Gendered Xenophobia?
Gendered Interpretation of Immigration and Labor Market Vulnerability

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Abstract

Why do women tend to oppose immigration more than men? I argue that this opposition to immigration is caused by women's labor market vulnerabilities. As immigrants increasingly enter sectors traditionally dominated by women, non-immigrant women may perceive immigrants as a threat. Drawing on two original surveys with embedded experiments conducted on nationally representative samples in Japan, I find that information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrants increases favorability toward immigrants among Japanese men but not women. Japanese women, especially those in non-professional jobs, show increased hostility toward immigrant women when exposed to such information. These findings highlight the importance of considering the interplay between gender and labor market position in shaping immigration attitudes. This research contributes to the literature on the political economy of immigration and gender politics and underscores the need for gender-sensitive approaches in immigration policymaking, particularly in countries with persistent gender inequalities.

INTRODUCTION

Do women tend to oppose immigration more than men? If so, why? Existing research reveals a puzzling inconsistency when addressing these questions. Some studies find that women are less tolerant of immigrants than men (Mayda 2006; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007), while others find the opposite pattern, with women exhibiting higher levels of tolerance toward immigrants and more positive attitudes toward refugees (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006; Bridges and Mateut 2009). Even more puzzling is our limited understanding of the mechanisms behind these gender differences. Most studies treat gender as a control variable rather than examining it systematically, leaving us with little insight into why men and women might view immigration differently. This literature reveals a critical gap: we lack a comprehensive understanding of when and why gender differences in immigration attitudes emerge.

Understanding gender differences in immigration attitudes is particularly important for three reasons. First, immigration policies in many developed countries increasingly focus on addressing labor shortages through targeted worker programs (Immigration Services Agency of Japan 2019; Peng 2016; Tagami 2023; Ikeda 2019). If men and women respond differently to immigration based on their positions in the labor market, this has significant implications for public support of such policies. Second, gender inequalities remain a defining feature of many democracies and influence political attitudes more broadly (Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel 2003; Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker 2012; Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Oliphant 2014; Ruiz and Rubio Marin 2008). Third, as immigration becomes an increasingly salient political issue, understanding how different groups within society respond to immigration is crucial for democratic governance and social cohesion.

Building on this foundation, I propose that gender differences in immigration attitudes can be explained by examining women's and men's different positions in the labor market. I argue that when women oppose immigration more than men, this pattern reflects women's greater vulnerability to labor market displacement by immigrant workers rather than inherent differences in tolerance or early socialization effects. This argument builds on research emphasizing the significant role of women's economic opportunities and the unique challenges faced by women in paid labor (Beegle, Frankenberg, and Thomas 2001; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983; Amin et al. 1998; Kabeer and Mahmud 2004; Shorrocks 2018; Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018; Goldin 2023; Dahlgaard and Hansen 2021; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997). To develop this argument, I introduce a new theoretical framework: dual-layer gendered immigration attitudes. This theory suggests that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men should be analyzed through two distinct mechanisms: (1) gender differences in competitiveness and (2) women's vulnerable positions in the labor market. The theory posits that gendered immigration attitudes are shaped by distinct interpretations of information about immigration, influenced by individuals' current positions in gendered labor markets where women are disproportionately employed in roles vulnerable to displacement by immigrant workers.

I test this theoretical argument using data from two original surveys with embedded experiments conducted on nationally representative samples of Japanese nationals, comprising 1,234 and 1,427 participants, respectively. Japan serves as a compelling case for examining the intersection of gender, immigration attitudes, and labor market dynamics for two key reasons. First, Japan is notable among developed countries for its significant gender inequality, especially in economic opportunities. As of 2020, Japan had the second-largest gender wage gap among

OECD countries for 19 consecutive years (OECD Data 2021). For example, this inequality is evident in the prevalence of "non-regular" employment among women, who constitute over 53% of employed Japanese women aged 20-65, hired on fixed-term contracts with lower wages and fewer protections (Yamaguchi 2019; Dalton 2022). Second, Japan has become an attractive destination for immigrants from other Asian countries and has seen a substantial influx of immigrant women.[1] Historically, female (undocumented) foreign workers entered Japan before their male counterparts (Sellek 1996), and more recently, Japan's rapidly aging population has spurred a need for additional caregivers, resulting in a significant influx of female foreign workers (出入国在留管理庁 (Immigration Services Agency) 2022; Asis and Carandang 2020).

Study 1 serves as the primary test for my hypotheses, using a survey experiment conducted on a Japanese sample. Participants are randomly assigned to read one of three mock articles: a control, a "Professional" immigration condition, and a "Non-professional" immigration condition. Both treatment conditions feature mock articles emphasizing the need for more immigrants, with the primary distinction being the focus on foreign human talent (高度外国人材 [koudo gaikoku jinzai]) versus foreign workers (外国人労働者 [gaikokujin rōdōsha]). Immediately following the stimulus, I measure participants' feelings toward immigrants using feeling thermometer items for immigrant men and immigrant women. By asking about immigrant men and immigrant women separately, I can also test the role of competition between members of the same gender in explaining immigration attitudes (Antfolk et al. 2018; Kruger, Fitzgerald, and Peterson 2010; Pedersen 1991). Additionally, I use

[1] While I use the term "immigrant" throughout the paper, it is worth noting that The Japanese context predominantly uses "foreign worker" (外国人労働者) [gaikokujin rōdōsha] and "foreigner" (外国人) [gaikokujin], as opposed to "immigrant" (移住者) [ijūsha], when referring to foreign nationals residing in Japan. Further discussion about the use of these terms can be found in subsequent sections of the paper.

participants' non-professional job status as a proxy for labor market vulnerabilities and an explanatory variable for testing my theory.[2] Study 2, another survey experiment on a Japanese sample, has two main purposes: testing the applicability of gender differences in competitiveness in immigration attitudes and addressing limitations from Study 1 by using a more direct outcome variable about confidence in competing with immigrant workers. Participants are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Control, Skilled Immigration, or Unskilled Immigration. The treatments emphasize the increasing number of foreign residents and immigrant workers in skilled sectors and unskilled sectors, respectively. The main outcome for this study is the participants' level of confidence in competing with immigrant workers in the labor market. The key difference between the studies lies in their analytical focus: Study 1 directly tests the main hypotheses, thereby examining both the first and second layers of the theory, whereas Study 2 focuses specifically on validating the underlying assumption of the first layer regarding gender differences in competitiveness and confidence by using participants' self-reported confidence in labor market competition as the primary outcome measure.[3]

The findings reveal several key patterns. First, information about the economic necessity of immigrants tends to elicit different responses between Japanese men and women (i.e., non-immigrant men and non-immigrant women).[4] Japanese men show increased favorability toward immigrants – both immigrant men and immigrant women – when exposed to such information. Conversely, Japanese women generally show decreased favorability toward immigrants under

[2] I choose non-professional job status over non-regular position because gender economic inequalities and women's labor market vulnerabilities encompass multiple dimensions beyond non-regular employment, including wage gaps and underrepresentation in managerial positions among regular employees, as discussed in greater detail in later sections.

[3] The "layers" are better illustrated in Figure 2 and the Theory & Hypotheses section of the paper.

[4] In this paper, "non-immigrant men" and "non-immigrant women" are used interchangeably with "Japanese men" and "Japanese women." They primarily refer to Japanese nationals who hold Japanese citizenship and are not of foreign nationality, though I use "non-immigrant(s)" more broadly when referring to citizens or the native-born population generally, particularly when discussing the generalizability of my theory or the broader literature.

the same conditions. Second, Japanese women show decreased favorability toward immigrants, particularly immigrant women, when exposed to information about the necessity of non-professional immigrant workers. Third, there is a statistically significant relationship between Japanese women's non-professional job status and hostility toward immigrants when exposed to information about the need for non-professional immigrant labor, a pattern that is not observed among Japanese men. Fourth, Japanese women express higher levels of concern about job competition with immigrants compared to Japanese men. Lastly, the gender of immigrants yields mixed results across the surveys conducted for this study, but the skill level of immigrants has a more pronounced impact on how non-immigrants perceive immigrants. For instance, priming Japanese women about the need for immigrant workers decreases their favorability toward immigrant women; however, further analysis that considers Japanese women's job types clarifies this effect. It reveals that women in professional positions do not exhibit decreased favorability toward immigrant women, whereas those in non-professional positions show decreased favorability in the same condition.

My research is among the first to explore the intersection of the gendered nature of the labor market and gendered immigration attitudes. The main findings suggest that gendered immigration attitudes are shaped by distinct interpretations of information, influenced by one's current position in the labor market where women are more likely than men to hold jobs that could be replaced by immigrant workers. These labor market positions of non-immigrant women can lead to decreased support for immigration, particularly in countries with significant economic inequality between genders. The article also sheds light on the individual-level economic conditions under which non-immigrants may exhibit varying levels of tolerance toward immigrants, highlighting the dynamic nature of immigration attitudes beyond the general

trait-based or socio-cultural explanations. These efforts are expected to advance scholarly understanding of gender politics, the political economy of migration, and inter-group relations. They will also offer crucial insights for policymaking in immigrant-receiving countries characterized by significant gender inequalities and contribute to addressing inter-group conflicts between non-immigrants and immigrants. I anticipate that the core ideas of the study will be particularly applicable to developed countries that receive immigrants, where significant gender economic disparities exist and immigration policies are centered around employment-based immigration.

In the following sections, I will first review prior research on immigration attitudes. I will then present preliminary analyses from existing surveys and discuss the relationship between gender economic inequality and gender differences in immigration attitudes across countries. Next, I will outline my theory and hypotheses, followed by an explanation of why Japan serves as a compelling case study. I will then present the findings from two studies: Study 1 tests the hypotheses using a Japanese sample, while Study 2 provides additional analyses related to my theoretical argument. Finally, I will conclude with a summary of the results and their implications.

ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION

Earlier studies on immigration attitudes have typically approached the topic from two angles: one focusing on economic factors and the other on non-economic factors, including beliefs, identity, and ethnocentrism. For those considering economic factors as key explanatory variables for immigration attitudes, the emphasis is often on individual-level economic conditions, such as concerns about labor market competition. In advanced economies, individuals in low-skilled, blue-collar, and low-wage jobs tend to oppose immigration more,

fearing increased competition with incoming foreign workers (Borjas and Freeman 1992; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Additionally, economic explanations also extend to the effects of economic downturns and public concerns regarding the fiscal impact immigrants might impose on the host country. It has been observed that opposition to immigration often escalates during economic downturns (Alexander and Simon 1993; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Gimpel and Edwards 1998; Goldstein and Peters 2014; Higham 2002; Lapinski et al. 1997; Olzak 1994). Further, concerns about fiscal strains on national economies and infrastructures are also seen as contributing to resistance against new immigrants (Coenders and Scheepers 1998; Quillian 1995).

Turning to ideational explanations, a well-established argument connects anti-immigration sentiment to broader ideologies such as xenophobia and cultural concerns. It is often highlighted that immigrants are seen as threats to the cultural and ethnic identity of the majority in host societies, leading to opposition (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Kinder and Sears 1981; Shapiro 1997; Sides and Citrin 2007; Wilson 2000). Ethnocentrism has been identified as a key predictor of anti-immigrant sentiment and support for restrictive immigration policies (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Hagendoorn 2007; Kinder and Kam 2010; Sniderman et al. 2002), but several studies have shifted focus to group-specific attitudes (Ford 2011; Konitzer et al. 2019; Poynting and Mason 2007; Reyna, Dobria, and Wetherell 2013; Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013). The group-specific attitudes hypothesis posits that attitudes toward immigrants are contingent upon the origin of the immigrants rather than the levels of ethnocentrism in the host society. While the group-specific attitudes hypothesis typically assesses attitudes based on immigrants' origins, another common approach categorizes immigrants by skill level, distinguishing between high- and low-skilled groups. Alongside this, an established trend in the

literature is the preference for high-skilled over low-skilled immigrants (Igarashi, Miwa, and Ono 2022; Helbling and Kriesi 2014; Iyengar et al. 2013; Kage, Rosenbluth, and Tanaka 2019; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Malhotra, Margalit, and Mo 2013).

While these studies provide valuable insights into general immigration attitudes, most focus on in-group versus out-group relations (i.e., non-immigrants vs. immigrants) within a society, rather than directly addressing differences in attitudes within the in-group, such as gender differences in immigration attitudes. In this paper, I do not overlook cultural factors in understanding immigration attitudes or gender differences. As discussed in the section on theory and hypotheses, socio-cultural conditions that foster different socialization of boys and girls are significant and cannot be ignored. I consider these conditions as a factor in understanding differences in competitiveness between genders, which forms the first layer of my dual-layered theory on gendered immigration attitudes. However, I place greater emphasis on the gendered nature of the labor market, where women are more likely to hold easily replaceable jobs, potentially leading to higher levels of concern regarding immigration. In this respect, my theory aligns with prior research that links individual economic conditions, especially concerns about labor market competition, to anti-immigrant sentiments (Borjas and Freeman 1992; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001), while extending these works by adding gender considerations.

GENDER AND IMMIGRATION

More studies have focused on the gender of immigrants themselves, rather than on gender differences in immigration attitudes. In the 1980s, the rise of new data and the growing influence of feminist critiques led to the integration of gender into migration and development studies. Until then, women's international migration had been largely overlooked, despite making up

nearly half of the global migrant population (Zlotnik 1995; Boyd 2021). Research in the 1980s, for example, recognized women as independent migrants and participants in the migration process (Morokvasic 1984). Since the 1990s, the phrase "feminization of migration" has become an established concept in migration studies (Mahon 2021; Boyd 2021; Castles and Miller 1993). The feminization of migration refers to the recognition and importance of women in global migration patterns, highlighting not only the significant number of female migrants but also their distinct experiences, roles, and challenges as migrants (Zlotnik 1995; Boyd 2021; Mahon 2021; Piper 2009).

More recently, a number of studies have examined how certain immigration policies affect immigrant men and women differently (Kofman 2014; Boucher 2007; Badkar et al. 2007). [5] Moreover, several studies consider the gender of immigrants in their analysis of immigration attitudes. Fietkau and Hansen (2018) vary the gender of the profiles in their survey experiments, and Bansak et al. (2016) incorporate gender in their conjoint experiments. Taking this a step further, recent studies have found a correlation between immigrant men and lower public approval of immigration, likely because young men are more often perceived as cultural and security threats (Ward 2019; Shao et al. 2023). Thus, these studies lay important foundations regarding the general trends and differences between genders. However, there remains a need for more focused and nuanced research that places gender as a primary focus and explores the nexus between gender and immigration attitudes.

Relatively few studies have focused on gender differences in immigration attitudes. Among those that do, much of the research has 'observed' gender rather than making it the

[5] For example, Kofman (2014) evaluates the gendered impact of European immigration policies and finds that these policies often undervalue female-dominated professions.

primary focus of analysis.[6] For example, Mayda (2006), using data from the International Social Survey Program, finds that men are more tolerant than women. Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007), drawing on the European Social Survey, report that women in affluent countries tend to be more intolerant than men. Gang et al. (2013) also observe that European women are more likely to oppose immigration than men. Another challenge in the literature on gender differences in immigration attitudes is that, while the prevailing observation is that men show stronger preferences than their female counterparts, a few studies have reported mixed and contrasting results. For instance, some studies present opposing findings, demonstrating mixed or reverse trends. For example, O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006) find that women tend to be less hostile toward refugees than men.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES

These challenges present in existing studies indicate the need to closely examine the complexities of gender differences in immigration attitudes. I propose that exploring the relationship between gender inequality and immigration attitudes may clarify why gender has not been the main focus of analysis and may also account for the mixed findings.

Figure 1 compares men's and women's preferences for immigration levels using survey data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Cumulation for the years 1995, 2003, and 2013 (International Social Survey Programme 2020). These years correspond to the "National Identity" topic in ISSP and include the immigration attitudes variable of interest. The question reads: "Do you think the number of immigrants to [COUNTRY] nowadays should be ..." with response options ranging from "Increased a lot" (1) to "Reduced a lot" (5). The variable was recoded so that higher values indicate greater support for increasing immigration.

[6] Exceptions include Valentova and Alieva (2014) and François and Magni-Berton (2013).

Acknowledging that this item measures immigration level preferences rather than broader immigration attitudes, I use higher values on the recoded scale as a proxy for positive attitudes toward immigration policy expansion.

I incorporated the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Gender Inequality Index for *Economic Participation and Opportunity*[7] and presented countries with above-average scores in Figure 1a and those with below-average scores in Figure 1b. In these two subfigures, the red and blue dots indicate whether women are more positive towards immigration than men (red) or vice versa (blue). Additionally, the statistical significance of the differences is shown by the shape of the markers (triangles represent significant differences, while circles represent non-significant differences).

Looking across Figure 1a and Figure 1b, I find a striking pattern between countries with above-average and below-average scores on the Gender Economic Inequality Index.[8] In countries with above-average scores, there is a more mixed and less consistent pattern of gender differences in immigration attitudes (Figure 1a). A few countries, like Sweden and Norway, show women holding significantly more positive immigration attitudes than men (as indicated by the red triangles), but overall, the gender gap is not pronounced in many of these countries. This suggests that in more gender-equal societies, attitudes toward immigration are more balanced, with women's support sometimes exceeding men's. In contrast, countries with below-average

[7] This index is composed of three components: (a) the participation gap, (b) the remuneration gap, and (c) the advancement gap. The participation gap measures the difference in labor force participation. The remuneration gap is presented by a quantitative indicator, which is the ratio of estimated female-to-male income, alongside a qualitative measure obtained from the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey. The advancement gap measures the disparity in advancement opportunities (World Economic Forum 2013, 4). For more details, please refer to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum 2013).

[8] Appendix A1 shows the same analysis using a different approach where the Y-axis represents the gender gap in immigration preferences (women - men) and the X-axis represents the same WEF Gender Inequality Index for Economic Participation and Opportunity scores. Additionally, Appendix A2 and Appendix A3 show similar plots but with the X-axis using the labor force participation ratio in Appendix A2 and the left-partisanship gender gap from ISSP in Appendix A3.

gender equality (Figure 1b) exhibit a clearer trend. Most countries in this group are represented by blue dots, indicating that men are generally more supportive of immigration than women. I also notice that approximately half of the countries represented by blue dots—indicating that men are generally more supportive of immigration than women—show statistical significance for gender differences in immigration attitudes (indicated by triangles).

Figure 1a. Immigration Preferences in Countries with Above-Average Gender Equality (Data from WEF 2013 & ISSP 1995/2003/2013 Cumulation)

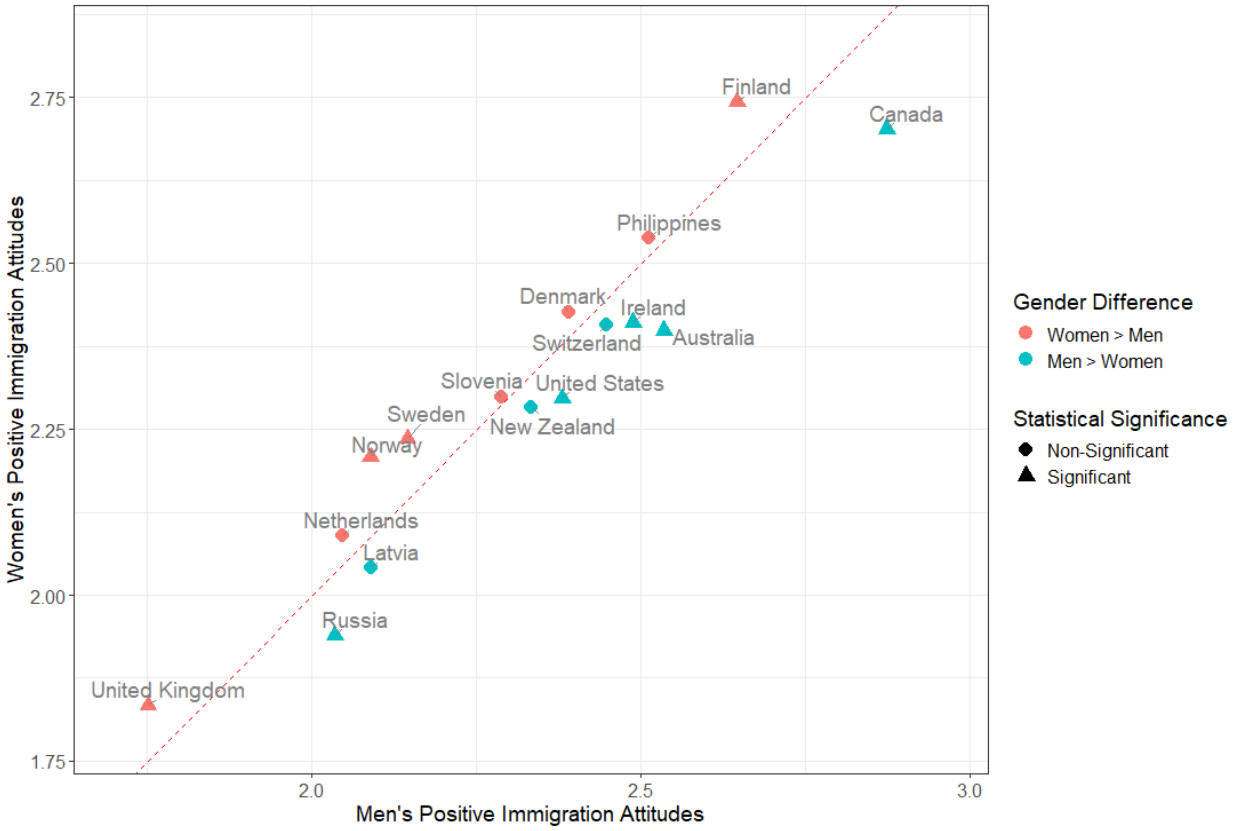
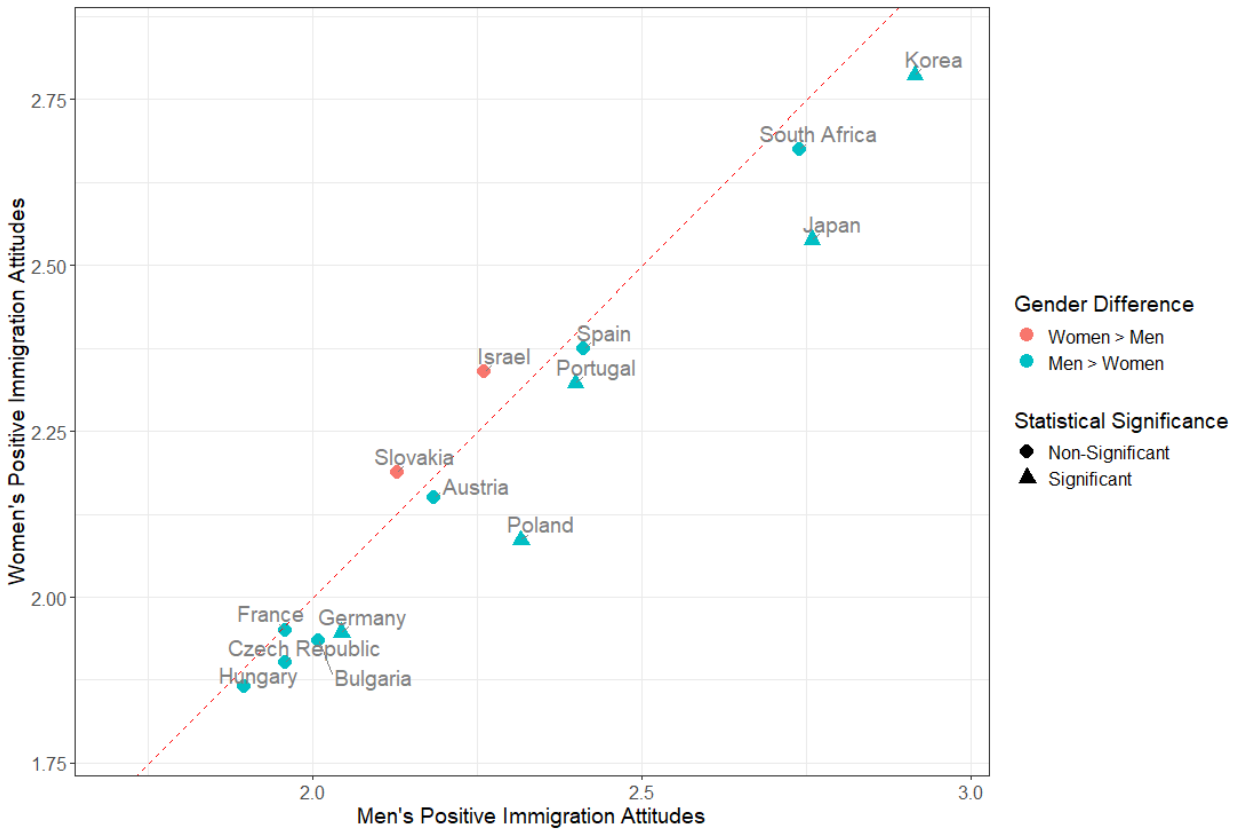


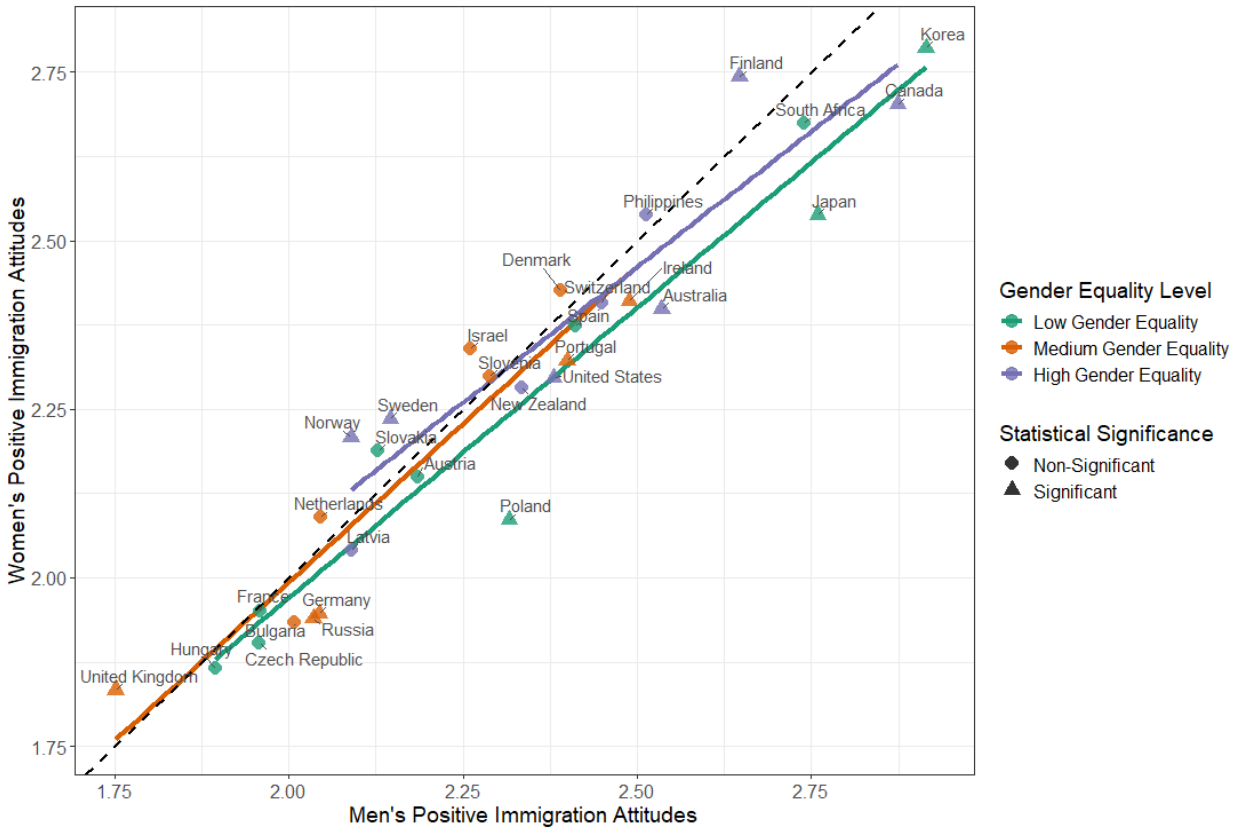
Figure 1b. Immigration Preferences in Countries with Below-Average Gender Equality (Data from WEF 2013 & ISSP 1995/2003/2013 Cumulation)



In Figure 1c, I combine both above- and below-average scored groups into a single plot with separate regression lines for terciles, rather than dividing countries into two sub-groups based on the average *Economic Participation and Opportunity* score. Countries are categorized into terciles based on the WEF Gender Inequality Index for *Economic Participation and Opportunity* scores: low gender equality (0.504-0.672), medium gender equality (0.673-0.765), and high gender equality (0.766-0.836). The plot displays mean immigration level preferences for men (x-axis) and women (y-axis) for each country, with the black dashed diagonal line representing identical immigration attitudes between men and women. Points above this line

indicate countries where women hold more positive immigration attitudes than men. Linear regression lines are fitted separately for each tercile group.

Figure 1c. Immigration Preferences by Economic Gender Equality Terciles (Data from WEF 2013 & ISSP 1995/2003/2013 Cumulation)[9]



[9] While this figure allows for cross-national comparisons of gender differences in immigration attitudes, interpreting it to compare absolute pro-immigration sentiment across countries requires caution. Because the original item measures immigration policy preferences, respondents' answers are likely influenced by their country's existing immigration policy framework and historical immigration patterns. This figure is specifically designed to illustrate gender differences in immigration attitudes across countries rather than overall national attitudes toward immigration. For example, while South Korea appears toward the top of the plot and the United Kingdom is located at the bottom, concluding that South Korea is more pro-immigration than the UK would be misleading, given that South Korea maintains one of the lowest levels of immigration among wealthy democracies, with a notably restrictive approach to immigration. This restrictive nature is evident in the country's strong emphasis on short-term foreign worker programs and its extremely limited pathways for family immigration and permanent residency (Chung 2022). Despite evolving over time, South Korea's immigration system is still largely geared toward short-term foreign workers and co-ethnics (Chung 2020; Kim 2008; Chung and Tian 2025). In this context, even responses favoring increases may reflect modest policy adjustments rather than broad immigration openness, and such modest policy adjustments might still be rather restrictive in absolute numbers of immigrant flows or compared to other developed countries with more established immigration systems and longer history of immigration.

While all three regression lines in Figure 1c display similar slopes and follow a consistent positive trajectory, examining each tercile group reveals important differences in the magnitude of gender gaps. Low gender equality countries (green line) exhibit the largest gender gaps, positioning furthest above the diagonal. Medium gender equality countries (orange line) and high gender equality countries (purple line) lie closer to the equality line. This pattern suggests that while the overall direction of the relationship between men's and women's attitudes remains consistent across institutional contexts, the magnitude of gender differences in immigration attitudes varies with levels of gender equality. Specifically, the least gender-equal societies show the strongest divergence between men's and women's immigration preferences, with women expressing notably less positive attitudes toward immigration expansion than men. In contrast, both medium and high gender equality societies demonstrate greater convergence between men's and women's attitudes, positioning closer to the diagonal line representing identical immigration support between men and women.

This preliminary analysis yields several key findings. First, the fact that only about half of the countries show statistically significant gender differences in immigration attitudes may explain why gender has not been a focal point in existing studies and why findings have yielded contrasting results (Figure 1a and 1b). More importantly, I observe a striking difference between more and less unequal countries in their immigration attitudes. When terciles are used rather than a binary division based on the average, the least gender-equal societies diverge most dramatically from the diagonal equality line, showing the largest gender gaps in immigration preferences. Specifically, in countries with the lowest levels of gender equality, women express notably less positive attitudes toward immigration than men, while countries with medium and high gender equality demonstrate greater convergence between men's and women's preferences.

These patterns raise an important question: what mechanism explains why women are less favorable toward immigration than men in the least-equal societies? The mechanism I propose—and one that is less studied compared to other important dimensions of gender inequality such as wage gaps, labor force participation rates, and underrepresentation in managerial positions— is the overlap of sectors and employment types between non-immigrant women and immigrants. Japan's distinction between regular and non-regular employment, discussed in detail later, exemplifies this dynamic. This perspective draws upon well-established scholarship examining the powerful effects of women's economic opportunities (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006, 2008, 2010; Beegle, Frankenberg, and Thomas 2001; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983).[10]

In more-equal economies, women are likely to have stable income sources and job security, which can even lead them to see immigrant workers as complementary labor they could hire as housekeepers to outsource domestic labor. By contrast, in less-equal contexts, women face compounded disadvantages. While women are generally at a disadvantage when competing for jobs with men because they are expected to leave the labor market for childbirth and child-rearing purposes (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006, 4–5), in certain contexts such as Japan, many women are at an even worse disadvantage due to additional structural factors affecting job security.

I suggest that, in contexts where women face greater labor market vulnerability, what needs further examination is how much overlap exists between non-immigrant women's labor

[10] For example, Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) demonstrate that women's bargaining power in household contexts is shaped by broader political-economic conditions, particularly their access to labor market opportunities, which in turn shape their broader political interests. Ross (2008) offers corroborating evidence that women's political engagement and influence are closely linked to their workforce participation and economic prospects. A more detailed discussion of the literature and how my theory builds upon existing studies is presented in the following section.

market opportunities and the positions immigrants would take. This consideration has two parts: first, the actual industries in which both groups are employed, and second, the employment type, which determines how easy it would be to replace existing employees with immigrants. Unfortunately, existing datasets do not provide comprehensive lists of sectors and employment types that women are more likely to occupy, and they sometimes mask the layers of gender disparity shaped by structural factors.[11] For example, 77% of Japanese women work, which exceeds the OECD average (Dalton 2022). However, the majority of employed Japanese women work in "non-regular" positions. In Japan, "regular" employees are strongly protected from layoffs and enjoy extensive benefits. Non-regular employees are exempt from such protections and benefits, making them easily replaceable. As a later section explains in greater depth, the industries with high concentrations of non-regular positions are those where women and immigrants are more likely to be hired, including the service industry.

In summary, the preliminary results presented in this section emphasize the importance of studying this topic in countries with significant gender inequality. In countries with greater gender economic inequality, men are more likely to express positive views on immigration, while women may be more hesitant due to concerns about economic competition and structural factors that limit their opportunities in the labor market. Moreover, these preliminary findings, drawn from multiple countries surveyed in the ISSP and WEF, suggest that women's immigration attitudes are influenced by broader economic and societal dynamics, particularly regarding gendered economic opportunities and participation.

[11] Even with limited datasets, however, we were still able to observe a general trend in which more economically equal societies tend to have women showing more favorable attitudes toward immigration (e.g., See Figure 1a, 1b, 1c, Appendix A1, and Appendix A2).

In the next section, I will elaborate on the theoretical conceptualization of these findings, drawing on theoretical frameworks to explore the underlying mechanisms driving these gendered attitudes toward immigration.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

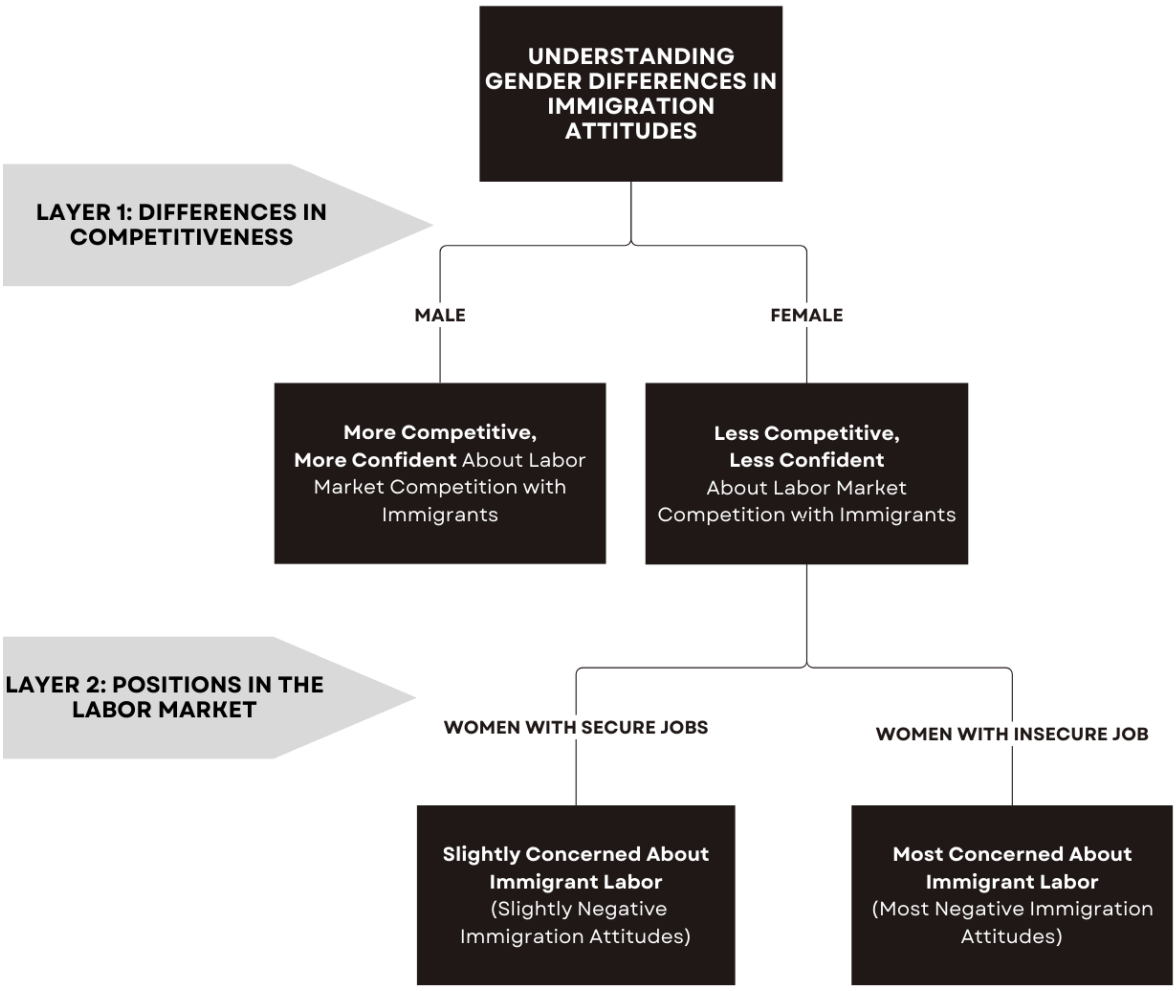
Dual-Layer Gendered Immigration Attitudes Theory

Drawing on preliminary findings from the WEF and ISSP surveys, I highlight the effect of the gendered nature of the labor market on attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. My approach focuses on the varying levels of concern about competition with immigrants, influenced by individuals' positions in the labor market. This moves beyond general trait-based explanations and underscores the importance of considering both social learning and economic factors in understanding immigration attitudes.[12]

Specifically, I introduce a new theory called dual-layer gendered immigration attitudes to enhance our understanding of the differences in immigration attitudes between men and women, as well as among women themselves. The core ideas of the theory can be summarized as follows:

[12] Moreover, I examine non-immigrants' attitudes toward immigrant men and immigrant women separately, rather than viewing immigrants as a homogeneous group or categorizing them simply by skill level. This approach, which considers the gender of both immigrants and non-immigrants, has been scarce, with a few exceptions, such as Antfolk et al. (2018) and Öblom and Antfolk (2017).

Figure 2. Theory of Dual-Layer Gendered Immigration Attitudes



This theory posits that variation in immigration attitudes between genders should be examined through two distinct layers: (1) gender differences in labor market competitiveness and (2) the vulnerable positions women occupy in the labor market. I argue that these differences do not merely reflect inherent tolerance levels or socialization experiences during formative years. Instead, a crucial aspect of gendered immigration attitudes lies in recognizing the gendered dynamics of the labor market, where women are more likely to be employed in roles at risk of displacement by immigrant workers. The two main hypotheses discussed in the following sections correspond to the two layers presented in Figure 2. I use Study 1 to test these main

hypotheses, thereby examining both Layer 1 and Layer 2 of my theory. Study 2, on the other hand, focuses specifically on testing the underlying assumption of Layer 1 regarding gender differences in competitiveness and confidence levels.

Layer One: Gender Differences in Competitiveness and Confidence

The first component of my dual-layer theory posits that men and women perceive competition with immigrants differently. Studies in economics and psychology find gender differences in levels of competitiveness and confidence (Barber and Odean 2001; Byrnes and Miller 1999; Gneezy, Leonard, and List 2009; Niederle and Vesterlund 2007; Dreber, von Essen, and Ranehill 2011). Barber and Odean (2001), for example, demonstrate men's overconfidence by using an example of men as being more confident stock investors than women. They find that men trade 45% more often than women, with single men trading 67% more frequently than single women. Most existing experimental studies on gender differences in competitiveness suggest that these gender differences often stem from men's tendency toward overconfidence (Frick 2011, 392).

Adapting these insights about men's overconfidence and gender differences in competitiveness, I contend that non-immigrant men, compared to non-immigrant women, tend to feel more favorable toward immigrants as they are more confident when it comes to competition with immigrants in the labor market. In fact, numerous studies on gender differences in competitiveness underscore the role of socio-cultural conditions fostering different socialization of boys and girls. While acknowledging that social learning during formative years outweighs inherent gender traits, I consider that women's relatively less favorable attitude toward

immigration is at least partly due to economic reasons, stemming from realistic concerns shaped by their current positions in the labor market.

Layer Two: Positions in the Labor Market

The second component of my theory focuses on women's vulnerable positions in the labor market and how these shape immigration attitudes. This represents the core idea of my theory on gendered immigration attitudes and is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the importance of individual-level economic conditions, such as concerns about labor market competition, in explaining anti-immigrant sentiment (Borjas and Freeman 1992; J. A. Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). However, while I focus on women's positions in the labor market, these positions are largely shaped by the broader institutional context. Consistent with previous research showing that gender attitudes cannot be explained by individual-level factors alone – as context and institutions matter significantly (Banaszak and Plutzer 1993; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010; Ross 2008) – the women's economic vulnerabilities I refer to need to be understood in the context of the gendered nature of the labor market.

This perspective connecting women's immigration attitudes to their labor market positions builds upon established research highlighting the influence of women's economic opportunities.[13] Studies demonstrate that women's economic empowerment enhances women's influence within the family (Beegle, Frankenberg, and Thomas 2001; Iversen and Rosenbluth

[13] Though not directly examining women's economic opportunities, another related strand of scholarship relevant to this paper focuses on gender and political participation in the Asian context. For example, Lee and Sambanis (2025) find that all-female school environments can cultivate women's civic and political participation and foster leadership ambitions. Park (2025) finds that South Korea's mixed-gender school environments tend to increase youth exposure to gender stereotypes and promote more stereotypical views of women in political roles. Meanwhile, Liu (2022) draws on the 2010 Asian Barometer Survey and demonstrates that gender gaps in political participation beyond voting persist across the region.

2006), reduces the traditional gender gap in rates of political participation (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008), and fosters more egalitarian beliefs about gender relations (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983). Other studies show that female labor force participation helps women build self-confidence, establish social networks, and learn to negotiate with men (Amin et al. 1998; Kabeer and Mahmud 2004).

However, research reveals more complex outcomes of women's labor market participation. Some studies find that women in poorly compensated positions may not realize such egalitarian outcomes (Shorrocks 2018) and that some women may move right as well (R. Clark, Khoban, and Zucker 2025). Additionally, women entering paid employment often may experience unique constraints and challenges as they manage paid work in addition to ongoing domestic responsibilities. Some are prevented from fully participating in the labor market (Goldin 2023) and local politics (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018; Dahlgaard and Hansen 2021; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997).

Based on these works emphasizing the significant role and effects of women's economic opportunities, especially those highlighting the unique challenges that women with paid labor have, I contend that gender differences in immigration preferences, where women show less favorable attitudes toward immigration, stem, at least in part, from women's distinct economic vulnerabilities rather than from inherent differences in tolerance or early socialization effects.

Integrating the Two Layers and Main Argument

Combining men's (over-)confidence shaped by social learning with the role of women's economic positions, my theory suggests that current positions in the labor market better explain women's attitudes toward immigrants than men's. For example, women may generally show less

favorability and greater concern than men when exposed to information about the economic need for immigrant workers, which can be attributed to social learning or trait-based explanations. At the same time, women in vulnerable positions in the labor market, rather than all women, may be particularly less favorable toward immigrants upon exposure to information about the economic necessity of immigrant workers. This insight is in line with an established theory that women do not inherently lack confidence or avoid risks (Frick 2011, 392).

Specifically, I propose that non-immigrant women in non-professional or low-skilled jobs are more likely to show lower confidence and reduced favorability toward immigration. While men's jobs may also be at risk of being replaced, their (over-)confidence tends to offset these concerns. Moreover, though it is not the focus of this study, I suggest that men's overconfidence may also stem from a realistic and accurate evaluation of the labor market's preference for men as employees over women. Therefore, instead of using the term "overconfidence", I use "confidence" or "(over-)confidence" in the follow sections of the paper. As suggestive evidence for this idea, I present an additional analysis of the experimental results in a later section of the paper.

Drawing on this theoretical framework, I contend that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men do not stem solely from inherent tolerance levels or early socialization effects. Instead, the dynamics in immigration attitudes can be attributed to distinct interpretations of information influenced by their positions in the labor market, where women often occupy jobs that are more vulnerable and susceptible to displacement by immigrant workers. Therefore, information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrant workers affects men and women differently, with women being more likely to perceive heightened concerns related to competition in the labor market.

Theoretical Predictions, Scope, and Hypotheses

I use Japan as the main case to examine my theoretical argument, but I consider my theory to hold some degree of generalizability as long as the main scope conditions are met. It may apply to countries characterized by (1) developed economies that attract economic immigrants from other countries, (2) significant economic inequality between genders, with women predominantly occupying lower-paid and less secure positions, and (3) substantial labor shortages that influence the implementation and revision of immigration policies, leading non-immigrants to primarily view immigrants as economic contributors rather than family immigrants.

My theory and argument about gendered immigration attitudes and the influence of gendered labor market lead to several observable implications. Hypothesis 1 predicts gendered reactions, suggesting that non-immigrant men will more likely increase in their favorability toward immigrants than non-immigrant women when exposed to stimuli.

> *H1*: Men and women will respond differently to information about immigrants' economic contributions, with men showing greater increases in pro-immigration attitudes than women.

However, these anticipated outcomes alone do not establish a clear relationship between gendered immigration attitudes and gendered labor-market positions. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, Hypothesis 2 further investigates these gendered responses and directly examines the correlation between non-immigrant women's status in the labor market and their attitudes toward immigration.

H2: Women in non-professional occupations will show greater hostility toward immigrants than men in similar positions, when exposed to information about non-professional immigrants.

CASE IN POINT: JAPAN

I test my argument in Japan due to (1) the high levels of inequality between men and women and (2) the country's status as a significant destination for immigrants from other Asian countries. Japan serves as a compelling case for examining the intersection of gender, immigration attitudes, and labor market dynamics. In this section, I will examine Japan in the context of gender inequality and as a destination country for immigration to further explain why it serves as an appropriate case for my research.

Japan and Gender Economic Inequality

Gender inequality, especially in economic opportunities, is a deeply rooted issue in Japan, standing out among developed countries.[14] As of 2023, Japan ranked 125th of 146 countries for unequal economic participation and opportunity between men and women (World Economic Forum 2023). In 2020, for example, Japan ranked second among the OECD countries for the largest gender wage gap for the 19th consecutive year (OECD Data 2021).

Scholars have pointed out a combination of structural, historical, and cultural factors to explain Japan's notably large economic participation inequalities and gender wage gap. In part,

[14] Japan's severe gender inequality extends beyond economic participation to political representation. As of 2016, women held only 12.6% of elected national legislative positions, ranking Japan 164th out of 193 countries globally and placing it as the second-lowest among OECD countries after Turkey (Kage, Rosenbluth, and Tanaka 2019). Even though the political underrepresentation of Japanese women is not the core focus of this paper, the parallel between women's concentration in precarious positions and their absence from political leadership positions reflects a broader pattern of gender-based exclusion from positions of economic and political power in Japanese society.

traditional gender roles, including women's "socially mandated family roles", persist (Kage, Rosenbluth, and Tanaka 2019), leading to the underrepresentation of Japanese women in non-human-service fields such as research, law, and engineering (Yamaguchi 2019). Additionally, the absence of supportive policies, including flexible working hours that accommodate childcare, exacerbates the issue (Ikeda 2019). An example of how traditional and structural factors combine to affect the gender gap is the unique promotion system in Japan. Typically, promotions occur slowly, and significant wage differences only become apparent in the later stages of careers (Tagami 2023). Given that many Japanese women still leave their employment when having or raising children, women tend not to receive the advantages of such a seniority-based promotion system (Ikeda 2019; Tagami 2023).

Japanese women are underrepresented in high-status, managerial positions, and high-paying professions, even though Japanese women are more highly educated than Japanese men.[15] Those women who hold managerial positions tend to receive lower wages compared to men in the same roles. As of 2016, for example, Japanese women held slightly over 6% of the department director positions or equivalent, and approximately 9% of section heads or equivalent (Yamaguchi 2019, 27). According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)'s white paper published in 2021, the average wage of Japanese women would be around 85% of men's if women held the same managerial positions, and around 79% if they had the same duration of service years as men (Tagami 2023, 59).

What worsens gender disparities in the labor market are the career interruptions as well as the prevalence of "non-regular" employment among women. This disparity can be easily masked by the fact that 77% of Japanese women work, a figure that exceeds the OECD average (Dalton

[15] As of 2024, Japanese women aged 25-34 are more highly educated than men, with 69% holding a tertiary qualification compared to 62% of men (OECD 2024).

2022). The participation of women in the Japanese labor force by age groups is characterized by an M-shaped pattern, which reflects decreased employment rates during child-rearing years, and the majority of women who return to work after career interruptions are relegated to "non-regular" employment positions (Inoue, Nishikitani, and Tsurugano 2016). "Regular" workers in Japan refer to employees who are employed on indefinite terms, strongly protected from layoffs, receive wage increases (wage premiums) until approximately 50 years old, and do not have specific job obligations (Yamaguchi 2019). In contrast, "non-regular" workers are employed on fixed-term contracts with lower wages, usually paid on an hourly or daily basis, and do not receive the benefits provided to regular workers. Examining over-time trends, female educational attainment in Japan has increased significantly, with the percentage of women advancing to four-year universities rising from 13% in 1986 to 51% in 2020, and labor force participation among working-age women rising from around 50% in 1986 to 70% in 2020 (Komatsu 2023). However, the percentage of Japanese women employed in non-regular positions also increased at similarly high rates, from 32% in 1986 to 56% in 2020,[16] while only 14% of employed Japanese men are non-regular workers as of 2020 (Yamaguchi 2019; Dalton 2022; Komatsu 2023). It is also extremely difficult to change one's career from being non-regular to regular, which, in turn, leads many Japanese women find themselves in what Inoue, Nishikitani, and Tsurugano (2016, 522) describe as "a vicious cycle of precarious employment in spite of their desire to be regular workers."

How, then, would the fact that many Japanese women are in precarious positions in the labor market actually affect their attitudes toward immigration? I propose that the overlap of industries and types of employment where immigrant workers and Japanese women are likely to

[16] Among female workers, those aged 55 or older (i.e., those who have returned to the labor market after child-rearing years) and single mothers have a particularly higher ratio of non-regular employment (Takenobu 2021).

work is one important factor to consider, alongside other dimensions of gender inequality including wage gaps, labor force participation rates, and underrepresentation in managerial positions. The top three industries where Japanese women account for a large proportion are "medical, health care and welfare," "accommodations, eating and drinking services," and "living-related and personal services and amusement services" (Takahashi 2023). The industries with higher percentages of non-regular workers are the "accommodations, eating and drinking services" and "living related and personal services and amusement services", and the industries with the largest absolute numbers of non-regular workers are "wholesale and retail trade," "medical, healthcare and welfare," and "manufacturing" (Takenobu 2021). While different government ministries conducting these surveys use slightly different terms and boundaries for categorizing sector/industry names, many of these industries appear in the rankings of the industries where immigrant workers (foreign workers) are most concentrated. As of the end of October 2024, "manufacturing", "service industry", and "wholesale and retail" were the top three industries with highest foreign workers employed (厚生労働省 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) 2023).[17]

These combined factors—Japanese women's concentration in vulnerable non-regular positions, career interruption patterns that limit advancement opportunities, and sectoral overlap with foreign worker employment—make Japan a compelling case for testing my theoretical framework about how gendered labor market positions shape immigration attitudes.

[17] 26% of registered foreign workers were employed in manufacturing, 15.4% in service industry, and 13% in wholesale and retail (厚生労働省 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) 2023).

Japan as a Destination Country

Asia is the fastest-growing region of international migration, having added more international migrants than any other region between 2000 and 2019 (International Organization for Migration 2019). Japan, with its developed economy, has become a significant destination for immigrants, primarily from other Asian countries. The foreign-resident population in Japan has seen a dramatic increase over the last few decades, growing from 0.7 percent in 1990 to 2.23 percent in 2018.[18] Foreign workers are estimated to account for 2.2 percent of Japan's total labor force in 2018 (Hong and Schneider 2020), still relatively small but representing dramatic growth when examining historical patterns.

In the early 1950s, Japan enacted the Immigration Control Order and the Alien Registration Act (the 1952 Immigration Control Act). The 1952 Immigration Control Act, which was designed to serve as the basis for postwar immigration policy and discourage the permanent settlement of unskilled foreign workers, remained largely unchanged until the late 1980s. It is still considered the foundation of modern Japanese immigration policy (Green 2017a; The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2016). Labor shortages have often been an important factor driving implementation and revision of Japanese immigration policy. By the 1970s and 1980s, many unskilled/manual-labor jobs were already facing shortages. The government began implementing new policy programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a result.[19] During the 2000s, shortages of care workers and nurses became a serious problem as the birthrate declined and population aging worsened. As part of these efforts, the government recruited nurses and

[18] Sources: Green (2017a); Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/newpage_03337.html (Accessed July 23, 2021)); Japan Macro Advisors (https://www.japanmacroadvisors.com/page/category/economic-indicators/labor-markets/immigration-to-japan/ (Accessed July 23, 2021))

[19] For example, the foreign worker skills training system in 1993 led to increased inflow of (mostly unskilled) foreign laborers by allowing domestic enterprises to employ short-term foreign workers from other Asian countries (Green 2017a; The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training 2016).

care workers from other Asian countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia through bilateral Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) (Peng 2016; Suzuki 2007).

These policy developments have resulted in continued growth in Japan's foreign population, as demonstrated by the most recent official data. Based on June 2024 data from Japan's Immigration Services Agency (2024), Japan's foreign resident population reached 3,588,956 people, representing a 5.2 percent increase (177,964 people) from the previous year-end and marking a new historical high. By national origin, the top 10 countries are China, Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines, Brazil, Nepal, Indonesia, Myanmar, Taiwan, and the U.S., with 49.5 percent of foreign residents being female. The composition by status of residence reveals the impact of Japan's evolving immigration policies on different migrant categories. Permanent Residents (永住者) remains the most common category (902,203, 25.1 percent), followed by Technical Intern Training (技能実習) (425,714, 11.9 percent) and Technical/Humanities/International Business (技術・人文知識・国際業務) (394,295, 11.0 percent). Though smaller than these top three categories, Specified Skilled Workers (特定技能) is the fastest-growing category (251,747), comprising 7.0 percent of the foreign resident population but increasing by 20.8 percent compared to the previous year. Similarly, the second and third largest status groups (Technical Intern Training and Technical/Humanities/International Business) also increased substantially by 5.2 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively. In contrast, Permanent Residents increased by only 1.2 percent, marking one of the lowest growth rates. This pattern reflects how long-term immigration and permanent

settlement to Japan "remains relatively exclusionary", as its immigration policy primarily focuses on accepting short-term immigrant workers (Green 2017a).

Even so, limited scholarly attention to immigration in Japan and Asia more generally is puzzling given that Japan's foreign resident population continues to grow and engages different parts of Asia through diverse visa categories and policy programs. Existing theories of immigration attitudes, which are largely based on studies in traditional Western immigrant-receiving countries, may not be entirely applicable to non-Western contexts like Japan.[20] Prior research on immigration attitudes in Japan highlights an important aspect - narratives of ethnic-cultural homogeneity. Some studies argue that the perception of the foreign population as a threat to the majority's cultural and ethnic identity is a key determinant of attitudes toward immigrants in Japan (Nagayoshi 2009; Chung 2010; Green 2017b; Green and Kadoya 2015). Others examine how narratives about ethnic-cultural homogeneity affect immigration policies, and find that those narratives often result in preferential treatments for co-ethnics over non-coethnic foreigners (Hein 2012; Komai 2000; Skeldon 2006). These studies elucidate a significant aspect of immigration attitudes and immigration policymaking, especially considering that narratives of ethnic-cultural homogeneity still persist not only in Japan but also in other East Asian countries that are relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and culture, such as Taiwan and South Korea (B. Lee, Choi, and Seo 2014; Tsai 2011; Chung 2010).

Nonetheless, the relative absence of economic explanations remains notable and puzzling for several reasons. First, employment remains the primary reason for international migrants

[20] For instance, when considering the commonly used distinction between high-skilled and low-skilled immigrants in the immigration literature, it is important to note that the proportion of high-skilled and white-collar immigrants in Japan is relatively low. Studies and statistics show that immigrant workers in Japan are mostly employed in non-professional sectors such as hospitality and manufacturing (Morita 2017; 厚生労働省 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) 2023). Furthermore, the term used for immigrant workers, gaikokujin rōdōsha (外国人労働者), is generally not applied to foreigners in professional or highly skilled jobs. Both government reports and polls commonly use the term "foreign workers", without making a distinction between low and high-skilled workers.

entering and staying in Japan for extended periods (Immigration Services Agency of Japan 2019). Second, immigration policies in Japan have long focused on economic imperatives, such as addressing labor shortages (Peng 2016, 10). Third, while ethnicity plays a significant role in policy, it may not be the sole explanation for immigration attitudes in Japan. What is also puzzling about studies on immigration attitudes in Japan is the relatively lesser emphasis on gender, despite the country's long-standing issues with gender inequality and its significant female foreign population. The female foreign population in Japan is notable, especially in light of its unique historical context. Female (undocumented) foreign workers initially entered Japan earlier than their male counterparts (Sellek 1996). Their population, particularly in the age group of 15-20, was often larger than that of males in the early 1990s (Sellek 1996). More recently, Japan's rapidly aging society has necessitated an increased number of care workers, leading to another influx of female foreigners (Asis and Carandang 2020).[21] All of this leads to the need for a greater focus on gender and women in studying immigration-related issues in Japan.

Then, how generalizable are my theory and argument to other contexts and other countries? This is a challenging question that a single study can rarely answer comprehensively. Nevertheless, I consider my theory to hold some degree of generalizability when certain scope conditions are met, as discussed in the previous section. The theory's predictions should be most applicable in advanced economies characterized by (1) significant economic immigration, (2) marked gender inequalities in employment security and wages, and (3) labor shortages that shape both immigration policy and public perceptions of immigrants as economic actors. Under these structural conditions, the dual-layer mechanism of gendered confidence differences and women's

[21] As of 2022, over 50% of registered foreigners in Japan are female, and 45% of the newcomers are women (出入国在留管理庁 (Immigration Services Agency) 2023, 2022).

labor market vulnerabilities should produce similar patterns of immigration attitudes across different contexts.

To explore this generalizability, I tested the theory's applicability beyond Japan by conducting an online survey with embedded experiments on a nationally representative U.S. sample—using a design similar to Study 1 from the Japanese case. While Japan and the U.S. differ substantially in their immigration contexts—the U.S. has a longer history of family-based immigration and accepts more asylum seekers than Japan, the U.S. nevertheless meets the first two theoretical criteria. As a developed economy with a gender wage gap above the OECD average, the U.S. provides a useful comparative case for testing whether the core mechanisms identified in Japan operate in a context with greater (though still imperfect) gender equality. The results provide partial support for my theory on the relationship between gendered immigration attitudes and individual economic factors, particularly that vulnerable status in the labor market better explains women's immigration attitudes compared to men's.[22]

INFORMATION ABOUT IMMIGRANT LABOR NECESSITY & THE ROLE OF THE CITIZEN'S JOB TYPE

Study 1: Survey Experiment on a Japanese Sample (September-October 2023)[23]

I conducted a survey with embedded experiments on a nationally representative sample of Japanese nationals from September 21 to October 2, 2023. The sample consists of 1,234 Japanese adults who hold citizenship and currently reside in Japan, recruited via Cint, an online platform.[24] Participants were randomly assigned to read one of three articles – a control and two experimental conditions ("Professional" immigration and "Non-professional" immigration

[22] The U.S. survey results are provided in Appendix K.
[23] This study has received IRB approval at UCLA (IRB-23-1285).
[24] The sample is representative of the census with respect to age, gender, and region.

conditions, respectively).[25] In each of the two treatment conditions, participants were presented with a mock news article emphasizing the need to accept more immigrant workers. The two mock articles closely resembled the content that Japanese nationals would typically encounter in news coverage about immigrants.[26] The primary distinction between the treatments was the focus on foreign human talent (高度外国人材 [koudo gaikoku jinzai]) versus foreign workers (外国人労働者 [gaikokujin rōdōsha]), which, in a more indirect translation, could imply professional/white-collar immigrant workers versus non-professional immigrant workers. Importantly for the outcome measures, both treatments contained no gender, racial, or ethnic cues.[27]

The headline of the "professional" immigration treatment was 'Low birthrate, aging population, and desperate need for *high-level foreign human talent*'. The headline of the "non-professional" immigration treatment read 'Low birthrate, aging population, and desperate need for human resources… *Essential use of foreign workers*'.[28] The "professional" immigration article mentions white-collar and high-skilled jobs such as business administration/management, research, legal/accounting/technical services. Also, the term 'high-level foreign talent'/'high-level foreign resources' (高度外国人材) [*kōdō gaikoku jinzai*], that typically refers to highly

[25] Subjects in the control group read a mock article about a random topic, specifically water consumption. All three articles provided to subjects were written in Japanese. See Appendix B for the mock articles.
[26] To ensure a strong resemblance between the actual news briefs and the mock versions, I conducted text analyses of Japanese newspaper articles. See Appendix C for details.
[27] To understand which types of immigrants participants were thinking of while reading, they were asked in the post-treatment section of the survey about the gender and origin of the immigrants they had in mind. More details of these post-treatment questions are presented in Appendix E.
[28] Throughout the survey, I avoided using the terms "high-skill" and "low-skill" directly in the survey for two reasons. First, the low- and high-skilled immigrant dichotomy is not without its challenges (Kurti 2020; Richwine 2018), especially in the Japan. For example, there is debate over labeling certain occupations, particularly nursing care (介護) [kaigo], as "low-skilled" or "simple labor" (単純労働) [tanjyunrōdō] (宮下公美子 2018). Second, the terms "high-skilled" and "low-skilled" are rarely used in reference to foreign workers (immigrant workers) in Japan.

educated immigrant workers in professional or highly skilled jobs in Japanese, was also used. For the "non-professional" immigration treatment, the term 'foreign worker' (外国人労働者) [*gaikokujin rōdōsha*] was used to denote low-skilled immigrant workers. Also, industries such as manufacturing, construction, agriculture, nursing care, and shipbuilding were mentioned.[29]

Immediately following the stimulus, subjects were asked a series of questions concerning immigration and immigrants. This included feeling thermometer items for (1) immigrant men and (2) immigrant women, which serve as the main outcome variable.[30] In my analysis, the status of non-professional jobs served as a proxy for women's vulnerable positions in the labor market and functions as an explanatory variable for testing H2. I choose non-professional job status over non-regular position because gender economic inequalities and women's labor market vulnerabilities encompass multiple dimensions beyond non-regular employment, including wage gaps and underrepresentation in managerial positions among regular employees, as discussed in earlier sections, and I consider non-professional job status better captures the multifaceted nature of women's economic vulnerability in the labor market. This non-professional job status variable is based on responses regarding respondents' occupations. I created an indicator variable for non-professional jobs and unemployment.[31]

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[29] Additionally, in Japan, the terms "foreign worker" and "foreigner" (外国人) [gaikokujin], rather than "immigration" (移民) [imin] or "immigrant(s)" (移住者) [ijūsha], are commonly used when referring to the foreign population residing in Japan (Hein 2012).

[30] The preamble and question were phrased as follows: *I'd like to ask you a few more questions about foreign immigrants who have come to live or work in Japan. What do you think about the following immigrants? Please use a thermometer to indicate your feelings. 0 degrees means "strong dislike" and 100 degrees means "strong like": (1) Foreign Women, (2) Foreign Men.* The descriptive statistics for the variables of interest and other details are presented in Appendix D.

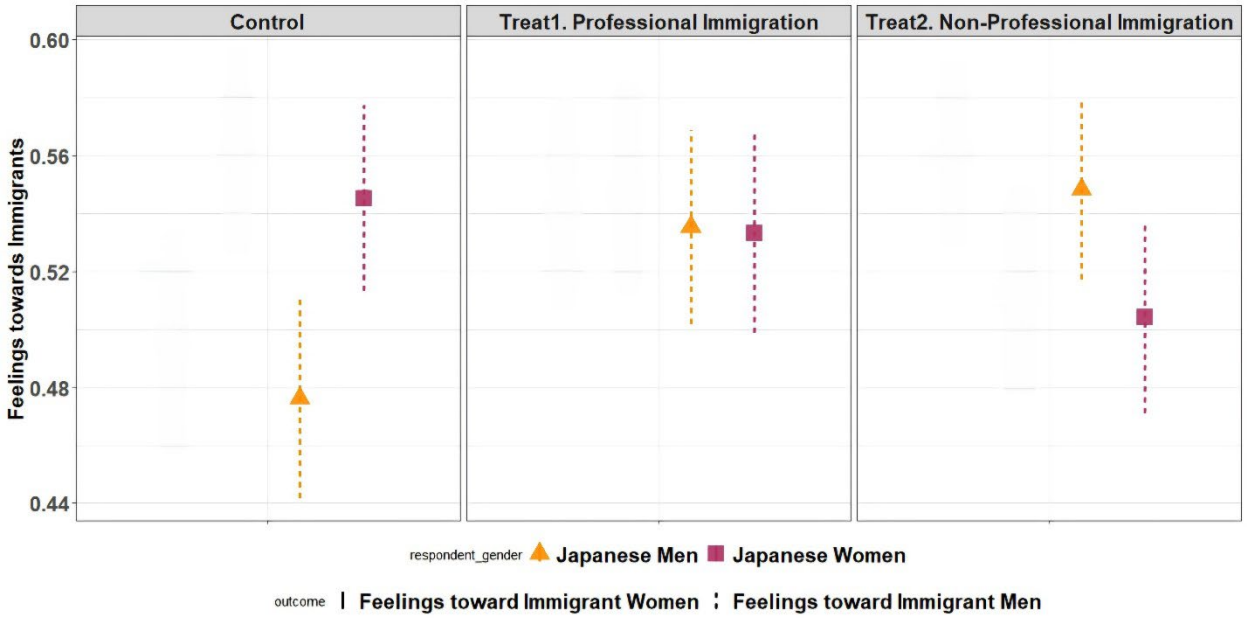
[31] For more details about the job categorization, please refer to Appendix D2.

Study 1: Results

Figure 3 displays the average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese men and women toward immigrant women (Figure 3a) and immigrant men (Figure 3b) across the survey experiment's three experimental conditions. Examining the box on the left reveals that Japanese men, compared to Japanese women, exhibit less favorable feelings toward both immigrant women and immigrant men in the control group. In both cases, the gender differences are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that, in the absence of intervention, non-immigrant women are more likely to be tolerant of immigrants than their male counterparts, diverging from common observations in previous studies.

Figure 3a. Mean Scores on Feeling Thermometer toward *Immigrant Women* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender

Figure 3b. Mean Scores on Feeling Thermometer toward *Immigrant Men* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender



Note: The plotted points indicate the mean scores on the feeling thermometer toward immigrant women and immigrant men, differentiated by respondent gender and experimental conditions. The original scores range from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest) on the Y-axis, but they were scaled to range from 0 to 1 for analysis. The vertical lines represent the 95% confidence intervals of these means.

My focus now shifts to testing H1, which predicts a gendered treatment effect, with Japanese men more likely to show increased favorability toward immigrants than Japanese women. Looking across the experimental conditions, the average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese men toward immigrant women increase in both professional immigration and non-professional immigration treatment conditions. These average feeling thermometer scores increase from 0.50 to 0.54 in the professional treatment and to 0.56 in the non-professional treatment, with both differences being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively). In substantive terms, these differences represent Japanese men being 4 percentage points more positive toward immigrant women in the professional condition and 6 percentage points more positive in the non-professional condition on the original 100-point scale (note that

the original 0-100 measure was rescaled to 0-1 for analysis). Similarly, the average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese men toward immigrant men increase from 0.48 to 0.54 in the professional treatment and to 0.55 in the non-professional treatment, again with both changes being statistically significant ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$, respectively). This suggests that information highlighting the necessity of both professional and non-professional immigrant workers would lead to a notable improvement in Japanese men's favorability toward immigrants of both genders.

This trend, however, is not observed among Japanese women. In fact, the mean scores of Japanese women in both subfigures reveal an opposite pattern. The average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese women decrease, particularly in the non-professional immigration condition. Examining Figure 3a again, the average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese women toward immigrant women slightly decrease from 0.56 to 0.55 in the professional treatment and further to 0.51 in the non-professional treatment. While the decrease observed in the professional treatment is not statistically significant, the change in the non-professional treatment is ($p<0.05$), suggesting a strong effect of the message emphasizing non-professional immigration on women's feelings toward immigrant women. The same message, however, does not appear to exert the same effect on Japanese women's feelings toward immigrant men (Figure 3b). Japanese women's favorability toward immigrant men decreases in both treatment conditions and shows a steeper drop in the non-professional immigration condition. Nonetheless, even this steeper change is not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2 predicts a positive and statistically significant correlation between holding a non-professional job and less favorability toward immigrants among Japanese women, specifically in the non-professional treatment scenario, while no such correlation is expected among Japanese men. Figure 4 displays the predicted values of Japanese women's feelings

toward immigrant women (Figure 4a) and immigrant men (Figure 4b), categorized by respondent's job type across different conditions.

The results presented in Figure 4 suggest a significant impact of holding non-professional job status on Japanese women's perspectives toward immigrant women, a pattern not evident among Japanese men. Looking at Figure 4a, the average feeling thermometer scores of Japanese women in non-professional jobs decrease slightly from 0.57 in the control condition to 0.56 in the professional immigration scenario, but drop significantly to 0.47 in the non-professional immigration scenario. In other words, in a neutral setting, Japanese women with non-professional jobs do not inherently exhibit hostility toward immigrant women compared to those Japanese women in professional roles. However, their feelings significantly degrade – 10 percentage points less favorable – when exposed to information emphasizing the need for non-professional immigrant labor.

Turning to the predicted values of their feelings toward immigrant men, similar patterns emerge (Figure 4b). While Japanese women's attitudes toward immigrant men did not change significantly in either experimental condition (see Figure 3b), a different trend emerges when Japanese women's feelings are examined separately by job type. In Figure 4, the predicted values of Japanese women's feeling thermometer scores toward immigrant men among Japanese women in non-professional jobs decrease from 0.57 in the control condition to 0.54 in the professional treatment, and further to 0.47 in the non-professional treatment condition. This suggests that, in the absence of a specific prompt, Japanese women in non-professional jobs do not exhibit stronger hostility toward immigrant men. However, their feelings worsen significantly upon exposure to information emphasizing the demand for non-professional immigrant labor.

Figure 4a. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Women*'s Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Women*

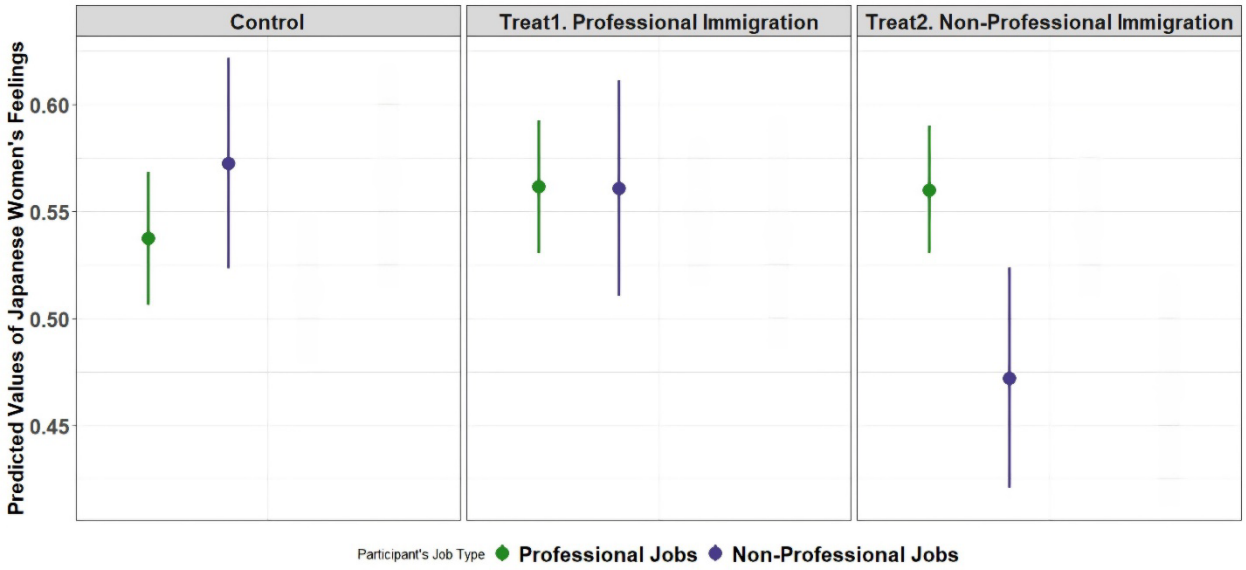


Figure 4b. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Women*'s Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Men*

Note 1: The two plots above show the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimates from a regression model that includes controls for age, education, income level, and other variables. The plotted dots represent the predicted values of Japanese women's feelings toward immigrant women (Figure 4a) and immigrant men (Figure 4b), categorized by the respondent's job type. The vertical lines represent the 95\% confidence intervals of these predicted values. The original scores range from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest) on the Y-axis, but they were scaled to range from 0 to 1. For the complete regression results, including these controls, please refer to Appendix F.

Note 2: Professional jobs include management, administrative, (semi-) professional, government employees, military personnel, clerical work, as well as retired individuals, students, and full-time homemakers. Non-professional jobs are sales and service industry jobs, agriculture/forestry/livestock/fishery jobs, production/transportation industry jobs/manual laborers, self-employed, (semi-) skilled laborers, unemployment, and other uncategorized occupations. Please see Appendix D2 for more details.

Such patterns are not observed among Japanese men. Looking at Figure 5, which displays the same analysis but for the feelings of Japanese men, the disparity in Japanese men's feelings toward immigrant women (Figure 5a) and immigrant men (Figure 5b) across different job types remains relatively stable across all conditions. This suggests that Japanese men, unlike their female counterparts, maintain similar feelings toward immigrant women and immigrant men regardless of their own job types and the types of jobs described for immigrants in the treatment articles.

Figure 5a. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Men*'s Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Women*

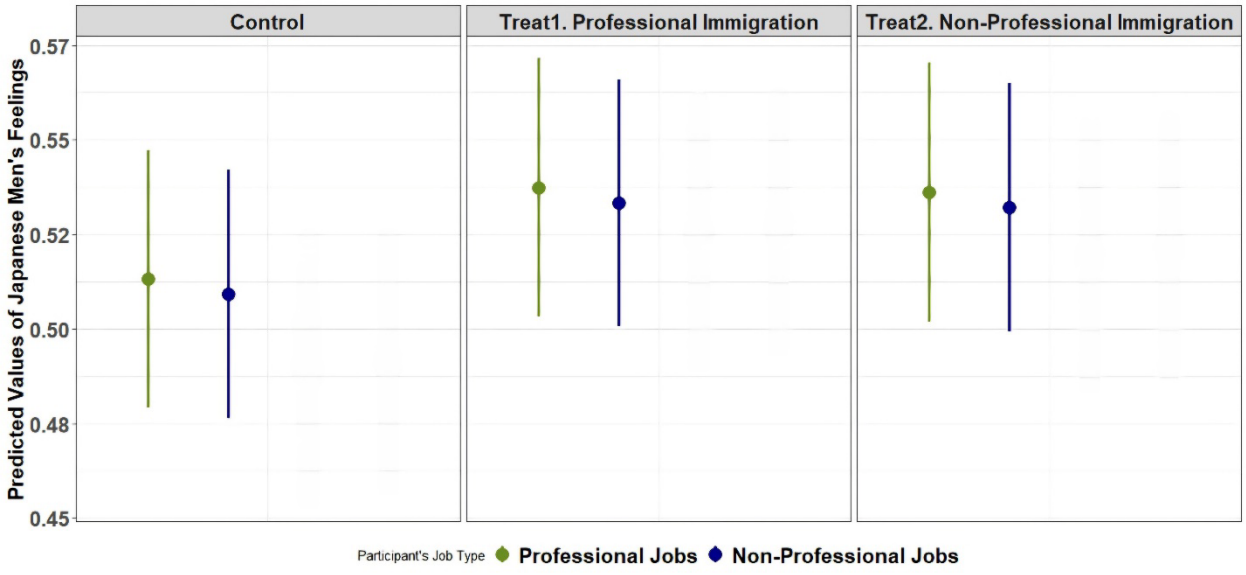


Figure 5b. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Men*'s Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Men*

Note 1: The two plots above show the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimates from a regression model that includes controls for age, education, income level, and other variables. The plotted dots represent the predicted values of Japanese men's feelings toward immigrant women (Figure 5a) and immigrant men (Figure 5b), categorized by the respondent's job type. The vertical lines represent the 95\% confidence intervals of these predicted values. The original scores range from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest) on the Y-axis, but they were scaled to range from 0 to 1. For the complete regression results, including these controls, please refer to Appendix F.
Note 2: Professional jobs include management, administrative, (semi-) professional, government employees, military personnel, clerical work, as well as retired individuals, students, and full-time homemakers. Non-professional jobs are sales and service industry jobs, agriculture/forestry/livestock/fishery jobs, production/transportation industry jobs/manual laborers, self-employed, (semi-) skilled laborers, unemployment, and other uncategorized occupations. Please see Appendix D2 for more details.

Study 1: Summary and Implications

The findings from an original survey with embedded experiments involving 1,234 Japanese nationals are summarized as follows. First, contrary to some previous studies (Mayda 2006; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Valentova and Alieva 2014; François and Magni-Berton 2013), women tend to hold more favorable attitudes toward immigrants compared to their male counterparts when no intervention is present. Second, there is a notable difference in the direction of treatment effects between Japanese men and women; they are indeed the opposite. News briefs emphasizing the necessity of both professional and non-professional immigrant

workers tend to increase Japanese men's favorability toward both immigrant men and women. Conversely, Japanese women exhibit decreased favorability toward immigrant women - but not toward immigrant men - in the second experimental condition where the need for non-professional immigrant workers is highlighted.

Specifically, the findings from Figure 3 strongly support Hypothesis 1, which predicts that information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrants could create gendered immigration attitudes, with Japanese men more likely to increase their favorability toward immigrants compared to Japanese women. Additionally, Japanese women's favorability toward immigrants, especially immigrant women, decrease significantly when the message highlighted the economic necessity of non-professional immigrants. These gendered effects of treatments suggest that Japanese women may feel heightened concerns about potential labor market competition against immigrants, especially non-professional immigrants which may be related to their tendency to hold non-professional jobs. In contrast, Japanese men do not exhibit similar concerns about either professional or non-professional immigrants. This difference is reflected in their increased favorability toward both immigrant men and women when exposed to such information.

Next, the results presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5 lend strong support to Hypothesis 2, predicting a positive and statistically significant correlation between Japanese women's non-professional job status and hostility toward immigrants when exposed to information about non-professional immigrants. This finding provides a direct test of Hypothesis 2 and underscores the importance of individual-level economic factors and the implications of women's vulnerable positions in the labor market. Specifically, I find that non-professional job status is significantly

associated with decreased favorability toward immigrants – both female and male immigrants – among Japanese women, whereas no such correlation is found among Japanese men.

These findings collectively provide evidence supporting my theory regarding gendered immigration attitudes and the differing effects of vulnerable status in the labor market on men and women. One limitation of these results, however, is that it is hard to determine what explains Japanese men's attitudes toward immigrants, specifically the increased favorability in the treatment conditions. This could be due to men feeling (over-)confident about potential competition with immigrants in the labor market, as my theory predicts. However, it is also possible that Japanese men increase their favorability because they care more about the nation's economy and feel that immigration helps the national economy when exposed to stimuli. To address this, I conducted another original survey to directly investigate the relationship between immigration attitudes and confidence levels.

CONCERNS ABOUT COMPETITION WITH IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOR MARKET

Study 2: Survey Experiment on a Japanese Sample (May 2024)[32]

To test one of the core assumptions of my theory and address the limitation of the results from Study 1, I conducted another original survey using a sample from Japan. Specifically, the experiment embedded in the survey serves two purposes: first, to test the applicability of men's confidence in the context of immigration; second, to examine how information about immigrant workers affects individuals' concerns about potential competition in the labor market, as well as gender differences in feelings of confidence or concern about such competition.

[32] This study has received received IRB approval at UCLA (IRB-23-1285 and pre-registered on Open Science Framework (OSF.io).

Study 2, another original survey with embedded experiments, involved a nationally representative sample of 1,427 Japanese individuals, recruited via Cint, an online platform.[33] After collecting demographic information through pre-treatment questions, subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) Control condition,[34] (2) Recent Increase in Skilled Immigration Inflow ("Skilled" immigration condition), (3) Recent Increase in Unskilled Immigration Inflow ("Unskilled" immigration condition). The headline of the "skilled" immigration treatment was "Number of Foreign Residents in Japan Reaches Record High of 3.41 Million, Sharp Increase in Highly Skilled Foreign Talent". For the "unskilled" immigration treatment, the headline was "Number of Foreign Residents in Japan Reaches Record High of 3.41 Million, Sharp Increase in Foreign Workers". Both articles highlighted the record-high number of foreign residents in Japan and included a short anecdote about a business that hired foreign workers due to labor shortage. In the "skilled" immigration article, the anecdote featured a medium-sized semiconductor company. An increase in foreigners working in specialized and technical fields was also discussed. In the "unskilled" immigration treatment, the anecdote focused on a restaurant, with mentions of sectors such as services, manufacturing, and food/beverage/accommodation.

Unlike Study 1, real news articles served as treatments for all three conditions in Study 2. Therefore, the distinction between "professional" and "non-professional" jobs discussed in Study 1 is not as clear-cut in Study 2.[35] The information presented in these treatments, including statistics, is derived directly from real news briefs, though I adjusted certain details such as the type of industry or business mentioned in anecdotal examples. Another difference between these

[33] The sample, collected from May 14 to May 18, 2024, is representative of the census in terms of age and gender.
[34] Subjects in the control group read an article about a random topic: the adequate amount of exercise.
[35] For instance, in the first treatment ("Skilled" condition), the discussion covers both "technical immigrant workers" and "foreign talent," a term often used to refer to highly educated foreigners employed in professional positions.

two news briefs and those used in Study 1 was that the news briefs used in Study 2 placed greater emphasis on reporting the increasing number of foreign residents and immigrant workers rather than advocating for the necessity of accepting more immigrant workers.[36] These articles did not contain gender, racial, or racial/ethnic cues.[37] The main outcome of Study 2 was the level of concern reported by Japanese respondents (i.e., non-immigrants), which indicates one's level of confidence in competing with immigrant workers in the labor market. The exact wording of the question was, *If you were preparing for a job, how worried would you be about competing with the following foreigner(s) in the job market? If you gave a score of 0 for "not at all concerned" and 100 for "very concerned", how many points would you give?: (1) Foreign Women, (2) Foreign Men*. I rescaled the responses to a continuous range from 0 to 1 where 1 represents "*very concerned*". Building on the findings from Study 1 and the foundational premise of my theory, I anticipate observing gendered effects of the stimuli in Study 2. Japanese men, often confident about competition, would likely exhibit decreased concerns upon exposure to stimuli. Japanese women, on the other hand, are expected to show unchanged or increased concerns upon exposure, especially in the "unskilled" immigration condition.

Study 2: Results and Implications

Figure 6 displays predicted values of competition concerns with immigrant women (Figure 6a) and immigrant men (Figure 6b) across different conditions and participant genders, derived from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis (details in Appendix J). The Y-axis represents the range of predicted values of competition concerns.

[36] More details regarding the survey, including the news briefs used in each condition, are provided in Appendix G.
[37] Nevertheless, I asked participants what types of immigrants they were thinking of while reading the news briefs. Similar to the findings of Study 1, a majority in both treatments reported thinking of male immigrants in terms of gender and Southeast Asian immigrants in terms of origin/race/ethnicity. More details regarding these post-treatment questions are provided in Appendix I.

Figure 6a. Predicted Values of Competition Concerns with *Immigrant Women* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender

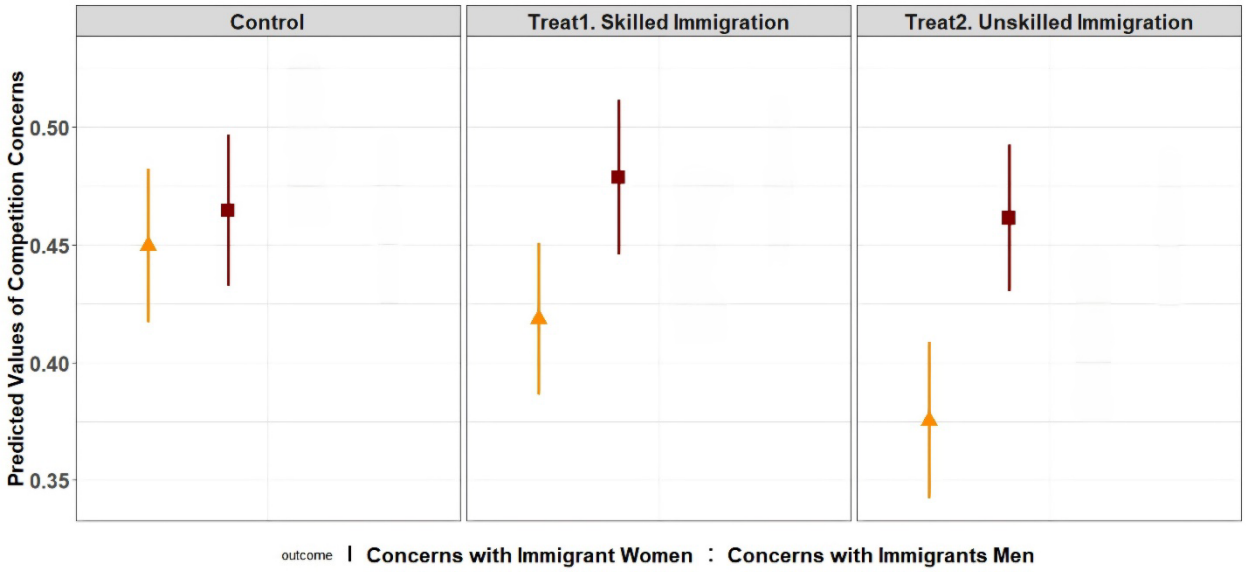


Figure 6b. Predicted Values of Competition Concerns with *Immigrant Men* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender

Note: The two plots above show the OLS estimates from a regression model that includes controls for age, education, income level, and other variables. The plotted dots represent the predicted values of participants' concerns about competition with immigrant women (Figure 6a) and immigrant men (Figure 6b), categorized by participant gender and experimental conditions. The vertical lines represent the 95% confidence intervals of these predicted values. The original

scores range from 0 (not at all concerned) to 100 (very concerned) on the Y-axis, but they were scaled to range from 0 to 1. For the complete regression results, including these controls, please refer to Appendix J.

Examining the predicted concerns of respondents with immigrant women, the differences between female respondents and male respondents are not significant in the control condition (first boxes in Figures 5a and 5b). When exposed to the treatments (second and third boxes in Figures 5a and 5b), however, the gender differences increase to statistically significant levels. Japanese women exhibit greater concerns about job competition with immigrant women than Japanese men in both treatment conditions (Figure 6a). Focusing on Figure 6a, the difference in the predicted values between Japanese men and Japanese women increases from 0.02 in the control condition to 0.06 in the skilled immigration condition and further to 0.1 in the unskilled immigration condition, with statistically significant differences observed ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.001$, respectively). To contextualize these effect sizes, these differences translate to Japanese women being 2 percentage points more concerned than men in the control condition, 6 percentage points more concerned in the skilled immigration condition, and 10 percentage points more concerned in the unskilled immigration condition on the original 100-point scale. This pattern demonstrates that Japanese women become significantly more concerned about job competition with immigrant women than Japanese men when exposed to information about immigration, particularly regarding unskilled immigrants.

Similar patterns emerge when examining the predicted concerns of respondents with immigrant men, presented in Figure 6b. However, in this case, differences between female and male respondents in the predicted levels of concern are statistically significant only in the unskilled immigration condition ($p < 0.05$), not in the skilled immigration condition. This suggests that Japanese women become more concerned than Japanese men about job competition with immigrant men specifically when exposed to information about unskilled immigration.

However, it is noteworthy that Japanese women's predicted values for competition concerns remain relatively stable across different conditions, while Japanese men's predicted values vary more significantly. Considering these observations together, this difference should be understood in the context of Japanese men's potentially greater confidence or lesser concerns about job competition with immigrants, rather than attributing it to Japanese women's lack of confidence or heightened concerns. This observation aligns with the first component of my theory highlighting the role of men's (over-)confidence in explaining gender immigration attitudes. This is also in line with an established finding in the literature on gender differences in competitiveness, which frequently highlights that such gendered patterns often arise from men's tendency toward confidence. Taken together, the results from Study 2 serve their intended purposes and further suggest that Japanese men's attitudes toward immigration likely to be related to their confidence about potential competition with immigrants in the labor market.

Additional Analysis: Men's (Over-)Confidence amd Labor Market's Preference for Men

In this section, I present an additional analysis to test my idea about the roots of men's overconfidence. To clarify, examining the causes and manifestations of men's overconfidence is not the focus of this study. However, I aim to clearly explain how this concept of men's overconfidence, often discussed in economics and psychology, can also be understood in the context of individual-level considerations about the labor market, particularly regarding gendered attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. To do so, I present an additional analysis of an item that appeared in the post-treatment section of the survey, following the main outcomes.

Given that the proportion of women in managerial roles and leadership positions is significantly low in Japan, it is highly likely that hiring decisions are predominantly made by

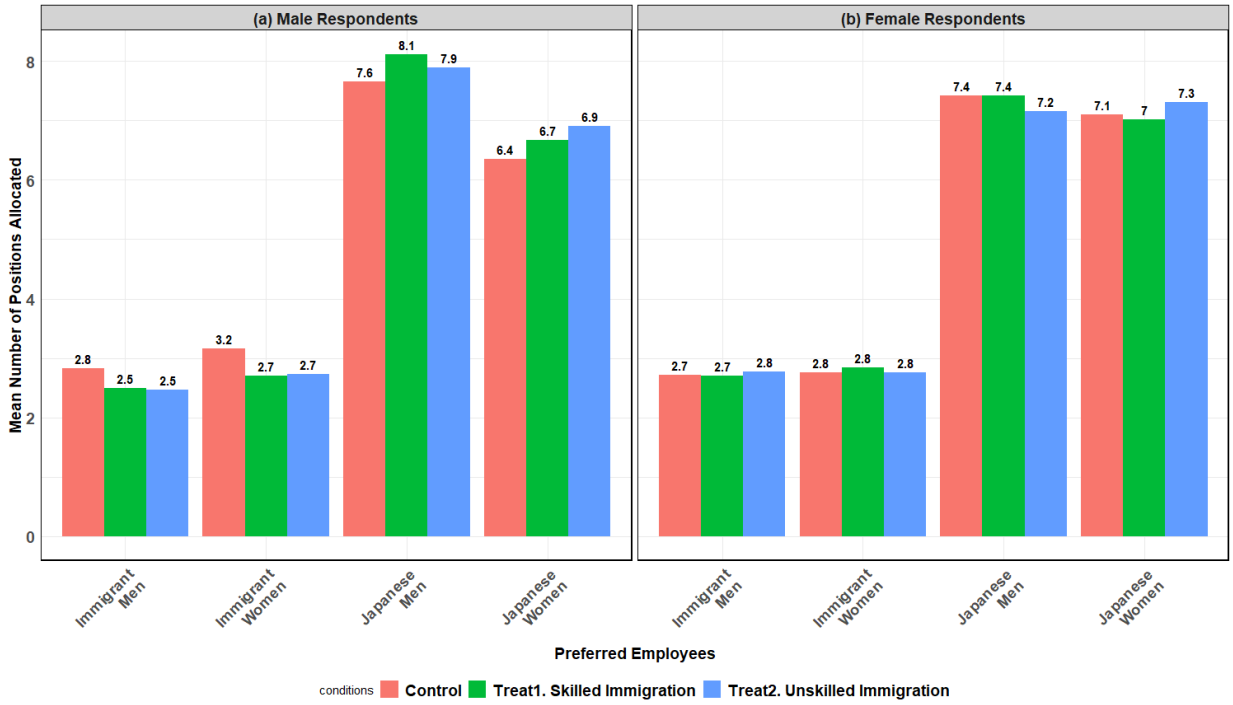
Japanese men rather than Japanese women.[38] This institutional reality provides a useful lens for examining whether men's confidence may be partly informed by accurate assessments of their advantages in hiring contexts. To explore this possibility, I present an additional analysis of an item that appeared in the post-treatment section of the survey, following the main outcomes.

In the survey, participants were asked to distribute twenty positions among four groups (immigrant men, immigrant women, Japanese men, and Japanese women). While they were allowed to distribute the positions equally or unequally across the four groups, the total sum of positions allocated must equal twenty. [39] Each bar represents the mean number of positions that Japanese men (left panel) and Japanese women (right panel) allocated to each group across the three experimental conditions.

Looking at Figure 7, two main findings stand out. First, there is a strong preference for non-immigrants over immigrants regardless of experimental conditions and participant gender. In both panels, immigrant men and immigrant women are allocated approximately three positions each, which is less than half of what is allocated to Japanese men or Japanese women. Second, Japanese men's preference for Japanese men is consistent across all conditions. The results depicted in the left panel indicate that Japanese men consistently prefer Japanese men across all conditions. On average, Japanese men allocated more than seven out of twenty positions to Japanese men. The allocation of positions to Japanese women also remains relatively high, though not as pronounced as that for Japanese men, indicating a secondary preference.

[38] For example, the proportion of Japanese women in leadership and managerial roles is 13 percent, significantly lower than the OECD average of 34 percent (International Monetary Fund, Asia and Pacific Department 2024).
[39] The question posed was: *If you were to employ 20 employees, how would you distribute these positions among the following groups? You can choose to allocate all positions to one group, distribute them equally among different groups, or distribute them unequally, favoring one or more groups*. The original question in Japanese is presented in Appendix H2.

Figure 7. Hiring Preferences: How Japanese Men and Women Would Distribute 20 Employee Positions



Conversely, Japanese women's hiring preferences appear to be slightly different. The right panel shows that Japanese men and Japanese women are allocated almost the same number of positions by Japanese women. In the "skilled" immigration condition, for example, Japanese women allocated an average of 7.4 positions to Japanese men and 7 positions to Japanese women, a difference that is not statistically significant. In other words, while Japanese men show a strong and consistent preference for Japanese men as employees, Japanese women do not necessarily prefer Japanese women over Japanese men.

The results presented in Figure 7, especially Japanese men's preference for Japanese men shown in the left panel, suggest not only that Japanese men are the strongest candidates in the eyes of those most likely to make hiring decisions, but also that men are likely aware of this preference. This provides suggestive evidence for the notion that gender differences in

competitiveness and men's (over-)confidence stem not only from different socialization of boys and girls but also from an accurate evaluation of the labor market's preference for men as employees over women. In this respect, what appears as men's overconfidence may partly reflect realistic assessments of structural advantages rather than unfounded self-regard, offering an additional perspective on understanding gendered economic behavior within the context of immigration attitudes.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined gender differences in attitudes toward immigration and their underlying causes through the theory of dual-layer gendered immigration attitudes, which focuses on how economic factors and labor market positions shape these attitudes. I argue that differences in immigration attitudes between men and women extend beyond inherent tolerance levels and instead stem from distinct interpretations of information shaped by their positions in the labor market. This argument aligns with previous studies showing how individual economic conditions, particularly concerns about labor market competition, contribute to anti-immigrant sentiment. The dual-layer theory posits that women's and men's views on immigration should be analyzed through two distinct lenses: men's (over-)confidence and women's vulnerable positions in the labor market. By integrating research on gender differences in competitiveness with individual economic circumstances, this framework highlights the gendered dynamics of the labor market. Through this theoretical lens, I investigated how perceptions of immigrants differ between women and men, and how these perceptions are influenced by their respective labor market roles.

The methodological approach involved two original surveys with embedded experiments from Japan. While Study 1 directly tested the main hypotheses and therefore examined both

Layer 1 and Layer 2 shown in Figure 2, Study 2 focused specifically on examining the core assumption of Layer 1—that men and women differ in their competitiveness and confidence levels. Results indicated that priming the economic necessity of immigrant workers affected Japanese men and women differently: Japanese men showed increased favorability toward both immigrant men and immigrant women, while women showed decreased favorability toward immigrant women when informed about the necessity of non-professional immigrant workers. Moreover, I found that vulnerable positions in the labor market correlated with Japanese women's hostility toward immigrants when exposed to stimuli, a pattern not observed among Japanese men.

These findings made several important contributions to existing literature. First, they extended existing theories of immigration attitudes focusing on individual-level economic factors by demonstrating that such factors operate differently for men and women due to their systematically different positions within gendered labor markets. This finding challenges the gender-neutral assumptions of much research on immigration attitudes by adding a crucial gender dimension. Second, the results contributed to the growing literature on gender and political attitudes by showing that women's political preferences are shaped by their economic vulnerabilities in ways that previous research on gender socialization and values had not fully captured. Third, the dual-layer framework advanced our understanding of when gender differences in immigration attitudes emerge, helping to explain the inconsistent findings in previous cross-national studies examining gender and immigration attitudes.

While this study primarily examines Japan, the theoretical insights should extend to other contexts that meet specific scope conditions. The framework is most applicable to developed countries that exhibit substantial economic immigration flows, marked gender inequalities in

employment security and wages, and labor market shortages that drive immigration policy and frame public discourse around immigrants primarily as economic contributors. The additional survey experiment conducted on a U.S. sample provided partial support for this generalizability, particularly confirming that vulnerable status in the labor market better explained women's immigration attitudes compared to men's (See Appendix K). In countries with low gender inequality, such as Nordic countries, I do not expect to see such gendered interpretations. One limitation of this study is that it does not extensively delve into testing other theories about non-immigrants' feelings toward immigrants. Future research could, for instance, examine to what extent ethnocentrism or other sociotropic considerations may explain gendered immigration attitudes and compare these effects with economic self-interest.

These findings offer specific guidance for policymakers seeking to build public support for immigration policies. More broadly, rather than treating gender differences as fixed demographic characteristics, policymakers and researchers should recognize that these attitudes reflect structural inequalities in labor markets that can be addressed through targeted policy interventions. This insight leads to several concrete recommendations. First, immigration policy communications should recognize that information about immigrants' economic contributions may be received differently by different segments of the population based on their labor market positions. Simply emphasizing economic benefits may inadvertently increase opposition among those most vulnerable to labor market displacement. Second, policies aimed at improving women's labor market security—such as stronger employment protections, skills training programs, or childcare support that enables more stable employment—may have the secondary effect of reducing gender-based opposition to immigration. Third, immigration policies that

include provisions for protecting existing workers' employment security may help build broader coalitions of support that include women in vulnerable labor market positions.

This research advances our understanding of immigration attitudes by demonstrating that gender differences reflect structural economic inequalities rather than inherent differences in tolerance or socialization. By recognizing the gendered nature of labor market vulnerabilities, we can better understand when and why different groups support or oppose immigration policies. These insights provide a foundation for developing more effective and inclusive approaches to immigration policy that account for the diverse economic circumstances of different segments of the population.

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