

What makes up welfare chauvinism in the United Kingdom. Preregistration.

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1 Introduction

Welfare chauvinism describes natives' position that immigrants to a country deserve a lower (if any) share of welfare benefits than natives (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997). Its subscribers justify their attitude with two arguments. First, immigrants are not from “us”, indicating that redistributive preferences do not travel well across cultural ingroup identities. Second, immigrants have contributed less or none to the welfare state, which indicates the existence of another form of ingroup–bias, namely, economic ingroup–bias. This prescribes that entitlements to the pooled resources are restricted to contributors.

The welfare chauvinistic attitude is gradual, spanning from unconditional inclusion to unconditional exclusion of immigrants in the welfare state with conditional welfare chauvinism in between (e.g., Heizmann et al., 2018). Large–scale studies document that only a small proportion of Europeans are *not welfare chauvinist* or are *unconditional welfare chauvinistic* (e.g., Mewes & Mau, 2013). People who do not hold welfare chauvinistic attitudes would grant welfare access to immigrants as soon as they arrive and would not condition welfare provisioning to immigrants on any factors. By contrast, unconditional welfare chauvinists would never give welfare benefits to immigrants under any circumstances.

However, most natives are somewhere between these two ends and classified as *conditional welfare chauvinists* — with some heterogeneity under which conditions they would include immigrants among the welfare beneficiaries. Two groups emerge among conditional welfare chauvinists. One subgroup would grant welfare access to immigrants once they begin contributing to the welfare state (such as paying taxes) or after they have made some significant contributions. This argument highlights the perceived importance of reciprocity among beneficiaries, which suggests that distributive preferences and fairness might be key components in shaping welfare chauvinistic attitudes. In fact, as (Cavaillé & Van Der Straeten, 2023) put forth, fairness concerns are the dominant justifications for welfare chauvinism among the Western–European electorate. In this approach, noncontributor immigrants are perceived as free–riders on the welfare state who are benefiting at contributors' expense. However, from this research, it is unclear, if invoking contribution asymmetries in justifying exclusionary welfare provisioning is driven by self–interest, or they are manifestations of unbiased fairness preferences where selfishness is muted. In fact, in an experiment enrolling UK resident natives and immigrants for distributive situations, (Dezsó & Koch, 2024) show that appealing to fairness in redistributive situations is self–serving and exclusionary redistributive preferences are driven by egocentrically biased fairness views rather than genuine ones.

Welfare chauvinists in the other subgroup, which is a smaller group (e.g., Mewes & Mau, 2013), claim that welfare benefits should be reserved for citizens of the country. Consequently, immigrants must first acquire citizenship to receive social rights. People in this group seem to believe that welfare entitlements should be tied to some form of cultural integration into the nation. In reality,

employment and thus making contributions typically precedes becoming a naturalized citizen (if this happens at all) for all immigrants. Consequently, joining the ingroup of the nationals typically comes after than becoming the ingroup of contributors.

The arguments of welfare chauvinists suggest that the stance emerges along redistributive preferences and that welfare chauvinism is a specific manifestation of attitudes toward redistribution. Specifically, that welfare chauvinism is associated with increased tolerance of inequality. At the heart of welfare chauvinism, we find a preference to exclude people from the redistribution either because they have not contributed at all or enough or because they are not citizens or natives of a country. Since redistributive social policies are designed to decrease ex-ante inequalities, denying welfare access to immigrants (who are typically overrepresented in the lower-income strata) increases inequalities. Consequently, implementing the demanded welfare chauvinistic policies exacerbates inequalities (on average) between natives and immigrants and suggests that the attitude is associated with higher tolerance of inequality. This reasoning suggests that welfare chauvinism may be a specific manifestation of attitudes towards redistribution, and studying the relationship between inequality acceptance and welfare chauvinism fits well into abundant studies documenting that distributional preferences absent of self-interest are associated with attitudes towards redistribution in different population samples (Almås et al., 2020; Cohn et al., 2023; Fehr & Gächter, 2000; Kerschbamer & Müller, 2020; Müller & Renes, 2021). Consequently, one goal of this research is to ask whether inequality acceptance absent of self-interest is associated with welfare chauvinistic attitudes.

There is also some research suggesting that welfare chauvinism is most likely among the low-skilled, low-income population strata who are also more dependent on welfare. This suggests that subscribing to welfare chauvinism is driven by self-interest, as with the increasing number of recipients, the pie share may shrink. Along these lines, this study asks whether the more vulnerable people (low-income, welfare-dependent, unemployed, and low-skilled) are more likely to be welfare chauvinists than those the less dependent ones.

Additionally, based on findings, we conjecture that anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with welfare chauvinism. Among these, we test if (3) racist and xenophobic inclinations (i.e., anti-immigrant for short), (4) perceiving immigrants as free-riders on the welfare state, and (5) blaming them for their welfare dependency are associated with welfare chauvinism.

This research examines the association between welfare chauvinism and three factors.

1. Self-interest drive: Increased dependence on welfare services
2. Anti-immigrant drives:
 - Increased racist and xenophobic inclinations
 - Increased perceptions that immigrants are free-riding the welfare state

- Increased blame assignment of immigrants

3. Redistributive attitude driven: Increased inequality acceptance

Our sample is representative of age, gender, and political preferences in the UK, and is recruited from Prolific services restricted to UK citizens. We impose this restriction because we are interested in those people's attitudes who are able to shape immigration and redistributive policies and politics by voting.

2 The main part: The survey–experiment

The study is programmed in oTree (Chen et al., 2016).

Table 1 presents the steps of the survey–experiment.

Table 1. Steps of the survey–experiment

1.	Welcome and Consent page: Information about tasks and earnings. Providing informed consent to participate
2.	Measuring Inequality Acceptance: Distributive <i>Choices</i> are made in <i>Luck</i> and <i>Merit</i> treatments (counterbalanced order); see Subsection 2.1.
3.	Attention check item
4.	Creating a common knowledge: Description of who we mean by Immigrants and what is the Universal Credit; see 2.1.
5.or 6.	Heterogeneity block: Block of items measuring attitudes (counterbalanced within the next step); see Subsection 2.3.
5.or 6.	Measuring WC attitude: Responding to item measuring welfare chauvinistic attitudes; see Subsection 2.4.
7.	Immigrant profile: Measuring what kind of immigrants respondents had in mind; see Subsection 2.5.
8.	Demographic measures: Answering a list of demographic questions; see Subsection 2.6.
9.	Final page: Thanking participation. Reminder of earnings.

Attention check item:

From the list, select the one you believe is the most common child's disease. Instead of the correct answer, please click on the third option.

1. Common cold
2. Chicken–pox
3. Croup
4. Earache

In the following subsections, we provide a detailed description of the tasks that respondents complete.

2.1 Measuring Inequality Acceptance: Distributing earnings between paired Workers

To measure inequality acceptance, we implement the so-called spectator method (e.g., Almås et al., 2020). We prompt respondents to stand in the shoes of a spectator, present them distributive situations, and prompt them to make a series of distributive choices (i.e., divide earnings). These distributive choices are consequential as they are imposed on people who completed a task, and their payment is partly determined by the spectators. The important characteristic of the spectator method is that the respondents' monetary self-interest is muted as their payoff is independent of their choices (e.g., Konow, 2000). Each distributive situation presented to the respondents includes an ex ante inequality between paired individuals whose identities are unknown to the respondents. It is up to the respondents to maintain the status quo (i.e., the ex ante inequality) or reduce or eliminate them via redistribution. Thus, the ex post distributive outcome reflects how much inequality the respondent tolerates, which —since they lack monetary interest— is also seen as a proxy which fairness ideals respondents adhere to (e.g., Almås et al., 2020; Konow, 2000).

Spectators' inequality acceptance may depend on what caused the ex ante inequality between the parties, which cause could be instrumental in shaping their redistributive preferences. We focus on two main sources of inequality: Luck and Merit. In one treatment variation, called Luck treatment, the reason for the ex ante inequality between parties is their (un)luck. In the other treatment variation, called Merit treatment, the reason for the ex ante inequality is productivity differences between parties. This differentiation allows us to examine two aspects. First, whether inequality acceptance depends on the source of the ex ante inequality, and there, the average inequality implemented would differ across the Luck and Merit treatments. Second, whether the relationship between inequality acceptance and welfare chauvinism depends on the source of the inequality.

Before we ask respondents about their attitudes towards immigrants and other social issues and thus, potentially prime them with these topics that could potentially bias their inequality acceptance, we begin with measuring respondents' Inequality Acceptance. This task precedes any mention of immigrants and immigration to avoid priming effects. In this task, respondents will be prompted to stand in the shoes of spectators and (re)distribute bonus earnings between two people who are called Worker A and Worker B. Respondents are informed that their decisions will be consequential, as they will be imposed on actual Workers who are recruited from Prolific services. No information about Workers will be provided to respondents.

The (re)distributive situations in which the respondents are placed are similar to those implemented in the Luck and Merit treatments by Almås et al. (2020) and Cohn et al. (2023). However,

in our setup, each respondent will be assigned to both experimental treatments, the *Merit* and the *Luck*, in a counterbalanced order. The *Luck* and *Merit* treatments will be administered in a randomized order within respondents, which gives the first between–subject variation, called *Treatment Order* with two levels. In the *Luck_Merit* level, respondents are first placed in the *Luck*, then in the *Merit* treatment. In the *Merit_Luck* level, respondents are first placed in the *Merit*, then in the *Luck* treatment. Consequently, each respondent makes two distributive choices, henceforth called *Choice*: one in the *Luck*, and one in the *Merit* treatment. As we anticipate no *Treatment Order* effect on *Choice*, we plan to merge *Choice* across the *Treatment Order* factor, and as described in Section 3. If we observe a significant *Treatment order* effect, we only analyze subjects' first *Choice* and proceed as the study was a between–subject design.

For each distributive situation (in total, two), respondents will be assigned to a different pair of Workers. The respondents will be truthfully informed that the Workers in the pair have individually completed a task and, regardless of their performance, they individually received a flat payment of £1 for completing their task. Keeping the completion payment equal between Workers eliminates wealth effects within and between pairs that could confound the interpretation of *Choice*.

In each distributive situation, one of the Workers, the pre–earner, is assigned bonus earnings of £2 (henceforth, the bonus). The bonus tops up the equal flat–fee payment each Worker receives for completing the task, and, thus, creates ex ante inequality between the Workers. In the *Merit* treatment, the bonus is assigned to the Worker with the higher performance on the task. In the *Luck* treatment, the bonus is assigned to the Worker who is randomly selected from the Worker pair, where each Worker is equally likely to be selected (i.e., to be the lucky one).

In both treatments, respondents receive information on the nature of the tasks completed by workers. Respondents are ensured that Workers would not learn about their identities. They are also informed that although Workers are informed about the presence of the bonus and the rule that determines who gets it, they will only learn which one of them is granted the bonus, after the Spectator choices are made. Consequently, it is up to the respondents whether they maintain the status quo — by leaving the ex ante inequality as is — or redistribute the bonus between Workers, and so reduce or eliminate the ex ante inequality. The alternatives given to the respondents are summarized in Table 2. In contrast to (Almås et al., 2020), we do not allow for distributive solutions that flip the wealth order between workers for two reasons. From a theoretical perspective, we see no reason to reverse the ex ante inequality order since neither Worker is known to be in higher need or no other information available that would warrant flipping the inequality between Workers. From a practical perspective, those reversing ex ante order were labeled as mixed/other in the original Almås et al. (2020).

Table 2. Alternatives presented to Spectators in the *Luck* and *Merit* treatments

Alternative	Worker A (Pre-earner)	Worker B
1.	£2	£0
2.	£1.8	£0.2
3.	£1.6	£0.4
4.	£1.4	£0.6
5.	£1.2	£0.8
6.	£1.0	£1.0

2.2 Creating common understanding among respondents

Please read this passage very carefully because it is important that we create a common understanding of the two described topics.

Who are the immigrants?

By immigrants we mean people who either: 1) were born in the UK but are foreign nationals, or 2) were born outside the UK and its Commonwealth territories to non-British parents, and moved to the UK at some point in their lives with the intention of settling there. These people can immigrate to the UK to work or study, or for family reasons. They can also arrive as asylum seekers who were subsequently granted refugee status, or through a legally recognized humanitarian route (e.g., the Hong Kong Scheme, the Ukraine Scheme, the Afghan Scheme)

A brief description of Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) is a means-tested benefit that is aimed at helping low-income individuals with their living costs. The main eligibility criterion is that the recipient has less than a total of 16,000 GBP in money, savings, and investments. UC was introduced in 2013 and replaces the following benefits and tax credits: Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Working Tax Credit. Applicants and recipients must live in the UK and be under State Pension age, but over 18 years old. There are some exceptions for people aged 16 or 17, who could claim UC if, for example, they have a health condition or are responsible for a child. Eligibility does not depend on employment. Applicants and recipients could be out of work, employed (full- or part-time or self-employed) or unable to work due to health conditions. UC is classified as Public Funds and, therefore, is available for citizens and immigrants with settled or pre-settled status (for example, EU Settlement Scheme) and refugees. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility>.)

2.3 Heterogeneity measures

In this subsection, we present a list of measures that we predict to be associated with welfare chauvinism.

2.3.1 Self-interest

The first group items, abbreviated as *Income*, *Education*, *UnivervalCredit*, *Employment* and *Pre-carious* presented in Table 3 measure respondents' vulnerability to the increased number of immigrants. Some literature proposes that low-income natives tend to be welfare chauvinistic due to pure material self-interest as they fear that the presence of immigrants introduces or intensifies competition for means-tested welfare benefits which they rely on.

Along these lines, we will recode these variables in the following fashion.

- Low_income = income level is maximum £20,000 per year.

Note, that those responding "prefer not to answer" to the income question will be excluded when analyzing variables corresponding to the measure of Self-interest.

We anticipate that responses to these five variables are not independent and correlate. First, we test this association. If the association warrants (as we expect) creating one component of them, we will implement a factor reduction technique to identify the single underlying measure which we will call *Self-interest*.

Table 3. Heterogeneity measures: Items measuring Self-interest

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Wording	Response scale
Income	Household income	What is your yearly disposable household income? By disposable income, we mean the amount of money your household has available for spending and saving after direct taxes have been accounted for. Include earnings from employment, private pensions, returns from investments, and cash benefits provided by the state.	Select your choice! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0£– 10,000£ • 10,001£– 20,000£ • 20,001£– 30,000£ • 30,001£– 40,000£ • 40,001£– 50,000£ • 50,001£– 60,000£ • 60,001£– 70,000£ • 70,001£– 80,000£ • 80,001£– 90,000£ • 90,001£– 100,000£ • over 100,000£
Education	Highest education	What is your highest education level?	Select your choice from the list or its equivalent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal qualifications • Secondary education (e.g., GED/GCSE) • High-school diploma/A-levels • Technical/community college • Undergraduate degree (BA/BSc/other) • Graduate degree (MA/MSc/MPhil/other) • Doctorate degree (PhD/other) • Other
UniversalCredit	Receiving Universal Credit	As of now, does anyone in your household receive Universal Credit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Prefer not to answer
Precarious	Perceived vulnerability	How precarious would you rate your overall financial and wealth circumstances as being?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very secure • Secure • Neither secure nor precarious • Precarious • Very precarious
Employment	Employment status	Your current employment status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time • Part-time • Due to start a new job within the next month • Unemployed (and job seeking) • Not in paid work (e.g., home-maker, 'retired or disabled') • Other • Prefer not to answer

2.3.2 Free-rider beliefs

The second group items, abbreviated as *ExploitWelfare* and *RelativeContrib* in Table 4 measure how much respondents perceive immigrants as free-riders of the welfare services in the UK. These two measures are motivated by research, (e.g., Cavallé & Van Der Straeten, 2023) putting forth that in European welfare states, natives may perceive immigrants as free-riders on the welfare state, which gives the basis for their unwillingness to grant them access to welfare benefits. Since we expect these two items to correlate, we will create a single index of them, called *Free-rider beliefs*, and when addressing the hypothesis, we will use this term.

Table 4. Heterogeneity measures: Items measuring Free-rider beliefs

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Wording	Response scale
ExploitWelfare	Beliefs about immigrants exploiting the welfare system in the UK (similar to Hellwig and Sinno (2017)).	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? <i>Immigrants are more likely to abuse the Universal Credit system than natives or UK-born citizens.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree
RelativeContrib	Perceived contributions of immigrants to the UK economy.	Compared to natives or UK-born citizens, how would you rate the overall economic contribution of immigrants to the UK economy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much higher • Higher • About the same • Lower • Much lower

2.3.3 Anti-immigrant stance

The second group of items; namely, *Xenophobia*, *Ethnocentrism*, *ParochAltr* and *Racism* measure respondents' inclinations to discriminate against immigrants because of their different cultural group membership; see Table 5 for their summary. We also expect these items to correlate, and therefore, we will perform an exploratory factor analysis of them and use the emerged Component, for now, called *Anti-immigrant stance*.

Table 5. Heterogeneity measures: Items measuring Racists inclinations

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Wording	Response scale
Xenophobia	Measures xenophobia as aversion (negative affection) towards newcomers, adapted from Campbell and McCandless (1951)	To what extent do you agree with a statement? <i>In general, I dislike those people who came from other countries to live in the UK.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree
Ethnocentrism	Measuring one's beliefs in the superiority of one's culture or ethnic group (in the spirit of Campbell and McCandless (1951) and Kleinpenning and Hagoendoorn (1993)).	To what extent do you agree with a statement? <i>The moral standards of an average person from other countries are lower than those of an average Brit.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree
ParochAltr	Measures of parochial altruism from adapted from Anderson (2018)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? <i>Immigrants may need help, but there are fellow Brits in our country who need help more.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree
Racism	Measures a belief that differences between ethnic groups are innate and that races can be ranked from superior to inferior, i.e., biological racism, adapted from Kleinpenning and Hagoendoorn (1993).	To what extent do you agree with a statement? <i>People from other races tend to be less intelligent and less capable than people of my race.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree

2.3.4 Blame assignment

Items presented in Table 6 measure blame assignment. The *Blame assignment* variable is calculated: ReasonPoorImm_Effort - ReasonPoorImm_Luck.

Table 6. Heterogeneity measures: Blame assignment, self-interest and politics

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
ReasonPoorImm_Effort	Beliefs about the main reason for poverty among immigrants (Alesina et al., 2023).	In your view, how much lack of hard work and circumstances beyond one's control (i.e., luck) explain why an immigrant might be poor in the UK?	%
ReasonPoorImm_Luck	Beliefs about the main reason for poverty among immigrants (Alesina et al., 2023).	In your view, how much circumstances beyond one's control (i.e., luck) explain why an immigrant might be poor in the UK?	%

Table 7. Additional heterogeneity measures: Political affiliation, attitudes toward redistribution and deservingness perceptions

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Politics	Political affiliation	What is your political affiliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservatives and Unionist Party • Labour Party • Scottish National Party • Liberal Democrats • Democratic Unionist Party • Sinn Fein • Plaid Cymru • SDLP • Alba Party • Green Party of England and Wales • Alliance Party of Northern Ireland • Workers Party of Britain • Reform UK • Other • Prefer not to say
Growth	Attitude toward redistribution	<p>To what extent do you agree with a statement?</p> <p><i>It should be more important to the government to achieve a high growth rate than to reduce inequality between people through all sorts of transfers and government support</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree
Deservingness	Deservingness perceptions	<p>To what extent do you agree with a statement?</p> <p><i>People should eventually face the consequences of their actions, whether good or bad.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neither agree nor disagree • Agree • Strongly agree

At which point this survey–battery is administered varies between the two–level *Heterogeneity Order* assignment, see Table 1. In the *Heterogeneity_WC* level, respondents first receive this survey–battery and then receive the item measuring their welfare chauvinism attitude. In the *WC_Heterogeneity* level, we first measure their welfare chauvinistic attitudes, and then they receive the survey–battery.

2.4 Eliciting welfare chauvinistic attitudes

In the UK, welfare benefits consist of a wide range of goods and services. They may include cash transfers, shelters, various forms of pensions, in–kind benefits (e.g., wood for heating, meals, or warm clothes), or accessing public goods (some of which cannot be withheld from anyone such as clean water or air, roads, public transportation services or that are universally provisioned, such as emergency and primary health care or mandatory schooling from ages 5 to 17 years), among others. Some benefits are universally provisioned, some are means–tested, and yet for some others, entitlements are tied to contributions.

Due to the ambiguity of what welfare benefits are meant and the consequential complexity of conceptualizing welfare chauvinism (see, Careja & Harris, 2022, for a recent review on welfare chauvinism), we restrict our inquiry to what makes one deserving of accessing Universal Credit. The Universal Credit is a comprehensive means–tested benefit that includes various forms of cash transfers and other benefits.¹ According to the updated regulations taking effect from 1 January 2021, Universal Credit is no longer available for immigrants who came to the UK on visa to work, study, or family reasons. This restriction leaves the Universal credit to lower–income and lower–skilled native and immigrant populations who either settled in the UK prior to Brexit or came since then as refugees or asylum seekers. Therefore, it is conceivable that within this lower–income and lower–skilled population segment, natives may feel that the presence of immigrants threatens their share of the Universal Credit. Moreover, since Universal Credit is tax financed, higher earners (i.e., higher tax–payers), may also be sour about the increase in the recipient population.

Along these lines, to maintain experimenter control, we aim to be very specific when measuring welfare chauvinism. On the one hand, before we begin our inquiry on immigrants and immigration, we describe who we mean by the term “immigrant” and, according to the current regulations, who is entitled to UC (see, Subsection 2.2). On a related note, to learn about what “kind” of immigrant respondents had in mind when responding to our questions, at a later point in the survey, we ask respondents to describe the characteristics of the immigrant they had in mind while responding. On the other hand, to gain full control over the beliefs about which welfare benefit our question pertains to, we specifically ask respondents about what makes an immigrant deserving of Universal Credit. We measure their welfare chauvinistic attitudes using a survey question, relying on their self–reports. Additionally, to be specific about what we mean by welfare benefits, our

¹for details, consult <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

inquiry and measurement item focuses on Universal Credit (UC). UC is a means-tested benefit entailing a monthly provisioned cash transfer for entitled households. UC was introduced in 2013 and replaced the following benefits and tax credits: Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Working Tax Credit. In January 2024 almost 10% of the British population were on Universal Credit.² UC is a particularly good tool for examining welfare chauvinistic attitudes for two reasons. First, UC is a noncontributory and nonconditional benefit, which implies that eligibility is not tied to being a contributor (currently, in the past or being one in the future). In this sense, it represents a setup where contributors are financing benefits for some noncontributors. Second, UC is provisioned to anyone who has a legal residency in the UK and thus, does not discriminate along immigration background or requires to have settled status or citizenship. Therefore, we modify the typical welfare chauvinism measure used in the fourth and eighth rounds of the European Social Survey (hereafter ESS), conducted in 2008/9 and 2016/17, respectively.³

The item measuring welfare chauvinistic attitude, henceforth *WC attitude*, will read as follows (our modification is highlighted with capitalized letters):

“In your view, at one point, immigrants of any origin deserve comparable access to Universal Credit with natives of the UK?”

Responses are anchored on the following six-level scale.

1. Immediately after they arrive
2. As soon as they start paying taxes
3. After they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year
4. Once they have the settled status
5. Once they became UK citizens
6. Never

When regressing *WC attitude* to address predictions, we will use the *WC4* variable : collapsing responses on “As soon as they start paying taxes” and “After they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year” and call this contribution based *wc* and collapsing responses on “Once they have the settled status” and “Once they became UK citizens” and call this culture based *wc*).

²Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-11-january-2024/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-11-january-2024>.

³For ESS related information see, <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data-portal>

Additionally, we will also create and use a WC3 variable that classifies respondents to No WC (“Immediately after they arrive ”), conditional WC (contribution wc and culture wc collapsed), and unconditional WC (“Never ”).

2.5 Immigrants’ profile

To gain some insight into what kind of immigrants the respondents had in mind, after measuring welfare chauvinism, we administer the following items summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Items measuring the characteristics of the immigrant respondents had in mind

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Imm_Gen	Immigrants’ gender .	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, which gender best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female • Males and Females alike
Imm_Type	Immigrants’ type .	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, which immigrant category best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrants who came to work, study, or for family reasons • Immigrants who came as refugees
Imm_Skills	Immigrants’ skills .	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, which category best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unskilled • low–skilled • high–skilled
Imm_Orig	Immigrants’ origin .	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, which origin best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Eastern Europe • From Western Europe • From the Middle East • From Africa • From Asia • From North–America or Australia • From South or Central–America

Table 9. Items measuring the characteristics of the immigrant respondents had in mind (continuation)

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Imm_Empl	Immigrants' employment status.	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, Which employment status best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly unemployed • Employed on and off • Employed steadily
Imm_Rel	Immigrants' religiousness.	Thinking back to when you answered the questions about immigrants and when to grant them access to Universal Credit, what degree of religiousness best describes the immigrant(s) you had in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious activities and rules guide their daily lives, behaviors, and attitudes. • Religious activities are restricted to big holidays a couple of times a year. • Religious activities are entirely absent from their lives.

2.6 Demographic and additional information

Finally, to allow for various robustness checks, we collect a range demographics characteristics that are listed in in Subsection 2.6.

Table 10 presents the list of demographic variables that we will collect.

Table 10. List of demographic variables

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Gender	Gender	What is your gender?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female • Other • Prefer not to say
Age	Age	Which year were you born?	A dropdown 1924–2006
Marital	Marital status	What is your marital status?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single or living alone • Married or living in a partnership • Divorced or separated • Widowed • Prefer not to answer
Nationality	Nationality	What is your nationality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Welsh • Scottish • Northern Irish • Other
Citizenship	Citizenship	Do you hold a UK citizenship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hold UK citizenship or Commonwealth citizenship or Republic of Ireland citizenship since birth • I acquired it later in my lifetime • I do not hold UK citizenship
Student	Student status	Are you currently a student?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Prefer not to answer

Table 10. List of demographic variables (continuation)

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Ethnicity	Ethnicity ^a	What is your ethnicity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian or Asian British (includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, and any other Asian background) • Black, Black British, Caribbean or African (includes Caribbean, African and any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background) • Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (includes White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background) • White (includes English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma and any other White background) • Other ethnic group (includes Arab and any other ethnic group) • Other, please specify
LengthUK	Length of living in the UK	For how long have you been living in the UK?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was born in the UK • More than 25 years • More than 15 years but less than 25 years • More than 5 years but less than 15 years • Less than 5 years

^aFrom <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/latest/>

Table 10. List of demographic variables (continuation)

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
ResidenceArea	Current area of residence	Current UK area of residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East, England (Tees Valley, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear) • North West, England (Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside) • Yorkshire and the Humber, England (East Riding, North Lincolnshire and Yorkshire) • East Midlands, England (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire) • West Midlands, England (Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, West Midlands) • East of England (East Anglia, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Essex) • London, England • South East, England (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and Isle of Wight) • South West, England (Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath area, Dorset and Somerset, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Devon) • Wales • Scotland • Northern Ireland

Table 10. List of demographic variables (continuation)

Abbreviation	Measure of...	Question	Response scale
Religion	Religious affiliation	What is your religious affiliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atheist or agnostic • Buddhist • Christian • Hindu • Jewish • Muslim • Sikh • Other • No religion • Prefer not to answer
ParentsImmig	Parents' immigration background	To your knowledge, was your biological mother and/or father born in the UK? Answer this question even if your parents were/are divorced, you were not raised by your biological mother, or if she had already passed away. If you only have information about one parent, answer only for this person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother and father • Only father • Only mother • I do not know
Postcode	Postcode area	In which postcode area do you live?	Select your choice.
Birth country	Birth country	Select your birth country from the list	Select your choice.
Voting	Voting eligibility	As of now, are you eligible to vote in the UK general (parliamentary) elections?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I do not know
Employment	Employment	Your current employment status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Full-time" • "Part-time" • "Due to start a new job within the next month" • "Unemployed (and job seeking)" • "Not in paid work (e.g. homemaker, 'retired or disabled)" • "Other" • "Prefer not to answer"

3 Empirical strategy and Hypotheses

3.1 Determining the final sample

We will only include respondents who completed the survey.

3.2 Testing for order effects

3.2.1 Order effect on *Choice*

After creating the final sample, we look at the distributions and the means of *Choice* in the *Luck* and *Merit* treatments separately. To ensure that *Choices* are not confounded by the *Treatment order*, we compare their distributions and means between the two levels of the *Treatment order* factor. As we anticipate no differences, we plan to merge *Choice* across this manipulation. Should we observe differences (e.g., anchoring), we will only use the first *Choice* from each respondent. Consequently, as a conservative approach, we determine the sample size for one *Choice* per respondent.

3.2.2 Order effect of *Heterogeneity items*

Since we elicit the *Heterogeneity* items before or after administering the *WC attitude* measure, we test whether the distributions and means of *WC attitude* vary across the *Heterogeneity Order*. As we anticipate no differences, we plan to merge the responses on the *WC attitude* measure across the *Heterogeneity* factors. If we observe differences, we separately analyze the two samples.

3.3 Main descriptive results

3.3.1 Self-interest items

Recall that Subsection 2.3 lists the following four questions to measure respondents' perceptions about immigrants' burden on the UK welfare state.

1. Income
2. Education
3. UC recipient
4. Employment
5. Precarious

We expect a high correlation between responses to these five items, which we will present in the descriptive section. To uncover the underlying factor(s) of responses to these five items, we will

perform a factor analysis (e.g., Principle Component Analysis). This/ese uncovered factor(s) will be used in the hypotheses section regressing WC attitude on Self-interest items. For simplicity, in the remainder of this preregistration, we assume that one underlying factor will emerge that captures the decision-maker's vulnerability to immigration and call this for now, *Self-interest*. This item will be coded so that higher values indicate a higher vulnerability.

3.3.2 Anti-immigrant or racists inclinations

Recall that Subsection 2.3 lists items; namely, *Xenophobia*, *Ethnocentrism*, *ParochAltr* and *Racism* measure respondents' inclinations to discriminate against immigrants because of their different cultural group membership; see Table 5 for their summary. We also expect these items to correlate, and therefore, we will perform an exploratory factor analysis of them and use the emerged Component, for now, called *Anti-immigrant stance*. We regress WC on the *Anti-immigrant stance*.

3.3.3 Free-rider beliefs

Recall that Subsection 2.3 lists items; namely, abbreviated as *ExploitWelfare* and *RelativeContrib* to measure how much respondents perceive immigrants as free-riders of the UC system in the UK. Since we expect these two items to correlate, we will create a single index of them, called *Free-rider beliefs*, and when addressing the hypothesis, we will use this term. We regress WC on *Free-rider beliefs*.

3.3.4 Blame assignment

Recall that Subsection 2.3 list the items by which we measure how natives' tend to assign blame for immigrants if they are poor. The *Blame assignment* variable is calculated: ReasonPoorImm_Effort - ReasonPoorImm_Luck. We regress WC attitude on the *Blame assignment*.

3.3.5 Inequality Acceptance

To calculate respondents' *Inequality Acceptance* from their *Choices*, we use the formula introduced by (Almås et al., 2020). The inequality acceptance (i.e., IA) of respondent i in the treatment $T = \{\text{Luck, Merit}\}$ is calculated as follows:

$$IA_{i,T} = \frac{|\text{Income worker } A_T - \text{Income worker } B_T|}{\text{Total income}}, \quad (1)$$

where Worker A_T is the pre-earner worker in the treatment T (i.e., who was granted the bonus in the first place), Worker B_T is his/her pair, and the Total income is the bonus. Note that this formula calculates an Inequality Acceptance value for each treatment, with $0 \leq IA_{i,T} \leq 1$. $IA_{i,T} = 0$

implies zero Inequality Acceptance (i.e., maximum possible redistribution), and $IA_{i,T} = 1$ implies the maximum Inequality Acceptance (i.e., zero redistribution by keeping the status quo).

3.4 Hypotheses

3.4.1 Main predictions

We predict that self-interest, anti-immigrant inclinations, free-rider perception, blame-assignment and inequality acceptance would be positively associated with welfare chauvinism.

We address the predictions with the adapting the following regression specification.

$$WC4 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 self_interest(+\beta_2 D) + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

$WC4$ is the four-level response to the question of measuring welfare chauvinism.

$self_interest$ describes the respondents' composite vulnerability

D is a vector of observables measured with demographic measures.

Hypothesis 1. $WC4$ is associated with self-interest, $\beta_1 > 0$.

$$WC4 = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 free_rider(+\gamma_2 D) + \epsilon \quad (3)$$

The $self_interest$ variable describes the respondents' beliefs that immigrants free ride on the UC system in the UK.

Hypothesis 2. $WC4$ is associated with free-rider beliefs, $\gamma_1 > 0$.

$$WC4 = \delta_0 + \delta_1 anti_immig(+\delta_2 D) + \epsilon \quad (4)$$

The $anti_immig$ variable is a composite score of respondents' attitudes towards immigrants.

Hypothesis 3. $WC4$ is associated with anti-immigrants stance, $\delta_1 > 0$.

$$WC4 = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 blame(+\alpha_2 D) + \epsilon \quad (5)$$

The $blame$ variable describes how much blame respondents assign to immigrants for being poor.

Hypothesis 4. $WC4$ is associated with blame assignment, $\alpha_1 > 0$.

$$WC4 = \zeta_0 + \zeta_1 IA_M(+\zeta_2 D) + \epsilon \quad (6)$$

The *IA* variable describes how much blame respondents assign to immigrants for being poor. In this specification, the baseline level of *IA* is set to the *Luck* cell and thus, *IA_M* measures the relative effect of *Merit* on *WC4* versus *Luck*.

Hypothesis 5. *WC4 is associated with inequality acceptance, $\zeta_0 > 0$.*

Hypothesis 6. *WC4 is associated with higher inequality acceptance in the *Merit* than in the *Luck* cells, $\zeta_0 > 0$.*

We will perform various robustness checks by entering a wide range of demographic variables for the regressions.

4 The second part: Workers' tasks

This part of the study will also be programmed in oTree (Chen et al., 2016). In this section, we briefly describe what happens to Workers whose bonus earnings are determined in the *Luck* and *Merit* treatments by the respondents in the main part. The instructions for Workers are very similar to those used by Cohn et al. (2023).

The UK-resident Workers are also recruited from Prolific services and will work on 8-minute brief assignment. The task is to double-check the maximum number of digitized entries (from a list of ID numbers) within 8 minutes. Each Worker receives a flat payment of £1 for participating, regardless of their potential additional payment for the assignment, and their bonus earnings are determined by respondents acting as spectators as described in Section 2.1.

To make sure that Workers are tracking time during their eight-minute assignment, a countdown timer informs them about their remaining time to complete the task.

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