

Thinking about immigration in terms of economics and culture

Implications for anti-immigrant sentiment

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Why did I choose this topic?



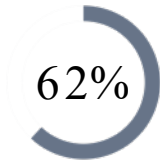
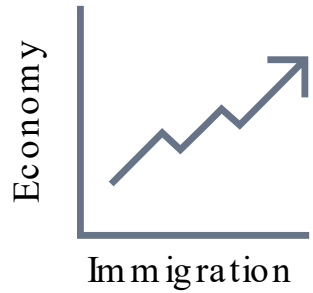
2024

Realistic and Symbolic Competition

Instrumental model of group conflict (Esses et al., 2001); **Integrated threat theory** (Stephan & Stephan, 2000)



Pro-economic Attitudes

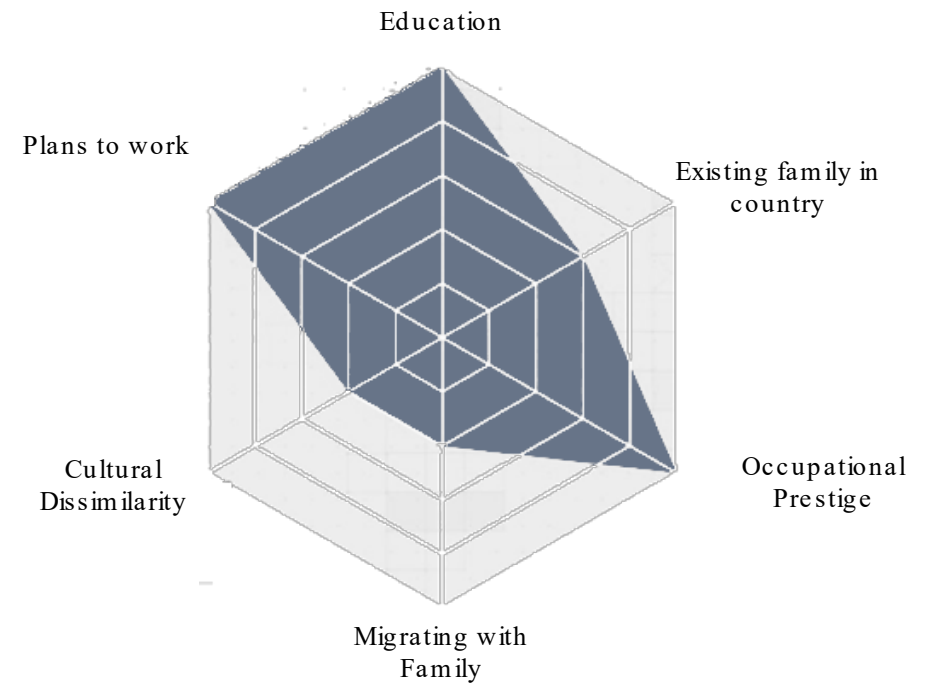


- People do not only think about immigrants in terms of competition, but also contribution
- In Canada, for example . . .
 - Government focuses on economic migration and benefits of immigrants.
(IRCC, 2022)
 - 62% of permanent residents are economic migrants.
(IRCC, 2022)
 - Use immigration to revitalize smaller, rural communities
- Small-to-medium immigrant receiving communities tend to have positive attitudes towards immigrants
(Esses, Sutter,..., Palma, et al., 2024, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*)
 - Immigrants as hard-working and want to 'give back' to the community.
 - Economic drivers who fill labour-force shortages

Pro-economic Attitudes

People generally feel positive towards 'skilled' and 'educated' immigrants, regardless of their own socioeconomic background.

(Esses, 2021; Hainmuller & Hiscox, 2010; Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015)



Sample stats distribution chart adapted from the
Pokémon anime



- Developed a scale to measure thinking about immigration in the context of cultural and economic contribution
- The ideological correlates of these attitudes and how they affect immigrant preferences

Measuring economic thinking

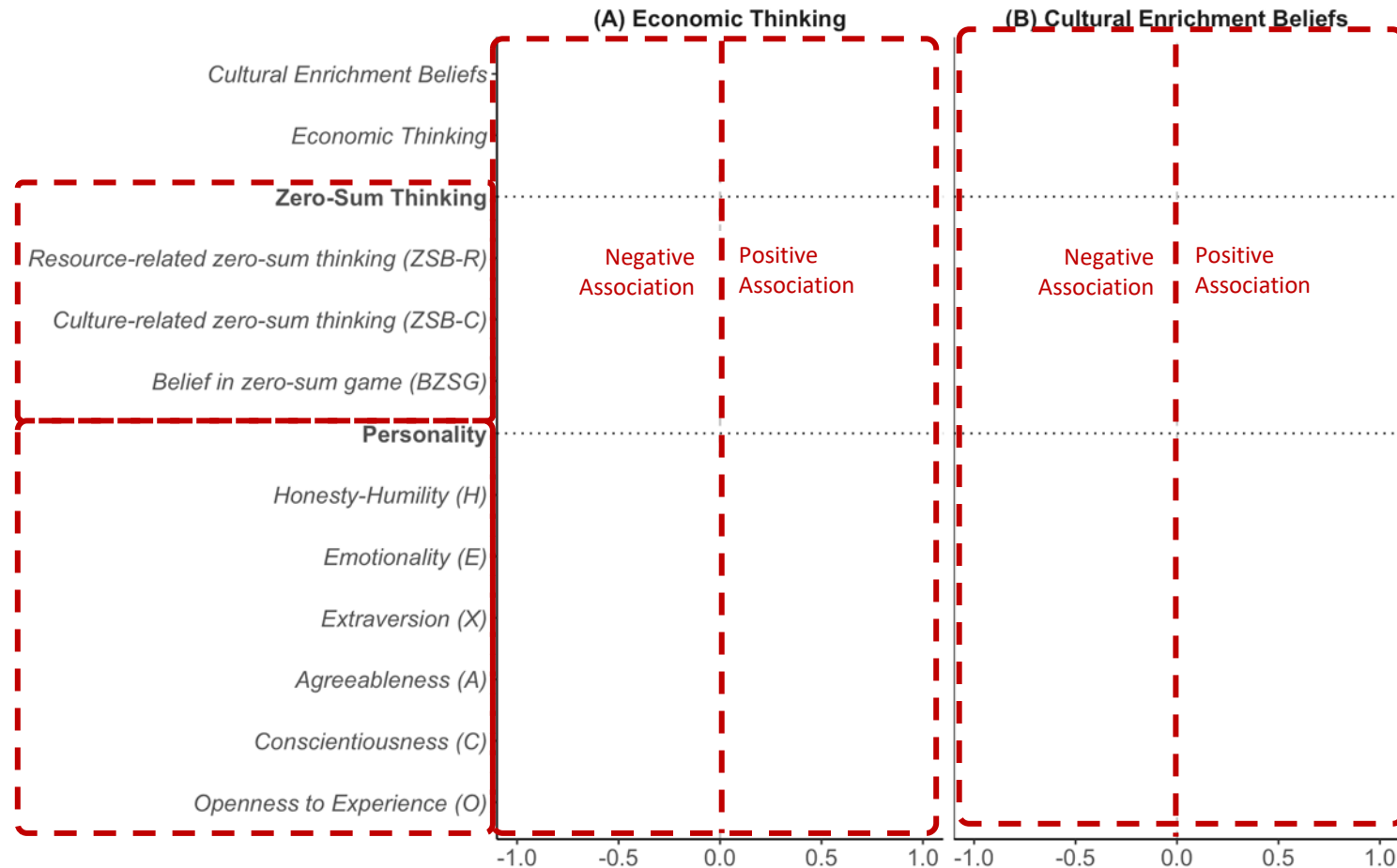
(Palma & Esses, 2023, *PsyArxiv*)

Economic Thinking and Cultural Enrichment (ETCEI) Beliefs Scale

Item	M	SD	Estimate	SE
Cultural Enrichment Beliefs About Immigration (CBI)				
Immigrants improve society by making it more diverse.	5.71	1.31	0.89	0.01
Immigrants bring new food and cuisine that enrich life in Canada.	6.18	1.10	0.63	0.03
One benefit of immigration is that it exposes Canadians to ideas and values different from our own.	5.92	1.12	0.79	0.02
It is good to be able to interact with immigrants from many different backgrounds.	6.02	1.05	0.81	0.02
Having people from many different cultures in our community is a good thing.	5.95	1.13	0.90	0.01
Integrating values and practices of immigrants with our own is a good thing.	5.28	1.31	0.67	0.03
Immigration improves Canadian society because it brings together people from around the world.	5.70	1.25	0.88	0.01
Immigration improves our way life by allowing us to have more diverse experiences.	5.75	1.21	0.87	0.01
Our community is stronger when we have people from many different cultures living together.	5.76	1.27	0.85	0.01
Immigrants bring new customs and practices that make life in Canada more enjoyable.	5.50	1.32	0.81	0.02
Immigrants bring new ideas that enrich life in Canada	5.78	1.22	0.86	0.01
Economic Thinking About Immigration (ETI)				
It's okay to put limits on immigration if there are not enough jobs for everyone.	5.01	1.62	0.86	0.02
It is better to allow immigrants into Canada who can contribute to the economy over family members of existing immigrants.	4.21	1.59	0.67	0.03
Immigrants who come to Canada should have work skills that the country needs.	5.02	1.52	0.73	0.03
It is okay to limit immigration if new immigrants struggle to find work in Canada.	4.69	1.58	0.82	0.02
All else being equal, employers should hire immigrants with Canadian work experience over those who only have experience abroad.	4.02	1.57	0.43	0.04
Decisions about immigration should primarily focus on the country's economic needs.	4.31	1.64	0.73	0.03

Measuring economic thinking

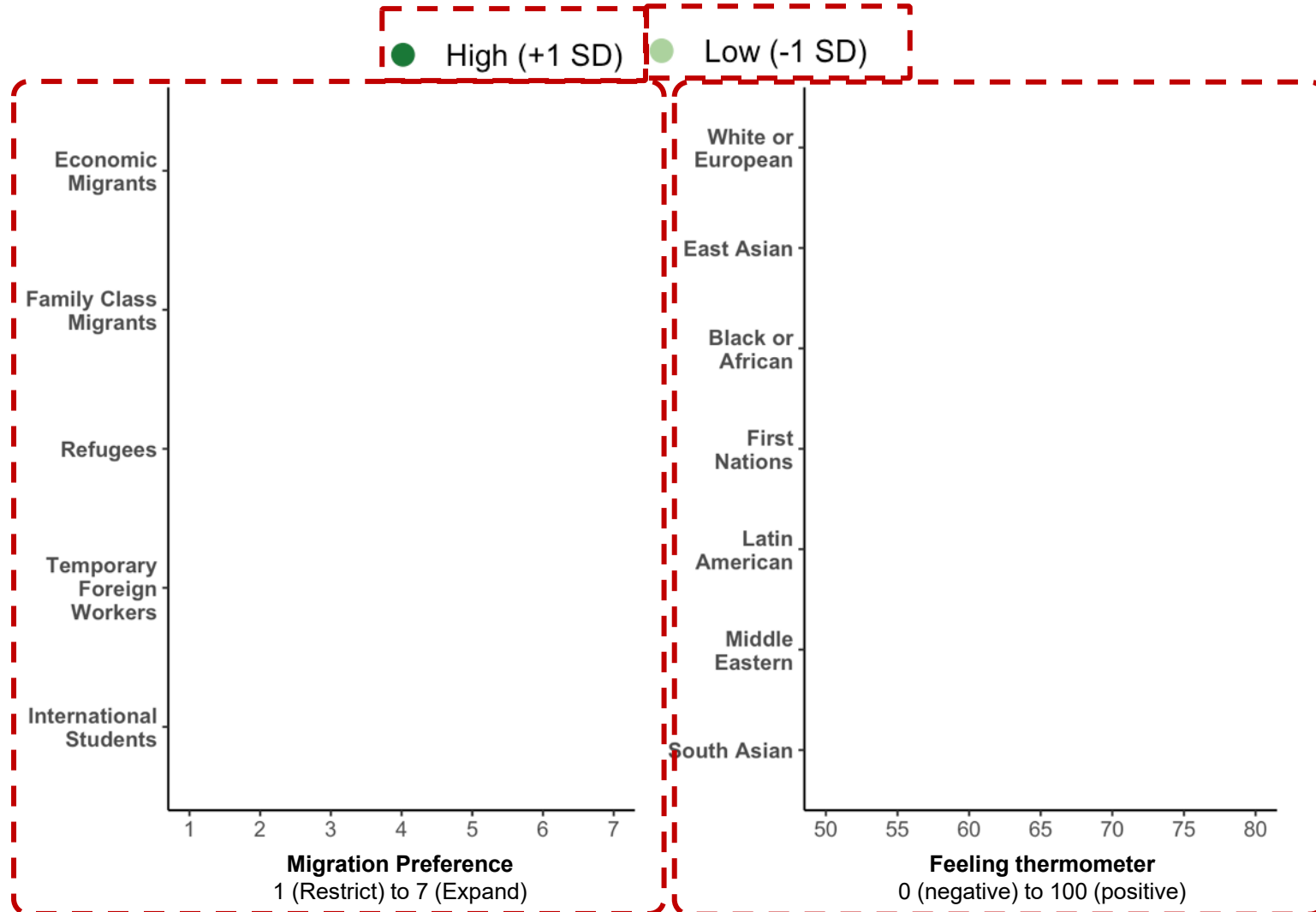
(Palma & Esses, 2023, working paper)



- Economic thinking and cultural enrichment beliefs moderately correlated.
- Showed 'opposite' patterns in terms of zero-sum thinking and personality traits

Measuring economic thinking

(Palma & Esses, 2023, *PsyArxiv*)

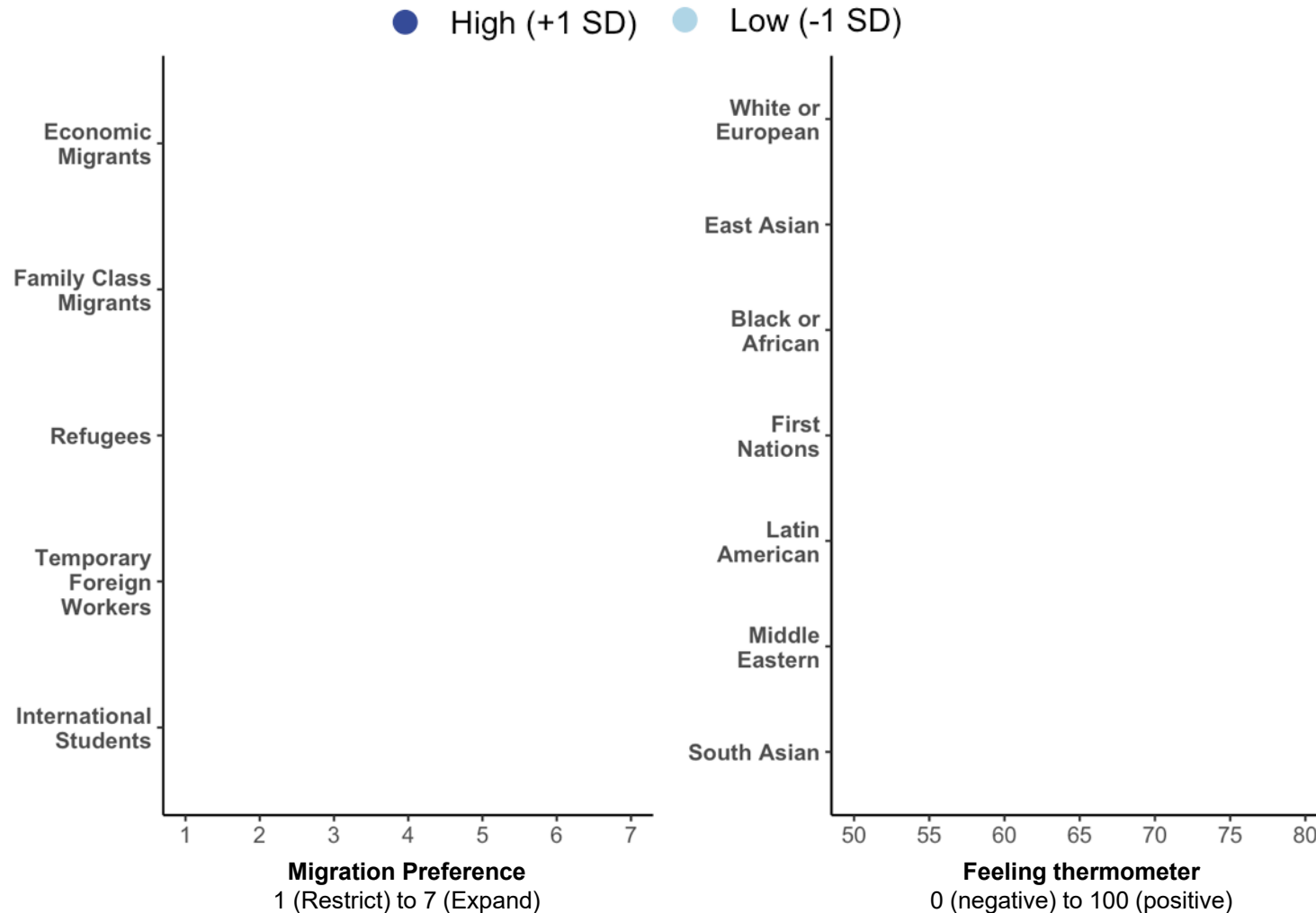


Cultural Enrichment Beliefs

- Expanding immigration regardless of admission category.
- Positive attitudes towards non-White ethnoracial groups.

Measuring economic thinking

(Palma & Esses, 2023, *PsyArxiv*)



Economic Thinking

- Restrict immigration, except for economic migrants.
- Generally, no difference in ethnoracial preferences across attitude level.
- General preference towards East Asians among those who score high on economic thinking.

Is economic thinking just stereotyping?

- Economic thinking associated with preferences for ...
 - Economic migrants
 - Model minority groups
- Likely based on stereotypes and assumptions about education and economic ability.
- Does giving individuating information minimize these preferences?



Education: Bachelor's
Occupation: Engineer
Married: Yes
Children: No



Education: MD
Occupation: Surgeon
Married: No
Children: No

Economic Thinking and Immigrant Preferences



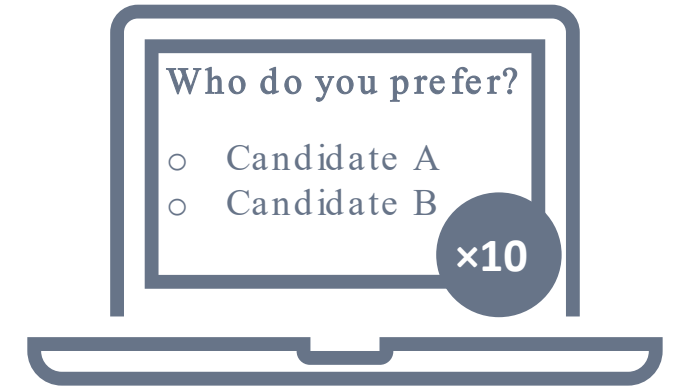
Prolific Academic

- $N=497$
- 18 – 76 years old
($M=34.1$, $SD=11.8$)
- 76.9% born in Canada
- 64.2% identified as White
- Gender breakdown:
49.9 women
45.4 men
4.74 another identity



Survey

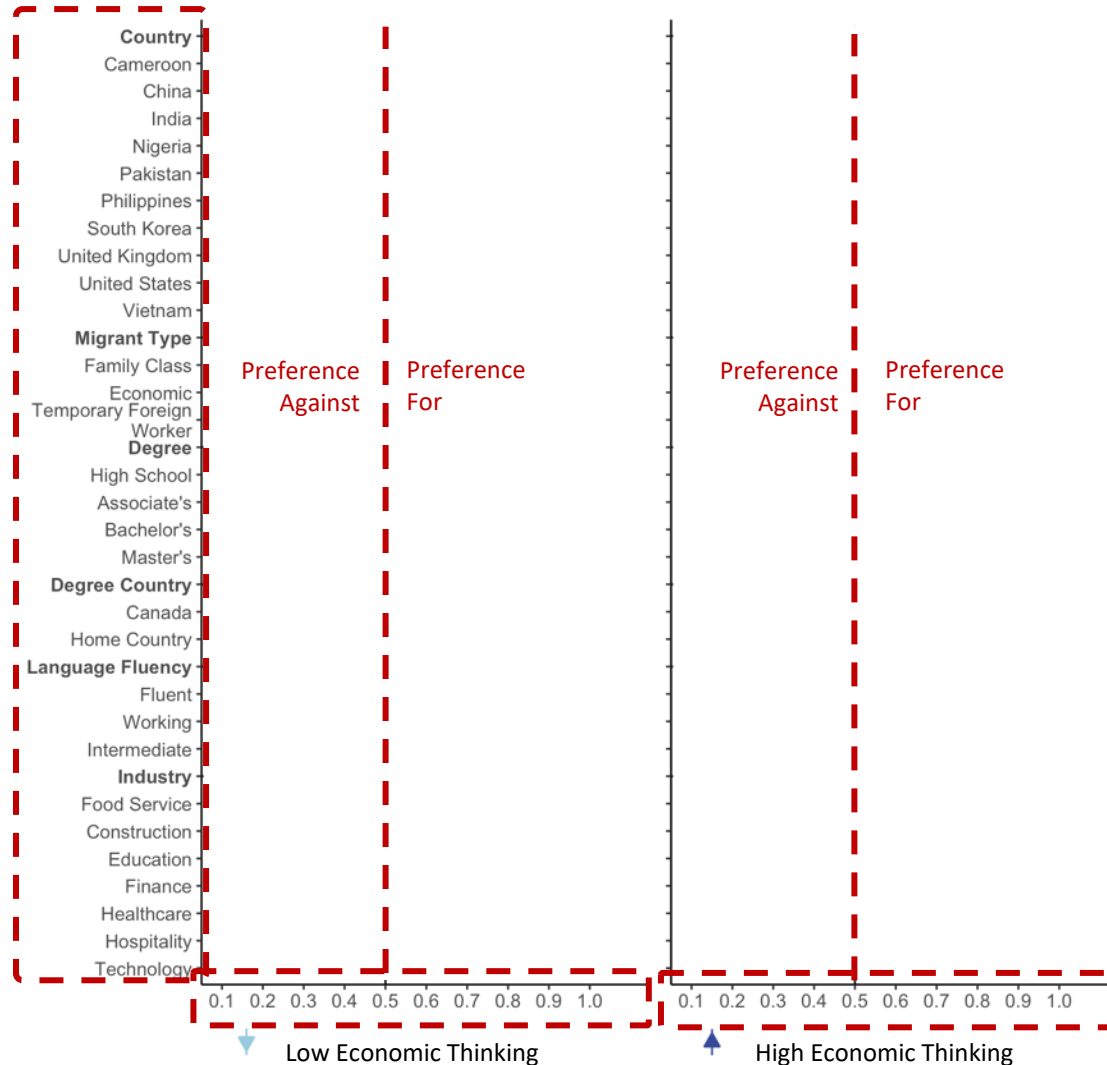
- Economic Thinking
- Cultural Enrichment Beliefs



Paired Conjoint Task

"[Initials] is [migrant type] from [country of origin]. [He / She] has a [educational attainment] from a school in [country of education]. [He / She] [language proficiency] in English and plans to work in [industry]".

Economic Thinking and Immigrant Preferences



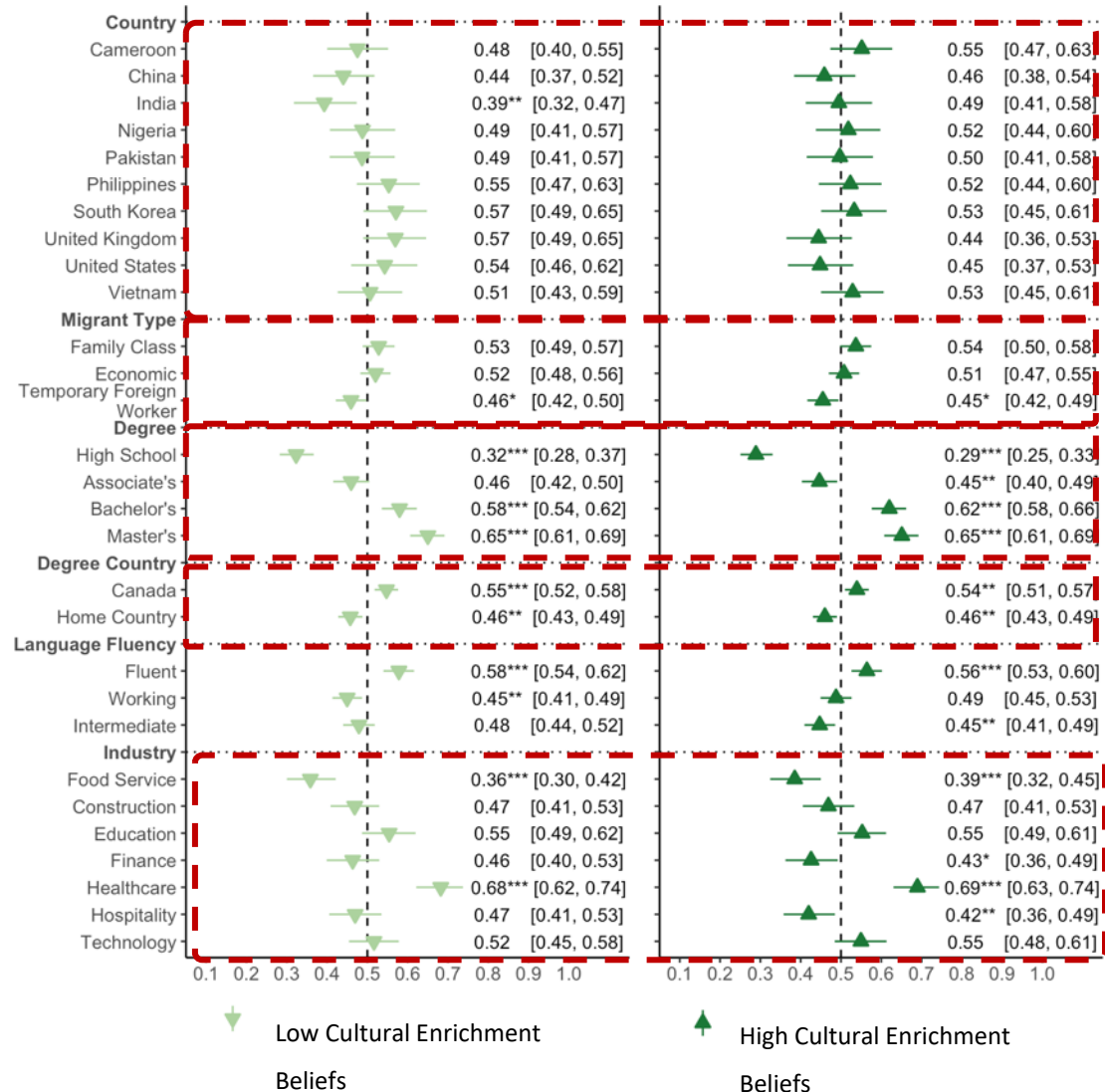
Analytic Strategy

- Logistic regression with robust standard errors to account for clustering
 - Interaction between profile features and attitudes

Results Guide

- Y-axis: Features
- X-axis: Probability of selecting a profile based on a specific feature while holding all other features constant
- Focus on whether a profile is selected *above chance* given a feature, rather than whether one feature is preferred over another.

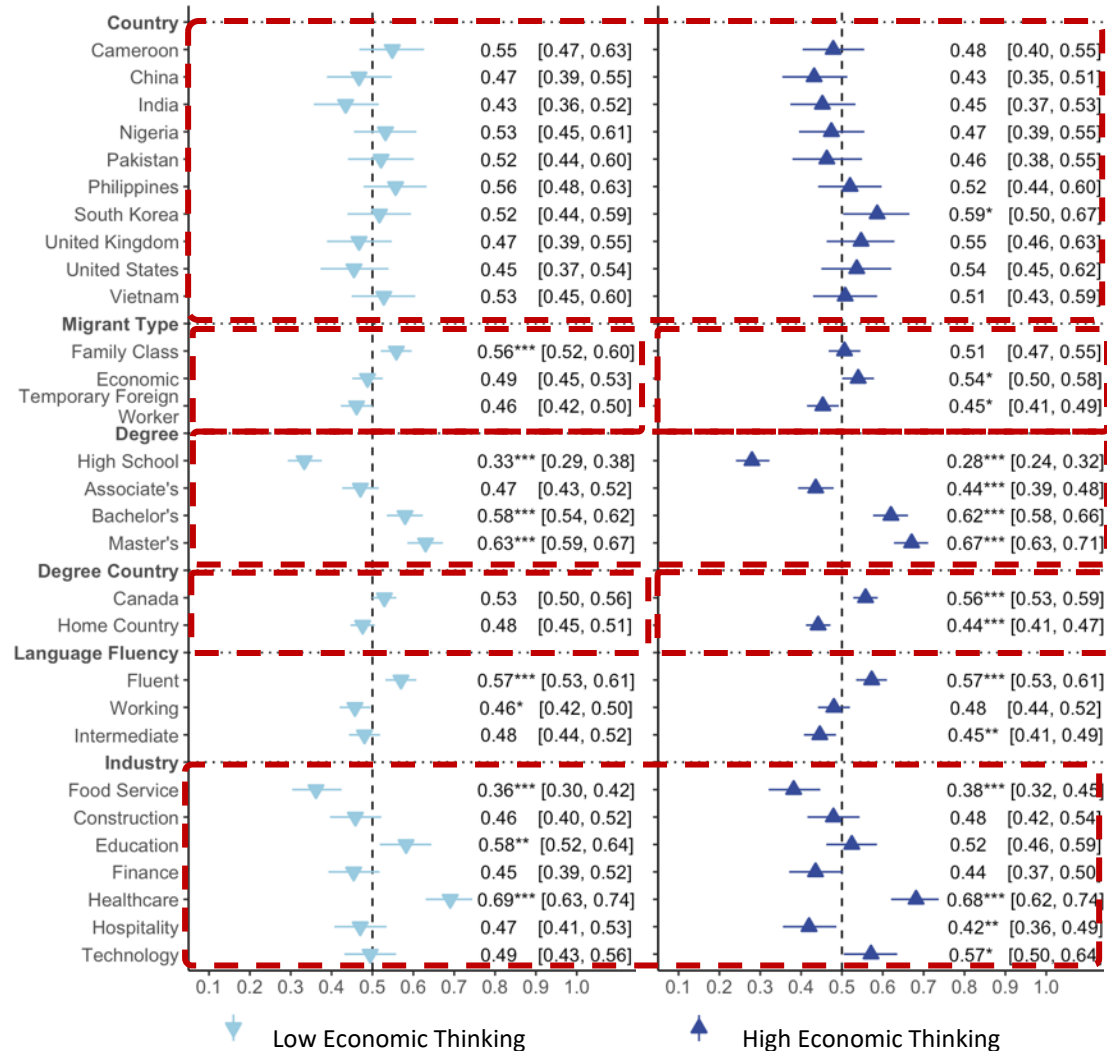
Economic Thinking and Immigrant Preferences



Cultural Enrichment Beliefs

- Generally, no difference in preference for country of origin—except for India.
- Preference against temporary foreign workers regardless of cultural enrichment beliefs.
- Similar preferences regardless of attitude level for . . .
 - Educated migrants
 - Trained in Canada
 - Works in healthcare

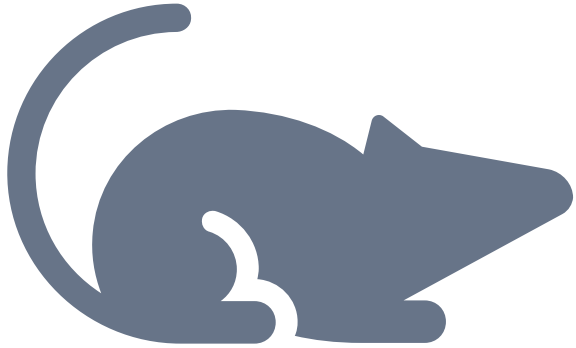
Economic Thinking and Immigrant Preferences



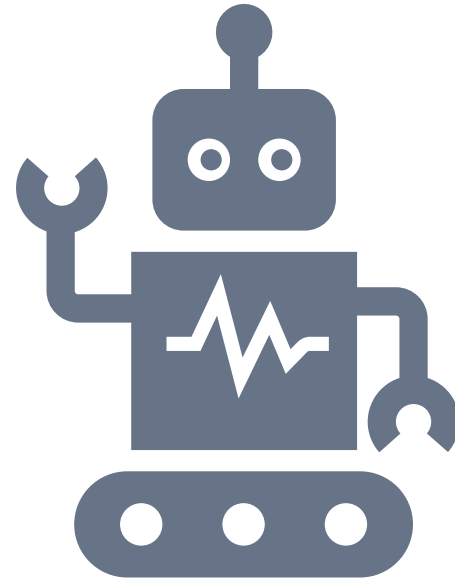
Economic Thinking

- Generally, no difference in preference for country of origin—except for South Korea
- Similar preferences regardless of attitude level for . . .
 - Educated immigrants
 - Works in healthcare
- Economic thinking moderates preferences for . . .
 - Migrant admission category
 - Degree country

How do these attitudes affect how we view immigrants?



Esses, Medianu, & Sutter (2021)
Marshall & Shapiro (2018)



Bai & Zhao (2024)
Savaş et al (2021)

Asymmetric dehumanization of immigrants

(Palma & Esses, 2024, *PsyArxiv*)

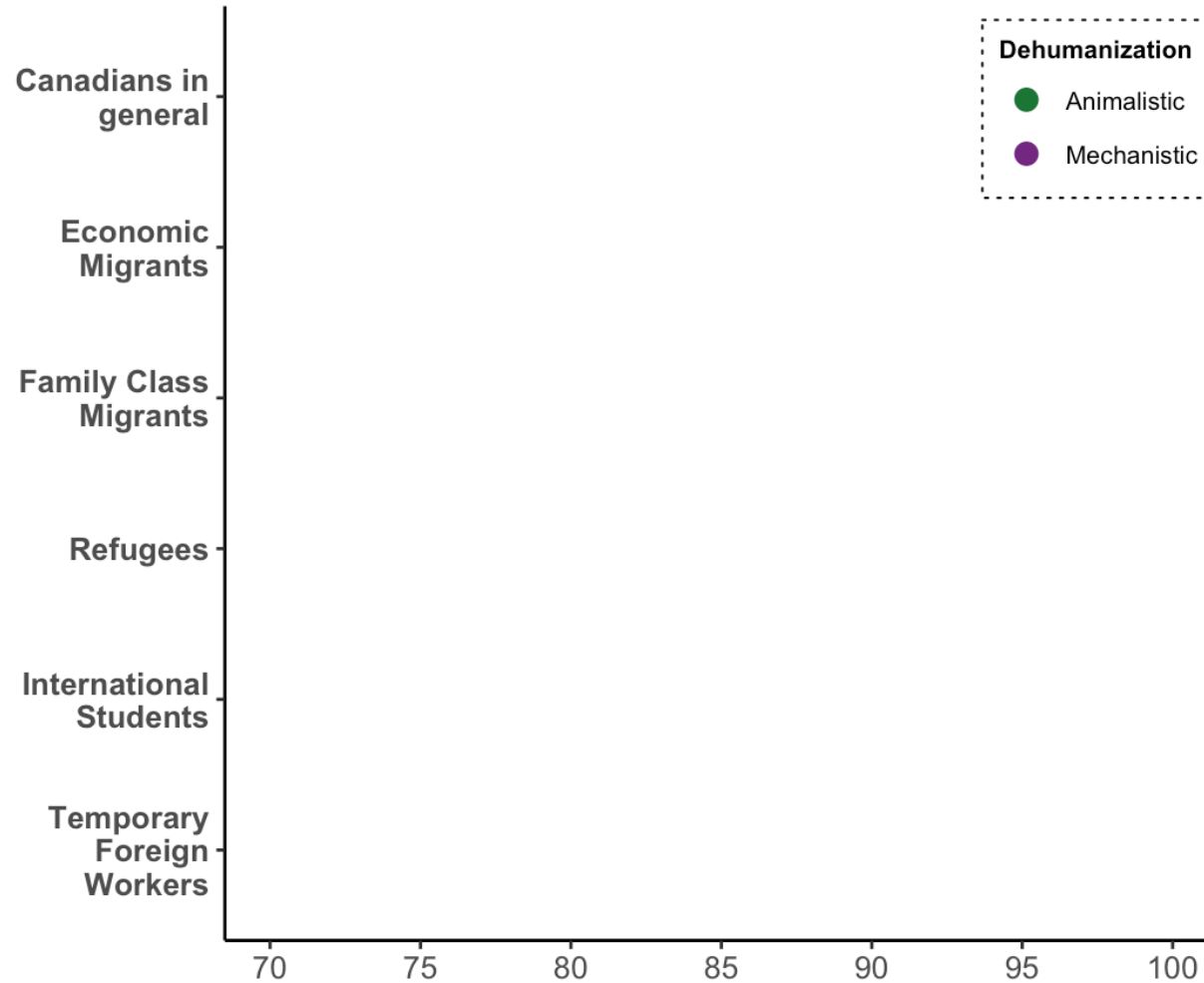


- $N = 500$ participants in Canada (via Prolific)
- 72.8% identified as White
- 65.2% born in Canada



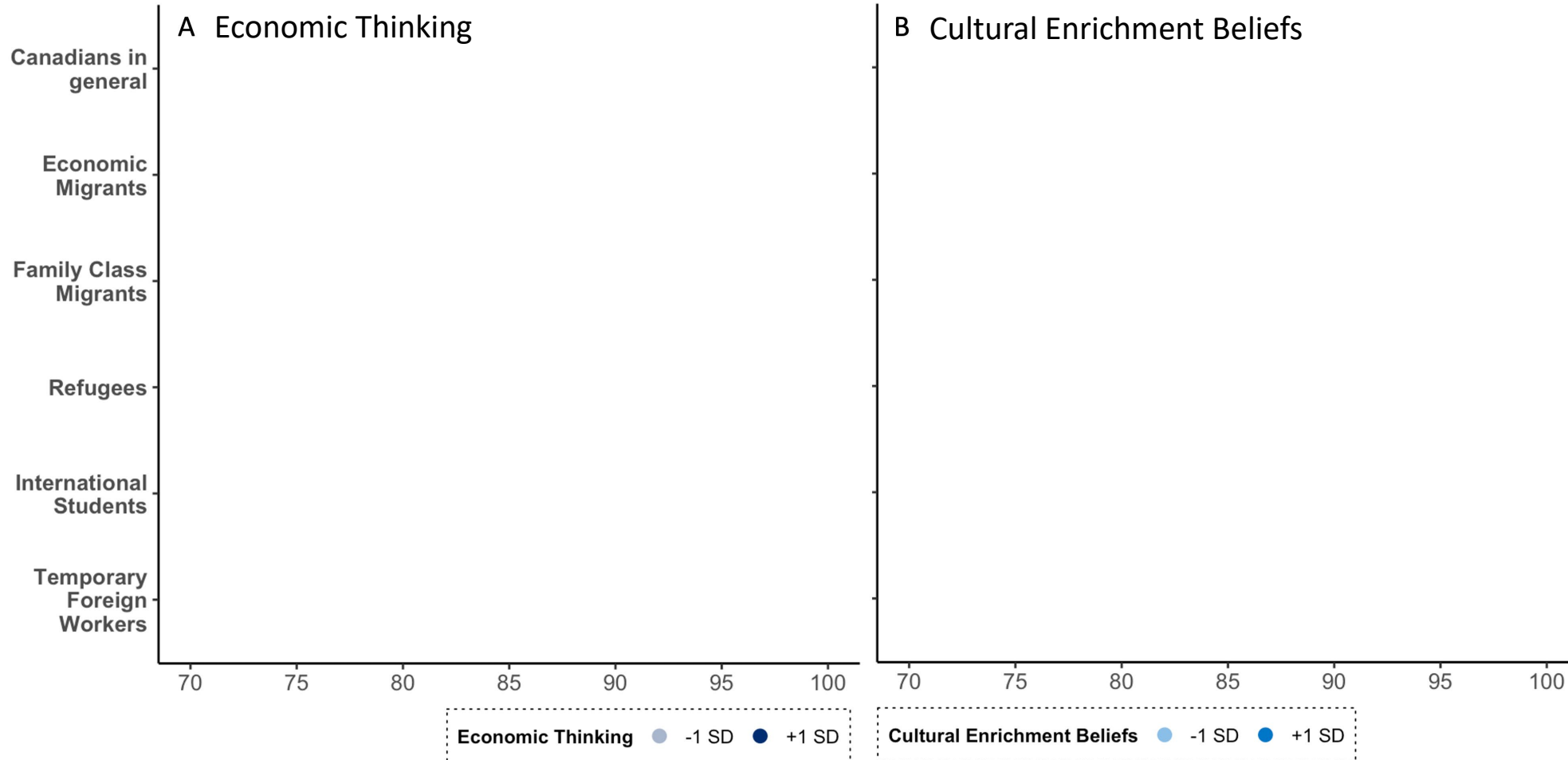
Asymmetric dehumanization of immigrants

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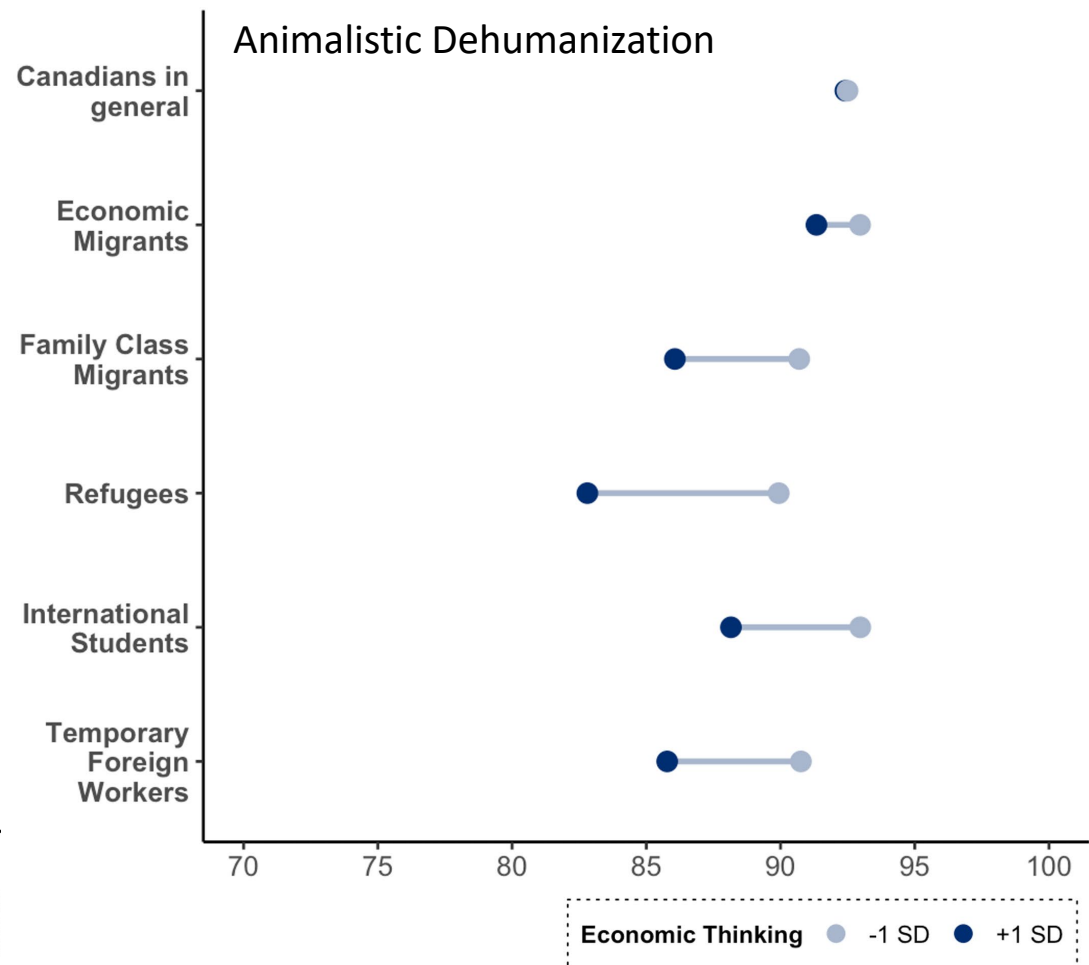
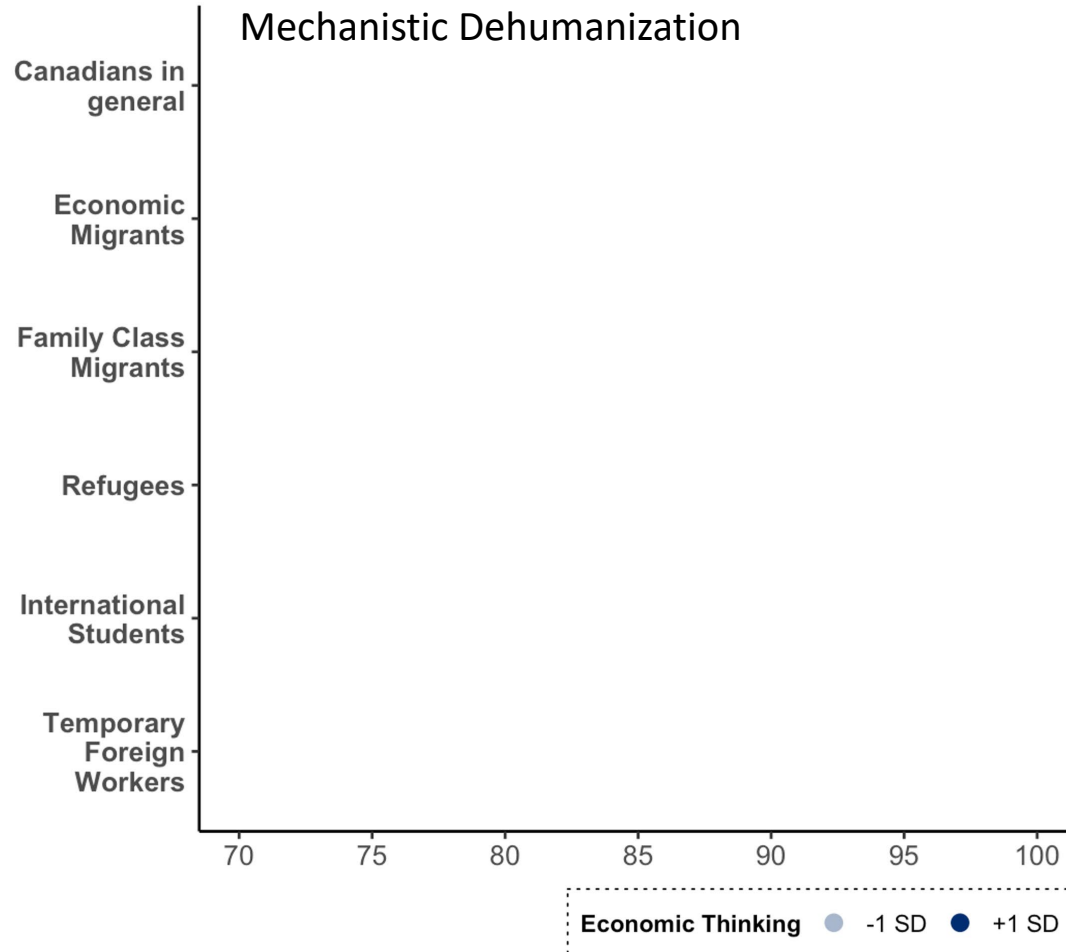
Animalistic Dehumanization

(Palma & Esses, 2024, *PsyArxiv*)



Mechanistic Dehumanization

(Palma & Esses, 2024, *PsyArxiv*)



Summary

- Economic thinking and cultural enrichment beliefs about immigration are psychologically distinct.
- Associated with different personality and ideological profiles.
- Predicts different preferences towards different types of immigrants and different forms of dehumanization.

Summary

- Are economic arguments effective at changing anti-immigrant attitudes?