribute level, marginalized over all other attribute values. This plot parallels the AMCEs reported in Figure 1 in the main text.

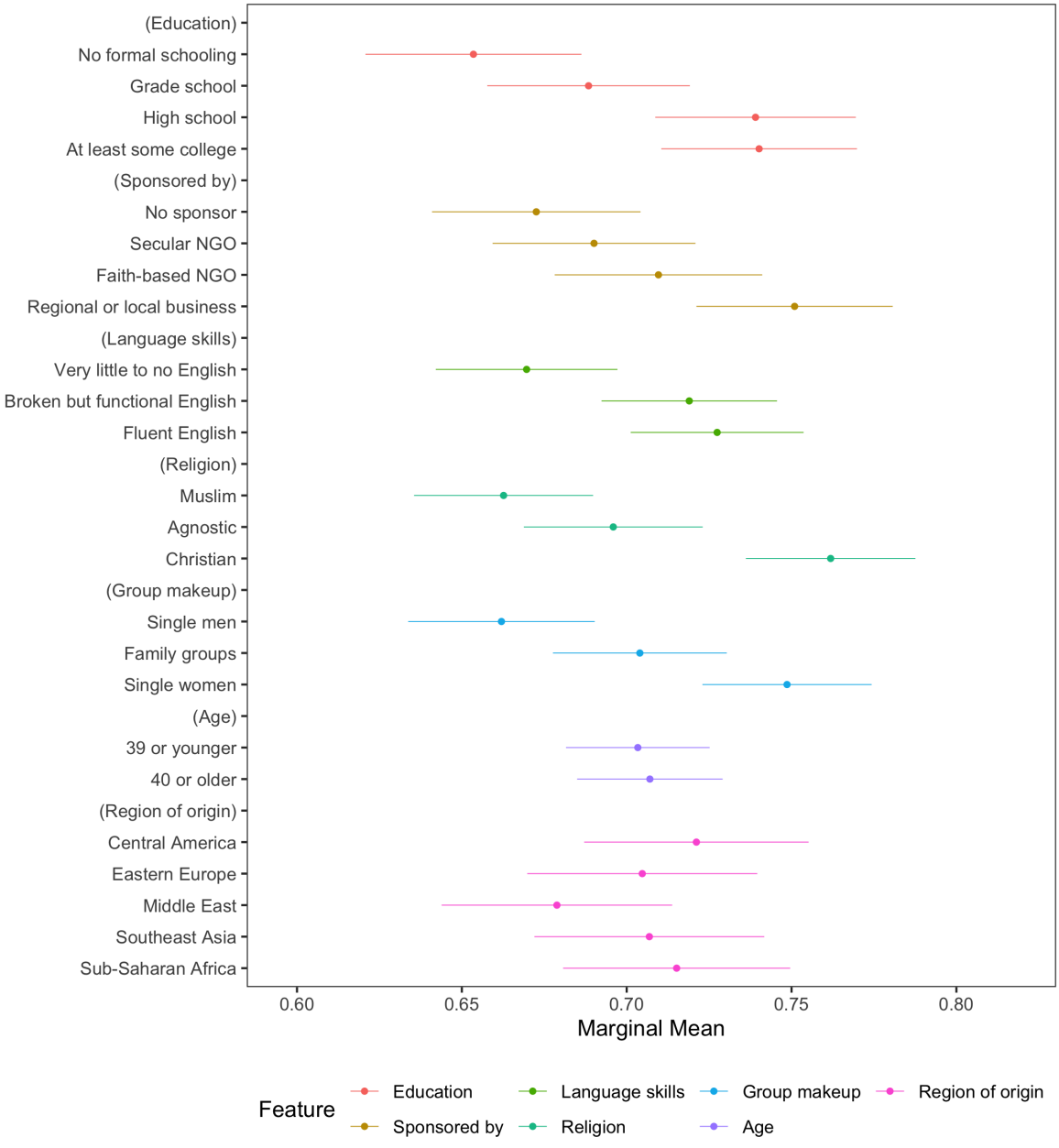


Fig. S3. Marginal Means of Refugee Group Receptivity

Subgroup analyses. Figure S4 illustrates the vote share subgroup analysis. For *Vote Share*, we compare officials by whether they or not their local government is in a county that had a majority vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

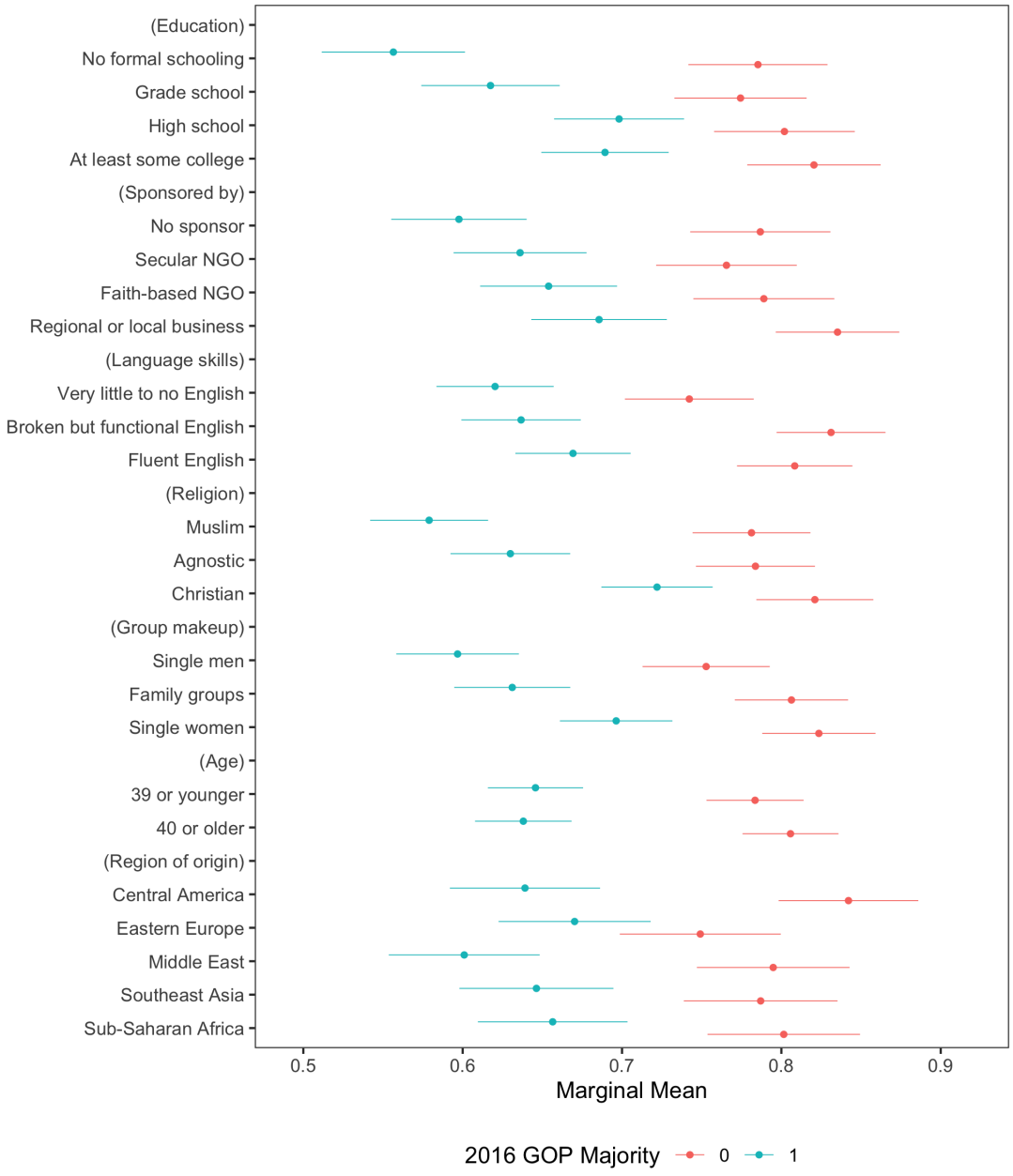


Fig. S4. Marginal Means and 95% CIs of *Refugee Group Receptivity*, split by partisan *Vote Share*.

Figure S5 illustrates the non-US citizen subgroup analysis. For *Interaction with Non-US Citizens*, prior to the conjoint experiment respondents were asked "About how often do you directly interact with non-US citizens?". We divide respondents into two groups by whether they report a few times a year or less versus a few times a month or more.

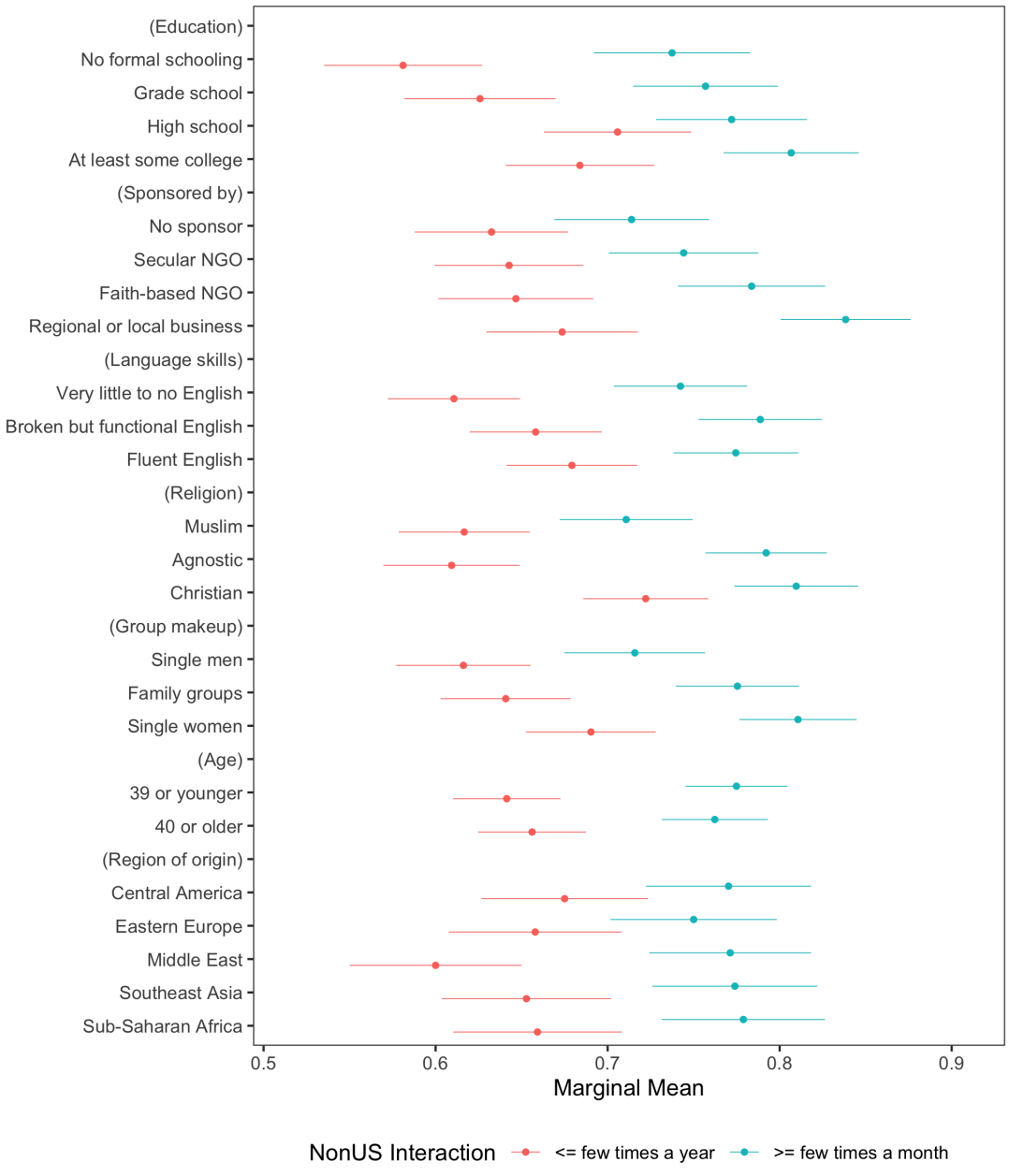


Fig. S5. Marginal Means and 95% CIs of Refugee Group Receptivity, split by *Interaction with Non-US Citizens*.

Figure S6 illustrates the population subgroup analysis. For *Population*, we split respondents according to whether they represent a jurisdiction with an above- or below-median population, relative the respondents in our sample. The population data is based on the total number of residents living in the given geographic unit and is drawn from the 2015 American Community Survey.

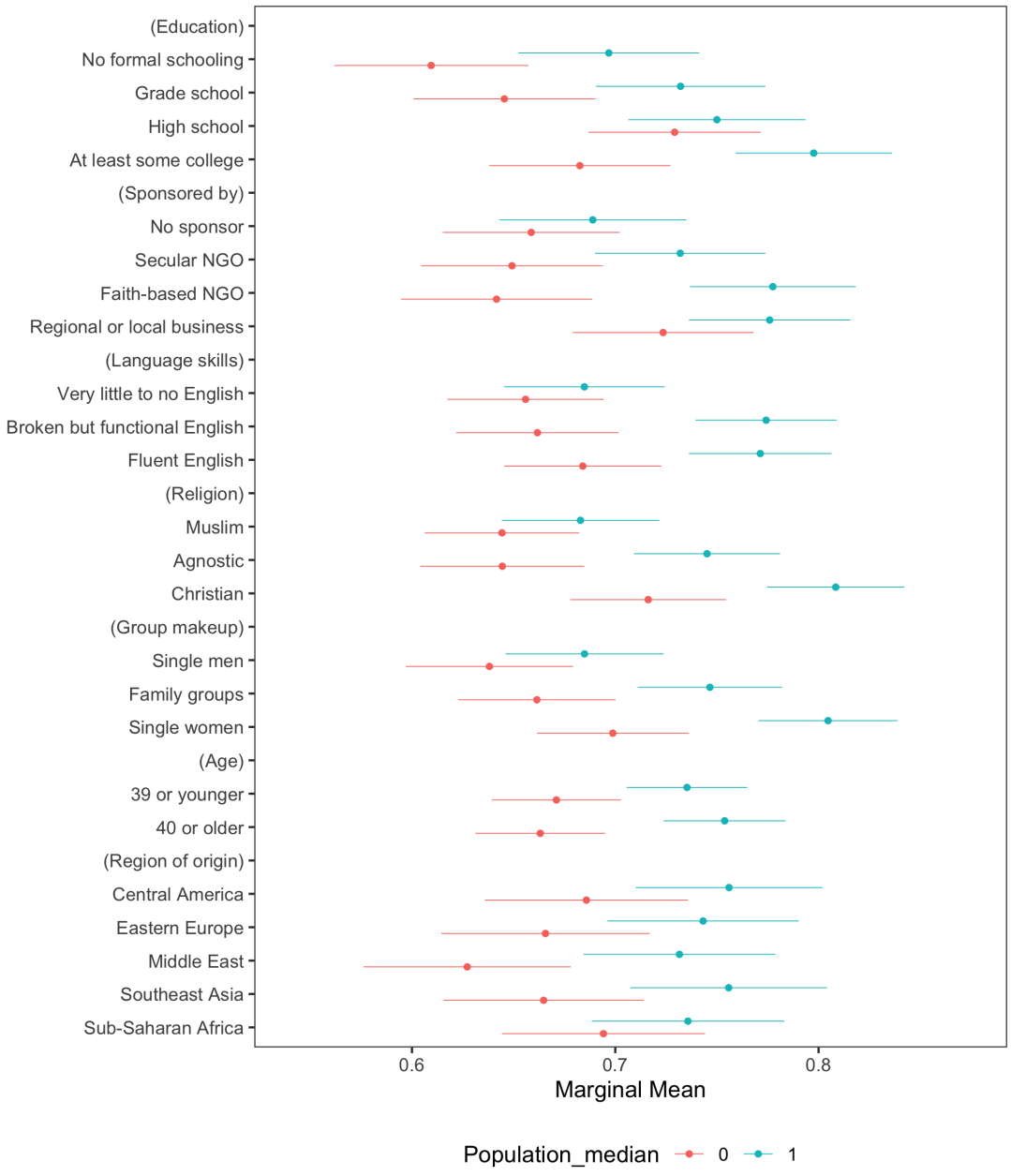


Fig. S6. Marginal Means and 95% CIs of Refugee Group Receptivity, split by *Population*.

Following (2), we also conduct a more formal test of the difference in subgroup preferences. Through a nested model comparison, we compare the fit of the regression without interactions or a subgroup variable with the fit of the regression that allows for interactions between the subgroup identifier and feature levels. Below are the F-tests of the null hypothesis that all interaction terms are zero. Results are significant at conventional levels.

Table S7. F-test of Vote Share

	Resid. Df	Resid. Dev	Df	Deviance	F	Pr(>F)
1	3300	671.34				
2	3282	645.45	18	25.89	7.31	0.0000

Table S8. F-test of Non-US Interaction

	Resid. Df	Resid. Dev	Df	Deviance	F	Pr(>F)
1	3268	666.49				
2	3196	633.36	72	33.13	2.32	0.0000

Table S9. F-test of Population

	Resid. Df	Resid. Dev	Df	Deviance	F	Pr(>F)
1	3306	671.76				
2	3288	662.07	18	9.69	2.67	0.0002

4. Open-ended analysis

Coding procedure. To describe the content of the open-ended responses we collected, we coded each open-ended response according to sixteen non-exclusive categories. These categories can roughly be categorized into two groups: conjoint attribute categories (Table S11), and abstract categories (Table S12). We also coded an additional constructed category—titled "Valence"—which describes whether the comment took an explicitly pro- or anti-refugee position. The seven conjoint attribute category labels were pre-defined and pre-registered before fielding the survey. However, all other labels were defined after reading a sample of comments to identify the most prevalent themes described by respondents.

To code each comment, we used a two-step process. First, each comment was read by two independent coders. For each category, each coder assigned a code of 1 if the comment mentioned the category as an important consideration in deciding whether or not to support a potential refugee, 0 if the comment did not mention the category, and -1 if the comment mentioned that the category should *not* be considered. For the "Valence" category, a code of 1 indicated support for refugee resettlement, 0 indicated no position, and -1 indicated opposition to refugee resettlement. Second, we reconciled coding decisions. For comment-category combinations where the two original coders agreed, their consensus coding decision became the final coding decision. Otherwise, the comment was read by a third independent coder, who acted as a tiebreaker between the two original coding suggestions. We then repeated this process for all 439 comments we collected.

After completing the coding process, for ease of interpretation we aggregated the "Economy/Infrastructure", "Physical Infrastructure", "Jobs", and "Soft Infrastructure" categories and the "Security" and "Rule of Law" categories" into higher-level "Economy" and "Public Order" categories, respectively. Our aggregation rule privileged in creating these higher-level categories was to assign each comment a value of 1 on a given category if any of the sub-categories took on a value of 1, 0 if all sub-categories took on a value of 0, and -1 otherwise. This coding rule privileges coding decisions of 1 in a case where a mix of -1 and 1 coding decisions were present; for example, if a given comment was coded -1 in the "Jobs" category and 1 in the "Physical Infrastructure" category, it would receive a code of 1 in the higher-level "Economy" category. However, since coding decisions of -1 were rare in most categories, this situation almost never arose.

Category descriptions, examples, and co-occurrence. See Table S10 for a brief description of each category. See Tables S11 and S12 for examples of each category. See Figures S7 and S8 for scores and score correlations, respectively, between the seven conjoint categories and the four high-level constructed categories.

Table S10. Open-ended comment category descriptions.

Label	Type	Description
Language	Conjoint	Refugee group's existing English language skills.
Education	Conjoint	Refugee group's existing level of education.
Sponsorship	Conjoint	Refugee group's sponsorship status (e.g. by a government or community group).
Religion	Conjoint	Refugee group's religious affiliation.
Group makeup	Conjoint	Refugee group's gender and/or family composition.
Age	Conjoint	Refugee group's approximate age.
Region	Conjoint	Refugee group's ethnic or national origin.
Economy/Infrastructure	Abstract	Community's economic resources and/or refugees' perceived impact on those resources.
Social/Cultural	Abstract	Refugees' perceived "fit" with community mores or values and community's acceptance.
Process	Abstract	Focus on the broader immigration system or refugee resettlement process.
Valence	Abstract	Explicit support or opposition to refugee resettlement.
Security	Abstract	Refugee group's existing criminal history or background.
Rule of law	Abstract	Refugee group's perceived willingness to follow US law.
Soft infrastructure	Abstract	Community social resources (e.g. job training, healthcare).
Physical infrastructure	Abstract	Community physical resources (e.g. transit, housing).
Jobs	Abstract	Community employment opportunities, or refugees' perceived employability.

Table S11. Sample comments and inter-coder agreement rates (ICA), conjoint coding categories.

Label	ICA	Example
Language	0.97	Being able to speak English.
Education	0.94	Education.
Sponsorship	0.97	Connecting with mentors who can help them in transition.
Religion	0.99	Ability to support themselves. Christian.
Group makeup	0.98	English language. Families.
Age	1.0	Language, age.
Region	0.99	[...] The Village government does not consider [...] race or origin [...].

Table S12. Sample comments and inter-coder agreement rates (ICA), abstract coding categories.

Label	ICA	Example
Economy/Infrastructure	0.89	Do they work.
Social/Cultural	0.89	Ability to assimilate within the community.
Security	0.98	Criminal history.
Rule of law	0.97	Good work ethic, law abiding persons.
Soft infrastructure	0.89	Support services provided by partner agencies.
Physical infrastructure	0.97	Housing.
Jobs	0.83	Safety, housing, and employment.
Process	0.92	They MUST follow all immigration laws and protocols.
Valence	0.91	Everyone is welcome.

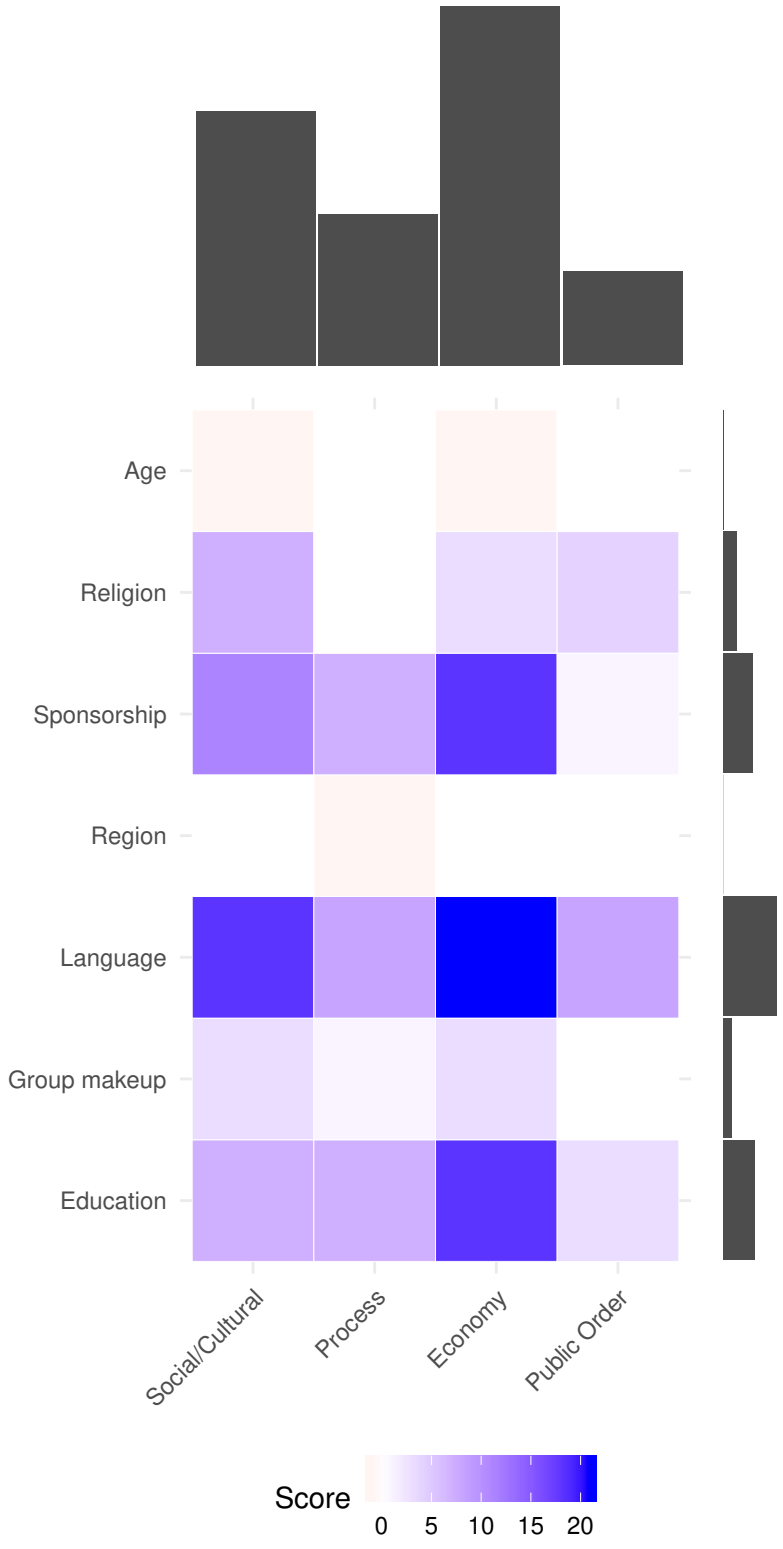


Fig. S7. Scores for documents containing combinations of conjoint and constructed categories, derived from open-ended responses. "Score" represents the summed coding decisions in a given category for all comments in the dataset.

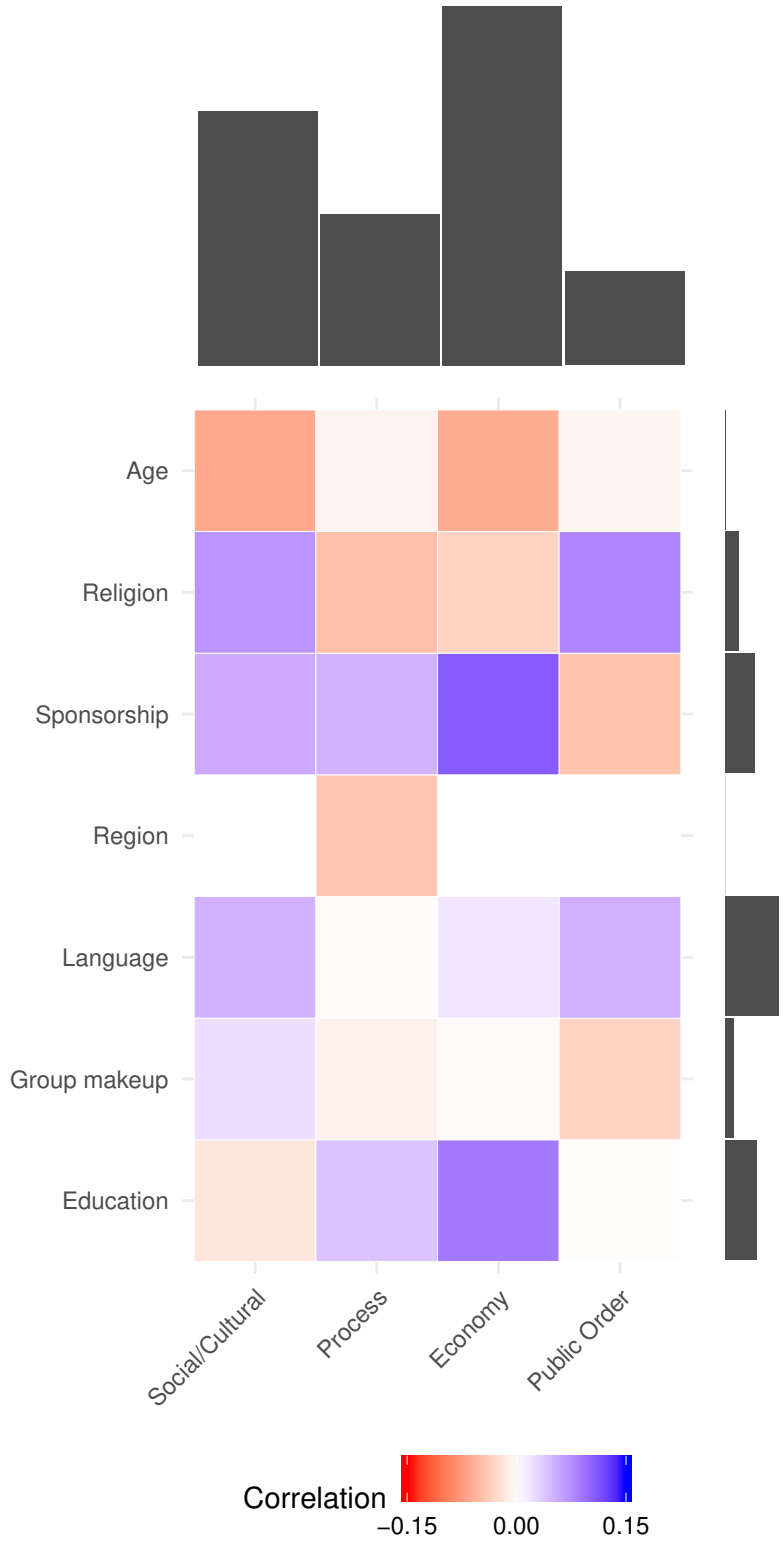


Fig. S8. Correlation of scores for conjoint and constructed categories, as described in Figure S7.

References

1. N Malhotra, B Monin, M Tomz, Does private regulation preempt public regulation? *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* **113**, 19–37 (2019).
2. TJ Leeper, SB Hobolt, J Tilley, Measuring subgroup preferences in conjoint experiments. *Polit. Analysis* **28**, 207–221 (2020).

CivicPulse Reference Guide for:

March-April 2020 Omnibus Survey

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**Variable modified to prevent identifiability.*

Sample Description

This dataset includes the responses from 688 respondents. As indicated by the variable Complete, 540 of them completed the full survey, while 148 completed part of the survey. The tables below describe the representativeness of the sample, compared to the population. We also provide probability weights to increase sample representativeness.

Sub-county[1] Officials

	Sample Mean (std. dev)	Population Mean (std. dev)
Proportion Urban	0.712 (0.409)	0.570 (0.450)
Proportion College-educated	0.292 (0.170)	0.258 (0.154)
Population Size	35,470 (365,815)	15,046 (91,801)
GOP Vote Share[2]	0.521 (0.158)	0.557 (0.151)

[1] *This group includes officials from townships and municipalities*

[2] *Vote share estimated at the county level. Each sub-county government is matched to the relevant county in which it is contained.*

[3] *The mean is right-skewed due to the inclusion of one observation from New York City. The population statistics without NYC are 20,244 (53,374).*

County Officials

	Sample Mean (std. dev)	Population Mean (std. dev)
Proportion Urban	0.485 (0.291)	0.405 (0.305)
Proportion College-educated	0.232 (0.0938)	0.208 (0.0892)
Population Size	243,772 (783,939)	96,787 (322,130)
GOP Vote Share	0.594 (0.144)	0.643 (0.148)

Weights

Probability weights were created with a post-stratification raking procedure using the Census and presidential vote share variables. This procedure follows the methodology outlined in DeBell and Krosnick (2009) for the American National Elections Study (ANES).

Questionnaire

CPSS_Background

CPSS_1

In the last year, have you corresponded with any of the following institutions about immigration policy? Select all that apply.
[Order of the answer choices was randomized, except for the choice "None of the above," which were always displayed last.]

- Federal government
- Non-governmental organizations
- Business groups
- None of the above

CPSS_2

How important do you think the issue of immigration is to your local community?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

CPSS_3

About how often do you directly interact with non-US citizens?

- A few times a year or less
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- More than a few times a week

CPSS_Conjoint

Timer_CPSS_intro

A set of timers for the conjoint module's introductory description page.

CPSS_05a; CPSS_07a-b; CPSS_09a-b

[Based on random assignment, either question set "a" or "b" was displayed to the respondent. Values for the rows of the conjoin table are recorded in the data set using the variables specified by the researchers.]

For questions 5a, 7a, and 9a:

Would you be receptive to neither, one, or either of these refugee groups settling in your community?

- Neither group
- Group A only
- Group B only
- Either group

For questions 5b, 7b, and 9b:

Would you be receptive to either, one, or neither of these refugee groups settling in your community?

- Either group
- Group A only
- Group B only
- Neither group

CPSS_10

Now, we'd like to ask you a general question about refugees. In your opinion, what are the most important issues to consider when assessing how a group of refugees might settle into your community?

Demographics Module 1

[Asterisk (*) indicates that the variable was modified to prevent identifiability.]

Birth

In what year were you born?
(1910 or earlier, 1911-1915, … , 2006 or later)

Sex

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Education

What is the last grade of school you completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Technical/trade school
- Some college
- College graduate
- Some graduate school
- Graduate degree

Ethnicity*

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Race*

Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

- White
- Black/African American
- Asian/Asian American (includes East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander)
- Native American
- Other (please specify):___

Demographics Module 2

Gov_exp*

How many years have you worked in government **over your career**?
(Please enter the number of years below.)

Electoral_compete

When you last ran for office, did you face an opponent in the general election?

- Yes
- No
- Other ____

Ambition

How would you characterize your interest in holding a higher elected office in the future?

- I have no interest in holding higher elected office at any time in the future.
- I am open to the possibility of holding higher elected office in the future.
- I am actively considering running for higher elected office.

Professionalization

Do you receive a salary for your government position?

- Full-time salary
- Part-time salary
- No salary
- Other _____

Ideology

In general, do you think of yourself as:

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Moderate, middle of the road
- Somewhat liberal
- Very liberal
- Not sure

Pid

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a …

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party (please specify): ___

Pid_lean

[Displays if neither Democrat nor Republican are selected in "Pid" question above]
Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Neither

Demographic Questions Modified From Survey

NonHispanic_white

Respondents were asked their race and ethnicity using questions taken from the US Census. If a respondent identified as non-Hispanic and white, then they were coded as a 1. If a person identified as Hispanic or non-white, they were coded as a 0. See race_other_flag for a further explanation of some of the respondents who did not identify as non-Hispanic whites.

Race_other_flag

Respondents were asked their race and ethnicity using questions taken from the US Census. Approximately 9 percent of respondents identified as being non-white. Of this group, approximately 2/3 of respondents picked one of the possible categories. Approximately, 1/4 of respondents picked "Other" and provided additional text. In the past, some of the responses provided included, "Human," "Why do you care?", "xxx", Scotch-Irish and German," "Scandinavian," "Middle Eastern" and "Jewish." Some of these responses may normally be categorized as "white" while others would be categorized as non-white, and others are not responsive to the question. The variable race_other_flag was created to flag the respondents who answered "Other" so researchers could decide whether to include this group who did not identify as Non-Hispanic white, but may not be traditionally categorized as minorities.

Gov_exp

The variable gov_exp was constructed by rounding government experience to the next highest number. For example, "0.75" would be rounded to "1" and "35+" would be rounded to 36.

Survey Metadata Variables

State_code, State_abb

Indicates the state in which the respondent resides. The two-digit FIPS numeric code and two letter abbreviations are provided.

Level

A variable indicating the government position of the respondent. Its values are: “county,” “municipality,” and “township.”

StartDate

The time and date when the survey was started.

EndDate

The time and date when the survey was completed. For respondents that did not complete the survey, this variable records the time of their last activity on the survey.

Complete

1 = Respondent completed the survey
0 = Respondent did not complete the survey

***Note**: We do not require survey participants to answer any particular survey question to complete the survey, though we do use “soft request” for questions left unanswered. Thus, a completed response may include unanswered questions if the respondent declined to answer.*

CP_ID

A random number generated to uniquely identify each survey respondent.

Census Area Demographics

Merging. To provide additional information about the geographic areas in which respondents work, additional covariates were merged to the survey response data (97% match rate). Where merging failed, these variables are labeled with 'NA'.

De-identification. To ensure anonymity of the respondent, each variable was "binned." The variables below are binned into terciles based on the population's distribution.

College_prop*

The proportion of 25-years-or-older residents in the given geographic unit who have completed a 4-year, post-secondary degree. This data was taken from 2015 American Community Survey. The population terciles are:

- 33.3 percentile: 0.168
- 66.7 percentile: .2657477

Population*

The total number of residents living in the given geographic unit. This data is taken from the 2015 American Community Survey.

- 33 percentile: 2,650
- 66.7 percentile: 10,100

Urban_prop*

The proportion of residents in the given geographic unit who reside in an urban area. This data is taken from the 2010 Census.

- 33 percentile: 0.114
- 66.7 percentile: 0.959

Vote2016_per_gop*

The proportion of the votes, by county, for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential election.
Note: *Each sub-county government is matched to the relevant county in which it is contained.*

- 33 percentile: 0.506
- 66.7 percentile: 0.652