**Supplementary material**

**Table A1:** List of empirical studies on misperceptions about immigration

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study** | **Focus of interest** | **Countries** | **Time period** | **Main finding(s)** |
| Aalberg and Strabac 2010 | Determinants | AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PT, SE, UK, US | 20022005  | Watching TV is associated with less knowledge about migration but watching TV news is associated with more such knowledge. There are significant differences across countries.  |
| Alba et al. 2005 | Effects | US | 2000 | The more distorted the majority group’s view of the relative size of minorities (including immigrants) is the more hostile their attitudes are. Education may help to counter related prejudices. |
| Alesina et al. 2018 | Description/Effects | DE, FR, IT, SE, UK, US | 20172018 | Across all examined countries, there are “strikingly large” misperceptions about the number and characteristics of immigrants. Thinking about immigration reduces support for redistribution. |
| Arin et al. 2021 | Description/Determinants | DE, ES, FR, UK | 2020 | During the COVID-19 pandemic, the share of immigrants has been frequently misestimated. Gender, education, income, etc., are relevant determinants. |
| Barrera et al. 2020 | Effects/Correction | FR | 2017 | While fact-checking improves voter knowledge, it hardly affects policy conclusions or support for the far-right; providing them with *alternative facts* is a powerful tool to distort people’s beliefs. |
| Blinder 2015 | Description/Effects | UK | 2011 | Public perception and official data on immigration diverge greatly, with the public often imagining immigrants as asylum seekers. This image is associated with more restrictive policy preferences.  |
| Blinder and Jeannet 2017 | Determinants | UK | 20132014 | Media reporting affects perceptions about immigration. More accurate depictions of immigrants can reduce the level of misperceptions. |
| Blinder and Schaffner 2020 | Description/Correction | US | 20132018 | People not only overestimate immigrant population stocks but also related flows. Receiving correct information can help to change their preferences. |
| Carnahan et al. 2021 | Correction | US | 2011 | Corrective effects are found to be detectable up to four weeks after first exposure, with repeated exposure further prolonging these effects and reducing misperceptions. |
| Citrin and Sides 2008 | Description/Determinants | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, UK, US | 20022005 | Both EU and US citizens overestimate the number of immigrants in their countries and prefer more restrictive policies, with attitudes hardly being affected by economic differences or the population share of the foreign born. However, the US is more culturally tolerant in general. |
| Fertig and Schmidt 2001 | Description  | DE | 1995 | There is a “very moderate actual public transfer payment dependence” of immigrants but much more negative public beliefs; people overestimate the economic disadvantages of immigration.  |
| Glinitzer et al. 2021 | Determinants | DE | 2018 | The processing of new information about immigrants (in this case: refugees) depends on political biases and prior beliefs. This effect is stronger among those most opposed to immigration.  |
| Gordon et al. 2020 | Description/Effects | SA | 2018  | While hostility toward immigrants has not increased over the last fifteen years, most people are misinformed about their number, which influences general hostility levels.  |
| Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2020 | Effects | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, UK  | 2014 | Public views are more strongly affected by innumeracy than by attitudes, with more pronounced discrepancies between real and imagined numbers leading to stronger anti-immigration views. |
| Grigorieff et al. 2020 | Correction | US | 201020142016  | Receiving correct information about immigration can improve attitudes toward immigration; This effect persists weeks later. It is crucial to correct misinformation about immigrants’ characteristics, not only about their number. |
| Haaland and Roth 2020 | Effects/Correction | US | 2017 | Support for immigration is linked to misperceptions about the labor market; if people are being presented with evidence that shows no adverse labor market effect, they become more supportive. |
| Hartley et al. 2019 | Effects | AU | 2015 | False beliefs about asylum seekers are a better predictor of restrictive immigration policies than political ideology or prejudice.  |
| Herda 2010 | Description | AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, SI, UK | 2002 | Innumeracy in Europe is “both widespread and variable” but particularly large in countries with high inequality levels. There may be a distinction between cognitive and emotional innumeracy.  |
| Herda 2013 | Description/Effects | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FR, FI, GR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, SI, UK | 2002 | Innumeracy entails not only overestimation but also underestimation and nonresponse. Both are rather common, with non-responders forming a particularly distinct group characterized by “low cognitive ability and high negative affect.” Underestimation correlates with pro-migration beliefs.  |
| Herda 2015a | Description/Effects | TR | 2013 | Innumeracy is “quite high in the Turkish context” but not as much correlated with anti-immigrant attitudes as in most of Europe. There is also a considerable regional variation (rural-urban). |
| Herda 2015b | Description/Determinants | FI | 2011 | Around a fifth of respondents are incorrect about where most immigrants come from, an error related to media exposure and threat perceptions. |
| Herda 2018 | Description/Determinants | DE, ES, FR, IT, UK, US | 2011 | There are high levels of both innumeracy and qualitative misperceptions. However, misperceptions about the size of the immigrant population are only weakly associated with exclusionary tendencies. |
| Herda 2019 | Description/Determinants | US | 200520092013 | Misperceptions have grown rapidly over time, far outpacing the real growth of the foreign-born population. Also, misperceptions held by conservatives have “grown increasingly extreme.” |
| Herda 2020 | Description/Effects | CA | 2009 | Innumeracy is more widespread than misperceptions related to the legal status of immigrants, yet holding the latter is more consequential for support of anti-immigration policies.  |
| Himmelroos and Rapeli 2020 | Correction | FI | 2012 | There is some evidence for the corrective potential of deliberation, i.e., engaging in discussions on immigration with individuals holding different beliefs (mixed discussion groups).  |
| Hjerm 2007 | Effects | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, SI, UK | 2002 | “Neither actual nor perceived size (of immigrant groups) matter for anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe. Nor does size have any effect under different economic or political contexts.” |
| Hooghe and de Vroome 2015 | Description/Effects | BE | 2009 | Inhabitants of local communities show a tendency to overestimate the number of non-nationals; in attitudinal terms, the perceived size of immigrant groups has a greater impact than their actual size. |
| Hopkins et al. 2019 | Description/Correction | US | 200620082010 | In the US, non-Hispanic Whites overestimate both the share of the foreign-born population and of those who entered the country irregularly. Four separate survey experiments present limited proof that providing accurate information can correct these misperceptions. |
| Johnston and Ballard 2016 | Description/Correction | US | 2013 | People are more doubtful of the economic benefits of immigration than professional economists are. Knowing an expert’s position only changes the position of those who were previously uncertain.  |
| Jørgensen and Osmundsen 2020  | Correction/Effects | DK | 2017 | Exposure to facts about immigration can make people update their beliefs. Yet, they often interpret this new information in a selective way and maintain their policy preferences. |
| Koopmans and Schaeffer 2016 | Determinants | DE, FR, NL | 20092010 | Negative diversity effects (out-group biases, asymmetric preferences, coordination problems) matter. (Mis)perceptions mediate statistical effects and have explanatory power on their own. |
| Lee et al. 2021 | Description/Effects | US | 2017 | Political elites (i.e., government officials) are more accurately informed than the general public about the “foreign-born national rate.” However, this does not lead to reduced polarization. |
| Leviston et al. 2020 | Description/Determinants | AU | 2018 | People tend to overestimate the extent to which others expect immigrants to adopt the culture of the host society. Voting behavior and right-wing authoritarian traits are relevant determinants. |
| Li and Wagner 2020 | Correction | US | 2018 | People holding misperceptions may be uninformed, ambiguous, or misinformed; in the case of immigration, fact-checking may help the first two groups to form correct beliefs. |
| Lind et al. 2018 | Determinants | SE | 2016 | Ideology and identity (i.e., nationally oriented *versus* globally oriented) play a role in assessing the link between refugee intake and higher/lower crime rate. This effect goes in both directions. |
| Lundmark and Kokkonen 2017 | Description | SE | 2012 | Immigration innumeracy at the neighborhood level is rather moderate, at least among the employees of small and medium-sized companies in an urban (metropolitan) setting.  |
| Mancini et al. 2020 | Determinants | IT | 2016 | People who have a high social dominance orientation and display right-wing authoritarian attitudes are more likely to hold the belief that asylum seekers are making false claims. |
| Martini et al. 2021 | Determinants | CZ, DE, ES, FR, GR, IT, NL, PO, PT, UK  | 2017  | There is an association between misperceptions and belief in conspiracy theories: The higher the propensity to hold conspiracist worldviews, the greater the tendency toward innumeracy.  |
| Markaki and Blinder 2018 | Determinants/Effects | AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NE, PO, PT, SE, SI | 20022014 | There is a strong correlation between the belief that immigrants place a burden on public welfare and restrictive immigration preferences. Geographical proximity is less important than skill level: people are more concerned about low-skilled than non-European immigration.  |
| Markaki et al. 2020 | Determinants | DE, ES, HR, PO, RO, SE UK | 201720182019 | Among those on the far left, political sophistication may affect belief in EU immigrants’ impact on welfare; but not among those on the far right who adhere to such misperceptions either way. |
| Meltzer and Schemer 2021 | Determinants | ES, UK, DE, SE, PL, HU, RO  | 20172018 | Mass media may have both an enlightening and a distorting effect on people’s perceptions of immigrant groups’ size. Immigration innumeracy is a rather stable phenomenon over time. |
| Mena 2021 | Determinants/Correction | US | 2019 | Correcting misperceptions can be significantly enhanced through data visualization if there is less than average prior knowledge. Beliefs have a strong effect regardless of data visualization. |
| Pedersen and Hartley 2017 | Determinants | AU | 2015 | The main predictors of misperceptions about asylum seekers are right-wing political orientation, prejudice, confidence in espousing false beliefs, and the third-person effect. |
| Peterson and Iyengar 2021 | Determinants | US | 20182019 | “Partisan cheerleading” only modestly inflates differences in information (e.g., on immigrant crime). Those holding misperceptions often sincerely believe in what is inaccurate. |
| Saldaña et al. 2018 | Determinants | US | 20152016 | Supporters of Donald Trump exhibit more inaccurate beliefs about immigration, yet Trump is a catalyst, rather than the cause of their misperceptions. Education and ideology are crucial factors. |
| Saldaña et al. 2021 | Determinants | US | 20152016 | The effect of one’s political ideology on inaccurate beliefs is contingent upon education, measured via misperceptions about Syrian refugees (e.g., “young males of combat age”).  |
| Schlueter and Scheepers 2010 | Determinants | NL | 2000 | Objective measurements of immigration group size correspond with subjective perceptions of a larger group size; these, in turn, are associated with perceptions of threatened group interests.  |
| Semyonov et al. 2008 | Effects | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, SI, UK  | 2002 | Inflated perceptions of the size of the foreign-born population are likely to increase negative views of immigrants.  |
| Sides and Citrin 2007 | Description/Determinants/Effects | AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PO, PT, SE, UK, US | 200220052006 | People overestimate the size of the foreign-born population, with their education and exposure to immigrants being relevant determinants. Receiving corrective information “influences attitudes very little” and only has a limited effect in general. |
| Steele and Perkins 2019 | Description/Effects | US | 2015 | New York City residents overestimate the share of non-citizens in their neighborhood. Those who overestimate it the most show the least support for redistributive policies.  |
| Strabac 2011 | Description/Effects | AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, PT, SE, UK | 2002 | Misperceptions are quite common in Western Europe; the perceived rather than the actual size of a country’s immigrant population affects prejudices. |

**Note:** *Empirical studies on misperceptions about immigration that were published as journal articles, book chapters, or working papers. We only selected studies that describe misperceptions, analyze their causes and effects, or report about correctional experiments. We make no claim of exhaustiveness. Country abbreviations: AT: Austria, AU: Australia, BE: Belgium, CA: Canada, CH: Switzerland, CZ: Czechia, DE: Germany, DK: Denmark, EE: Estonia, ES: Spain, FI: Finland, FR: France, GR: Greece, HR: Hungary, IE: Ireland, IL: Israel, IT: Italy, LT: Lithuania, LU: Luxemburg, NL: Netherlands, NO: Norway, PO: Poland, PT: Portugal, SA: South Africa, SE: Sweden, SI: Slovenia, TR: Turkey, UK: United Kingdom, US: United States.*

**Figure A1:** Distribution of studies on misperception about immigration over time

**Note:** *Histograms displaying the annual number of studies on misperceptions about immigration. The same study can appear more than once in the right figure if separate data collections were performed in different years. If the data collection spans more than a year, the figure shows the year in which it was concluded. Sample size: N=51 (left) and N=65 (right).*

**Figure A2:** Distribution of studies on misperception about immigration across countries



**Note:** *World map visualizing the geographical distribution of studies on misperceptions about immigration by country. Sample size: N=51.*
**Table A2:** Public survey data on misperceptions about immigration

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Survey name** | **Relevant item(s)** | **Survey year** |
| German General Social Survey (GGSS/ALLBUS)[*https://doi.org/10.4232/1.3751*](https://doi.org/10.4232/1.3751)[*https://doi.org/10.4232/1.10110*](https://doi.org/10.4232/1.10110)[*https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12796*](https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12796) | * “How high, do you think, is the percentage of foreigners in Western Germany?” [in %]
* “And in Eastern Germany?” [in %]
 | 19962006 2016 |
| Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES)[*https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR30141.v1*](https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR30141.v1)[*https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR35616*](https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR35616) | * “Out of every 100 people living in the United States, how many do you think entered this country illegally?”
 | 2006 2010 |
| European Election Study (EES)[*https://doi.org/doi:10.4232/1.11760*](https://doi.org/doi%3A10.4232/1.11760) | * “And over the last 12 months, has immigration in {country} increased a lot, increased a little, stayed the same, decreased a little or decreased a lot?”
 | 2009 |
| European Social Survey (ESS)[*https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS1-2002*](https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS1-2002)*https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS7-2014* | * “Out of every 100 people living in [country], how many do you think were born outside [country]?” [in %]
* “Compared to other European countries of about the same size as the UK, do you think that more or fewer people come to live here from other countries?”
 | 20022014 |
| South Africa Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS)[*https://doi.org/10.14749/1612884573*](https://doi.org/10.14749/1612884573) | Question items from the European Social Survey (see above) | 2018 |
| Special Eurobarometer (EB) 469 [*https://doi.org/10.2837/918822*](https://doi.org/10.2837/918822) | * “To your knowledge, what is the proportion of immigrants in the total population in (OUR COUNTRY)?”
* “Generally speaking, would you say that there are more immigrants who are staying legally or staying illegally in (OUR COUNTRY)?”
 | 2017 |
| Transatlantic Trend Survey (TATS)[*https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR33022.v1*](https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR33022.v1)  | * “In your opinion, what percentage of the total (COUNTRY) population were born in another country? You can answer any number between 0 and 100.”
* “In your opinion, do you think that most of the immigrants in (COUNTRY) are here legally, or are most of them here illegally?”

  | 2010 |
| REMINDER: ​​Online Panel Study on Migration and Mobility Attitudes 2017-2018. [*https://doi.org/10.11587/LBSMPQ*](https://doi.org/10.11587/LBSMPQ) | * Out of every 100 people in [COUNTRY], about how many do you think are unemployed? [NUMBER BETWEEN 0 and 100]
* Out of every 100 people in [COUNTRY], how many do you think were born outside [COUNTRY]? [NUMBER BETWEEN 0 and 100
* Out of every 100 people in [COUNTRY], about how many do you think were born in another EU country? [NUMBER BETWEEN 0 and 100]
* Out of 100 immigrants in [COUNTRY], how many do you think are [SPLIT HALF] female/male? [NUMBER BETWEEN 0 and 100]
 | 20172018 |

**Note:** *Social science population surveys that contain question items related to misperceptions about immigration. We only selected items that can be empirically verified, leaving those that ask about the general economic and cultural impact of immigration out. All listed surveys are publicly available and provide micro-level data. We make no claim of exhaustiveness.*

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