# Supplementary Materials:
# The Politics of Imperial Nostalgia

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# 1. Details of survey

Our data come from a three-round panel survey conducted by YouGov with a sample of adult residents of Britain (excluding Northern Ireland). The first round, fielded from October 3 to 19, 2022, included 4,069 respondents.

YouGov employs quota sampling rather than probability sampling, but this sample was designed to be representative of the adult populations of England, Scotland, and Wales. Quotas based on age, gender, social class, region, and political attitudes were used, with post-stratification weighting applied to match population demographics. Our sample includes deliberate oversamples of rural residents by design, but all results are weighted to be representative of the adult populations of England, Wales, and Scotland at the time of survey administration.

The second round, conducted from October 13 to November 11, 2023, retained 2,522 participants from the first wave, and the third round, fielded from May 21 to June 10, 2024, included 2,169 of the original respondents, with 1,876 participating in all three waves. The first wave featured an oversample of rural residents, and weights were constructed for each survey wave using raking to align results with national population marginals.

To improve response quality, respondents who completed a survey wave in less than one-third of the median completion time were excluded: 117 respondents were excluded in wave 1 (median 24.7 minutes) and 12 in wave 2 (median 19.1 minutes), with none excluded in wave 3. Additionally, 36 respondents who were missing demographic data and six who had left the UK during the panel period were dropped. The final sample sizes for analysis were 3,898 for wave 1, 2,460 for wave 2, and 2,109 for wave 3.

## 2. Psychometrics of the scales

### 2.1. Attitudes to empire

The imperial attitudes battery appears to measure a single coherent and reliable dimension of opinion. The scree plots from both survey rounds reveal a strong first eigenvalue, a second eigenvalue below one, and a pronounced "elbow" at the second eigenvalue, all of which support a unidimensional interpretation (see the tables and figures in this supplementary materials document). A one-dimensional confirmatory factor analysis fits reasonably well, with the CFI and SRMR metric better than the conventional metrics, but the RMSEA metric falling short (round 2: CFI = .996, RMSEA = .105, SRMR = .043; round 3: CFI = .997, RMSEA = .106, SRMR = .040). In addition, all items have strong positive standardised loadings in the .74-.89 range. The battery is internally consistent across both rounds ($\alpha$ = .91 and .92), showing inter-item reliability. The repeated measurements allow us to assess the test-retest reliability, which is also strong (r = .87).

### 2.2. Emotions to empire

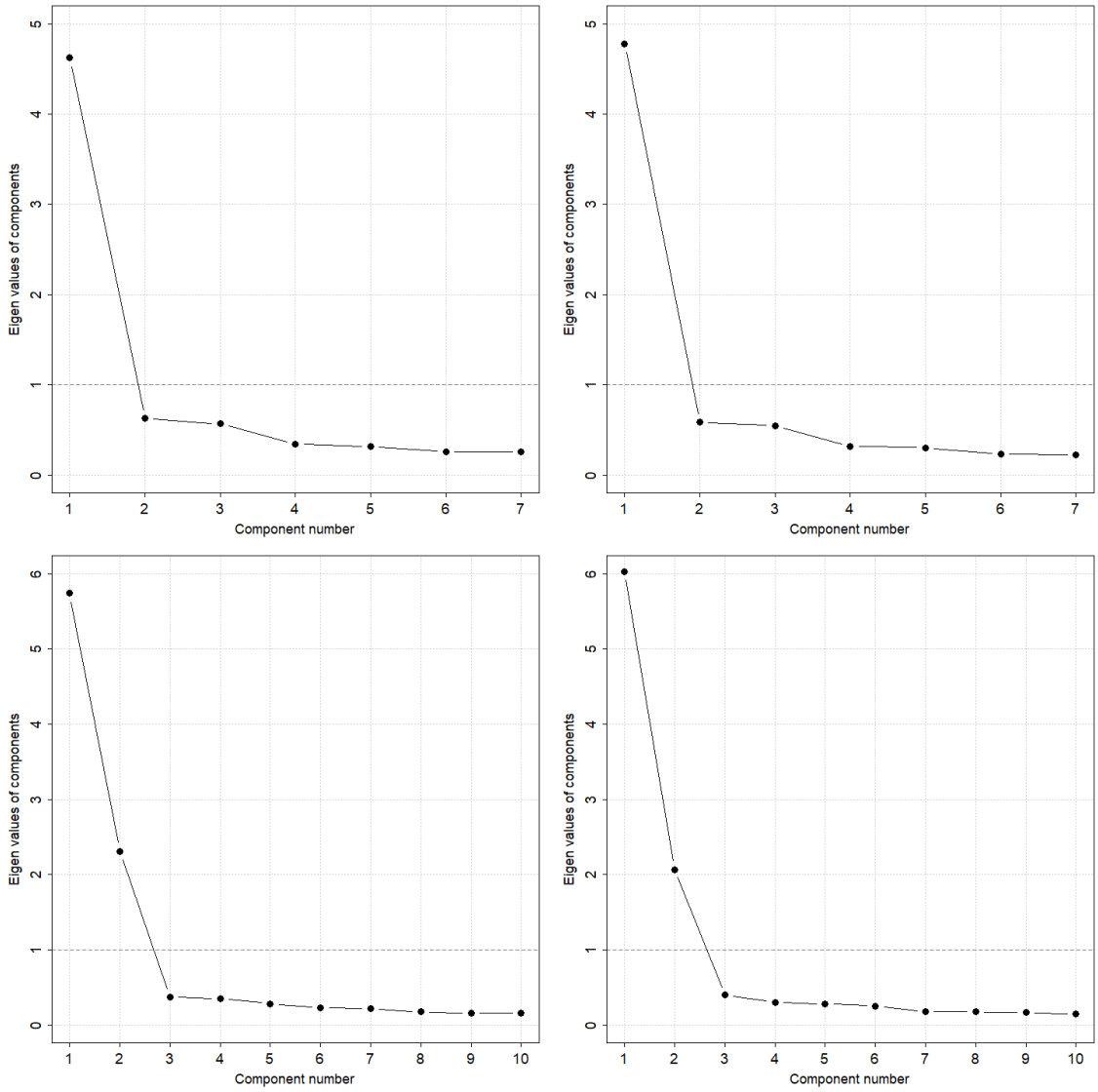
The imperial emotions battery displays a more complex structure than imperial attitudes, with evidence for distinct positive and negative dimensions. Such a finding is consistent with classic research on the latent structure of emotional response (**?**). Specifically, scree plots reveal that the first two eigenvalues are elevated (both greater than 2), with a distinct "elbow" at the third. Exploratory factor analyses reveal a clear separation, with the items tapping negative and positive emotions loading on separate factors. Confirmatory factor analyses show that the two-dimensional, negative vs. positive imperial emotion model fits well (CFI = .999, RMSEA = .053, SRMR = .0388; r3: CFI = .999, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .039) while a one-dimensional model does not (r2: CFI = .972, RMSEA = .296, SRMR = .240; r3: CFI = .980, RMSEA = .261, SRMR = .202). The two dimensions exhibit a moderate negative correlation (r = -.51 & -.60).

While these results support the use of separate negative and positive emotions to empire scales, creating a single differenced measure (i.e., positive emotions scale − negative emotions scale) produces a scale with greater test-retest reliability (r = .86 vs. .81) and a stronger correlation with imperial attitudes (r = .87-.88 vs. .74-.78). Given the strong correlation that imperial attitudes exhibits with the net imperial emotions scale, as well as the stronger correlation it shows with other measures of cultural conservatism (compared with net imperial emotions; results in online supplementary materials), we use the imperial attitudes scale as our measure of imperial nostalgia in the remainder of the paper.

**Table S1.** Summary of imperial attitude positions

| | disagree | unsure | agree | net % nostalgic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| harm vs. good | 29.2 | 34.7 | 36.1 | −6.9 |
| civilising effect | 19.1 | 34.1 | 46.9 | 27.8 |
| advanced humanity | 20.3 | 40 | 39.8 | 19.5 |
| responsible atrocities | 10.8 | 26.3 | 62.9 | −52.1 |
| wish empire | 54.0 | 29.6 | 16.4 | −37.7 |
| golden age | 29.2 | 36.4 | 34.3 | 5.1 |
| shameful period | 32.3 | 32.5 | 35.2 | −3.0 |

**Figure S1.** Scree plots, imperial nostalgia



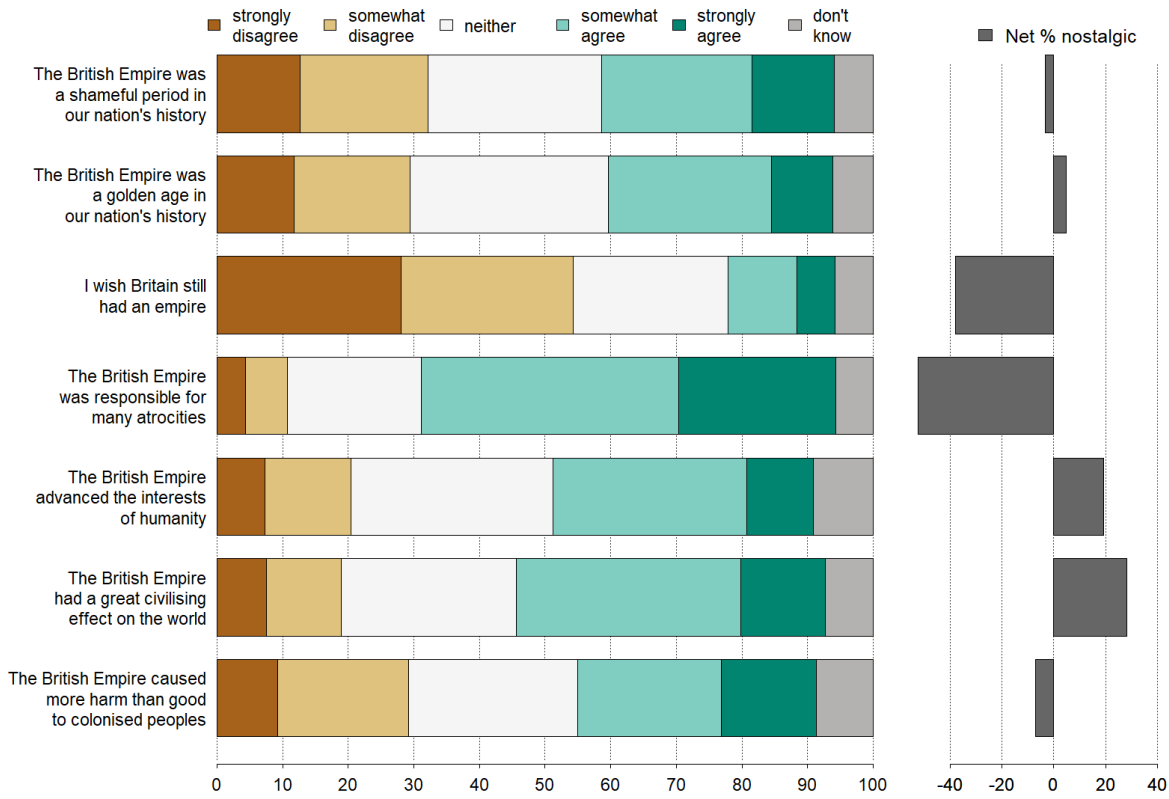

Notes: Each panel shows a scree plot displaying the eigenvalues of the correlation matrix for the items. Top row: imperial attitudes round 2 (left), round 3 (right); bottom row: imperial emotions, round 2 (left), round 3 (right)

**Table S2.** CFA, imperial attitudes, round 3 survey

| Factor Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Estimate | Std. Err. |
| imp att q1 | 0.88 | 0.01 |
| imp att q2 | 0.89 | 0.01 |
| imp att q3 | 0.86 | 0.01 |
| imp att q4 | 0.77 | 0.01 |
| imp att q5 | 0.74 | 0.01 |
| imp att q6 | 0.85 | 0.01 |
| imp att q7 | 0.88 | 0.01 |
| Latent Variances | | |
| Imperial attitudes | 1.00+ | |
| Fit Indices | | |
| $N$ | 2124 | |
| $\chi^2$ | 344.24 | |
| CFI | 1.00 | |
| RMSEA | 0.11 | |
| SRMR | 0.04 | |
| Scaled $\chi^2$(df) | 1010.13(14) | |

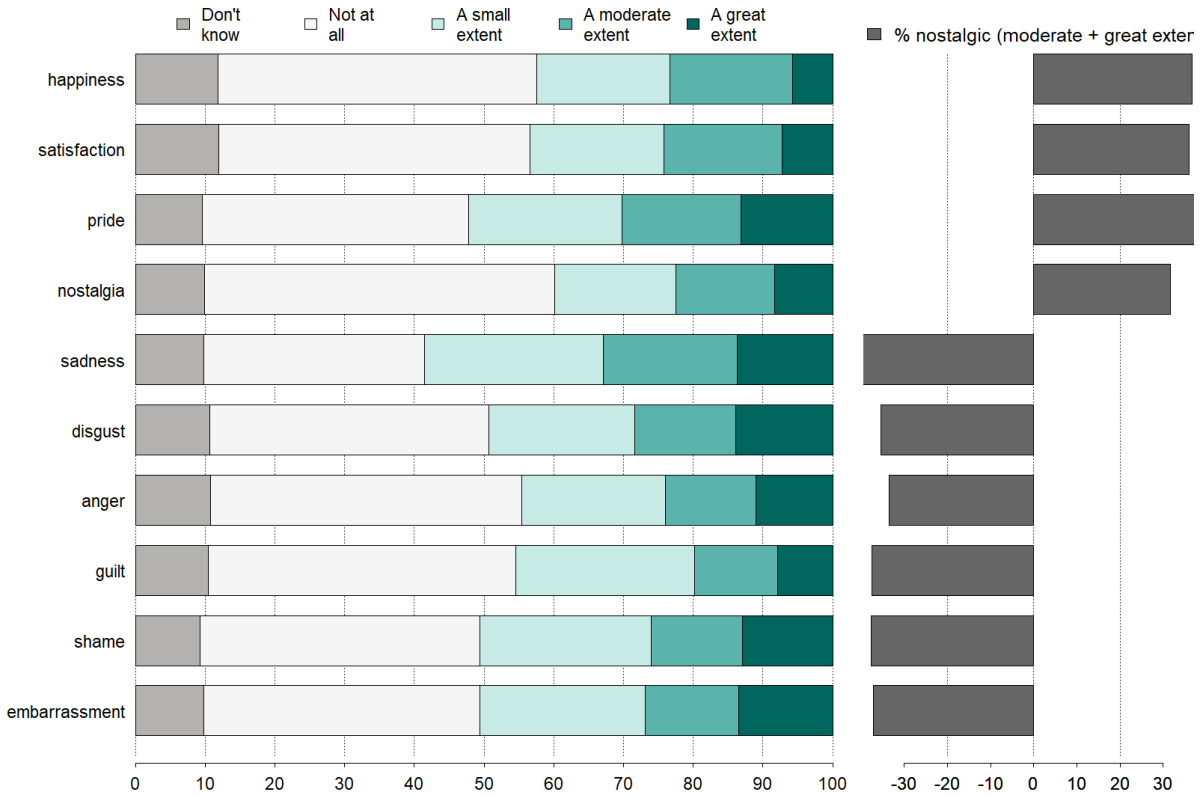
+Fixed parameter

**Figure S2.** Responses to the imperial attitudes questions, round 3




Notes: Each bar shows the weighted distribution of responses for one of the seven questions in the imperial attitudes battery using the third round survey. The net percentage of the sample offering a nostalgic (anti-imperial) view is shown in the panel on the left.

**Figure S3.** Responses to the imperial emotions questions, round 3




Notes: Each bar shows the weighted distribution of responses for one of the ten questions in the imperial emotions battery using the third round survey. The stem of the question read "When you think about the British Empire, to what extent do you feel...". The percentage of the sample holding a pro- or anti-imperial emotion – defined as selecting the response options a "moderate" or "great" extent – is shown in the panel on the left.

**Table S3.** Correlations between imperial nostalgia scales

| | IA r2 | IA r3 | IE+ r2 | IE+ r3 | IE- r2 | IE- r3 | IED r2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IA r3 | .87 | | | | | | |
| IE+ r2 | .78 | .74 | | | | | |
| IE+r3 | .77 | .81 | .81 | | | | |
| IE- r2 | −.76 | −.73 | −.55 | −.59 | | | |
| IE- r3 | −.72 | −.78 | −.57 | −.64 | .81 | | |
| IED r2 | .87 | .83 | .88 | .79 | −.88 | −.78 | |
| IED r3 | .82 | .88 | .76 | .90 | −.77 | −.91 | .86 |

IA: Imperial attitudes; IE+ Imperial emotions, positive; IE- Imperial emotions, negative; IED Imperial emotions, difference; r2,r3: round 2,3

**Table S4.** Exploratory factor analysis

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| imperial nost. 1 | 0.92 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 2 | 0.84 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 3 | 0.84 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 4 | 0.71 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 5 | 0.66 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 6 | 0.76 | | | | | | | |
| imperial nost. 7 | 0.92 | | | | | | | |
| immigr. eco. | | | | | | 0.80 | | |
| immigr. cult. | | | | | | 0.76 | | |
| eco. values 1 | | | | | | | 0.80 | |
| eco. values 2 | | 0.39 | | | | | 0.38 | |
| eco. values 3 | | 0.30 | | | | | 0.70 | |
| eco. values 4 | | 0.46 | | | | | 0.55 | |
| auth. values 1 | | | | | 0.65 | | | |
| auth. values 2 | | | | | 0.42 | | | |
| auth. values 3 | | | | | 0.62 | | | |
| auth. values 4 | | | | | 0.65 | | | |
| sexism 1 | | | | | | | | 0.82 |
| sexism 2 | | | | | | | | 0.85 |
| sexism 3 | | | | | | | | 0.79 |
| sup. democ. 1 | | | 0.73 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 2 | | | 0.73 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 3 | | | 0.56 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 4 | | | 0.80 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 5 | | | 0.73 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 6 | | | 0.46 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 7 | | | 0.70 | | | | | |
| sup. democ. 8 | | | 0.70 | | | | | |
| satis. democ. | | −0.41 | | | 0.48 | | | |
| trust MPs | | −0.69 | | | | | | |
| gov. approval | | −0.45 | | | 0.42 | | | |
| left-right | | | | | | | −0.42 | |
| EU indepen. | | | | | | −0.40 | | |
| populism 1 | | 0.92 | | | | | | |
| populism 2 | | 0.84 | | | | | | |
| populism 3 | | 0.92 | | | | | | |
| populism 4 | | 0.57 | | | | | | |
| chauv. nation. 1 | | | | 0.77 | | | | |
| chauv. nation. 2 | | | | 0.76 | | | | |
| chauv. nation. 3 | | | | 0.92 | | | | |
| nation. pride 1 | | | | 0.67 | | | | |
| nation. pride 2 | | | | 0.69 | | | | |
| nation. pride 3 | | | | 0.64 | | | | |

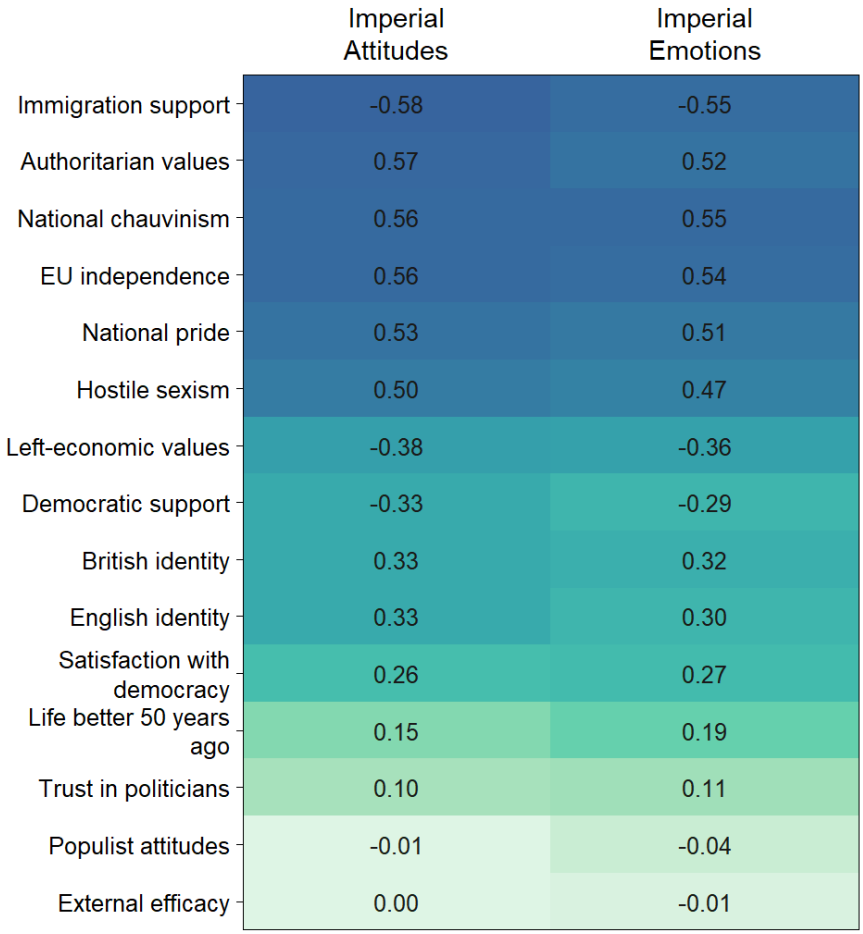
Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with eight dimensions (as indicated with parallel analysis), using minimum residual estimation and promax rotation. Based on pairwise polyserial correlations. Loadings < |0.30| suppressed for clarity. Most items are from round 2, except national pride and chauvinistic nationalism (round 3).

**Table S5.** EFA inter-factor correlations

| | $F1$ | $F2$ | $F3$ | $F4$ | $F5$ | $F6$ | $F7$ | $F8$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F1 | 1.00 | −0.09 | −0.41 | 0.60 | 0.63 | −0.42 | −0.55 | 0.51 |
| F2 | −0.09 | 1.00 | −0.08 | −0.31 | −0.04 | −0.41 | 0.41 | 0.13 |
| F3 | −0.41 | −0.08 | 1.00 | −0.19 | −0.44 | 0.47 | 0.27 | −0.43 |
| F4 | 0.60 | −0.31 | −0.19 | 1.00 | 0.58 | −0.05 | −0.47 | 0.25 |
| F5 | 0.63 | −0.04 | −0.44 | 0.58 | 1.00 | −0.31 | −0.46 | 0.44 |
| F6 | −0.42 | −0.41 | 0.47 | −0.05 | −0.31 | 1.00 | 0.10 | −0.47 |
| F7 | −0.55 | 0.41 | 0.27 | −0.47 | −0.46 | 0.10 | 1.00 | −0.25 |
| F8 | 0.51 | 0.13 | −0.43 | 0.25 | 0.44 | −0.47 | −0.25 | 1.00 |

Inter-factor correlations from the Exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The imperial nostagia factor is F1.

**Figure S4.** Correlations between measures of imperial nostalgia and other attitudinal variables




The heatmap shows the bivariate correlations between the two measures of imperial nostalgia and other attitudinal variables we collected. Darker blue cells indicate correlations with larger absolute values. Wave 2 correlations are reported, except for national chauvinism and national pride (all in wave 3) and nostalgic deprivation and life better 50 years ago (measured in wave 1, correlated with nostalgia in wave 2

**Table S6.** OLS regressions of party evaluations, round 2

| | Cons | Lab | LDem | Reform | Green | SNP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperial nostalgia | .42* | −.22* | −.12 | .49* | −.54* | −.75* |
| | (.09) | (.09) | (.09) | (.08) | (.09) | (.36) |
| Left-eco.values | −1.04* | .97* | .15 | .01 | .39* | .53 |
| | (.09) | (.10) | (.09) | (.08) | (.09) | (.34) |
| Authoritarian values | .85* | .19 | .22* | −.16 | −.29* | −.59 |
| | (.10) | (.11) | (.10) | (.10) | (.10) | (.40) |
| Immigration support | .29 | .87* | .97* | −1.05* | .49* | .20 |
| | (.16) | (.18) | (.16) | (.16) | (.16) | (.66) |
| Hostile sexism | −.16 | −.50* | −.30* | .17* | −.40* | .63 |
| | (.08) | (.09) | (.09) | (.08) | (.08) | (.36) |
| Populist attitudes | −.66* | −.13 | −.20* | .44* | .03 | −.09 |
| | (.09) | (.09) | (.09) | (.08) | (.09) | (.34) |
| English identity | .05* | .04 | .02 | .03 | .00 | −.16 |
| | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.09) |
| EU independence | .26* | −.34* | −.23* | .23* | −.19* | −.30* |
| | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.02) | (.11) |
| $R^2$ | .47 | .43 | .26 | .35 | .38 | .41 |
| $N$ | 2029 | 2028 | 2011 | 1897 | 2011 | 242 |

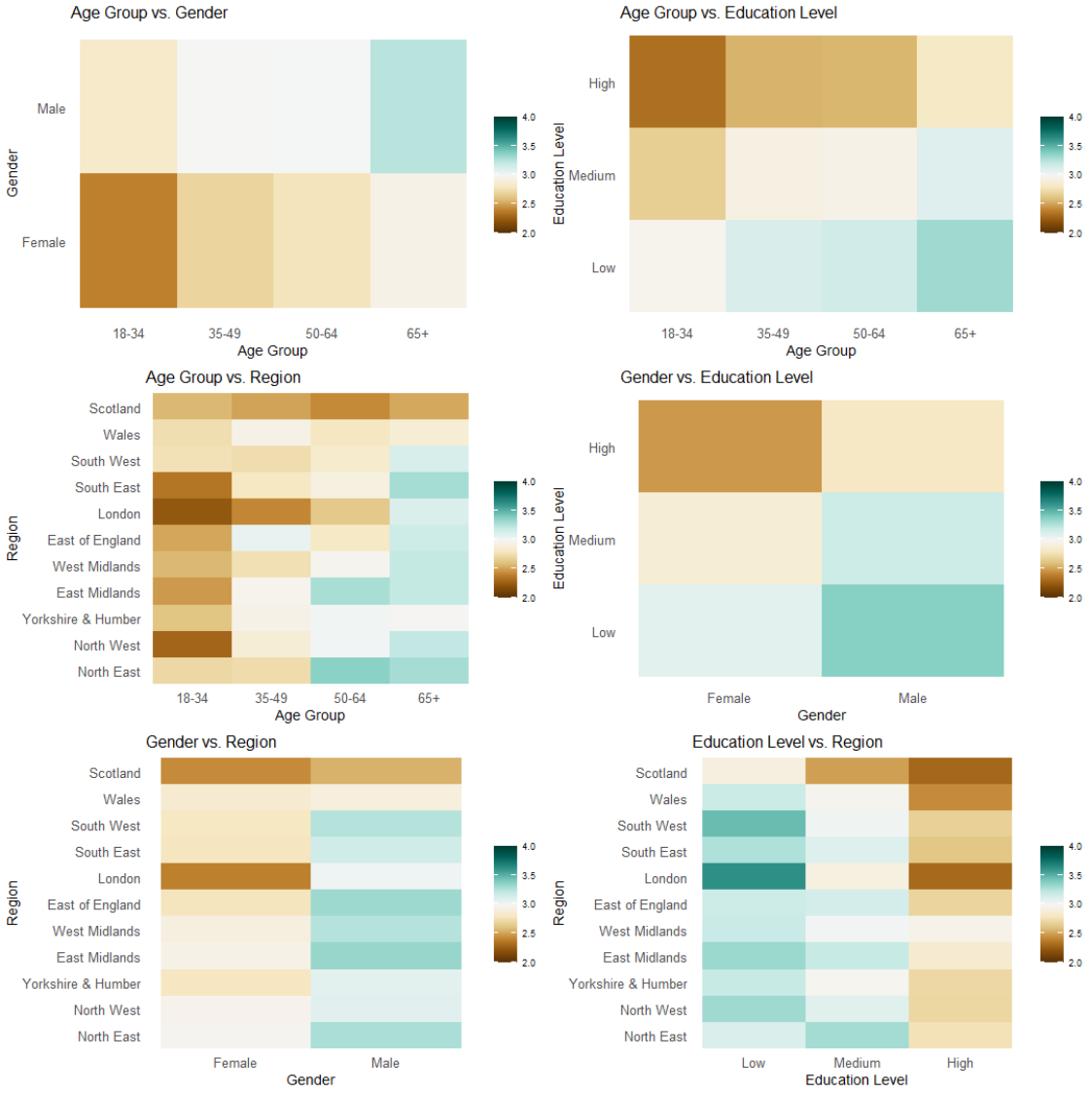
* $p < 0.05$. OLS regression models.

**Table S7.** OLS regressions of pro- (vs. anti-) empire candidates

| | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Intercept | .53* | .53* |
| | (.04) | (.04) |
| Imperial nostalgia | .17* | .16* |
| | (.02) | (.03) |
| Authoritarian values | −.00 | .02 |
| | (.03) | (.03) |
| Conservative party evaluations | −.00 | |
| | (.01) | |
| Labour party evaluations | .01 | |
| | (.01) | |
| Liberal Democrat evaluations | −.00 | |
| | (.01) | |
| Reform party evaluations | .01 | |
| | (.01) | |
| Green party evaluations | −.01 | |
| | (.01) | |
| Vote intention for left (vs. right) party | | .03 |
| | | (.05) |
| $R^2$ | .16 | .11 |
| $N$ | 1268 | 1017 |

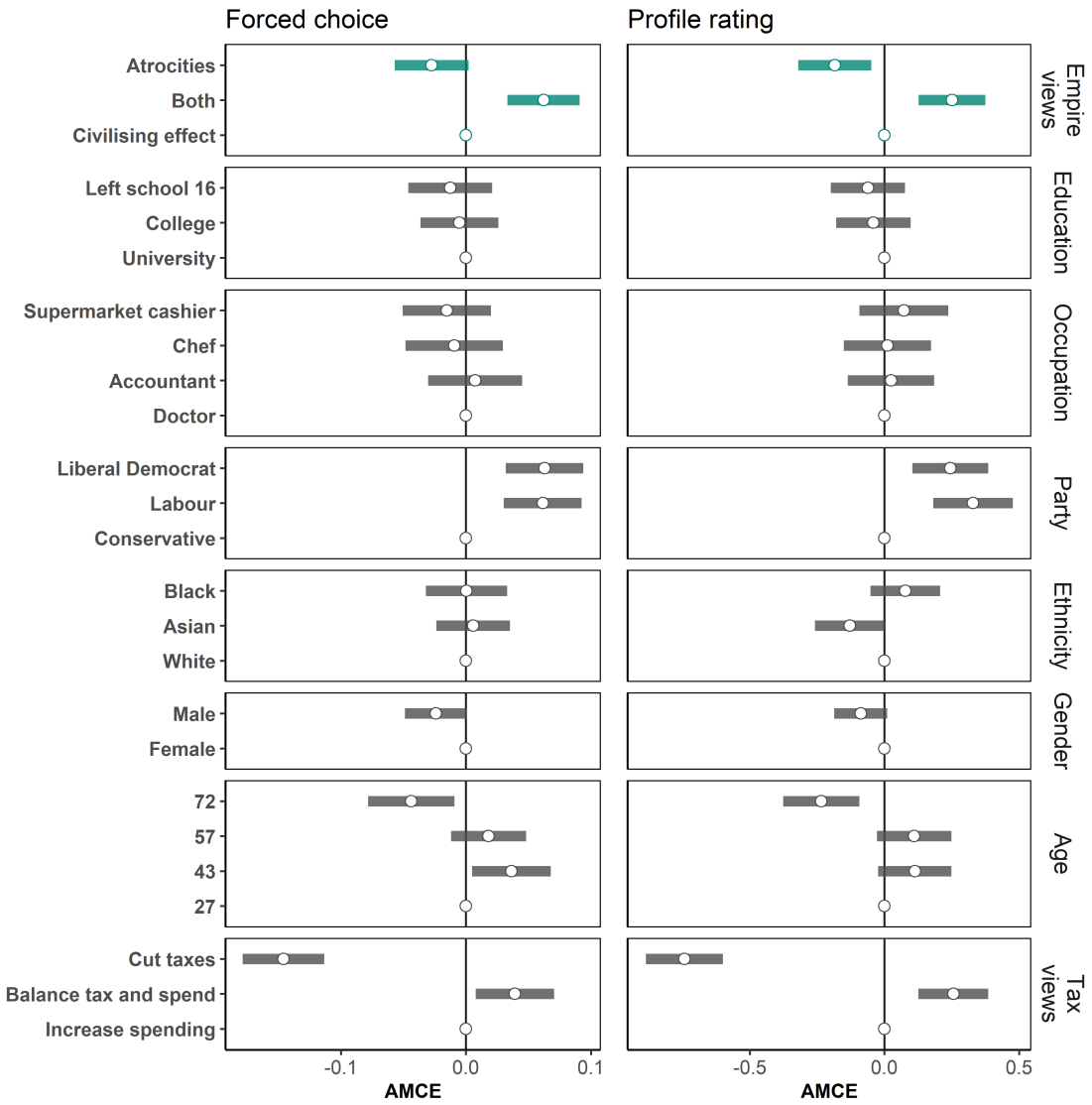
*$p < 0.05$. OLS regression models, with standard errors clustered by respondent in parentheses. The outcome is 1 when respondents were presented with a pro- vs anti-empire pair of candidates and selected the pro-empire one; and 0 if they selected the anti-empire candidate.

**Figure S5.** Imperial nostalgia by 2-way demographics



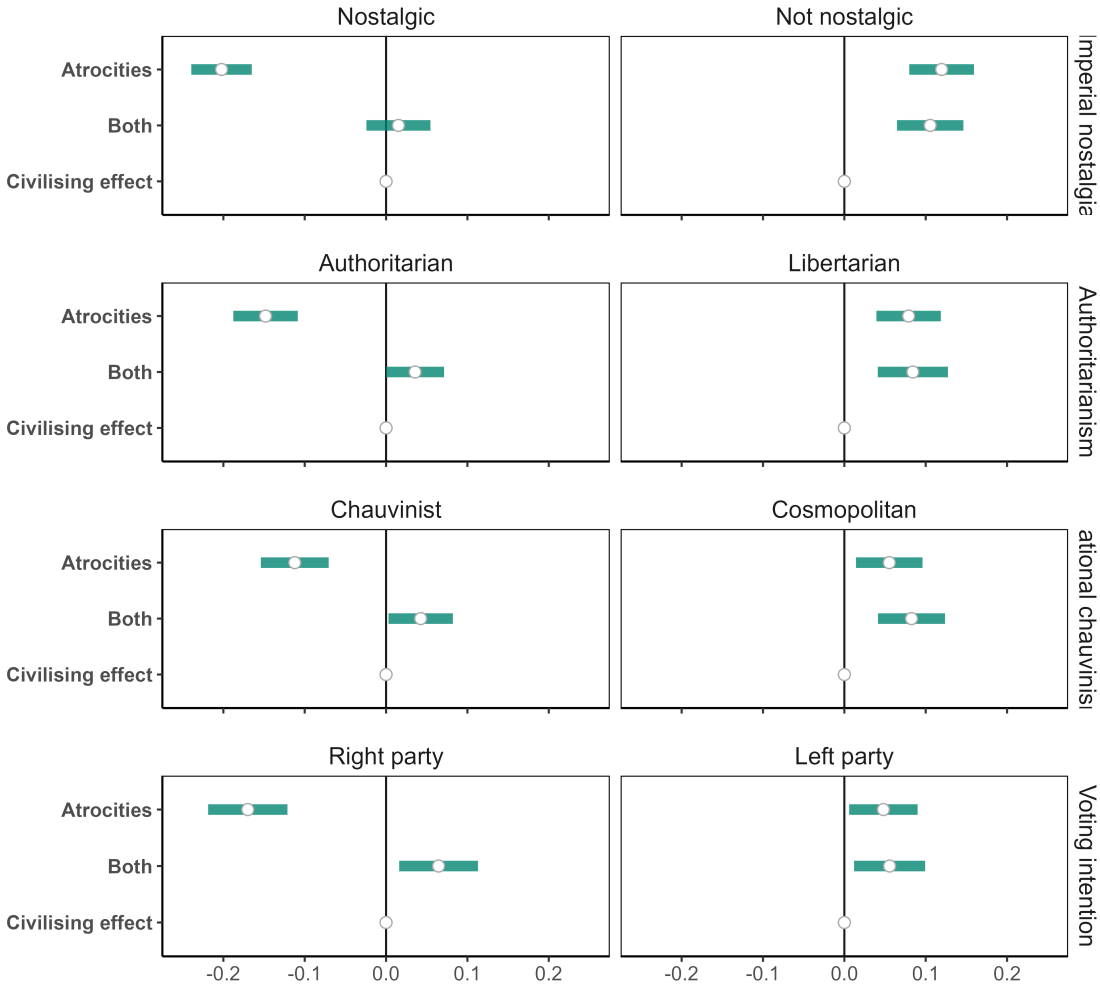

Results of linear models regressing the composite mean imperial attitudes scale on each pair of the following demographic variables: age groups, gender, region, and education level, with interaction terms included. The cells show predicted effects of these linear models, which are obtained using data pooled across survey rounds and are weighted.

**Figure S6.** Conjoint experiment, AMCEs



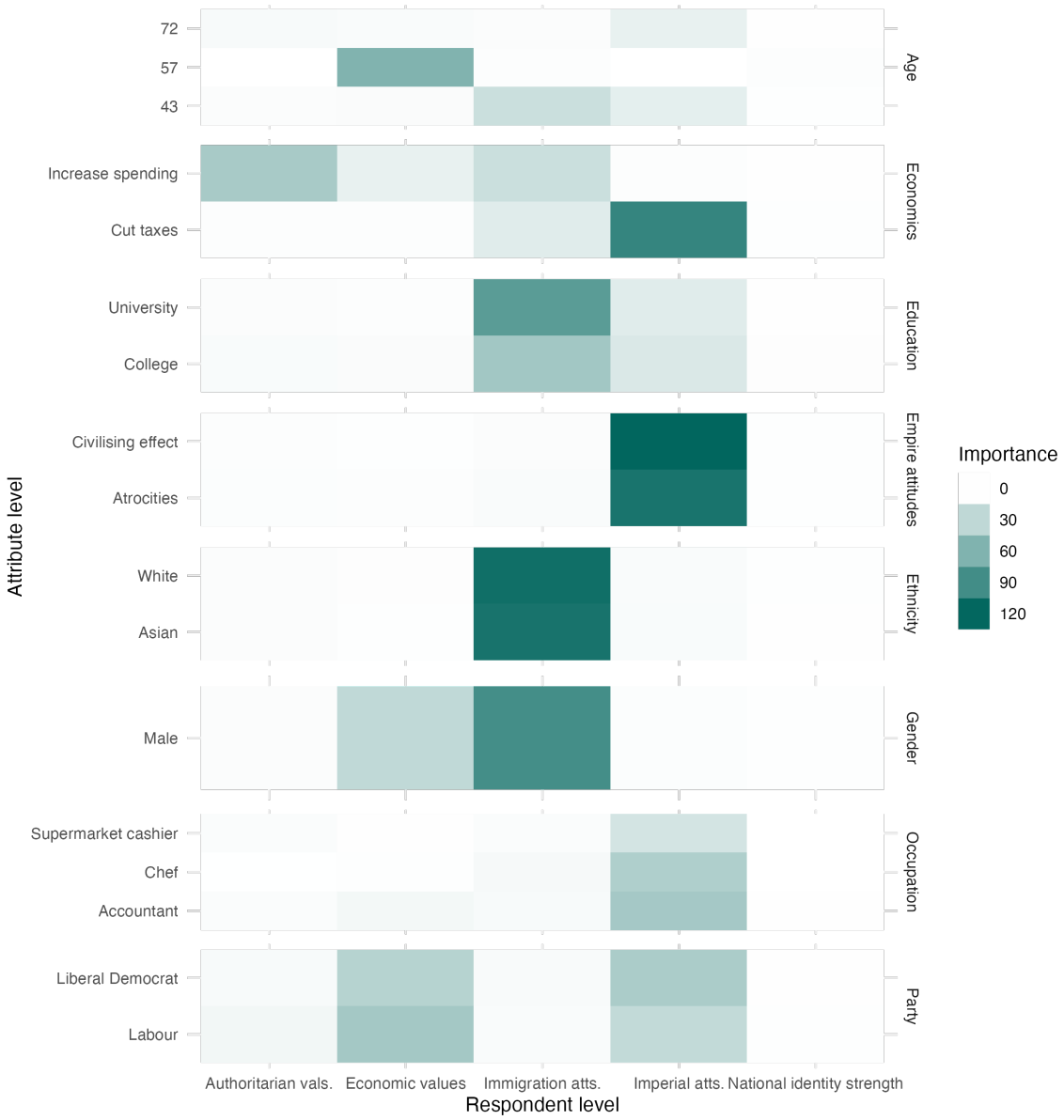

Results of conjoint experiment - average marginal component effects (AMCEs)

**Figure S7.** Conjoint experiment, AMCEs by attitudinal subgroups




Results of conjoint experiment (average marginal component effects) when splitting the sample by the median of imperial nostalgia, authoritarianism, and national chauvinism, and by right vs. left party preference. Results from the forced MP choice question used.

**Figure S8.** Variable importance matrix from separate random forest models on separate attribute levels.




Notes: This figure presents variable importance scores for respondent-level covariates (columns) in predicting the distribution of (individual-level) effects for each attribute level (rows). Higher values (darker shading) indicate variables' greater importance in predicting the estimated effect distribution. The individual level effects are derived from Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BARTs), and then the variable importance is derived from random forests.