

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 of immigration is caused by women's labor market vulnerabilities. As immigrants increasingly take positions in care work and other industries that are traditionally dominated by women, women are more likely to perceive them as a threat. Drawing on data from two original surveys on Japanese samples with embedded experiments, I find that information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrants increases favorability toward immigrants among non-immigrant men, but not among non-immigrant women. Additionally, women, especially those in non-professional jobs, show increased hostility toward immigrants when exposed to such information. The findings underscore the importance of considering the interplay of gender and labor market vulnerability, contributing to the literature on political economy of immigration and gender politics. The results also suggest the necessity for gender-sensitive approaches in shaping immigration policy and addressing inter-group conflicts, especially in countries characterized by significant gender inequalities where women predominantly occupy lower-paid and less secure job roles.

*I thank Margaret E. Peters, David Sears, Lachlan McNamee, Michael Thies, Jessica Hyunjeong Lee, Julian Michel, Andrew Roskos-Ewoldsen, Miye Joo, Soonhong Cho, Cybele Kappos, and the participants at USC KSI Graduate Symposium 2023, AusPSA 2023, ASQPS 2023, MPSA 2024, PRIEC February 2024 Meeting, APSA 2024, UCLA Political Psychology Lab, for their feedback. This research was supported by the APSA Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG) 2023, the Kawahara Fellowship, Sasakawa Fellowship, and Baerwald Graduate Fellowship from the UCLA Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, UCLA Political Psychology Fellowships, the UCLA/Keck Humanistic Inquiry Graduate Research Award, and the UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship. This research comprises two studies, all of which have received IRB approval at UCLA. The second study was pre-registered on Open Science Framework (OSF.io).

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Introduction

Do women tend to oppose immigration more than men? If so, why? Many studies have found that women tend to be less tolerant of immigrants than men (Mayda 2006; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). However, gender differences in immigration attitudes typically are observed, rather than examined systematically. When studies do consider gender as an explanatory variable instead of a control variable, they have found mixed results regarding whether women are less intolerant. These studies find that women exhibit a higher level of tolerance toward immigrants in some countries, and women's attitudes toward refugees are more positive than men's (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006; Bridges and Mateut 2009). These mixed and sometimes reverse findings highlight the need for more focused and nuanced research on gender as a factor in immigration attitudes.

This research focuses on understanding gender differences in immigration attitudes by examining the role of individual-level economic factors, specifically one's status in the labor market. I argue that gender differences in immigration attitudes, where women oppose immigration more than men, can be explained by women's labor market vulnerabilities. This suggests that gendered attitudes toward immigration are not solely based on biological or socio-cultural aspects. Instead, they are significantly shaped by the gendered nature of the labor market and economic inequalities between men and women. Examining these differences in the context of labor market structures is crucial because many developed countries, including Japan, focus their immigration policies on mitigating labor shortages (出入国在留管理庁 (Immigration Services Agency) 2019; Peng 2016; Tagami 2023; Ikeda 2019). Additionally, gender inequalities and female representation are important factors in democratization processes (Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel 2003; Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker 2012; Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Oliphant 2014; Ruiz and Rubio Marin 2008), further underscoring the importance of examining economic inequalities between genders.

I propose a new theory, namely dual-layer gendered immigration attitudes, to better understand differences in immigration attitudes between men and women, as well as within

women. At its core, the theory suggests that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men should be analyzed through two distinct layers: (1) gender differences in competitiveness and (2) women’s vulnerable positions in the labor market. Drawing from the theory, I contend that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men do not solely reflect innate tolerance levels or socialization during one’s formative years. Rather, an important aspect of gendered immigration attitudes involves recognizing the gendered nature of the labor market, where women are disproportionately employed in roles vulnerable to displacement by immigrant workers. These gendered immigration attitudes are shaped, at least in part, by distinct interpretations of information influenced by current positions in the labor market. These insights align with prior research linking individual economic conditions, such as 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).

To test my theoretical argument, I analyze data from two original surveys with embedded experiments. These surveys include two nationally representative samples of Japanese nationals, comprising 1,234 and 1,427 participants respectively. Japan serves as an ideal case for examining my theoretical argument, which intersects gender, immigration attitudes, and labor market dynamics, for two 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 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 is an attractive destination for immigrants from other Asian countries and has seen a substantial influx of immigrant women. 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). Also, I use participants’ non-professional job status as a proxy for labor market vulnerabilities and an explanatory variable for testing my theory. 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.

To preview the results, several key findings stand out. First, information about the economic necessity of immigrants tends to elicit different responses between non-immigrant men and women,¹ especially within the sample of Japanese nationals. Japanese men show

1. In this paper, “non-immigrant men” and “non-immigrant women” refer to Japanese nationals who hold citizenship and are not of foreign nationality, while “immigrants” refers to individuals of foreign nationality.

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 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 non-immigrants’ non-professional job status and hostility toward immigrants among Japanese women 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, when exposed to information about the recent increase in immigrant labor. 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 decrease their favorability toward immigrant women. However, further analysis, considering 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 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 an ideal 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 nation. 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)

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).²

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, Hainmueller, and Hangartner (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 primary focus of analysis.³ 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, Rivera-Batiz, and Yun (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 example, O’Rourke and Sinnott (2006) find that women tend to be less hostile toward refugees than men.

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

3. Exceptions include (Valentova and Alieva 2014) and (François and Magni-Berton 2013).

Preliminary Analysis: 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 immigration attitudes using survey data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) for the years 1995, 2003, and 2013 (ISSP Research Group 2020).⁴ I incorporated the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Gender Inequality Index for “Economic Participation and Opportunity”⁵ and presented countries with above-average scores in Figure 1a and those with below-average scores in Figure 1b. In both subfigures, the red and blue dots indicate whether women are more positive toward 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).

4. 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.

5. 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 (4).

Figure 1a. Immigration Attitudes in Countries with *Above-Average* Gender Equality
(Data from WEF & ISSP)

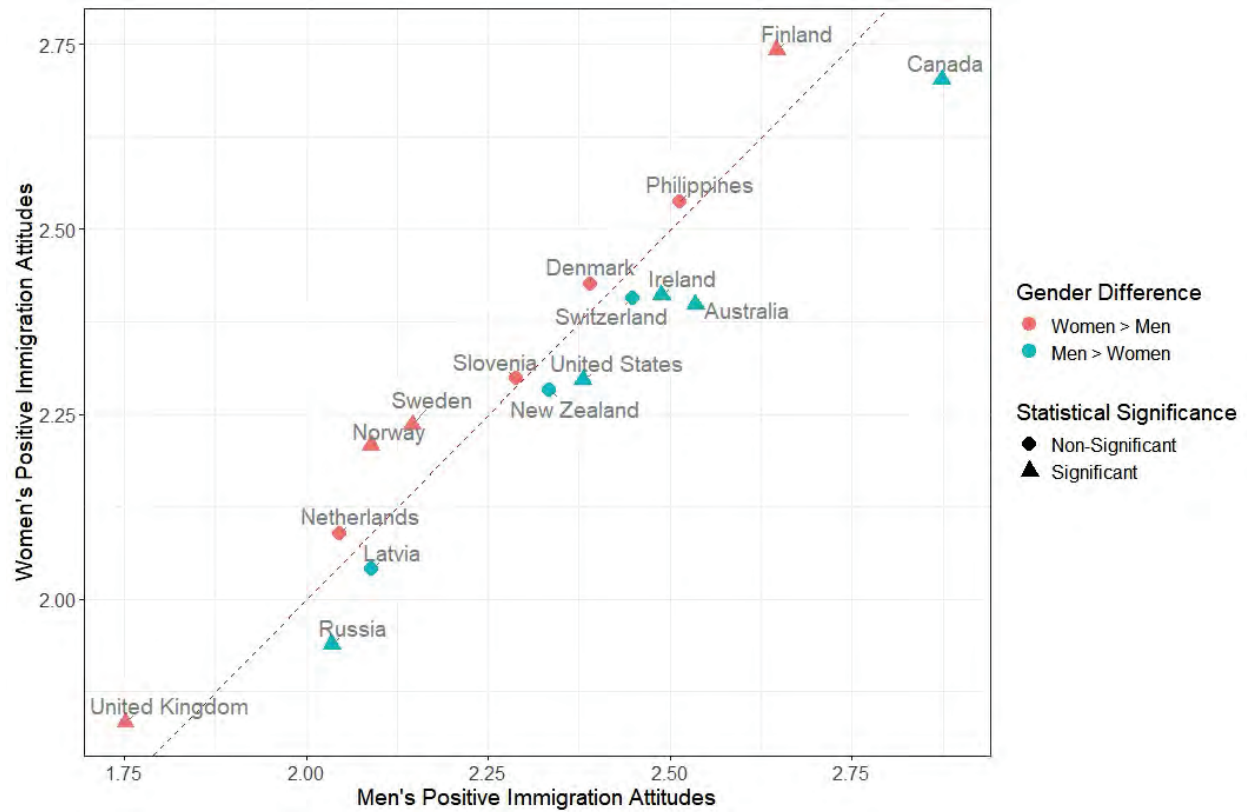
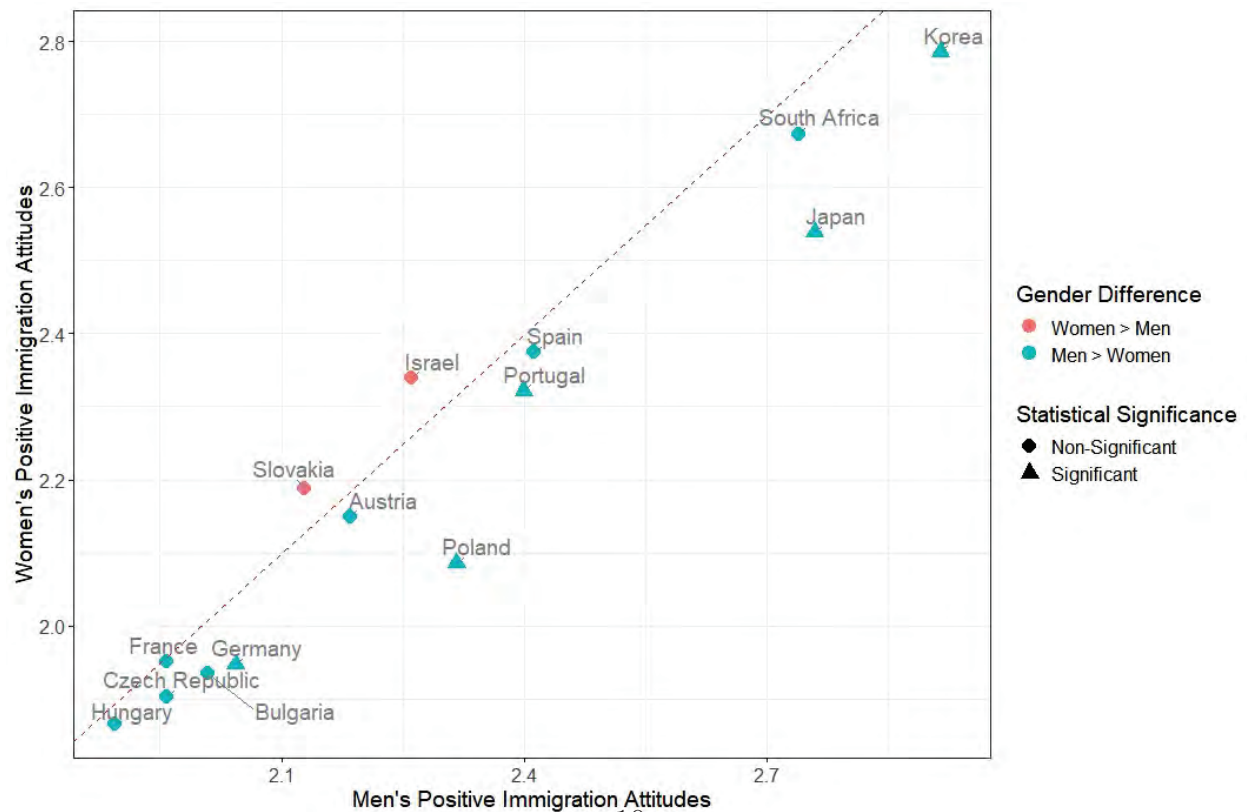


Figure 1b. Immigration Attitudes in Countries with *Below-Average* Gender Equality
(Data from WEF & ISSP)



Looking across the subfigures, we find a striking pattern between countries with above-average and below-average scores on the Gender Economic Inequality Index. 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 Spain and Portugal, show women holding more positive immigration attitudes than men (as indicated by the red dots), 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 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. We 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).

Taken together, two main findings emerge from this preliminary analysis. 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 the focal point of analysis in existing studies and why findings have yielded contrasting results. Perhaps more importantly, we observe a striking difference between more unequal and less unequal countries in terms of immigration attitudes, which emphasizes 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 the structural factors that may limit their opportunities in the labor market.

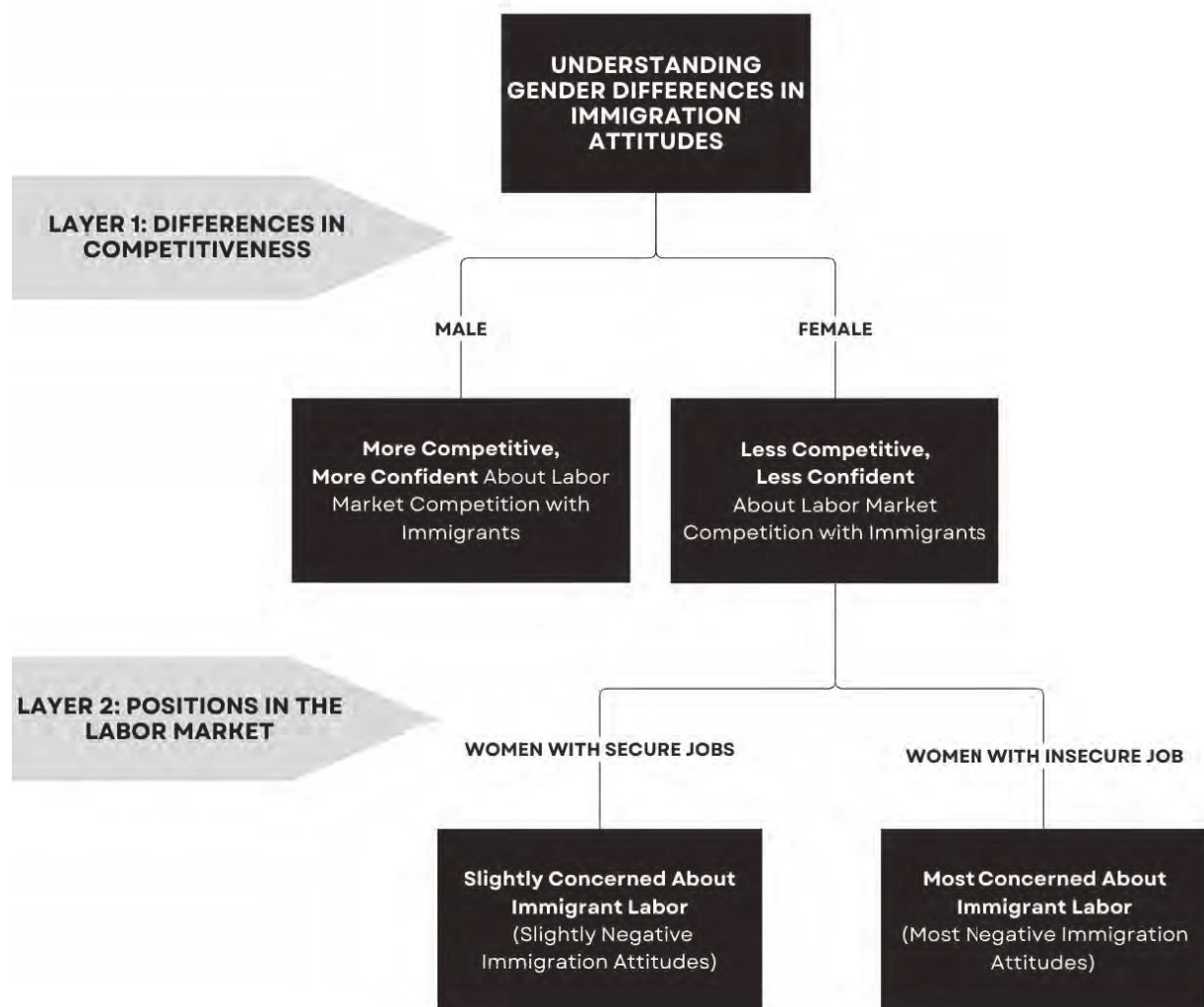
Moreover, these preliminary findings, drawn from multiple countries surveyed in the ISSP and WEF, suggest that women’s immigration attitudes are likely influenced by broader economic and societal dynamics, particularly regarding gendered economic opportunities and participation. In the next section, I will elaborate on my conceptualization of these

findings, drawing on theoretical frameworks to explore the underlying mechanisms driving these gendered attitudes toward immigration.

Theory and Hypotheses

Do gender differences exist in attitudes toward immigration, and if so, what explains these gendered attitudes? Drawing on the preliminary findings from the WEF and ISSP surveys, I address this question by highlighting the effect of the gendered nature of the labor market on gendered attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. Specifically, I focus on the varying levels of concern about competition with immigrants, influenced by individuals' positions in the labor market. In doing so, I move beyond the general trait-based explanations and underscore the importance of considering both social learning and economic factors in understanding immigration attitudes. Furthermore, 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).

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:



This theory posits that the variation in immigration attitudes between genders should be examined through two distinct layers: (1) gender differences in 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 being displaced by immigrant workers. These attitudes are, at least in part, influenced by how individuals interpret information based on their current labor market positions. This

perspective is consistent with existing research that connects personal economic conditions, particularly concerns about competition in the labor market, to anti-immigrant sentiments (Borjas and Freeman 1992; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001).

The starting point of my theory is 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, 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 contend 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. 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; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). I posit that it is particularly women in non-professional

or low-skilled jobs, rather than all women, who are more likely to exhibit less favorable attitudes toward immigration. This may explain variations in attitudes toward immigrants between genders as well as among women. However, in societies with heavily gendered labor markets where women often occupy highly replaceable roles, this factor could be the primary explanation for gendered immigration attitudes overall. 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.

Combining men’s (over-)confidence shaped by social learning with the role of individual-level economic factors, 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.

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. My theory and argument about gendered immigration attitudes and the influence of individual-level economic factors 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:** Presenting information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrants will have gendered effects on attitudes toward immigrants, whereby non-immigrant men are more likely than non-immigrant women to exhibit increased favorability toward immigrants.*

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:** There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between non-immigrants’ non-professional job status and hostility toward immigrants among non-immigrant women but not men when exposed to information about non-professional immigrants.*

Japan as a “Most Likely” Case

I begin testing 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 an ideal 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 ideal case for my research.

Japan and Gender Economic Inequality

Gender inequality, especially in economic opportunities and political empowerment, is a deeply rooted issue in Japan, standing out among developed countries. 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 2021). One of the factors affecting such disparities is that a large share of Japanese women are “non-regular” workers. “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, and do not receive the benefits provided to regular workers. Although 77% of Japanese women work, a higher rate than the OECD average, over 53% of employed Japanese women aged 20-65 are employed in non-regular roles, compared to 14% of employed Japanese men (Yamaguchi 2019; Dalton 2022).

Gender disparities are also evident among regular workers. Japanese women are under-represented in high-status, managerial positions, and high-paying professions. And 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). 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. Traditional gender roles persist, leading to the underrepresentation of Japanese women in non-human-service fields such as research, law, and engineering (Yamaguchi 2019). The absence of supportive policies, including flexible working hours that accommodate childcare, exacerbates the issue (Ikeda 2019).⁶

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 (IOM 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 two to three decades, growing from 0.7 percent in 1990 to 2.23 percent in 2018.⁷ Despite these, scholarly attention to immigration in Japan and Asia more broadly has been relatively limited. 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.⁸

Prior research on immigration attitudes in Japan highlights an important aspect - narra-

6. 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).

7. 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))

8. 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.

tives 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 (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 entering and staying in Japan for extended periods (出入国在留管理庁 (Immigration Services Agency) 2019). Second, immigration policies in Japan have long focused on economic imperatives, such as addressing labor shortages (Peng 2016, 16). 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).⁹ All of this leads to the need for a greater focus on gender and

9. 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).

women in studying immigration-related issues in Japan.

Information about Immigrant Labor Necessity and the Role of Citizen’s Job Type

Study 1: Survey Experiment on a Japanese Sample (September-October 2023)¹⁰

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.¹¹ Participants were randomly assigned to read one of three articles –a control and two experimental conditions (“Professional” immigration and “Non-professional” immigration conditions, respectively).¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴

10. This study has received IRB approval at UCLA (IRB#23-001285).

11. The sample is representative of the census with respect to age, gender, and region.

12. 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 A for the mock articles.

13. To ensure a strong resemblance between the actual news briefs and the mock versions, I conducted text analyses of Japanese newspaper articles. See Appendix B for details.

14. 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 D.

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’.¹⁵ 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 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷ 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. This non-professional job status variable is based on responses regarding respondents’ occupations. I created an indicator variable for non-professional jobs and unemployment.¹⁸

15. 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.

16. Additionally, in Japan, the terms ‘foreign worker’ and ‘foreigner’ (外国人) [gaikokujin], rather than ‘immigrants’ (移民/移住者) [imin/ijūsha], are commonly used when referring to the foreign population residing in Japan (Hein 2012).

17. 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 C.

18. For more details about the job categorization, please refer to Appendix C2.

Study 1: Results

Figure 2 displays the average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant men and women toward immigrant women (Figure 2a) and immigrant men (Figure 2b) across the survey experiment's three experimental conditions. Examining the box on the left reveals that non-immigrant men, compared to non-immigrant 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 2a. Mean Scores on Feeling Thermometer toward *Immigrant Women* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender

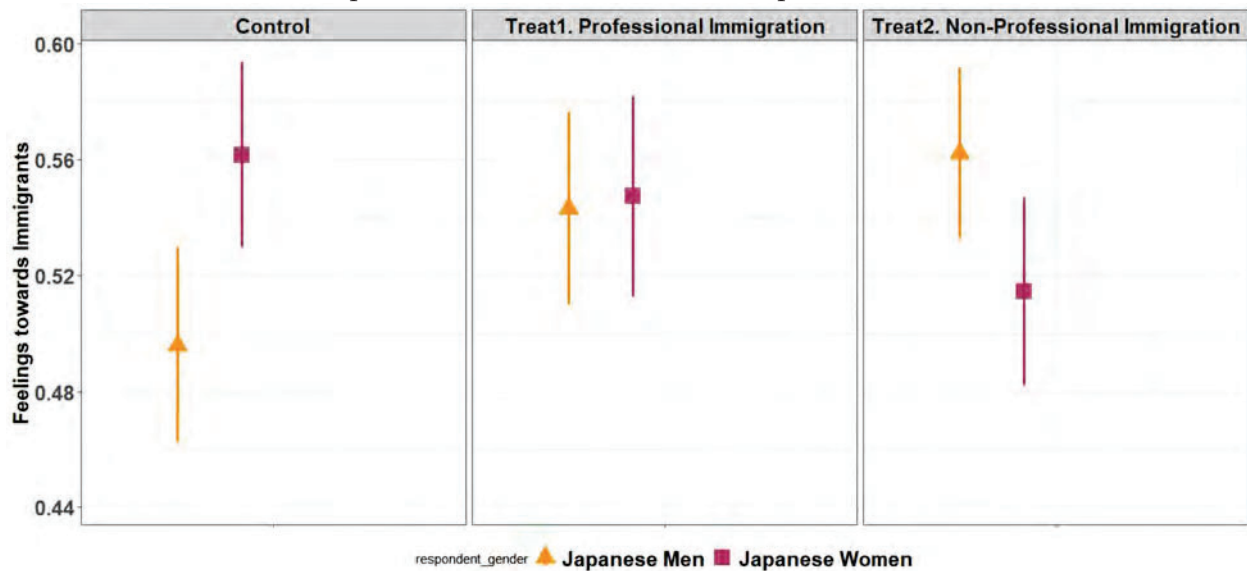
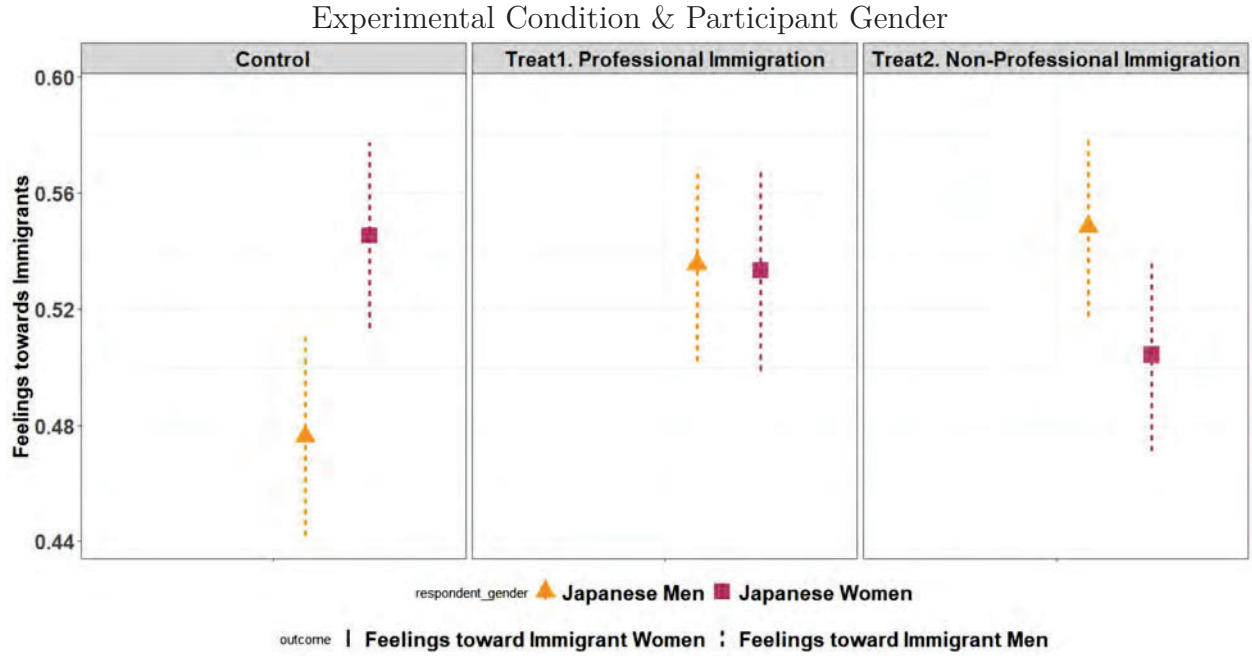


Figure 2b. Mean Scores on Feeling Thermometer toward *Immigrant Men* by



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 non-immigrant men more likely to show increased favorability toward immigrants than non-immigrant women. Looking across the experimental conditions, the average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant 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). Similarly, the average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant men's favorability toward immigrants of

both genders

This trend, however, is not observed among non-immigrant women. In fact, the mean scores of non-immigrant women in both subfigures reveal an opposite pattern. The average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant women decrease, particularly in the non-professional immigration condition. Examining Figure 2a again, the average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant women's feelings toward immigrant men (Figure 2b). Non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant women, specifically in the non-professional treatment scenario, while no such correlation is expected among non-immigrant men. Figure 3 displays the predicted values of non-immigrant women's feelings toward immigrant women (Figure 3a) and immigrant men (Figure 3b), categorized by respondent's job type across different conditions.

Figure 3a. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Women's* Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Women*

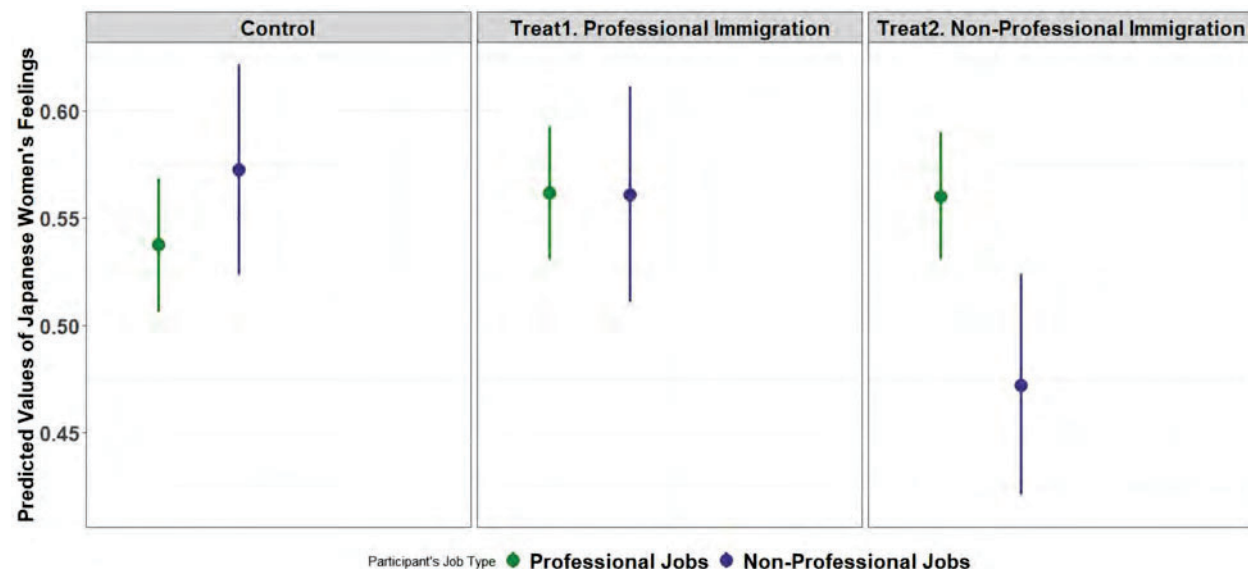
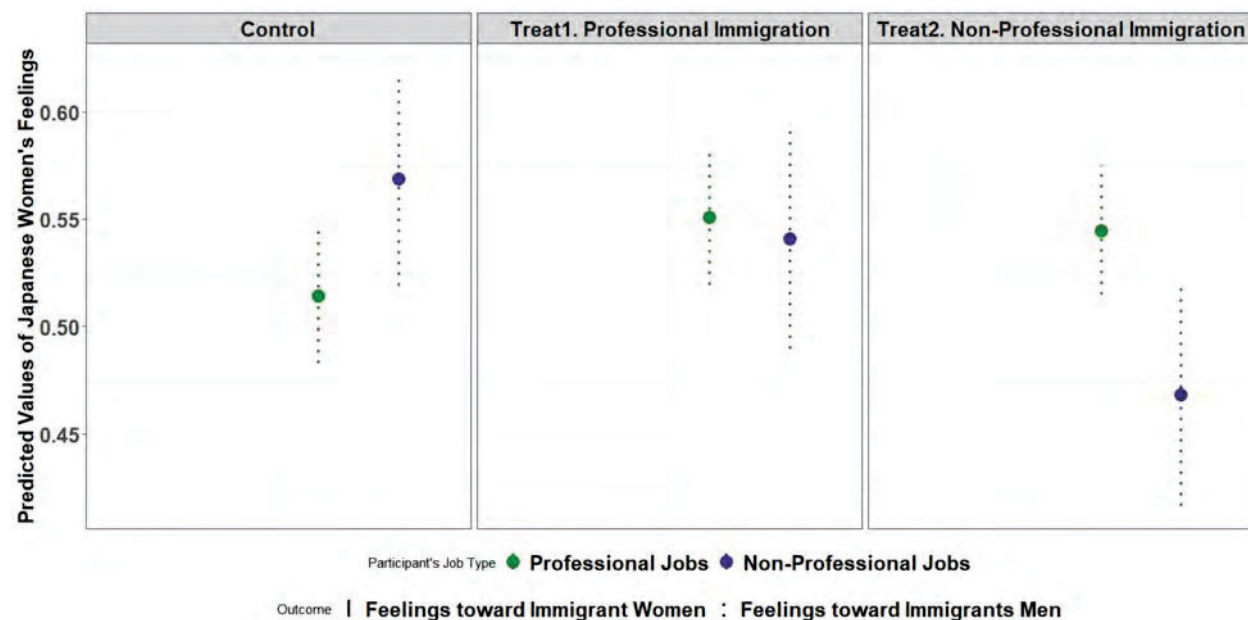


Figure 3b. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Women's* Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Men*



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 3a) and immigrant men (Figure 3b), 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 E.

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 C2 for more details.

The results presented in Figure 3 suggest a significant impact of holding non-professional job status on non-immigrant women’s perspectives toward immigrant women, a pattern not evident among non-immigrant men. Looking at Figure 3a, the average feeling thermometer scores of non-immigrant 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, non-immigrant women with non-professional jobs do not inherently exhibit hostility toward immigrant women compared to those non-immigrant women in professional roles. However, their feelings significantly degrade 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 3b). While non-immigrant women’s attitudes toward immigrant men did not change significantly in either experimental condition (see Figure 2b), a different trend emerges when non-immigrant women’s feelings are examined separately by job type. In Figure 3, the predicted values of non-immigrant women’s feeling thermometer scores toward immigrant men among non-immigrant 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, non-immigrant 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.

Such patterns are not observed among non-immigrant men. Looking at Figure 4, which displays the same analysis but for the feelings of non-immigrant men, the disparity in non-immigrant men’s feelings toward immigrant women (Figure 4a) and immigrant men (Figure 4b) across different job types remains relatively stable across all conditions. This suggests that non-immigrant 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 4a. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Men's* Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Women*

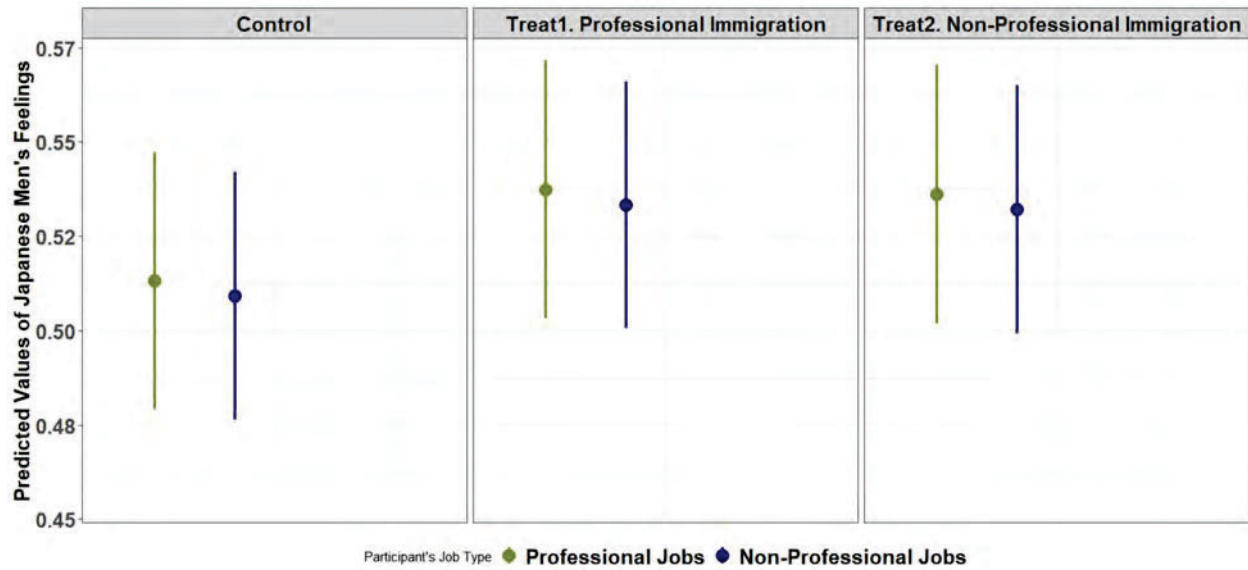
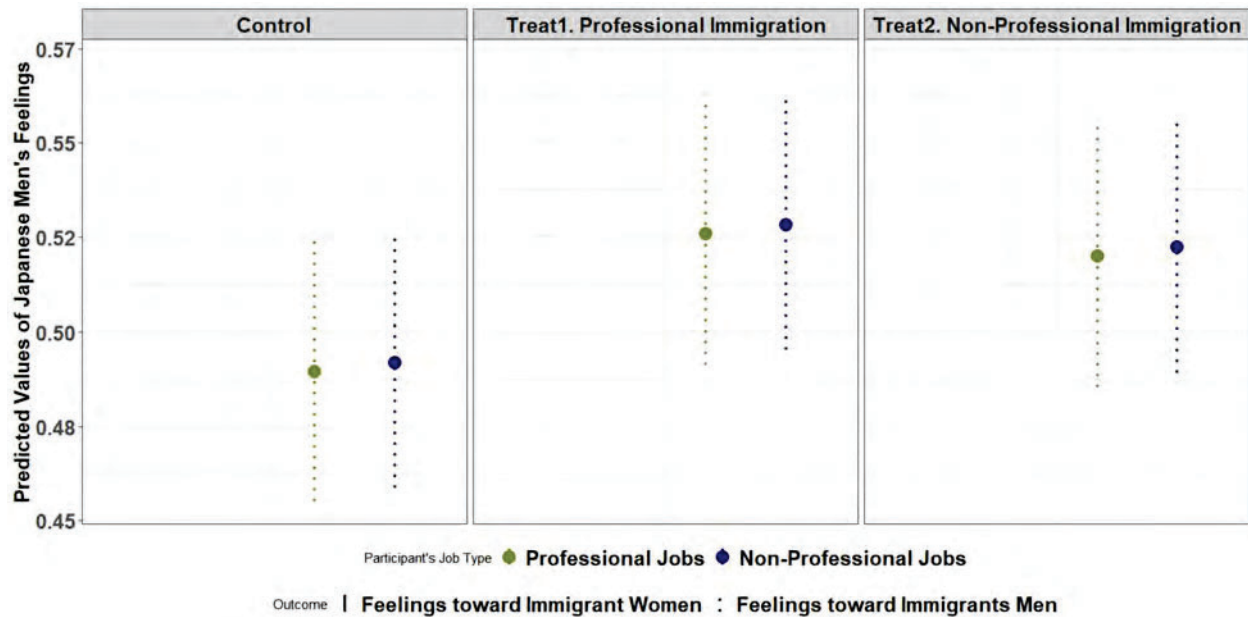


Figure 4b. Marginal Effect of *Japanese Men's* Job Type on Feelings toward *Immigrant Men*



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 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 E.

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 C2 for more details.

Study 1: Summary & 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 non-immigrant 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 2 strongly support Hypothesis 1, which predicts that information emphasizing the economic necessity of immigrants could create gendered immigration attitudes, with non-immigrant men more likely to increase their favorability toward immigrants compared to non-immigrant women. Additionally, non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant 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, non-immigrant 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 3 and Figure 4 lend strong support to Hypothesis 2, predicting a positive and statistically significant correlation between non-immigrants' non-professional job status and hostility toward immigrants among non-immigrant women 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 non-immigrant women, whereas no such correlation is found among non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant 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)¹⁹

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.

Study 2, another original survey with embedded experiments, involved a nationally representative sample of 1,427 Japanese individuals, recruited via Cint, an online platform.²⁰ After collecting demographic information through pre-treatment questions, subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) Control condition,²¹ (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

19. This study has received IRB approval at UCLA (IRB23-001285) and pre-registered on Open Science Framework (OSF.io).

20. The sample, collected from May 14 to May 18, 2024, is representative of the census in terms of age and gender.

21. Subjects in the control group read an article about a random topic: the adequate amount of exercise.

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 2.²² 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 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.²³ These articles did not contain gender, racial, or racial/ethnic cues.²⁴ The main outcome of Study 2 was the level of concern reported by 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. Non-immigrant men, often confident about competition, would likely exhibit decreased concerns upon exposure to stimuli. Non-immigrant women, on the other

22. 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.

23. More details regarding the survey, including the news briefs used in each condition, are provided in Appendix F.

24. 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 H.

hand, are expected to show unchanged or increased concerns upon exposure, especially in the “unskilled” immigration condition.

Study 2: Results & Implications

Figure 5 displays predicted values of competition concerns with immigrant women (Figure 5a) and immigrant men (Figure 5b) across different conditions and participant genders, derived from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis (details in Appendix I). The Y-axis represents the range of predicted values of competition concerns.

Examining the predicted concerns of non-immigrants with immigrant women, the differences between non-immigrant women (Figure 5a) and non-immigrant men (Figure 5b) are not significant in the control condition. When exposed to the treatments (second and third boxes in Figures 5a and 5b), however, the gender differences increase to statistically significant levels. Non-immigrant women exhibit greater concerns about job competition with immigrant women than non-immigrant men in both treatment conditions (Figure 5a). The difference in the predicted values between non-immigrant men and non-immigrant 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).

Figure 5a. Predicted Values of Competition Concerns with *Immigrant Women* by Experimental Condition & Participant Gender



Figure 5b. 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 5a) and immigrant men (Figure 5b), 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 I.

This suggests that non-immigrant women tend to exhibit high levels of concern about job competition with immigrant women following exposure to information about either un-

skilled or skilled immigrants compared to non-immigrant men. Similar patterns emerge when examining the predicted concerns of non-immigrants with immigrant men, presented in Figure 5b. However, in this case, gender differences in the predicted levels of concern are statistically significant only in the unskilled immigration condition ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that non-immigrant women tend to exhibit higher levels of concern about job competition with immigrant men following exposure to information about unskilled immigration than non-immigrant men.

However, it is noteworthy that non-immigrant women's predicted values for competition concerns remain relatively stable across different conditions, while non-immigrant men's predicted values vary more significantly. Considering these observations together, this difference should be understood in the context of non-immigrant men's potentially greater confidence or lesser concerns about job competition with immigrants, rather than attributing it to non-immigrant 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 non-immigrant men's attitudes toward immigration likely to be related to their confidence about potential competition with immigrants in the labor market.

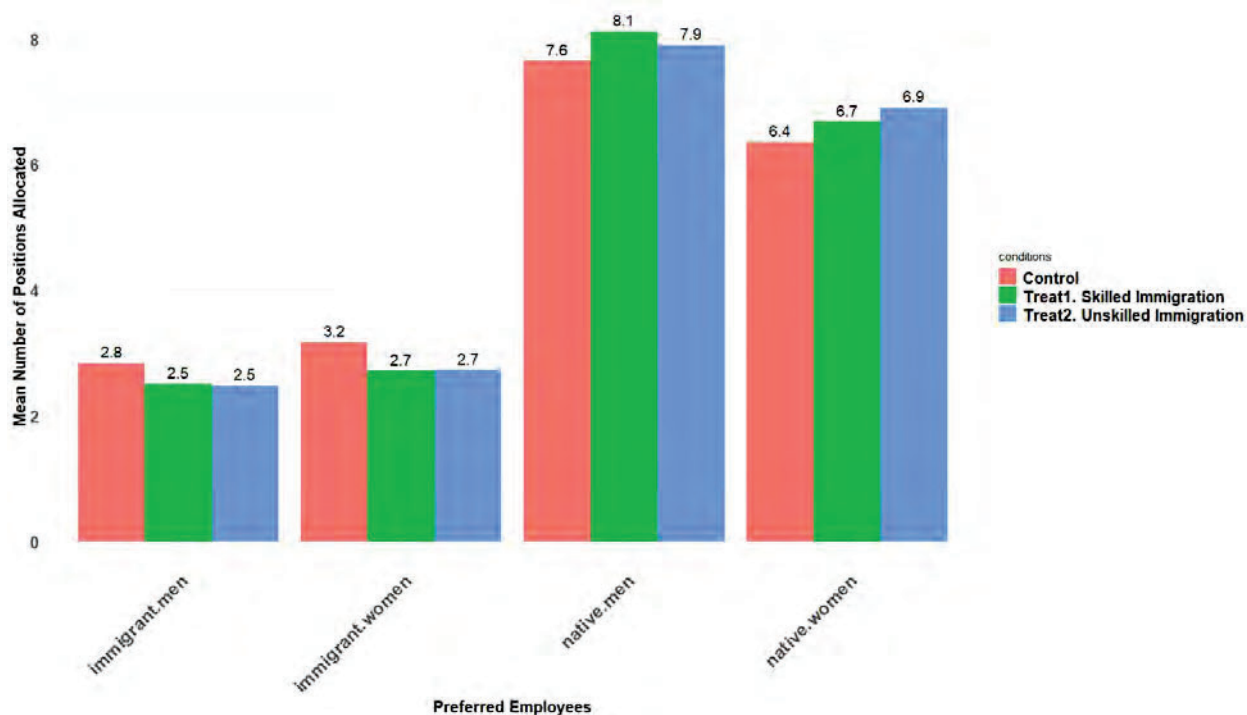
Additional Analysis: Men's (Over-)Confidence & Labor Market's Preference for Men

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.

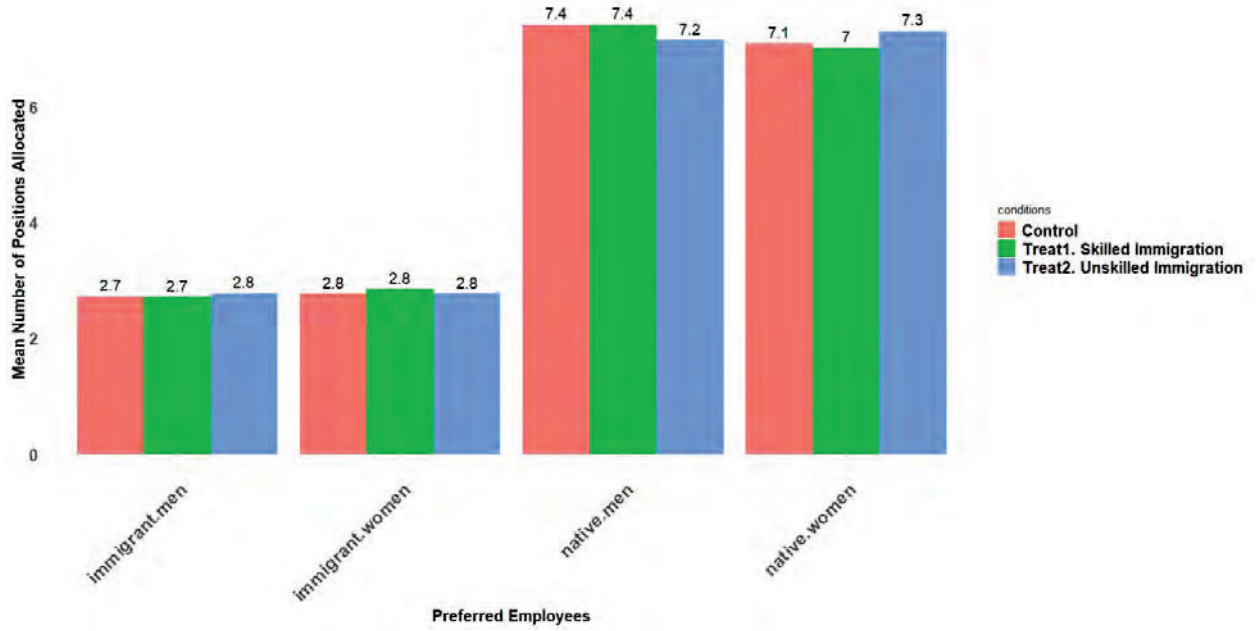
In the survey, participants were asked to distribute twenty positions among four groups (immigrant men, immigrant women, non-immigrant men, and non-immigrant women). While they were allowed to distribute the positions equally or unequally across the four groups, the total sum of positions allocated must equal twenty.²⁵ Each bar in Figures 6a and 6b represents the mean number of positions that non-immigrant men (Figure 6a) and non-immigrant women (Figure 6b) allocated to each group across the three experimental conditions.

Figure 6a. Non-immigrant Men’s Responses for Distributing 20 Employees (Hiring Preference)



25. 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 G2.

Figure 6b. Non-immigrant Women’s Responses for Distributing 20 Employees (Hiring Preference)



Two main findings stand out. First, there is a strong preference for non-immigrants over immigrants regardless of experimental conditions and participant gender. In Figures 6a and 6b, immigrant men and immigrant women are allocated approximately three positions each, which is less than half of what is allocated to non-immigrant men or non-immigrant women.

Second, non-immigrant men’s preference for non-immigrant men is consistent across all conditions. The results depicted in Figure 6a indicate that non-immigrant men consistently prefer non-immigrant men across all conditions. On average, non-immigrant men allocated more than seven out of twenty positions to non-immigrant men. The allocation of positions to non-immigrant women also remains relatively high, though not as pronounced as that for non-immigrant men, indicating a secondary preference. Conversely, non-immigrant women’s hiring preferences appear to be slightly different. Figure 6b shows that non-immigrant men and non-immigrant women are allocated almost the same number of positions by non-immigrant women. In the “skilled”immigration condition, for example, non-immigrant women allocated an average of 7.4 positions to non-immigrant men and 7 positions to non-immigrant women, a difference that is not statistically significant. In other

words, while non-immigrant men show a strong and consistent preference for non-immigrant men as employees, non-immigrant women do not necessarily prefer non-immigrant women over non-immigrant men.

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 non-immigrant men rather than non-immigrant women.²⁶ In this respect, the results presented in Figures 6a and 6b, especially non-immigrant men's preference for non-immigrant men, suggest not only that non-immigrant men are the strongest candidates 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.

Conclusion

This paper delved into the presence and underlying causes of gender differences in attitudes toward immigration, offering a comprehensive examination of how these attitudes are shaped by economic factors, specifically one's position in the labor market. It integrated previous research on gender differences in competitiveness and immigration attitudes with the impact of individual economic circumstances, emphasizing the gendered nature of the labor market. My theory and argument align with previous studies that demonstrate how individual-level economic conditions, such as concerns about labor market competition, contribute to anti-immigrant sentiment. Expanding from our current understanding, I proposed a new theory about gendered immigration attitudes suggesting that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men should be analyzed through two distinct layers: men's (over-)confidence and women's vulnerable positions in the labor market. Building on

26. 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).

this theoretical framework and placing a significant emphasis on gender, I examined how perceptions of immigrants differ between women and men and how these perceptions are influenced by their roles in the labor market. I contend that these differences extend beyond inherent tolerance levels and are rooted in distinct interpretations of information shaped by their positions in the labor market.

The methodological approach involved a combination of data from two original surveys with embedded experiments. Study 1 directly tested the main hypotheses, while Study 2 examined core assumptions of my theory. Results indicated that priming the economic necessity of immigrant workers affects Japanese men and women differently: Japanese men show increased favorability toward both immigrant men and immigrant women, while women show decreased favorability toward immigrant women when informed about the necessity of non-professional immigrant workers. Moreover, I found that the vulnerable positions in the labor market correlate with Japanese women's hostility toward immigrants when exposed to stimuli, a pattern not observed among Japanese men. In sum, these results lend support to my theoretical argument that differences in immigration attitudes between women and men do not solely reflect innate tolerance levels or socialization during malleable years. Instead, such gendered immigration attitudes are shaped, at least in part, by current positions in the labor market, where women are more likely than men to hold jobs that (they fear) could be replaced by immigrant workers.

This research advances the understanding of the political economy of migration by exploring the interplay between the gendered nature of the labor market and the gendered attitudes toward immigration. Moreover, the main findings offer crucial insights to policymakers, enhancing their understanding of anti-immigrant attitudes and inter-group conflicts, with a particular focus on the role of gender and the gendered nature of the labor market. They emphasize the importance of incorporating gender considerations into policy formulation and discourse, ensuring that immigration policies are informed by a deep understanding of these nuanced dynamics. Finally, while this article primarily examines Japan, I antic-

ipate that its insights into gendered interpretations influenced by labor market positions are applicable across diverse contexts, particularly in countries with significant gender economic disparities. I also conducted an additional survey experiment on a U.S. sample, which provides 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 (See Appendix J). 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.

Moreover, this research makes a substantial contribution to the field of political science and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration. Given the critical roles of gender inequalities and female representation in democratization, this research holds significant implications for the future of democracy and social cohesion. Ultimately, it contributes to a more inclusive and representative society by examining gender disparities and conflicts between immigrants and non-immigrants. Beyond advancing political science knowledge, this research offers insights that can inform policy decisions on immigration, inter-group conflicts, and gender-based discrimination, benefiting society at large.

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