The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants

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Many studies have examined Americans' immigration attitudes. Yet prior research frequently confounds multiple questions, including which immigrants to admit and how many to admit. To isolate attitudes on the former question, we use a conjoint experiment that simultaneously tests the influence of nine immigrant attributes in generating support for admission. Drawing on a two-wave, population-based survey, we demonstrate that Americans view educated immigrants in high-status jobs favorably, whereas they view those who lack plans to work, entered without authorization, are Iraqi, or do not speak English unfavorably. Strikingly, Americans' preferences vary little with their own education, partisanship, labor market position, ethnocentrism, or other attributes. Beneath partisan divisions over immigration lies a broad consensus about who should be admitted to the country. The results are consistent with norms-based and sociotropic explanations of immigration attitudes. This consensus points to limits in both theories emphasizing economic and cultural threats, and sheds new light on an ongoing policy debate.

In recent years, the immigrant population in the United States has grown rapidly, and it now stands at over 40 million (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). At the same time, immigration has become a salient political issue across the federal system, with Congress considering major immigration reforms repeatedly. These contentious, ongoing debates make it clear that at both the elite and mass levels, there are stark divisions over immigration.

Over that same period, scholars have been working to better understand immigration attitudes and to identify whether attitudes toward immigrants are primarily driven by economic competition, ethnocentrism, concerns about norms and national identity, or other factors (see Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014 for a detailed literature review). Still, in seeking to explain immigration attitudes, prior research has frequently confounded at least three distinct questions: Which types of immigrants

should be admitted, how many immigrants should be admitted, and how should the United States address those immigrants who are already here? In this study, we seek to disentangle those questions and to focus on the first by identifying the types of immigrants who are supported for admission.

Certainly, there are prior studies examining which immigrant attributes affect attitudes toward immigrants. Yet to date, survey experiments on these questions have manipulated only a few immigrant attributes at a time, such as immigrants' countries of origin, skill levels, skin tones, or English abilities (e.g. Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Harell et al. 2012; Iyengar et al. 2013; Ostfeld 2012; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Valentino and Iyengar 2011). This empirical strategy has enabled scholars to test likely influences on immigration attitudes in isolation, but it has not allowed for

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comprehensive tests of the competing hypotheses. To address that limitation, we introduce to political science an experimental design—conjoint analysis—that can identify the attributes of immigrants that provoke especially positive or negative reactions.[1]

Our experiment asks a population-based sample of U.S. citizens to decide between pairs of immigrants applying for admission to the United States. In each case, a respondent sees application information for two immigrants, including notes about their education, countries of origin, and several other attributes that vary randomly across pairings. Instead of limiting our analysis to one or two factors, this experimental design enables us to vary many immigrant attributes simultaneously and to evaluate which attributes make immigrants more or less likely to be granted admission. This design therefore allows us to compare the relative explanatory power of various hypotheses, from those emphasizing labor market threat or fiscal burdens to those emphasizing sociotropic impacts, norm adherence, or prejudice. Unlike prior observational research (such as Hainmueller and Hangarter's 2013 study of Swiss votes on naturalization applications), this research makes use of a sample that is both nationally representative and observed at the individual level. Individual-level data make it possible to assess a wide variety of theoretical mechanisms, and so to address our central question: whether various subgroups of Americans respond differently to specific immigrant attributes. Unlike prior experimental studies of immigration attitudes, including Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) and Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008), this research independently randomizes numerous immigrant attributes in a single experiment, allowing us to identify and compare the unique effects of each.

We find that hypotheses emphasizing immigrants' adherence to national norms and their expected economic contributions receive strong support. For our respondents, immigrants with bachelor's degrees are 20 percentage points more likely to win admission over those with no formal education, for example. We also find that immigrants who have good language skills, have job experience, and work in high-status jobs are viewed favorably, whereas immigrants who lack plans to work or entered without authorization are not. Moreover, immigrants' countries of origin matter, with respondents penalizing Iraqi immigrants by 14 percentage points (compared to immigrants from the most preferred origin, Germany) and with more ethnocentric respondents penalizing

immigrants from several African and Asian countries. Yet such effects are relatively small in magnitude and limited in scope. Once we provide information on education, language, and other factors, Mexican immigrants appear to suffer little penalty as compared to German immigrants, a finding that distinguishes these results from those of Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) and suggests the limits of ethnocentrism-based explanations.

The results provide us with substantial leverage to reconsider various theoretical explanations of attitudes toward immigrants. Our findings are at odds with explanations emphasizing labor market threat, since preferences for highly skilled immigrants and those planning to work do not vary with respondents' skill levels, occupations, or industries. Yet they are also at odds with explanations highlighting other types of variation across individuals. Indeed, the most striking pattern to emerge is not anticipated by prior scholarship emphasizing economic *or* cultural factors. Past theories have consistently posited individual-level differences in attitudes toward immigrants, whether they are based on respondents' labor market positions, fiscal exposure to immigration, attitudes toward outgroups, partisanship, or other traits. The divisive national debates of recent years certainly reinforce the expectation of individual-level differences in immigration-related attitudes. In contrast, our results uncover a sweeping consensus across different groups about which types of immigrants to admit. These preferences differ little based on the respondents' education, income, race/ethnicity, partisanship, or other demographic and attitudinal characteristics.

A wealth of recent scholarship reports pronounced differences in attitudes across partisan groups, both on preferred immigration policies (e.g., Knoll, Redlawsk, and Sanborn 2011) and on a host of other political issues (e.g., Gerber and Huber 2009). Given the expansive influence of partisanship, the underlying American consensus on preferred immigrants is all the more remarkable. The strength of this unacknowledged consensus undercuts explanations of attitudes toward immigrants that highlight individual-level differences, such as claims that anti-immigrant attitudes are primarily driven by distributional concerns. It also helps us better understand the roots of contemporary divisions over immigration policy—those divisions cannot be masking divisions over the types of immigrants to admit, as on that point, there is widespread agreement. Immigrants are being assessed in similar ways by Democrats and Republicans, by high school graduates and college graduates, and by rich and poor. The operative question appears to be not how immigrants affect specific individuals but how they are perceived to affect the nation as a whole.

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[1]In a companion article, we develop the statistical tools for conjoint analysis utilized in this study (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014).

A wide variety of robustness checks provides confidence that these results are not artifacts of specific choices made during survey administration or analysis. The results are not especially pronounced among those with a tendency to "self-monitor," among those who saw less typical immigrant profiles, or among responses to profiles seen early or late. Methodologically, the conjoint analysis employed here has potential value in studying problems well beyond immigration attitudes.

To be sure, on most issues, public attitudes do not translate directly into policy, and prior research suggests that the disconnect between public opinion and policymaking has been especially pronounced on immigration (e.g., Messina 1989; Tichenor 2002). On the whole, the public is thought to be more restrictionist than elected officials. But the existence of a "hidden American immigration consensus" on whom to admit is nonetheless important in understanding contemporary immigration attitudes and immigration policymaking, even if there is no similar consensus on immigration policy. First, the mass-level consensus indicates that any disagreements among the mass public are more likely to be over *how many* immigrants to admit or *how to handle immigrants already here* than over *whom to admit*. More tentatively, our findings are consistent with the claim that salient disagreements over immigration policy might stem from the selective mobilization of people, groups, and attitudes on this issue (see also Tichenor 2002). Even so, as the Conclusion discusses, key elements of the Senate's 2013 immigration reform follow the tenets of the consensus uncovered here. That proposed reform emphasized skill-based immigration, English-language acquisition, increased border security, and penalties for unauthorized migration. Each of those policies is in line with American public opinion about whom to admit. So while there is no analogous consensus on immigration policy among interest groups or policy makers, the shadow of the hidden consensus uncovered here is visible in policymaking.

Why Do Natives Oppose Immigrants?

As immigrant populations have grown in developed democracies, hypotheses about the sources of native-born opinion about immigrants have proliferated as well. Here we organize several theoretical approaches based on the hypotheses they generate about two questions: What immigrant attributes influence native-born attitudes, and which native-born groups are influenced?

Economic Self-Interest and Sociotropic Concerns

One approach to immigration attitudes takes economic self-interest as its starting point. In this view, the native-born perceive immigrants as competitors for scarce jobs and will oppose immigrants if they have skill profiles and occupations similar to their own (Mayda 2006; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). For example, high-skilled respondents are expected to oppose high-skilled immigrants, but not low-skilled immigrants. Another variant of the material self-interest approach hypothesizes that immigrants might influence native-born residents through their impact on taxes and spending (Facchini and Mayda 2009; Hanson, Scheve, and Slaughter 2007). Those native-born residents whose level of income and place of residence expose them to higher costs from immigration are expected to be especially opposed. For example, a wealthy respondent in a heavily immigrant state with a high income tax is likely to be more anti-immigration than a similar respondent in a state with no income tax. Under this hypothesis, we might also expect that immigrants' intention to work will influence their reception, with high-income Americans especially wary of immigrants not planning to work.

Other scholarship has contested hypotheses based on material self-interest, either by pointing out that economic perceptions are weak predictors of immigration-related attitudes (e.g., Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Sides and Citrin 2007) or by demonstrating that the preference for high-skilled immigrants is evident among all subgroups of natives (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010). To the extent that more educated individuals are more supportive of immigration, such a finding might reflect increased tolerance. Moreover, Hainmueller, Hiscox, and Margalit (2014) show that attitudes toward immigration are very similar among native workers in U.S. industries that vary in their dependence on immigrant labor, their labor mobility, or the skill mix of the immigrants they employ (but see Malhotra, Margalit, and Mo 2013). These findings are inconsistent with the argument that egocentric concerns about labor market competition strongly influence immigration attitudes.

Still, there are also sociotropic economic explanations that remain viable even in the face of these objections. According to a sociotropic account, native-born Americans respond to immigrants based on perceptions about their economic contribution to the nation as a whole. If so, native-born Americans might prefer well-educated, experienced, high-status professionals based on perceptions about their impact on the national economy or their likely tax contribution (Citrin et al. 1997; Hainmueller

and Hiscox 2007). Sociotropic hypotheses have been well developed in explaining Americans' perceptions of economic performance (e.g., Kinder and Kiewiet 1981), but could extend to their assessments of immigrants as well.

English or those from outside Europe are viewed more negatively. With respect to the Middle East, threats related to terrorism could exacerbate such differences (Harell et al. 2012; Schildkraut 2011).

Prejudice and Ethnocentrism

As with race-related questions, immigration is an emotionally charged issue addressing the rights of people who are predominantly nonwhite (e.g., Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008). Research indicates that those who hold negative stereotypes about immigrants (Burns and Gimpel 2000) or more biased implicit associations (Pérez 2010) are more opposed to immigration. In the United States and Europe, there is substantial variation in support based on immigrants' countries of origin (Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013; but see Sniderman et al. 2002). Given those observations, an alternate set of explanations holds that non-Hispanic whites' immigration attitudes—and perhaps those of other groups—are structured similarly to their racial views. These viewpoints begin from the contention that racial and immigration-related attitudes stem from a common underlying factor, whether it is ethnocentrism (e.g., Kinder and Kam 2009), authoritarianism (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), or social dominance orientation (Newman, Hartman, and Taber 2014). Building on the close relationship between immigrants' countries of origin and their ethnic or racial backgrounds, this approach generates two hypotheses: that native-born Americans will be more opposed to immigrants from countries that are more ethnically and culturally distinctive and that native-born Americans with higher levels of ethnocentrism will be especially opposed (Kinder and Kam 2009, 138).

In one variant of hypotheses emphasizing prejudice, immigration-related attitudes are straightforward extensions of racial attitudes. Thus, native-born white Americans are likely to be more supportive of immigrants from Europe. In this view, sources of intergroup difference that are common to racial ascription, such as skin tone, are likely to shape attitudes on immigration. Maintaining the emphasis on prejudice or ethnocentrism, a second approach allows for the possibility that the content of the anti-immigrant stereotypes might differ from that of antiblack stereotypes. In this view, there are several immigrant attributes that might increase perceptions of social and cultural distance, from difficulty with English (Hopkins 2014) to differing religious or cultural practices (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010; Ostfeld 2012). This hypothesis could explain why immigrants who do not speak

American Identity and Norms

Another theoretical approach begins from the premise that natives evaluate immigrants based on their adherence to norms related to American identity (Schildkraut 2011). With respect to immigration, many Americans identify strongly with their nationality (Theiss-Morse 2009; Wong 2010), and concerns that immigration might dilute national identity are widespread (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Schildkraut 2011; Wright 2011). Attitudes toward immigrants might thus hinge on whether they are seen as upholding American norms (Wright and Citrin 2011). But what are "American norms"? One concerns assimilation (Schildkraut 2005, 2011): We should expect those immigrants who demonstrate an interest in America and its culture to win higher levels of support. Over 90% of Americans indicate that speaking English is an important element of American identity (Theiss-Morse 2009; Wong 2010), so we hypothesize that speaking English will matter too.

The norm-based approach also produces the expectation that immigrants' labor market credentials will be influential, albeit for reasons not related to economic self-interest. Given Americans' strong adherence to work-related norms, immigrants' professions, job experiences, and employment plans are signals of adherence to those norms. Whereas the hypothesis grounded in self-interest predicts that immigrants' professions should interact with hosts' professions, this norm-based account expects a common influence across host subgroups. Immigrants who want to enter the United States to improve their job prospects might be rewarded relative to others. A related line of thinking might lead immigrants who are more familiar with the United States, perhaps having spent time in the country, to garner more support. Notice the similarity between the observable implications of this norms-based approach and the sociotropic approach. To the extent that norms about American identity are related to professional success, these two approaches yield overlapping expectations.

Conversely, one of the central norms that many contemporary immigrants are perceived to violate regards authorized entry (Hood and Morris 1998). If so, immigrants who have previously been in the United States without authorization might be penalized despite their increased familiarity with the country. One of the

liabilities of the norms-based account is that there is no comprehensive list of norms related to American identity, giving the hypothesis substantial flexibility. Nonetheless, our focus here is on well-defined norms, such as those around language, work, and law. This theoretical discussion does not pretend to be exhaustive, but it organizes prior theorizing into three broad approaches. Most hypotheses lead us to expect pronounced individual-level differences in attitudes toward immigrants, whereas a few theories predict a more common response.

Limits of Existing Evidence

Pioneering studies played a critical role in identifying the correlates of immigration attitudes (e.g., Burns and Gimpel 2000; Citrin et al. 1997; Scheve and Slaughter 2001), but these early studies emphasized immigration attitudes in general. Prior studies have only rarely considered attitudes about whom to admit separately from those about how many to admit. Also, as this literature has expanded, scholars have increasingly supplemented observational studies with experimental approaches. Such experiments vary one, two, or at most three immigrant attributes at a time, including the immigrant's country of origin, education, language use, or skin tone (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2010; Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010; Harell et al. 2012; Hopkins 2014; Ostfeld 2012; Schildkraut 2011; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004; Sniderman et al. 2002; Valentino and Iyengar 2011; Wright and Citrin 2011). Yet even these second-generation studies are limited in their ability to test the relative strength of various hypotheses. There is also the possibility of confounding if the experimentally manipulated attributes are correlated with other influential attributes. For example, if an experiment includes information only on immigrants' countries of origin, it is unclear whether immigrants from Mexico are penalized because of perceptions about their education levels or levels of unauthorized entry, or for other reasons, such as deep-seeded prejudice. Certainly, it is difficult to identify a single manipulation that can definitively test a hypothesis, and it is difficult to make direct comparisons between estimates obtained from experiments with different designs, manipulations, and dependent variables. Moreover, prior research has focused on only a small subset of the sources of immigrant-native distinction. Given these limitations, the following section proposes a research design that enables comparisons of a much wider range of theoretically relevant immigrant attributes on a single scale.

Experimental Design, Data, Measurement, and Analysis

We employ a choice-based conjoint design to obtain a more comprehensive picture of citizens' opinions on whom to admit. Conjoint analyses have been widely used in marketing (e.g., Raghavarao, Wiley, and Chitturi 2011), but they have seen little use in political science (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). Our experiment puts respondents in the position of immigration officials, asking them to make decisions between pairs of immigrants applying for admission. We require a choice between each pair of immigrants to simplify the decision task, given the limits of short-term memory (Krosnick 1999). Following a short introduction explaining the exercise, we show respondents a screen with profiles of two immigrants as displayed in Figure 1. The instructions asked respondents to "please indicate which of the two immigrants you would personally prefer to see admitted to the United States." As detailed below, the results are not sensitive to this particular framing of the task.[2] We provide details on the question wording, variable coding, and survey administration in the Supporting Information (SI).

Below the immigrant profiles, we measure the outcome in two ways. The first question asks respondents to report a preference for one of the profiles. We code the responses to this question in a binary variable, *Immigrant Preferred*, which is 1 if the immigrant profile is preferred and 0 otherwise. This variable is our primary outcome of interest. The question has the advantage that it forces respondents to make trade-offs, as someone must be admitted and someone else rejected. Requiring a decision also neutralizes attitudes about overall levels of immigration, enabling us to focus on the attributes that make immigrants more or less attractive to the native-born. As a robustness check, we also use responses to a pair of questions that ask respondents to rate each immigrant on a 7-point scale.[3] We use these ratings to code a binary variable (*Immigrant Supported*) as 1 if the rating is above the midpoint and 0 otherwise.

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[2]The similarities between these results and those of Wright, Levy, and Citrin (2014) further suggest that the core results detailed below are likely to be robust to the specific framing of the survey task.

[3]Our focus is on which immigrants receive support, and our emphasis on the forced-choice outcome reflects that. Given our design, it is plausible that responses to the forced-choice question influenced the ratings provided immediately afterward. Future work might consider randomizing the format of the outcome variable so as to evaluate its effects. For an example of a conjoint design using a different response format, see Wright, Levy, and Citrin (2014).

FIGURE 1 Experimental Design

Please read the descriptions of the potential immigrants carefully. Then, please indicate which of the two immigrants you would personally prefer to see admitted to the United States.

	Immigrant 1	Immigrant 2
Prior Trips to the U.S.	Entered the U.S. once before on a tourist visa	Entered the U.S. once before on a tourist visa
Reason for Application	Reunite with family members already in U.S.	Reunite with family members already in U.S.
Country of Origin	Mexico	Iraq
Language Skills	During admission interview, this applicant spoke fluent English	During admission interview, this applicant spoke fluent English
Profession	Child care provider	Teacher
Job Experience	One to two years of job training and experience	Three to five years of job training and experience
Employment Plans	Does not have a contract with a U.S. employer but has done job interviews	Will look for work after arriving in the U.S.
Education Level	Equivalent to completing two years of college in the U.S.	Equivalent to completing a college degree in the U.S.
Gender	Female	Male

	Immigrant 1	Immigrant 2
If you had to choose between them, which of these two immigrants should be given priority to come to the United States to live?	○	○

On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates that the United States should absolutely not admit the immigrant and 7 indicates that the United States should definitely admit the immigrant, how would you rate Immigrant 1?

Absolutely Not Admit 1	2	3	4	5	6	Definitely Admit 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Using the same scale, how would you rate Immigrant 2?

Absolutely Not Admit 1	2	3	4	5	6	Definitely Admit 7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Note: This figure illustrates the experimental design for the conjoint experiment.

Each respondent evaluates five comparisons between pairs of immigrants, each displayed on a new screen. We randomly vary the two immigrants' profiles on nine attributes that previous studies identify as potentially influential. The attributes include each immigrant's *gender, education, employment plans, job experience, profession, language skills, country of origin, reasons for applying,* and *prior trips to the United States*. These attributes were cho-sen to approximate the information available to immigration officials, and that rationale explains why other factors such as religion were omitted. Each of the attributes can take on multiple values. For example, *job experience* has five values ranging from "no job training or prior experience" to "more than five years." For each profile, we randomly assign the values of each attribute such that the two immigrants' profiles vary within and across the

binary comparisons. Table 1 contains the full list of attribute values. They cover a wide range—in theory, there are just under 900,000 unique immigrant profiles—to assess various theoretical dimensions that are potentially influential.

While some profiles are more typical than others, the population of immigrants to the United States is itself large and diverse, and the attribute values were chosen to be common, distinctive, plausible, and theoretically relevant. For example, the professions include a variety of occupations in which contemporary immigrants are likely to be found. Also, the 10 chosen countries jointly are the sending countries for approximately 43% of all immigrants in the United States today. Table A.1 in the SI reinforces these impressions by using Current Population Surveys to estimate the share of immigrants from each of our 10 national-origin groups with some college education or a bachelor's degree. It confirms that even seemingly atypical profiles likely correspond to significant numbers of actual immigrants. Below, we also address the question of typicality by identifying respondents who saw profiles that were more or less typical.[4] For each respondent, we also randomly assign the order of the attributes to rule out primacy and recency effects.[5]

Our design has several advantages over prior observational and experimental approaches. First, given that the attribute values are randomized, the design allows us to identify the effect of each immigrant attribute on the probability of being preferred for admission. Put differently, the randomization provides new leverage to disentangle the effects of correlated attributes such as language skills and country of origin. Moreover, given that we vary all the attributes and measure their effects on the same scale, the design allows us to examine the attributes' relative importance. For instance, we can compare the effect of a college education with that of being Mexican. Second, we can examine possible interactions in the effect of the immigrant attributes (e.g., do skill levels matter more for more culturally distinctive immigrants?). This allows us to test the conditions under which some attributes mat-

ter more or less. Finally, the design allows us to consider interactions between respondent and immigrant characteristics (e.g., do ethnocentric voters care more about immigrants' countries of origin?). These interactions provide opportunities to test additional hypotheses.

Sample

Our data come from a two-wave, nationally representative panel survey of U.S. citizens administered through Knowledge Networks (KN) between December 2011 and January 2012. Uniquely among American survey companies, KN recruits respondents using random-digit dialing or address-based sampling, and it provides Internet access to those who lack it. All members of the KN panel have a known probability of selection, so our sampling procedure constitutes a two-stage probability design. The KN panel covers the online and offline U.S. populations aged 18 years and older, and previous research has shown that it closely approximates national demographic benchmarks (Chang and Krosnick 2009). The SI provides a full list of the survey questions as well as details about survey administration.

The first wave of our survey contained 1,714 completed interviews and measured key covariates, including attitudes toward immigration, levels of self-monitoring (Berinsky and Lavine 2011), and ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam 2009). After a 3-week washout period, we re-interviewed respondents in a survey containing the conjoint experiment. Respondents were not made aware of the connection between the surveys. Although considerably more costly than a cross-section, this panel design enables us to measure potential moderating variables without priming respondents or introducing differential measurement bias. The second wave yielded 1,407 completed interviews, so attrition within the panel was limited to 18%. In SI Table A.2, we use t-tests to demonstrate that the attrition was not related to any of our core variables. In the second wave, we also measured additional covariates such as respondents' employment status, industry, and occupation. In all analyses, we use post-stratification weights to adjust the data for common sources of survey error.

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[4]We impose two restrictions on the randomization to rule out implausible profiles. First, we restrict immigrants who *apply for admission* to "escape persecution" to come from "Iraq," "Sudan," or "Somalia." Second, we restrict the randomization for *profession* such that high-skill occupations "financial analyst," "research scientist," "doctor," and "computer programmer" are included only if the *education level* is 2 years of college or more.

[5]However, the order of the attributes is fixed for each respondent across the five comparisons to reduce complexity. Moreover, we restrict the randomization of the attribute order such that the work-related attributes *profession*, *job experience*, and *employment plans* always appear consecutively in a randomized order.

Analysis

Conjoint experiments frequently involve many more unique profiles than there are observations in the data set. In this case, there are just under 900,000 possible profiles, only a small fraction of which are ever observed.

TABLE 1 Attributes for Immigrant Profiles in Conjoint Experiment

Attributes	Values
Education Level	No formal education
	Equivalent to completing fourth grade in the U.S.
	Equivalent to completing eighth grade in the U.S.
	Equivalent to completing high school in the U.S.
	Equivalent to completing two years at college in the U.S.
	Equivalent to completing a college degree in the U.S.
	Equivalent to completing a graduate degree in the U.S.
Gender	Female
	Male
Country of Origin	Germany
	France
	Mexico
	Philippines
	Poland
	India
	China
	Sudan
	Somalia
	Iraq
Language	During admission interview, this applicant spoke fluent English
	During admission interview, this applicant spoke broken English
	During admission interview, this applicant tried to speak English but was unable
	During admission interview, this applicant spoke through an interpreter
Reason for Application	Reunite with family members already in U.S.
	Seek better job in U.S.
	Escape political/religious persecution
Profession	Gardener
	Waiter
	Nurse
	Teacher
	Child care provider
	Janitor
	Construction worker
	Financial analyst
	Research scientist
	Doctor
	Computer programmer
Job Experience	No job training or prior experience
	One to two years
	Three to five years
	More than five years
Employment Plans	Has a contract with a U.S. employer
	Does not have a contract with a U.S. employer, but has done job interviews
	Will look for work after arriving in the U.S.
	Has no plans to look for work at this time
Prior Trips to the U.S.	Never been to the U.S.
	Entered the U.S. once before on a tourist visa
	Entered the U.S. once before without legal authorization
	Has visited the U.S. many times before on tourist visas
	Spent six months with family members in the U.S.

Note: This table shows the attributes and attribute values that are used to generate the immigrant profiles for the conjoint experiment.

Yet the estimation of treatment effects is straightforward on account of the randomization and the resulting orthogonality of each attribute with respect to every other. In survey experiments, researchers commonly randomize potential confounders (such as the question order) and then analyze the treatment effects by averaging over those orthogonal attributes. Here we evaluate the relative importance of immigrant attributes in an analogous way. We follow the statistical approach developed in Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014) and estimate average marginal component effects (AMCEs). The AMCE represents the average difference in the probability of being preferred for admission when comparing two different attribute values—for example, an immigrant with "fluent English" versus an immigrant with "broken English"—where the average is taken over all possible combinations of the other immigrant attributes. Thanks to the random assignment of attributes, profiles with "fluent English" will have the same distribution for all other attributes on average as compared to profiles with "broken English," allowing for a straightforward comparison of means. Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014) show that the AMCE is nonparametrically identified given the conditionally independent randomization of the attributes and can be easily estimated using a regression of the binary outcome variable, *Immigrant Preferred*, on sets of indicator variables measuring the levels of each attribute. The advantage of this approach is that the estimator for the AMCEs is fully nonparametric and does not require functional form assumptions about the choice probabilities.[6] Note that since the unit of analysis is the rated immigrant profile, we have up to 14,000 observations in some models—each of our 1,407 respondents rated five pairings, with two immigrant profiles per pairing. To obtain accurate variance estimates, we cluster the standard errors by the respondent because observed choice outcomes are not independent across the profiles rated by a single respondent.

Effects of Immigrant Attributes on Support for Admission

Figure 2 displays the results for all respondents. It uses dots to indicate point estimates and lines to illustrate 95% confidence intervals for the AMCE of each attribute value on the probability that respondents chose a particular applicant for admission. The dots without confidence intervals denote reference categories. For example, the second line from the top indicates that male immigrants are 2.4 percentage points less likely to win support for admission than female immigrants. The estimates are based on the benchmark regression model described above where the *Immigrant Preferred* variable is regressed on sets of indicator variables for each level of each immigrant attribute (omitting the reference categories). The full regression model is displayed in SI Table B.1.[7]

Confirming prior research (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004), the KN panelists prefer immigrants with higher levels of education, and the effect is roughly monotonic: the more educated the immigrant, the greater the support. In fact, immigrants with a B.A. are 19.5 percentage points (SE = 2.1) more likely to be supported for admission than immigrants without formal education. Differences in the immigrants' ability to use English have similarly sized effects. Compared to an applicant who speaks fluent English, one who uses an interpreter sees a decline in support of 16.2 percentage points (SE = 1.4). There is some penalty for speaking broken English (6.4, SE = 1.4), but the penalty for being unable to use English is much larger. Language is commonly considered a cultural indicator, but in this context, it might be considered an economic skill to some degree.

A variety of other cultural differences are correlated with immigrants' countries of origin, from their religions and manners of dress to phenotypical differences such as skin tone. Conditional on detailed information about immigrants' education, job experience, occupation, and language, it seems reasonable to consider country of origin an imprecise indicator of cultural differences. Yet despite the emphasis past research places on cultural differences, the effects for the immigrants' countries of origin are typically small and statistically insignificant, with only four countries (China, Iraq, Sudan, and Somalia) reducing the probability of admission as compared to the baseline Indian immigrant. The difference between coming from these four countries and Germany—the most preferred country of origin—is statistically significant (p < .05, two-sided). Iraqi immigrants are viewed more negatively

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[6]This sets it apart from other estimation approaches in the conjoint literature, such as conditional logit. Nonetheless, all the results reported below obtain when estimated via conditional logit.

[7]Notice that we include the full set of pairwise interactions for the attributes that are linked through the restrictions on the randomization. As explained in Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014), the AMCEs for these linked attributes need to be estimated as the weighted average of the effect of a specific attribute averaged over the valid strata of the linked attribute (e.g., we average the effect of going from a "janitor" to a "waiter" across each education level).

FIGURE 2 Effects of Immigrant Attributes on Probability of Being Preferred for Admission
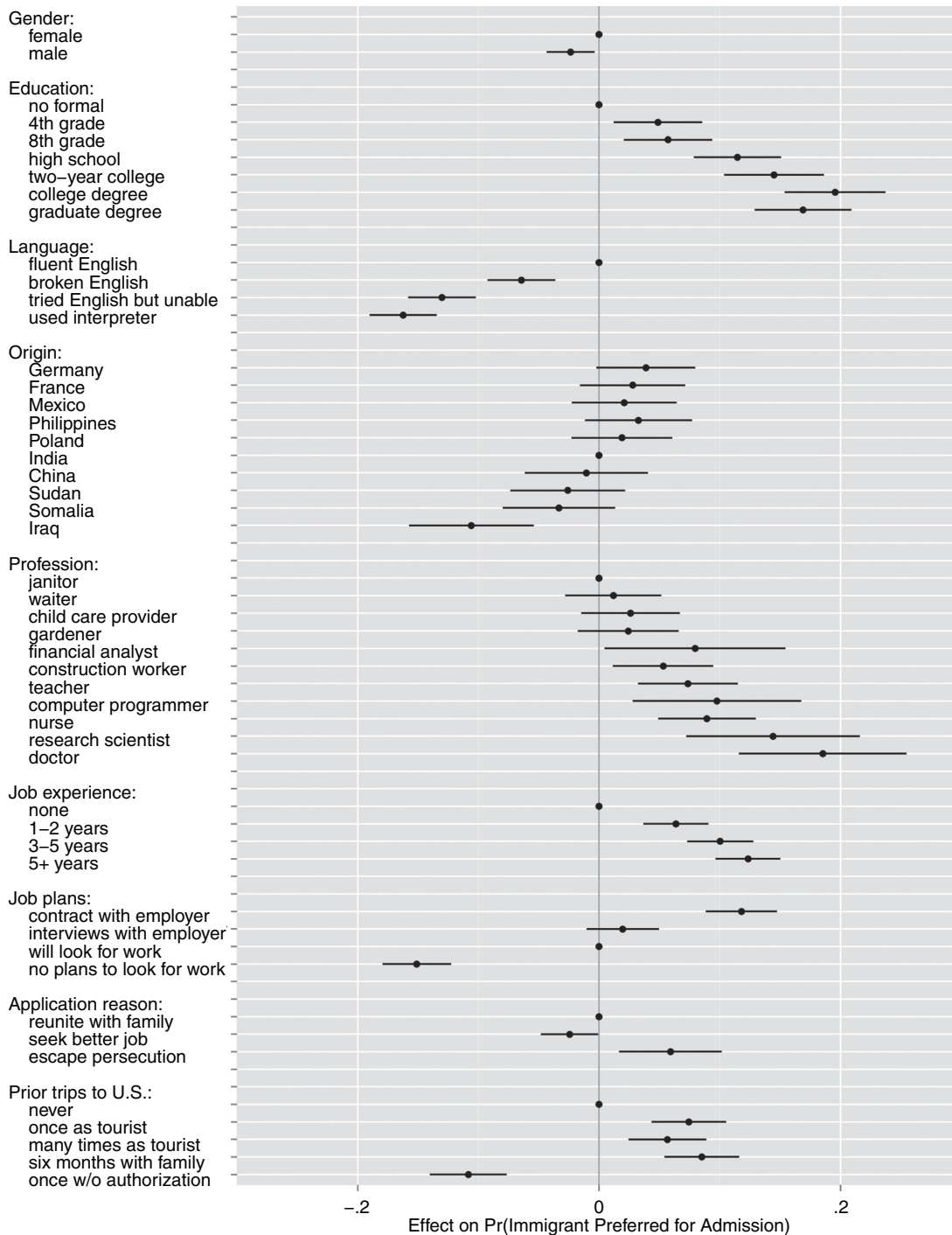
Note: This plot shows estimates of the effects of the randomly assigned immigrant attribute values on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with clustered standard errors detailed in SI Table B.1; bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The points without horizontal bars denote the attribute value that is the reference category for each attribute.

than others, as being from Iraq reduces the probability of admission by 10.6 percentage points (SE = 2.6) compared to Indian immigrants. Given the two wars between the United States and Iraq, and given the salience of terrorism after 9/11, it is plausible that Iraqi immigrants are viewed as security threats. Intriguingly, despite media frames focusing on low-skilled, unauthorized immigration from Mexico, there is little evidence of a penalty specific to Mexicans. Mexican immigrants are treated in a manner indistinguishable from Polish or German immigrants and earn more support than Indian immigrants. This estimate is conditional on information about the immigrant's prior trips to the United States, suggesting that Mexican immigrants might be viewed negatively in other contexts because of their association with unauthorized immigration.

We also find evidence that the prospective immigrant's profession matters, with construction workers (5.3, SE = 2.1), nurses (8.9, SE = 2.1), doctors (18.5, SE = 3.5), and research scientists (14.4, SE = 3.7) enjoying a bonus over janitors. Generally, those in high-skill professions are more likely to win support, although it seems plausible that respondents' perceptions about labor market demand or expectations about immigrants' societal contributions also matter. Computer programmers and financial analysts are in high-skill professions, but not ones that advantage would-be immigrants as decisively. The bonuses are 9.8 (SE = 3.6) and 7.9 (SE = 3.8) percentage points, respectively. Job experience makes an immigrant more desirable as well. In a sense, our survey respondents act like employers, screening for those who will contribute to the U.S. economy. But they also apply noneconomic criteria about different professions' relative contributions. This pattern is in keeping with the sociotropic hypothesis.

Turning to the applicant's job plans, we observe that immigrants who have a contract with an employer earn significantly more support than those who have conducted interviews or will look for work after arriving. This observation lends credence to the idea that labor market demand is influential, with Americans more interested in immigrants if U.S.-based employers signal their need. At the same time, immigrants without plans to work are penalized more than immigrants with any other single attribute. Immigrants who do not plan to work are 15.1 percentage points (SE = 1.5) less likely to be supported than an immigrant who will look for work after arriving, and 26.9 percentage points less likely than an immigrant with a contract. This observation is compatible with explanations based on immigrants' expected tax burden or their compliance with American norms. By

contrast, immigrants' reason for seeking admission has little influence, with only a hint that those immigrants who seek better jobs are viewed more negatively than others (−2.5 percentage points, SE = 1.2). Those immigrants who seek to escape from religious or political persecution are viewed a bit more favorably (5.9 percentage points, SE = 2.2).

Our final attribute summarizes the applicant's prior trips to the United States. Immigrants who have spent time in the United States are likely to be perceived as having a stronger connection to the country. In fact, as compared to those who have never been to the United States, immigrants who have been to the United States once, those who have been many times, and those who spent six months with family in the United States are all between 5.7 and 8.5 percentage points more likely to win admission. Yet the most striking result is the 10.8 percentage point (SE = 1.6) penalty for coming previously without authorization. Whatever familiarity with the United States an unauthorized immigrant might gain is outweighed by the violation of norm and law. Whether this penalty comes from concerns about the illegal entry itself, about future lawbreaking, or from other factors is a productive question for future research. Social desirability concerns should be muted with respect to unauthorized immigrants, as our respondents have a clear, nonracial rationale for treating them differently. In this light, the fact that a shift from German to Iraqi origin (−14.5) has a more negative impact than a shift from never having visited the United States to having come without authorization (−10.8) is informative. It suggests that responses to immigrants' countries of origin vary in meaningful ways, even with social desirability potentially at work.

To better understand the substantive meaning of these results, Figure 3 illustrates the predicted probability of being preferred for admission from our baseline model for immigrant profiles that correspond to the 1st, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 99th percentiles of estimated support. The first percentile is occupied by a Sudanese gardener with a fourth-grade education, no English, little job experience, no plans to work, and a prior unauthorized trip. Such an immigrant would win support in 8.1% of pairings (SE = 4.9). On the other extreme is a German research scientist with a graduate degree, fluent English, 3–5 years of job experience, and a job contract who had previously visited the United States many times. This applicant wins support 87.7% of the time (SE = 5.3). Taken together, our findings reveal that Americans' views about immigrants vary dramatically depending on their attributes.

FIGURE 3 Estimated Probability of Being Preferred for Admission for Selected Immigrant Profiles
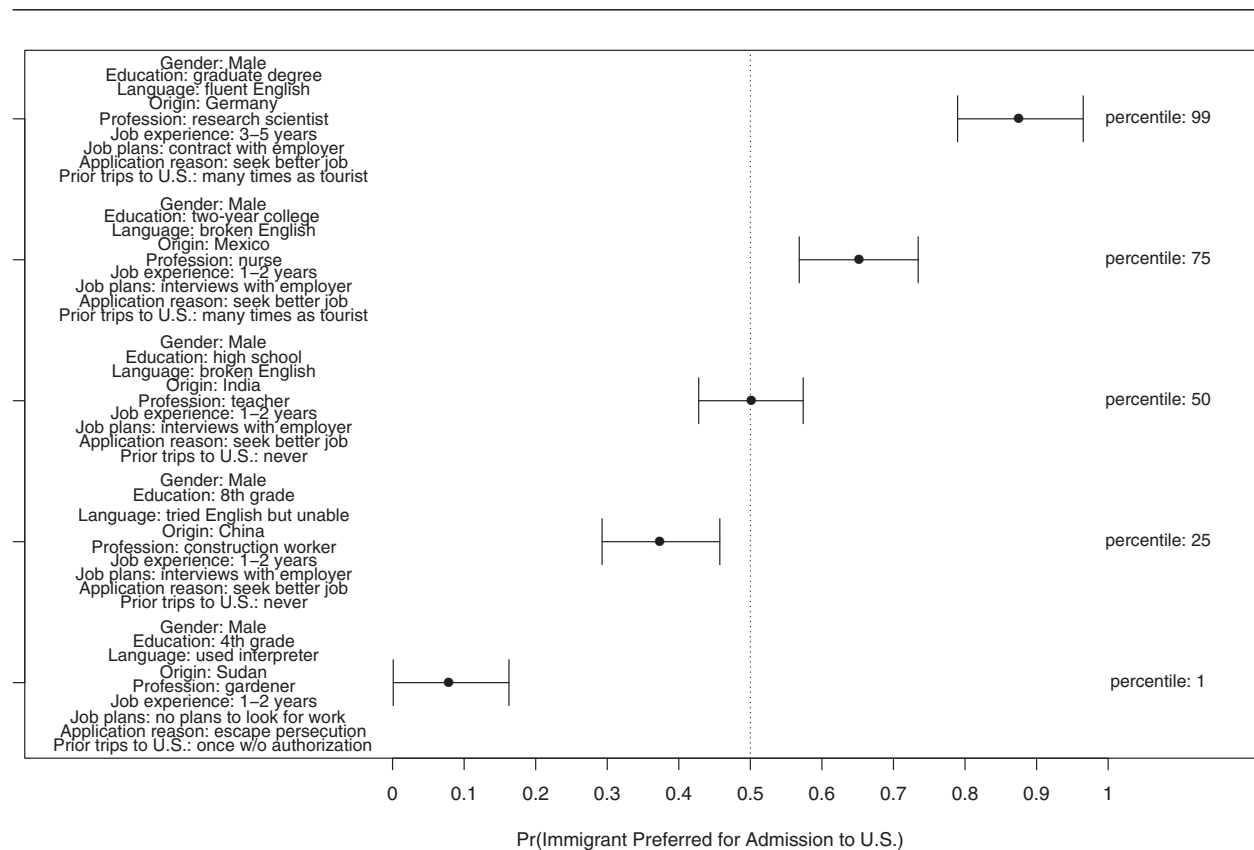
Note: This plot shows the estimated probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. The estimates are shown for selected immigrant profiles that refer to the 1st, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 99th percentiles of the distribution. The estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with clustered standard errors; bars represent 90% confidence intervals. Note that by virtue of forcing each respondent to choose one of the two profiles, the baseline probability of choosing a randomly drawn immigrant profile is 0.5.

Interactions with Respondent Characteristics

These baseline results enable us to jointly assess the importance of various theoretical approaches to immigrant-related attitudes. Yet our empirical design allows for more finely grained tests, as several of the hypotheses developed above also posit interactions between immigrants' attributes and respondents' characteristics. For example, the evidence that well-educated immigrants are favored is compatible with hypotheses about labor market threat if such responses are concentrated among those in less competition with highly skilled immigrants. Here and in the SI, we consider a variety of potential moderators of the effects to better distinguish between the different theoretical arguments. Those moderators include the KN panelists' education, profession, exposure to immigration in their industry, household income, fiscal exposure to immigration, ethnocentrism, race/ethnicity, neighborhood diversity, partisanship, political ideology, prior immigra-

tion attitude, gender, and age. The SI describes the coding of each moderator.

Economic Self-Interest

If attitudes toward immigrants are shaped by labor market concerns, we should expect that native-born Americans with skills or professions similar to a particular immigrant will be more opposed to that immigrant. We first consider skill levels, imperfectly approximated by whether or not respondents have any college education. Figure 4 presents the estimated marginal effects when replicating our benchmark model for the subsamples of respondents with and without any college education. We see little evidence of an interaction between respondents' education and that of their preferred immigrants, with both Americans who attended college and those who did not preferring well-educated immigrants. If anything, it is the college-educated Americans who are more favorable toward research scientists and financial analysts. Here and

FIGURE 4 Effects of Immigrant Attributes on Probability of Being Preferred for Admission by Education of Respondent
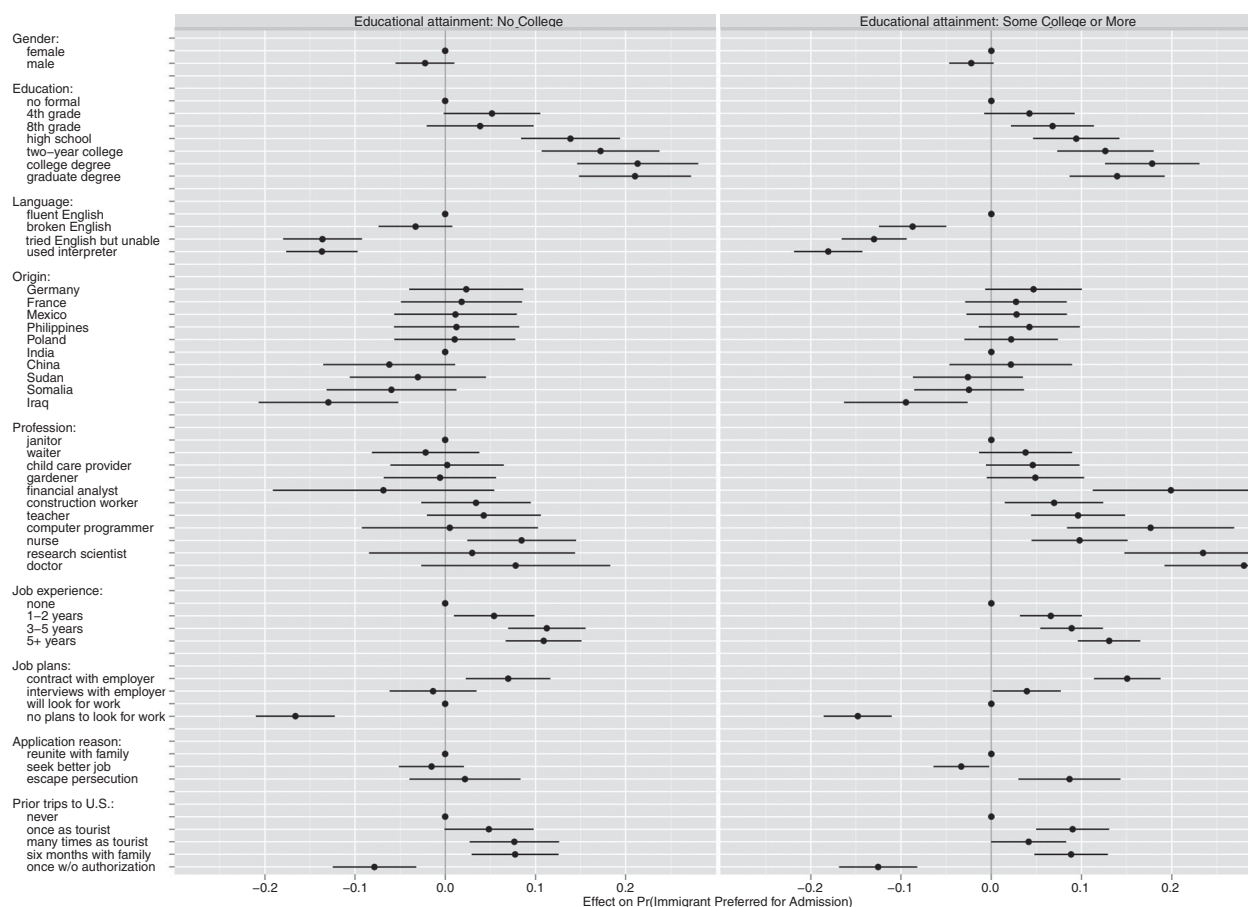
Note: These plots show estimates of the effects of the randomly assigned immigrant attributes on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with clustered standard errors estimated for the group of respondents without and with some college education, respectively; bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The points without horizontal bars denote the attribute value that is the reference category for each attribute.

in all subgroup analyses, we present the results separately by subgroup in our figures, while using joint models with interaction effects to estimate the statistical significance of any differential effects.[8] Hypotheses based on relative skill levels do little to make sense of these results, although hypotheses based on immigrants' sociotropic impacts are consistent with this pattern. Examining other attributes, we see that the responses are quite similar irrespective of the respondents' educational levels. Whether college educated or not, Americans agree that immigrants are more

desirable when they speak English, have a job contract, and have no history of unauthorized entry.

Another test of labor market competition considers whether respondents are more likely to oppose an immigrant who shares their profession. Here we augment our benchmark model to include an indicator variable for whether the immigrant's listed profession matched the respondent's. The results are shown in SI Table B.2. Respondents are not less likely to prefer or support an immigrant who shares their profession—the point estimates are very close to zero and insignificant. Similarly, SI Figure B.1 illustrates that respondents who work in industries with high or low concentrations of immigrants are not much different in their responses. None of these tests uncovers evidence consistent with labor market threat.

Other interest-based hypotheses lead us to expect individual-level differences as well. For example, if

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[8]The AMCEs of financial analyst and research scientist are both significantly different for respondents with and without college education, at $p < .0005$ and $p < .005$, respectively. To test for differences in the conditional AMCEs, we fit a fully interacted model to the pooled data and then conduct an F-test against the restriction that the conditional AMCEs are the same in both samples.

voters are concerned that immigrants will increase public spending, such concerns might be especially pronounced among those whose income or state of residence exposes them to potential tax increases (Hanson, Scheve, and Slaughter 2007). In SI Figures B.2 and B.3, we present the results separately based on respondents' household income and fiscal exposure to immigration. We find no meaningful change in the penalty for such immigrants across these subsets.[9] Taken together, these results suggest that fiscal concerns stemming from material self-interest are far from paramount. Still, these findings are consistent with sociotropic concerns: Immigrants who have no plans to work might be perceived as a burden for the country as a whole.

Ethnocentrism, Race, and Ethnicity

Today's immigrants to the United States come predominantly from Asia and Latin America, making them distinctive from America's non-Hispanic white majority. Variants of the hypotheses emphasizing these ethnic and racial differences lead us to expect some respondents to make extensive use of immigrants' countries of origin in judging their fitness for admission. Here, we discuss three such moderators: respondents' ethnocentrism, their ethnic/racial identification, and the demographic composition of their ZIP code.

Following Kinder and Kam (2009), we assess ethnocentrism through respondents' sentiment toward various ethnic/racial groups, which we measure using feeling thermometers included in the panel's first wave. The level of ethnocentrism is computed as the feeling thermometer score for the respondent's ingroup minus the average feeling thermometer score across the outgroups relevant to immigration (i.e., immigrants, Latinos/Hispanics, and Asian Americans). For this estimation, we break the ethnocentrism measure into two equally sized bins, splitting the sample on the median ethnocentrism value.

In Figure 5, we reestimate the benchmark model separately for respondents with low and high levels of ethnocentrism. The patterns are quite similar for these groups. In both cases, education, speaking English, some high-status professions, job experience, and prior trips are valued. Also, the two groups take decidedly negative views of those who do not plan to work or enter without authorization. Yet there are some differences, especially with respect to the prospective immigrant's

country of origin. More ethnocentric respondents impose somewhat more of a penalty for immigrants from non-European countries.[10] This negativity is pronounced for immigrants from countries with significant Muslim populations, but it extends to Mexico, China, and the Philippines as well. More ethnocentric respondents also place less emphasis on the immigrant's occupation. These results are consistent with ethnocentrism playing a role in attitudes toward immigrants.

In the SI, we consider differences in responses based on respondents' racial/ethnic backgrounds as well as the demographics of their ZIP codes. Those living in ZIP codes with few immigrants, many Mexican immigrants, and many immigrants from countries other than Mexico all show highly similar preferences about immigrant attributes (Figure B.4). So, too, do respondents who are white and nonwhite (Figure B.5). The SI also presents the results when we consider the 152 Hispanic respondents separately (Figure B.6). The small sample size means that the estimated effects have considerable uncertainty. But even so, the pattern for Hispanic respondents is broadly similar to that for other groups, as they place significant weight on education and assess immigrants from most countries similarly. Hispanic respondents do appear to place more of an emphasis on the immigrant's education than non-Hispanics, and they apply much less of a penalty for unauthorized entry. Non-Hispanics penalize a prior unauthorized entry by 11.9 percentage points (SE = 1.7), whereas for Hispanics the comparable figure is just 1.6 percentage points (SE = 5.0). That difference is right at the cusp of statistical significance ($p \approx 0.05$), and it is an important limit to the attitudinal consensus on desirable immigrants. The fact that Hispanics view unauthorized entry differently—and that unauthorized immigration is a salient dimension of contemporary debates—provides one explanation for why despite the attitudinal consensus we identify, there is little consensus in immigration policymaking.

Party Identification and Ideology

Since partisanship is a central source of structure for contemporary Americans' political attitudes (e.g., Levendusky 2009), Figure 6 examines whether Republicans and Democrats exhibit different preferences about immigrants. The findings are in stark contrast to a significant body of literature finding that Republicans and Democrats respond differently to cues, whether on immigration (e.g., Knoll, Redlawsk, and Sanborn 2011) or

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[9]We cannot reject the null that the conditional AMCEs for the immigrant education and "no plans to work" attributes are the same in both fiscal exposure subsamples ($p \approx .36$ and $p \approx .61$, respectively).

[10]The p-value for the difference in AMCEs is $p < .05$.

FIGURE 5   Effects of Immigrant Attributes on Probability of Being Preferred for Admission by Ethnocentrism of Respondent
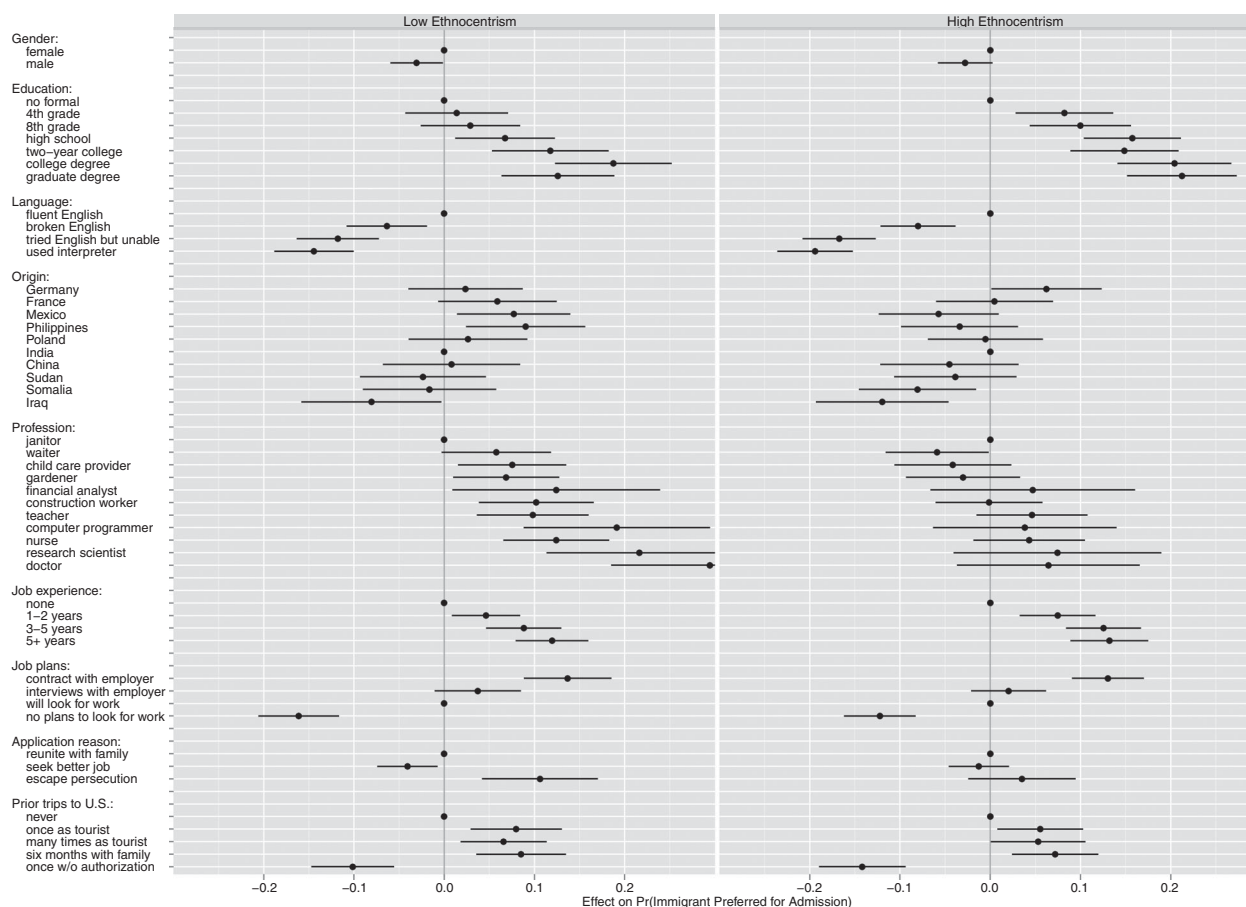
Note: These plots show estimates of the effects of the randomly assigned immigrant attributes on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with clustered standard errors estimated for the group of respondents with low and high levels of ethnocentrism, respectively; bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The points without horizontal bars denote the attribute value that is the reference category for each attribute.

on other issues (e.g., Gerber and Huber 2009; Zaller 1992). For a significant majority of the attribute values, the responses by Democrats and Republicans are highly similar. Republicans are much less supportive of immigrants who have no plans to work or those who entered the United States without authorization—but so are Democrats. Irrespective of partisanship, Americans prefer well-educated immigrants in certain high-skill professions. The penalty for coming from Iraq is almost identical, at −11.1 for Republicans and −10.7 for Democrats.[11] Overall, Democrats and Republicans evaluate immigrant attributes in surprisingly similar ways. The same holds true for self-reported liberals and conservatives, as shown in SI Figure B.7. The results are

also stable when comparing respondents based on their prior immigration attitudes (Figure B.8), gender (Figure B.9), and age (Figure B.10). Partisanship, ideology, race/ethnicity, gender, and age structure a wide range of Americans' political attitudes. But in understanding choices between immigrants, these characteristics give us little leverage. Strikingly, the American consensus on what constitutes a desirable immigrant cuts across even the most common correlates of differences in public opinion.

Robustness Checks

One indication of these results' robustness comes from the fact that they appear for the full set of respondents

[11]The p-value for the difference in AMCEs is p ≈ .94.

FIGURE 6 Effects of Immigrant Attributes on Probability of Being Preferred for Admission by Party Identification of Respondent
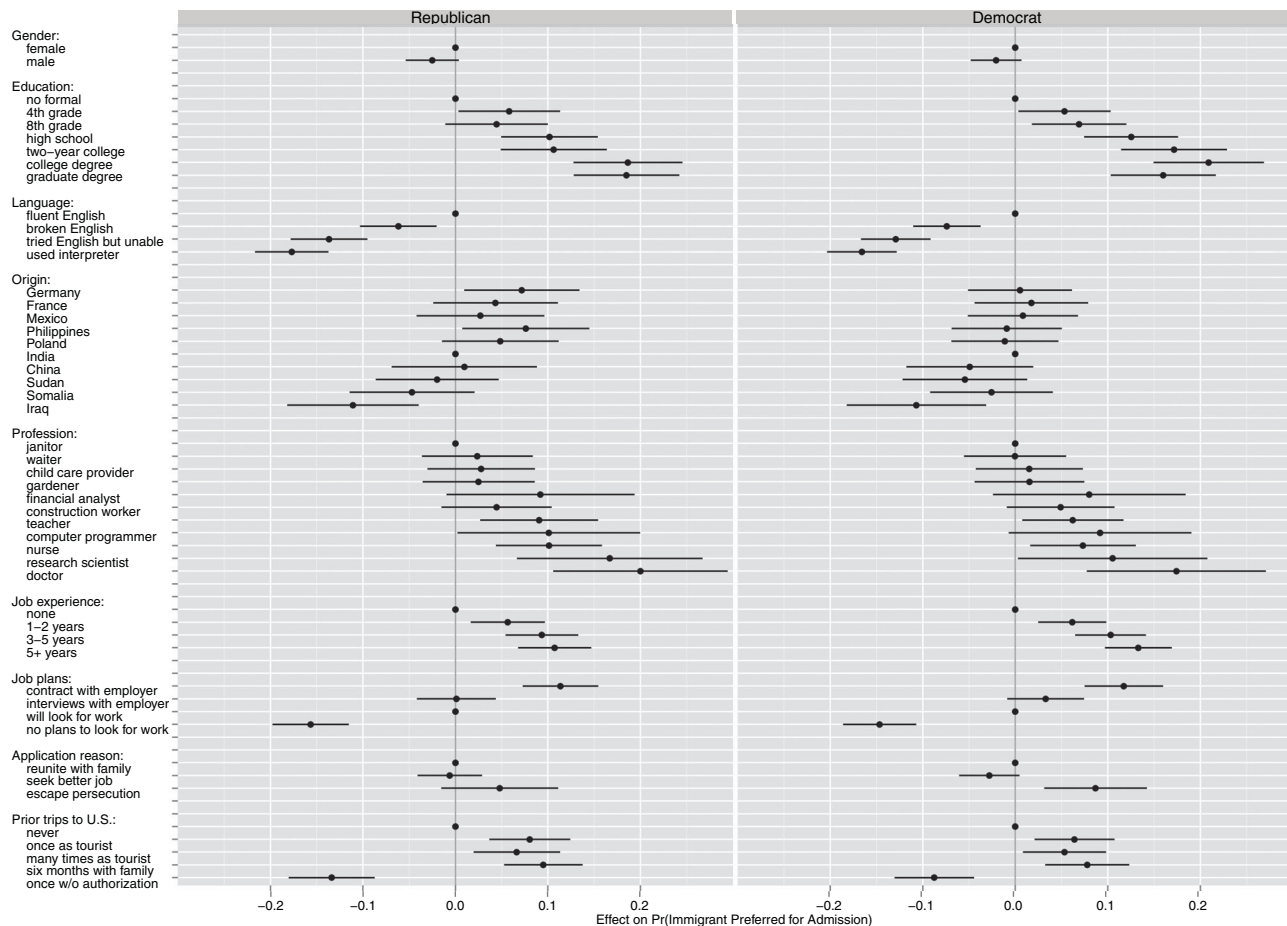
Note: These plots show estimates of the effects of the randomly assigned immigrant attributes on the probability of being preferred for admission to the United States. Estimates are based on the benchmark OLS model with clustered standard errors estimated for the group of respondents who identify with or lean toward the Republican or Democratic parties, respectively; bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The points without horizontal bars denote the attribute value that is the reference category for each attribute.

as well as for many theoretically relevant subgroups. In the SI, we report a wide variety of additional robustness checks.

First, we replicate the benchmark model using a profile-specific outcome measure. The analyses above employ the *Immigrant Preferred* outcome, in which respondents were asked to choose between the two immigrant profiles presented in each pairing. This design has an important advantage: It enables us to separate attitudes about overall levels of immigration from attitudes about preferred types of immigrants, since everyone must choose one of the two immigrants. Still, it is informative to test whether the results are sensitive to the specification of the dependent variable. We do so by using two questions that we asked immediately after the forced-choice question. For each profile, those questions asked respondents to assess the immigrant on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates that the United States should "absolutely not admit" the immigrant and 7 indicates that the United States "definitely should admit" the immigrant. We dichotomize the answers, coding them as 1 if the response is above the midpoint (and so indicates support for admission) and 0 otherwise. The results are reported in SI Figure C.1. The core conclusions differ little from those for the forced-choice outcome.[12]

As additional robustness checks, we examined different ways of addressing the clustering of profiles by respondents. We replicated the benchmark model while adding

[12]To be sure, the presence of these rating questions immediately after the forced-choice question could influence responses, as respondents might rate chosen profiles more highly or unchosen profiles less so.

respondent fixed effects (SI Figure C.2) and respondent random effects (SI Figure C.3). The results are almost identical to those from the benchmark model reported above.

Third, we show that the results do not differ for long-time members of the KN panel (SI Figure C.4) and are very similar across the five pairings evaluated by each respondent (SI Figure C.5). These results add to the external validity of our findings, as the effects of the immigrant attributes do not change as respondents become familiar either with survey taking in general or our survey specifically.

Fourth, we consider the extent to which responses are shaped by social desirability. Following Berinsky and Lavine (2011), we do so using three first-wave questions to measure self-monitoring, one aspect of self-presentation that is closely connected to social desirability. Respondents high in self-monitoring exert more effort to present themselves in an appealing way. However, when reestimating the marginal effects while separating respondents into those who are low or high in self-monitoring,[13] we find that any differences are minor (SI Figure C.6). High self-monitors seem somewhat less opposed to immigrants who entered once without authorization.[14] Both those who engage in more self-monitoring and those who do not are more negative toward Iraqi or Somali immigrants.[15] The weak effect of Mexico, for example, does not appear to be driven by those high in self-monitoring.[16] While these patterns do not rule out the influence of social desirability, our substantive conclusions would be similar even when restricting our attention to a subset of respondents least likely to give socially desirable answers. Moreover, online survey administration is known to reduce respondents' tendency to report socially desirable answers (Chang and Krosnick 2009).

Fifth, we checked whether respondents react differently to atypical profiles. We identified combinations of attribute values that might be considered atypical, such as profiles from poor countries with high-status jobs. We then subdivided our respondents into those who saw 0–3 atypical profiles, those who saw 4–5, and those who saw 7–10. The core results differ little across these subsets

of respondents and are not driven by reactions to less common profiles (SI Figure C.7).

Finally, we conducted additional robustness checks using Mechanical Turk in which we asked respondents to perform the conjoint task described above. In the first Mechanical Turk study, we added a question that asked respondents to explain their choice for each pairing in their own words. The clusters of words that the respondents use to explain their decisions match the findings that come from the conjoint analysis closely, further validating the method (see SI Table C.1). In the second Mechanical Turk study, we randomly varied the introduction to the conjoint task to include or exclude the phrase about acting "as if you were an immigration official." The results were almost identical across the two conditions, suggesting the results are robust to these different framings (SI Figure C.8). Moreover, the overall results from the Mechanical Turk samples were similar to those from the KN sample detailed above.

Discussion and Conclusion

By identifying specific immigrant attributes that shape immigration opinions, scholarship using survey experiments has advanced our understanding in critical ways. In separate experiments, prior research has manipulated factors including immigrants' skill levels, countries of origin, skin tones, and languages. But as survey experiments proliferate, the task of comparing the explanatory power of the many immigrant attributes on a single scale becomes increasingly important. This article introduces conjoint analysis to vary nine theoretically relevant attributes of hypothetical immigrants, and thus to make explicit comparisons between the explanatory strength of various hypotheses.

Two types of explanations—sociotropic explanations and norms-based explanations—receive strong support. Americans express a pronounced preference for immigrants who are well educated, are in high-skilled professions, and plan to work upon arrival. They prefer English-speaking immigrants with no unauthorized prior trips. We do find that country of origin matters, with Iraqis penalized and with more ethnocentric respondents relying more heavily on country of origin in making decisions. But this attribute's explanatory power is limited. Conditional on information about prior trips to the United States, there is no penalty for immigrants from Mexico, which is the single largest sender of immigrants to the contemporary United States.

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[13]We divide the sample at the median of the self-monitoring scale, which is an additive index of the three self-monitoring questions. The Cronbach's alpha for the three items is .69.

[14]The p-value for the difference in the AMCEs is p < .04.

[15]The p-values for the differences in the AMCEs are p ≈ .77 and p ≈ .79, respectively.

[16]The p-value for the difference in ACMEs is p ≈ .81.

Strikingly, our core results prove similar for Democrats and Republicans, those who support increased immigration and who oppose it, and those with high school degrees and with college degrees. It is not simply that hypotheses based on labor market threat or disparate fiscal impact find little support. More generally, we find little evidence of individual-level differences in attitudes about what makes an immigrant desirable. There is a broad American consensus about who should be admitted to the country.

Commentators have used many words to describe recent debates over immigration policy, including the divisive and highly salient debates in 2006, 2007, and 2013. "Consensus" is rarely one of them. How, then, are we to square the results reported here with the deep and highly visible divisions on specific immigration policies, both among elites and the public? First, we should emphasize that our focus here has been on attitudes about *which types* of immigrants should be admitted—and while public opinion broadly agrees on that question, such a consensus could coexist with sharp divisions about *how many* immigrants to admit or the appropriate policies for *immigrants already here*. Still, the hidden American immigration consensus indicates that today's salient disagreements about immigration policies are not proxy battles for the types of immigrants to admit, as on that question, Americans are largely in agreement. Those seeking to explain the very real divisions on other aspects of immigration will need to consider other explanations, from those based on perceptions of deservingness to those based on partisanship. Contemporary disagreements are more about policies than about people.

Some might be curious about the broader import of these results given that in the real world, the attributes we isolate are in fact correlated, sometimes strongly so. If immigrants from certain countries are typically not well educated, does it matter that the source of the opposition is education as opposed to a more ascriptive feature, such as their country of origin? We contend that it does. Even in light of real-world correlations across attributes, the ability to identify the sources of preferences and discrimination is critical in testing between theoretical explanations (see also Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004)—and thus in developing appropriate policy responses. To the extent that opposition to immigrants is rooted in sociotropic perceptions about their likely contributions, that suggests very different immigration and settlement policies than does an opposition rooted in prejudice against specific countries. Moreover, these correlations are far from perfect. As Table A.1 in the SI shows, there are almost equal numbers of Mexican and Chinese immigrants with B.A.s in the contemporary United States. Our results suggest

that those well-educated Mexican immigrants are likely to win as much support as their Chinese counterparts. And while it remains plausible that the preference for well-educated immigrants is in part masking prejudices about immigrant groups thought to have low levels of education, that is an issue best addressed in future research. Here we would simply note that the preference for highly educated immigrants is practically uniform across native-born Americans, including Latinos.

The fact of this hidden American immigration consensus does not mean that American immigration policymaking is or will soon be harmonious. Even so, the hidden American immigration consensus can shed light on political dynamics of immigration policymaking. It suggests that Americans would be likely to support a Canadian-style immigration system emphasizing immigrants' skill levels—and unlikely to back the strict immigration quotas for many non-European countries that were in place before 1965. In fact, the immigration reform bill passed by the U.S. Senate in 2013 reflects the consensus identified here: It places increased emphasis on high-skilled immigration as well as the acquisition of English, and it devotes substantial resources to border security (Immigration Policy Center 2013).

Beyond providing evidence about several specific hypotheses, our results indicate the types of theoretical explanations that are well suited to explain contemporary American attitudes toward immigrants: explanations that posit similar responses across diverse subgroups of American citizens. With the exception of ethnocentrism, explanations that emphasize individual-level differences in responses to immigrants face important limitations. This pattern makes the task of researching immigration attitudes more challenging, as to date, individual-level differences have been an important source of leverage for testing competing hypotheses. Future research might also devote attention to designing critical tests that allow scholars to differentiate between the overlapping predictions of the norms-based and sociotropic hypotheses. Some norms about what constitutes a good American are related to one's economic contribution while others are not. Immigrants' support for sports teams should have little bearing on their economic prospects, for instance, so a positive reception for an immigrant who roots for the L.A. Dodgers would be evidence for norms-based approaches. Alternate tests might examine immigrant attributes including age and religion. Still others might consider how to disentangle the extent to which English-language ability is a cultural versus economic marker.

Political scientists commonly aim to test multiple hypotheses against one another, whereas experiments are

typically designed to recover the causal effects of a small number of manipulated treatments. For that reason, they face inherent limitations in testing competing theoretical explanations. The conjoint analysis employed here helps reduce the tension between the discipline's theoretical goals and its methodological tools, as this design enables researchers to experimentally evaluate many hypotheses on a single scale. It also encourages scholars to think not in binary terms about hypotheses that are falsified but about relative levels of support for different claims. Here, we have focused on perceptions about immigrants, and Wright, Levy, and Citrin (2014) provide a valuable extension by considering the attributes that make native-born citizens more or less likely to support deporting unauthorized immigrants. But as discussed in Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014), the technique's applicability is likely to be substantially wider. It could shed light on major questions in the study of voting and political behavior, such as the relative weight that voters place on various candidate attributes in their decision making or how they evaluate multidimensional policy bundles such as immigration or health care reform.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Appendix A: Data Description
Appendix B: Additional Results
Appendix C: Robustness Checks