

# GFMD RT5: Improving the perception of migration in public opinion through narratives, culture, emotion and rational discourse

*A global outlook on public attitudes to immigration: from description  
to explanation to intervention*

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<a href="#">Executive summary</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Describing global attitudes to immigration: what people think about immigration</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Explanation of public attitudes to immigration: why people think what they do</a> .....	21
<a href="#">What are narratives and why does their popularity vary?</a> .....	30
<a href="#">Intervening to affect public attitudes to immigration: changing what people think about immigration</a> .....	32
<a href="#">Six examples of communication on immigration</a> .....	42
<a href="#">Conclusion</a> .....	51
<a href="#">References</a> .....	53

## Executive summary

- This report asks what individuals across the world think about immigration, why they think what they do, and what communication is likely to affect what they think.
- In doing so, it makes three contributions:
  1. It provides a global outlook of what public attitudes to immigration are
  2. It brings up to date the rapidly developing scientific literature that explains attitudes to immigration
  3. It provides guidance to communicators on what types of communication are likely to be effective, along with examples
- Across 63 countries and six continents globally, citizens' immigration policy preferences are shown to be far more moderate than radical and—in countries with a recent history of immigration—relatively stable over time. That said, important country differences exist.
- Outside of a few “western” countries, citizens prefer that nationals are prioritised over immigrants for jobs in every country. Prejudice against immigrants is usually held by a minority.
- Citizens across the world simultaneously believe both positive and negative narratives about immigration. Even in very pro-immigration countries, belief in immigration's negative effects is widespread. That said, immigration preferences seem to be informed by a complex mix of the extent to which immigration is seen as affecting unemployment, crime, terrorism, social conflict, but also filling jobs and enriching culture.
- The perceived importance of immigration as an issue affecting one's country, compared to other political issues, is highly volatile and driven by episodic “crises” and news cycles. By contrast, the perceived importance of immigration to individuals' personal lives is consistently very low.
- Individual attitudes to immigration are shown as resulting from deeper, stable psychological predispositions and early-life socialisation which then affect the size and direction of more immediate factors, such as the economic situation, migratory context, and messaging that they receive.

- These factors are combined in a so-called “funnel of causality” that highlights how attitudes are formed over time and the relative importance and positioning of various factors in the causal chain.
- In addition, the report overviews why some narratives become popular and some do not, again reflecting the predispositions of the audience but also the particular characteristics of the narrative, its effects, and the context in which it operates.
- A range of guidelines are then overviewed on what constitutes effective communication on migration, with a particular focus on personal values and emotions.
- Finally, six examples are displayed and discussed to better understand how such lessons can be used in practice.
- Future research should now move beyond identifying individual and exemplary attributes of effective communication and towards formalising a framework across the full range of factors suggested in this report.

## Introduction

This report asks what individuals across the world think about immigration, why, and how best we might affect that. It seeks to inform the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and, in particular, its Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. Moreover, it assists that group and other interested parties and stakeholders who wish to implement Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) and particularly its Objective 17 to ‘Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration’. As such, the key motivations of this report include setting the record straight about what attitudes to immigration of citizens across the world are, offering the most holistic and cutting-edge explanations for why attitudes to immigration vary as they do and how they affect a range of vitally important phenomena, and finally recommending how policymakers and communicators can use these findings to produce better and more sustainable policies that are fit to meet the demands of a century likely to be defined by human migration.

Migration will remain one of the world’s most important and complex political challenges throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Not only do the politics of migration have vast economic consequences and opportunities, but its governance raises profound legal- and rights-based questions for millions of people worldwide. Debates on immigration are granted further gravity and complexity by the highly charged political questions of identity, values and community that discussing the topic often engenders. Moreover, public attitudes to immigration increasingly represent the major parameter for policymakers working on this and numerous related policy areas. As such, understanding what public attitudes to migration are, how they are formed and what interventions are likely to affect them—negatively or positively—is of overwhelming practical importance.

Furthermore, explaining why global citizens vary in what they think about immigration—both as individuals and in terms of country averages—can offer deeper insights into key social scientific questions of why we as humans think as we think and do as we do—in short, what makes us tick. Describing and explaining attitudes to immigration provides evidence in support



of, at times, competing scientific theories that see public opinion as, on the one hand, volatile, uninformed, irrational, and prone to manipulation or, on the other, the result of deep-seated and stubborn psychological predispositions or early-life experiences. More sophisticated, contemporary theories that consider the interactions between these forces.

Indeed, as this report shows and attempts to grapple with, there are myriad potential explanations for variation in attitudes to immigration—themselves subject to a complex web of interactions, mediations and contingencies. Both the “attitudes” and “immigration” components of “attitudes to immigration” are vast and varied phenomena, with dynamic meanings across time and space. The effects of misinformation, contact with immigrants and the rhetoric of media and politician remain the explanatory mainstays of how policymakers and academics alike continue to make sense of variation in attitudes to immigration, partially the result of an outsize focus on these issues by social scientists, with important real-world consequences.

Despite important progress in understanding attitudes to immigration, there remain fundamental shortcomings in the literature. Immigration is typically considered to be a singular, stable object of the attitudes rather than one with a dynamic meaning across time and space. There are relatively few comprehensive models that seek to explain variation overall, with a strong preference instead for the testing of singular causal mechanisms. As such, we know relatively little about the respective importance of factors, their causal relationships to each other, or their respective positions in causal chains. Many findings still derive from relatively naïve methods. Recent studies that make use of experimental methods have tended to focus on the effects of “correcting misperceptions” and show these to have weak or no effects, suggesting that attitudes are formed by deeper psychological predictors. Furthermore, natural experiments have reported no effect of short-term contextual changes such as being close to a refugee camp. Moreover, attitudes to immigration tend to be thought of as distinct from attitudes to other issues, leading social scientists and observers to focus on determinants that are specific to migration, such as contact with migrants and so-called group threat. Yet we know that migration attitudes correlate strongly with other political attitudes and one’s broader ideological positioning on the left-right spectrum. Theoretically, there are likely to be

considerable similarities between the formation process of attitudes to immigration and towards other issues, with the specificities of immigration only having proximal affects.

The report continues first by describing attitudes to immigration across the globe in terms of policy preferences, perceptions, prejudice, and political priorities. Next, it explains attitudes to immigration as resulting from a complex mix of socialisation, psychology, economics, migratory context, and messaging. Finally, and based on the preceding insights, a range of “best practices”, both from the practitioner world, academic experimental studies, and recent examples, are overviewed.

## Describing global attitudes to immigration: what people think about immigration

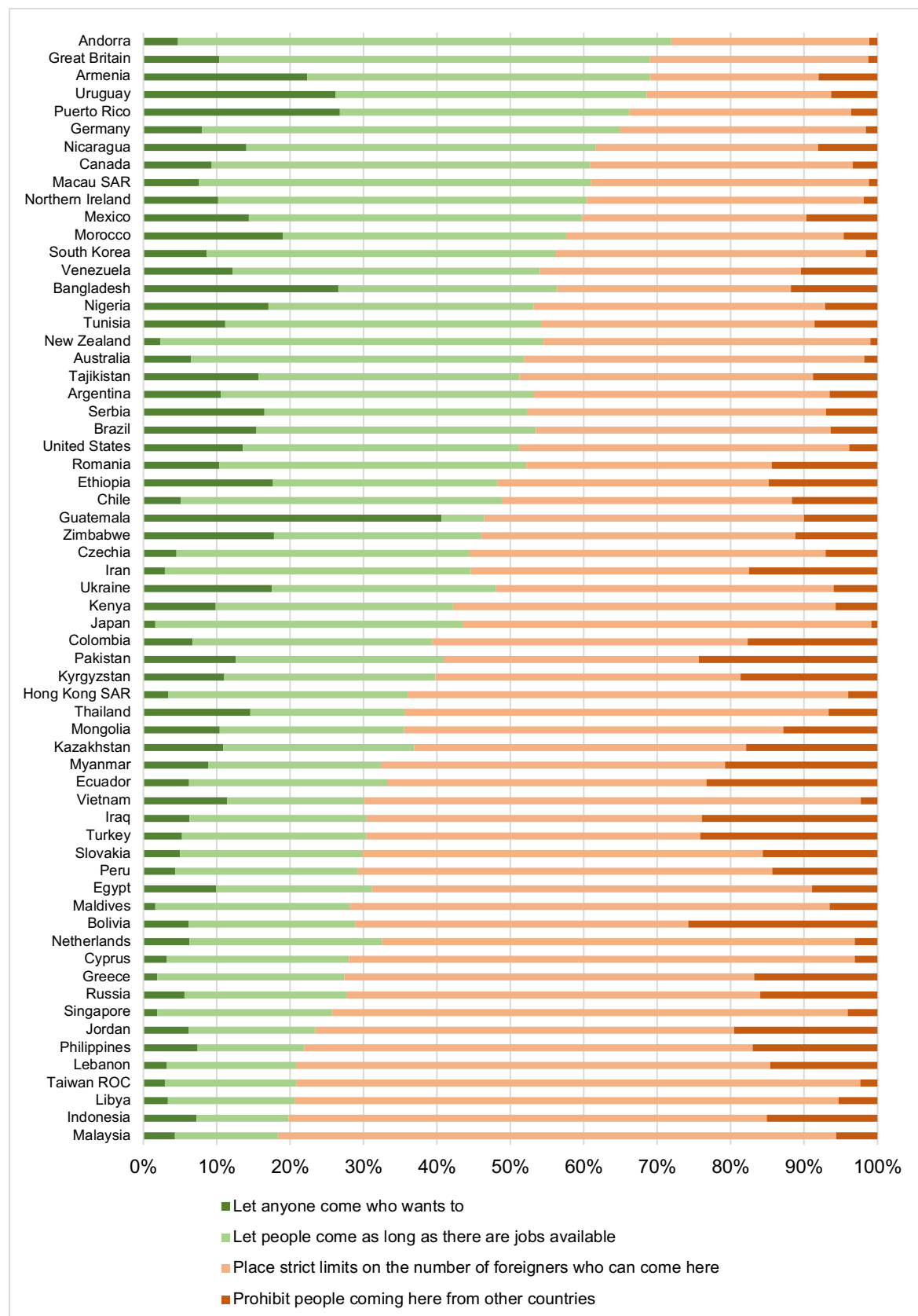
What do people across the world think about immigration? Attitudes to immigration can be roughly placed into four categories: preferences, perceptions, prejudice, and priorities. Preferences typically entail policy preferences: what kind of immigration policies do citizens want? Who should be admitted? How many? What criteria should be used? Who should decide? Perceptions typically entail beliefs about the effects of immigration and broader immigration narratives. What do citizens see as the effects of migration on economic issues like jobs and government finances, social issues like crime and inter-group conflict, and cultural issues such as the so-called national way of life? Prejudice, broadly defined, differs in that it relates to affect about immigrants as individuals and resulting personal behaviour. Finally, priorities include the extent to which individuals believe immigration is an important issue in absolute terms and, more importantly, relative to the myriad other issues affecting their country, themselves personally, and beyond.

To measure how citizens across the world think about immigration this report relies largely on data from the World Values Survey (WVS). Between 2017-2022, the WVS measures such preferences across 63 countries by presenting participants with four options: (1) Let anyone come who wants to; (2) Let people come as long as there are jobs available; (3) Place strict

limits on the number of foreigners who can come here; and (4) Prohibit people coming here from other countries. In Figure 1, we see the distribution of responses across all participating countries in order of the sum of those responding one of the first two—more positive—responses. The question suffers the drawback that, by including a contingency on “jobs” in the second option, it fails to entirely isolated either the levels or contingencies aspect of immigration policy preferences. That said, there are four key observations that are in line with studies across the globe from other data sources:

1. Countries do not vary significantly in the proportion of individuals at either extreme—for entirely “open” or “closed” borders—which almost everywhere is a small minority.
2. There is significant variation by country among the two “moderate” responses.
3. Slightly more countries—37—have majorities favouring restrictive immigration policies than have majorities favouring permissive policies—26
4. Continental differences are minor.

Figure 1: Immigration policy preferences by country (Source: WVS, 2017-2020)



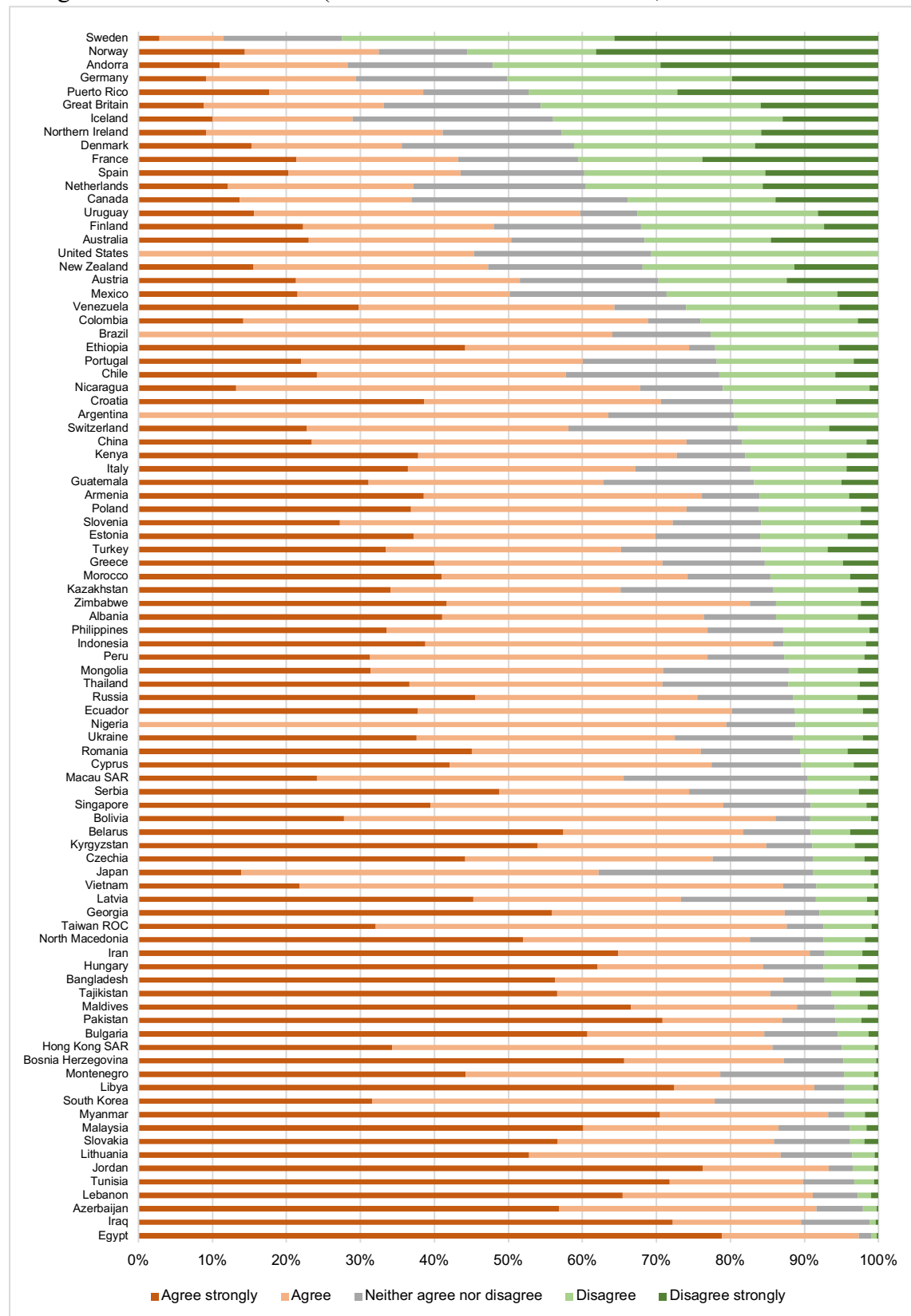
The relative moderation regarding immigration policy preferences stands in contrast to the more universal preference for labour market preference for nationals over immigration. Indeed, as we see in Figure 2:

1. All but 15 countries<sup>1</sup> have outright majorities in favour of labour market preference for nationals over immigrants.
2. Regional differences are clear:
  - a. Countries that do not favour labour market discrimination are overwhelmingly north-west European or English-speaking countries.
  - b. Latin American and southern European countries favour labour market discrimination to a slightly lesser extent though they—like the rest of the world—still do favour it.
  - c. East Asian countries are also highly favourable towards labour market discrimination.
3. Immigration policy preferences—which vary considerably—are therefore unlikely to be solely a function of labour market considerations—which vary far less.

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<sup>1</sup> Sweden, Norway, Andorra, Germany, Puerto Rico, Great Britain, Iceland, Denmark, France, Spain, Netherlands, Canada, Finland, United States, New Zealand

Figure 2. “When jobs are scarce, employers should give priorities to [nationals] over foreigners”. (Source: WVS, 2017-2022)

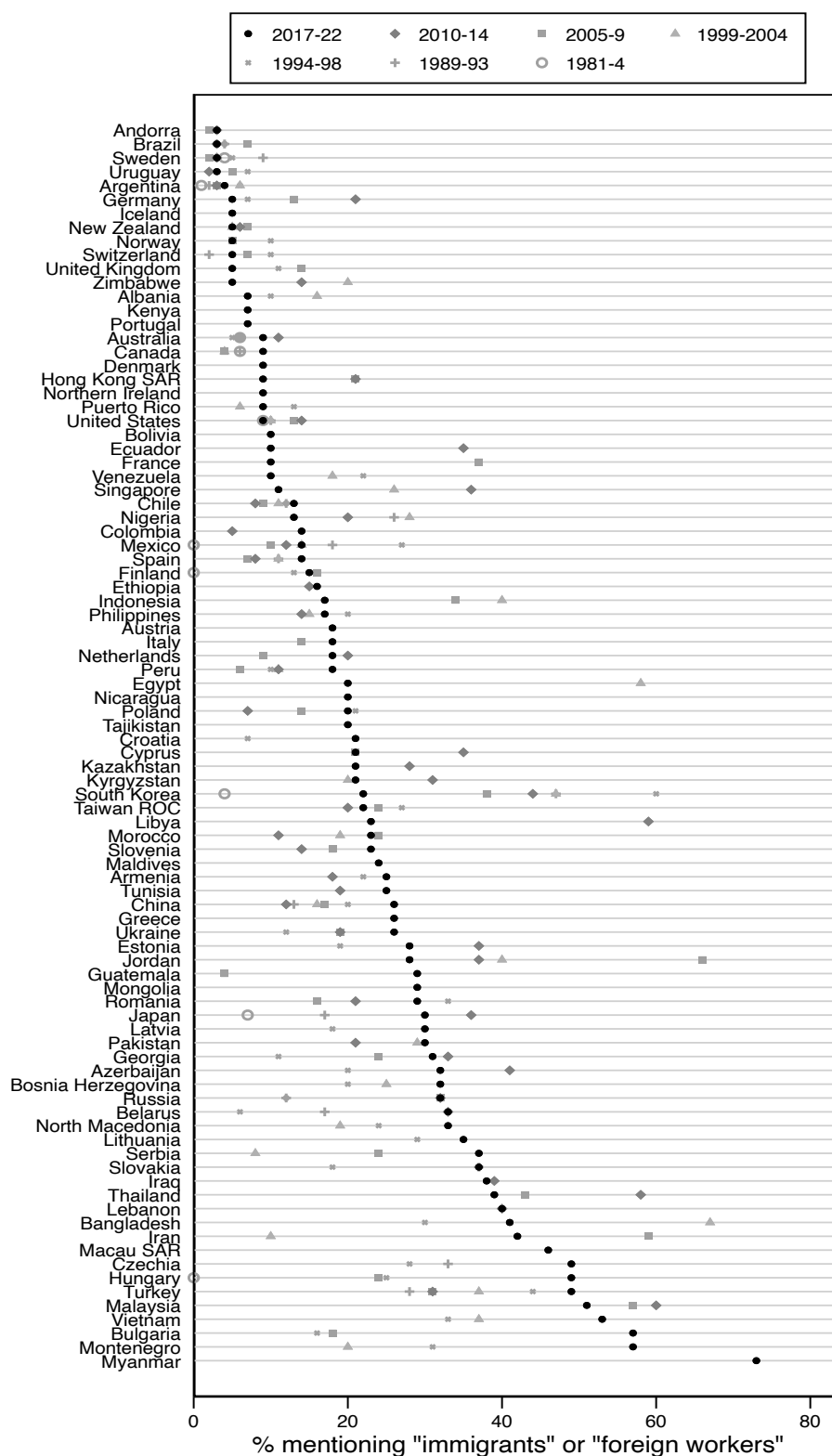


The WVS has also asked respondents over the course of its seven waves since 1981-1984 to select from a list of groups—including immigrants and foreign workers—which, if any, they would be uncomfortable having as neighbours. In Figure 3, we see the proportion citing immigrants and foreign workers across 91 countries, all of which participated in either the WVS or its associated European Values Survey (EVS) in 2017-2022. As included in shades of grey are scores from previous waves. Four things are apparent:

1. The proportion expressing such prejudice is mixed by country though a minority in all but five countries, all of which are in Eastern Europe or South-East Asia.
2. That said, such prejudice is at least relatively prevalent in most countries—the median proportion is 21 per cent.
3. All but one of the 32 countries in which such prejudice is less than 15 per cent are all in Western Europe, Latin America, or the Anglophone world.
4. There is no obvious pattern in either the direction or extent of change over time.



Figure 3. Percentage mentioning “immigrants and foreign workers” as someone you wouldn’t want as a neighbour (Source: WVS, 2017-2022)

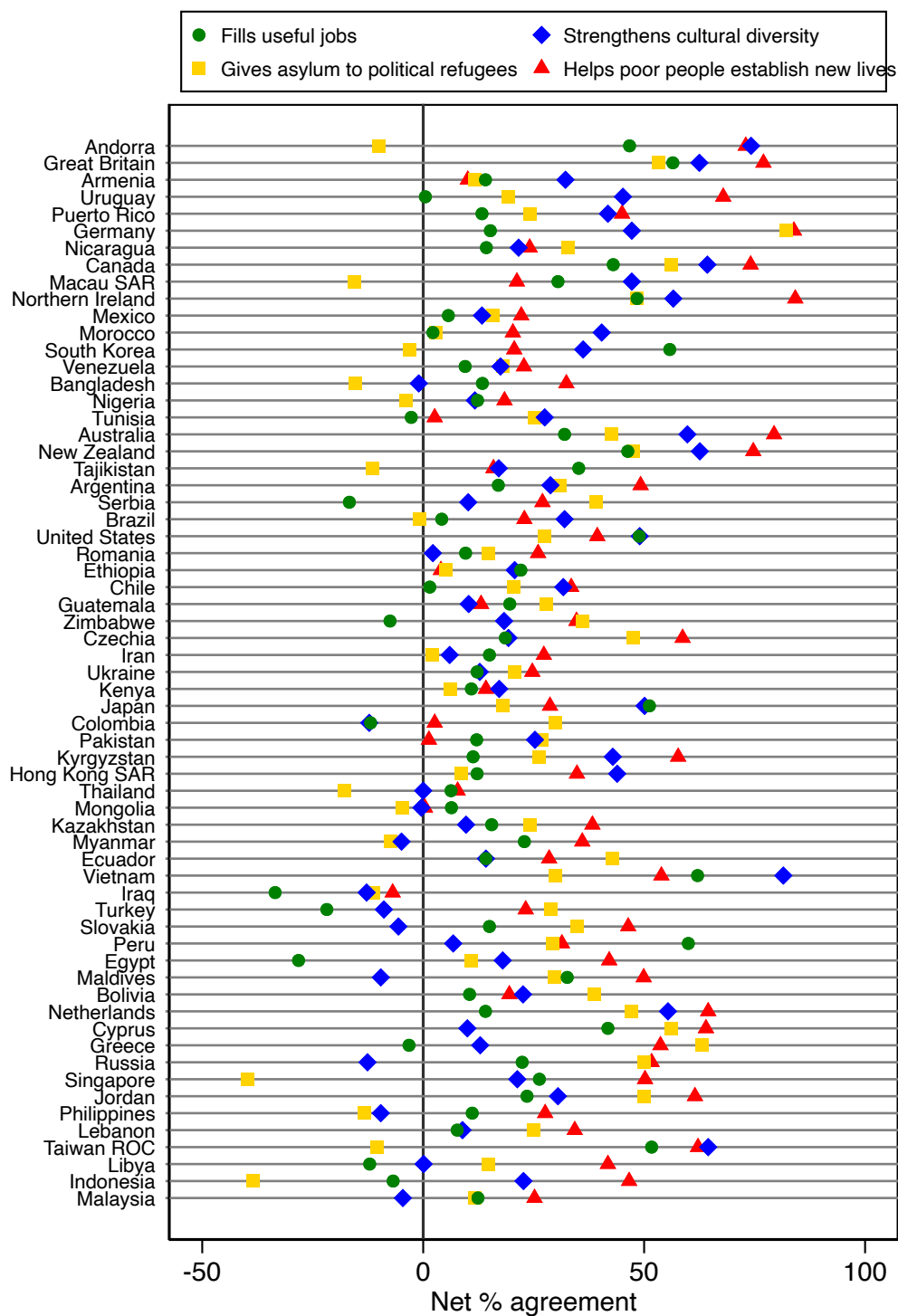




The 2017-2022 WVS also asked respondents about the extent to which they agree or disagree that immigration has had eight respective effects—four positive and four negative—in their country. For the purposes of simplicity, these can be collapsed into a net agreement figure: the total in agreement strongly or slightly subtracting the total in disagreement. As such, zero net agreement means that the same proportion of citizens agree and disagree. In Figure 4, we can see net agreement that immigration has had the four positive effects in each country. The countries are placed in the same order as that of Figure 1, i.e. descending preferences for open immigration policies. We see several trends:

1. In almost every country, there are majorities in agreement that immigration has had all four of the positive effects—in short, people recognise that immigration has positive effects wherever they are and regardless of their immigration policy preferences.
2. Net agreement with two of the effects related to the host country—“fills useful jobs” and “strengthens cultural diversity”—seem to be positively correlated with policy preferences.
  - a. These two are also those that are most likely to not be agreed with in those countries most opposed to immigration.
3. By contrast, net agreement with the other two effects—“gives asylum to political refugees” and “helps poor people establish new lives”—has no obvious relationship with policy preferences and the latter receives net agreement in all but one country.

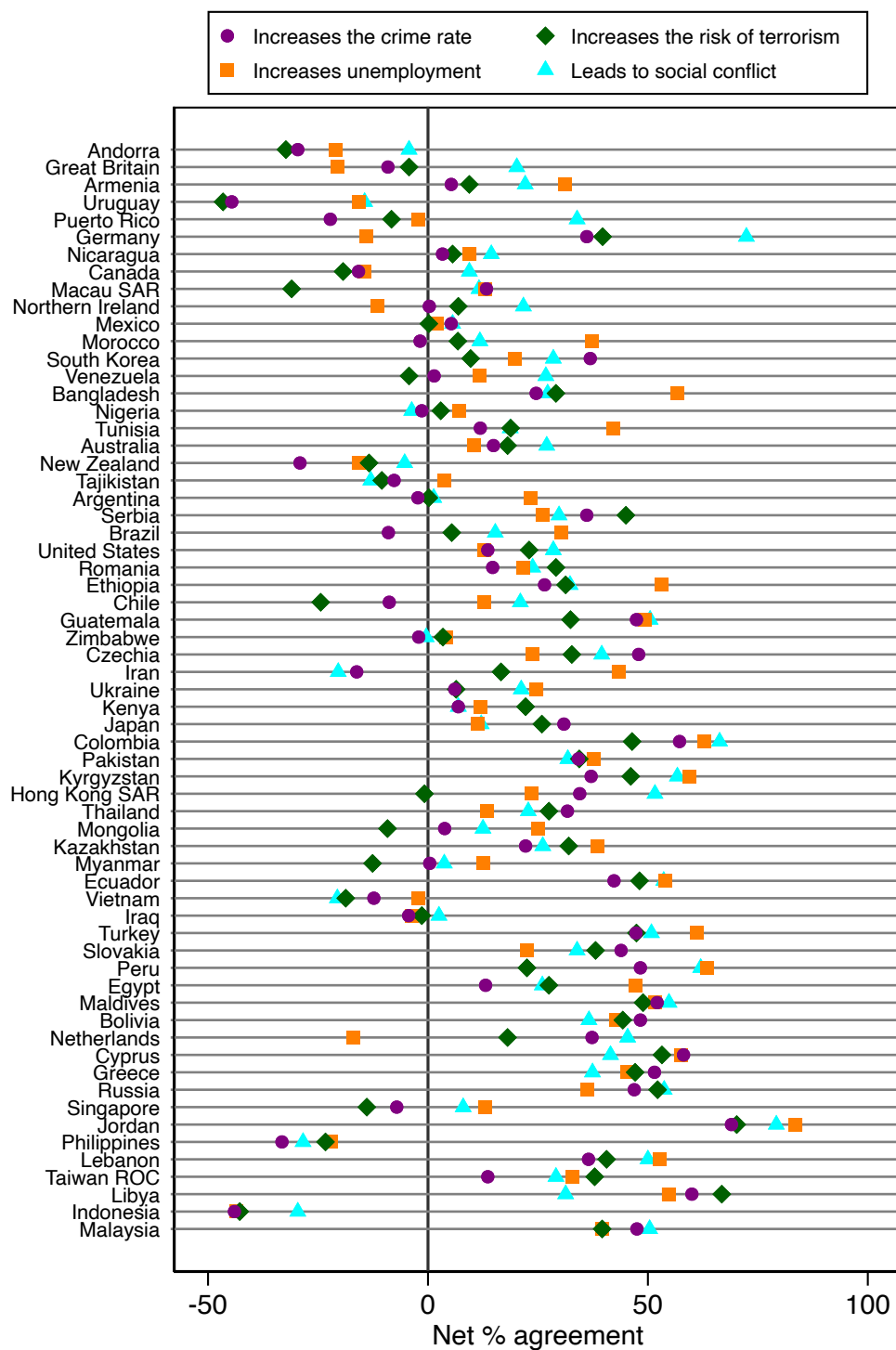
Figure 4. Net belief in positive narratives about the effects of immigration (Source: WVS, 2017-2022)



In Figure 5 we again see net agreement that immigration has had four respective *negative* effects by country. Again, countries are in order of descending preference for open immigration policies shown in Figure 1. The following trends, including differences with net agreement about *positive* effects, are visible:

1. There is considerable variation in the extent to which there is net agreement with the four negative effects—that immigration increases the crime rate, increases the risk of terrorism, increases unemployment, and leads to social conflict.
2. Net agreement with each of the four negative effects is correlated with policy preferences.
3. Even in pro-immigration countries, there is widespread agreement that immigration “leads to social conflict”

Figure 5. Net belief in negative narratives about the effects of immigration (Source: WVS, 2017-2022)



Finally, we move on to the extent to which citizens see immigration as an important issue. Because the WVS does not measure this we turn to other data sources. The Open Society Barometer<sup>2</sup> asked individuals across the 30 countries<sup>3</sup> (representing 5.5 billion individuals) globally in September 2023 what they saw as the biggest challenges facing the world, their country, and their daily lives: the percentages responding immigration were 7, 7, and 6, respectively, putting the issue considerably far behind the likes of inequality, climate change, corruption, hunger, and conflict (see also Dennison and Nasr, 2020). That said, the survey found that those in high-income European countries saw the issue as a higher priority than those in low-income countries.

The Eurobarometer has asked representative samples in every European Union member state since 2005 what they see as the two most important issues affecting their country. Since 2013 they have also asked what individuals see as the two most important issues affecting themselves personally and what are the two most important issues affecting the European Union. In Figure 6, we see the trends in those responding “immigration” to each of the questions over time by country. Several trends are visible:

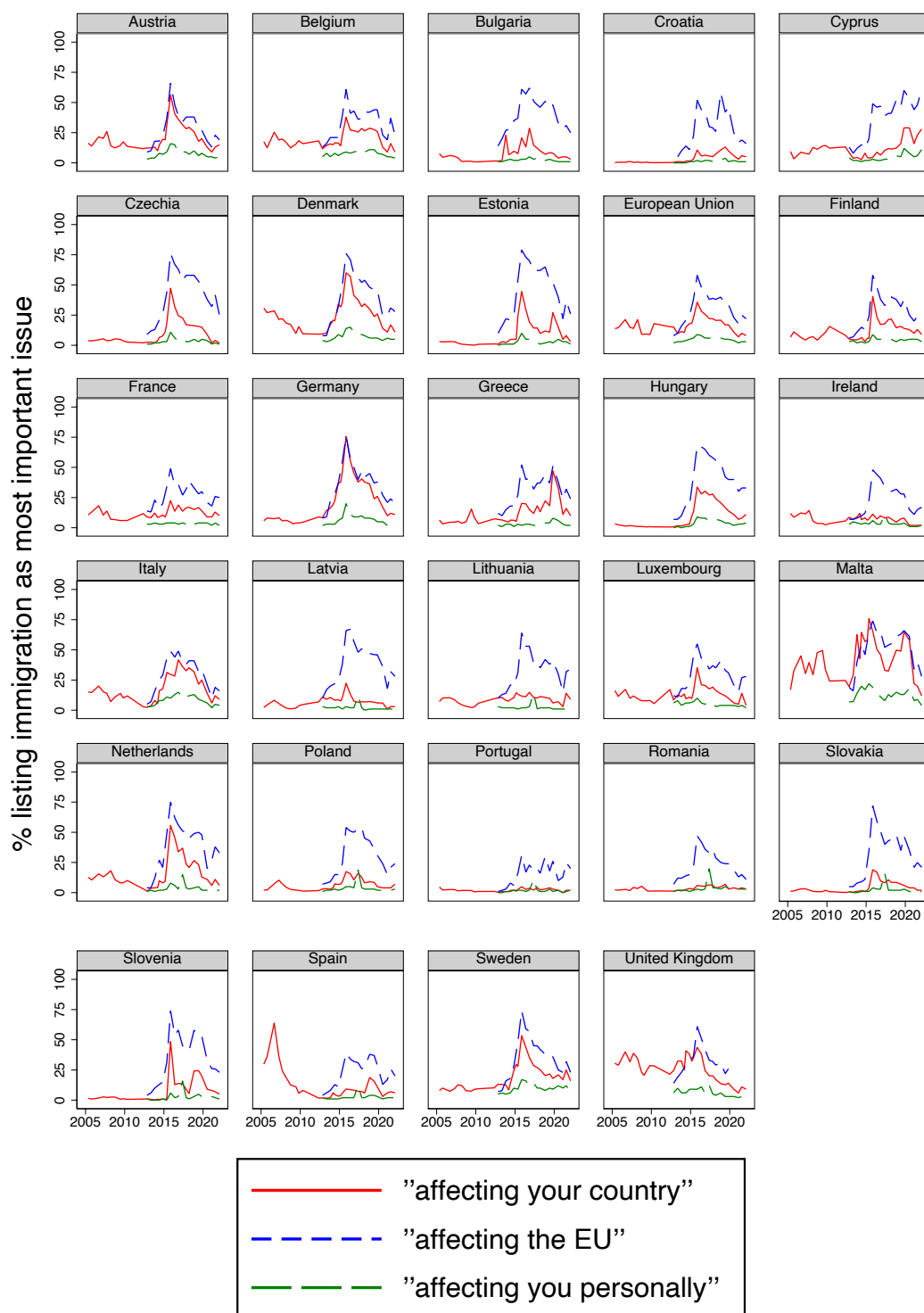
1. The salience to individuals *personally* is low in almost every country throughout the time series.
2. The salience to one’s country is volatile in most countries and seems to peak episodically.
3. Since the salience to the EU has been measured, that has been the highest of all three in every country and remains the same today.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/focus/open-society-barometer>

<sup>3</sup> Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

Figure 6. Percentage listing immigration as one of the two most important issues affecting their country, themselves, and the EU, respectively, by country (Eurobarometer, 2005-2022)



Overall, based on Figures 1 to 5, attitudes to immigration globally can be summarised as follows:

1. Policy preferences towards admission in all countries are far more moderate than radical—in either direction—and are normally distributed.
  - a. That said, there are important differences by country in how that normal distribution is skewed.
  - b. Moreover, in most countries, mean policy preferences show little change over time, suggestive of being determined by stable long-term factors.
  - c. Such preferences seem to be not only driven by labour market concerns, which are ubiquitous outside of a few “western” countries.
2. Prejudice against immigrants on a personal basis is expressed by a minority in all but a few countries, though is still prevalent in many.
3. Belief in eight narratives about the effects of immigration on one’s country varies by country considerably:
  - a. That said, almost *all* narratives are more believed than not in most countries, i.e. people are capable of believing *both* good and bad things about immigration simultaneously.
  - b. Even countries that are very pro-immigration show widespread belief in some negative narratives—particularly on social conflict but also on terrorism, crime, and unemployment in some cases.
  - c. Similarly, even countries that are very negative show widespread belief in some positive narratives—particularly those regarding its effects on the lives of poor people and political refugees but also on filling jobs and enriching culture.
  - d. Only those relating to the effects of immigration on the host country, rather than the immigrants, seem to be correlated with policy preferences.
4. Based on Figure 6 from Europe, the perceived importance of immigration, compared to other political issues, to one’s country is shown to be highly volatile and episodic across several European countries.
  - a. By contrast, its perceived importance to individuals personally is consistently perceived to be very low across all countries.

## Explanation of public attitudes to immigration: why people think what they do

In the previous section we overviewed attitudes to immigration globally to show normally distributed and stable of policy preferences with significant national differences, belief that immigration has both positive and negative economic and non-economic effects, and the seeming centrality of immigration's social—rather than personal—effects to people perceptions. How can we explain such observations? In this section we overview the key scientific theories and findings that explain, first, attitudes to immigration and, second, why some narratives spread.

The literature explaining variation in attitudes to immigration is voluminous. Although several academic reviews already exist of at least some facet of attitudes to immigration (Ceobanu and Scandell, 2010; Dennison and Vrânceanu, 2022), the rapid advances and sheer cumulative scale of extant findings across a range of disciplines makes any entirely comprehensive review impossible. In this section, findings are categorised according to five fundamental theoretical approaches respectively see variation in attitudes to immigration as resulting from variation in: (1) the environment an individual has been socialised in, particularly in early life; (2) one's psychological characteristics, either in terms of (a) *deeper* non-political psychological traits and motivations or (b) *broad*er and more shallow political psychological attitudes; (3) one's personal and the national economic situation; (4) persuasive messaging that one receives, particularly from political actors and media; and (5) the migratory context at both micro-level, such as personal contact with migrants, and macro-level, such as migratory trends.

### Socialisation

Socialisation is the process by which an individual internalises the morals and norms of the society and social groups in which they live. This process, which is inherent to humanity, ensures, on the one hand, that individuals can learn, survive and thrive in their particular society but also, on the other, that societies have the sufficient homogeneity to make cooperation and continuity possible and conflict minimised (Clausen, 1968: 5). Forms of socialisation include norm acquisition from parents, formal education, and peers. Although socialisation is ongoing



throughout life, its most powerful effects are theorised to be those from early in life. Socialisation and non-environmental individual predispositions interact to affect attitudes and behaviours (Kendler and Baker, 2007). Three socialisation factors particularly stand out for both the weight of evidence and the size of their effects on attitudes to immigration: (1) (typically, tertiary) education; (2) levels of migration and multiculturalism during formative years; and (3) national culture during early years.

Levels of education has been repeatedly shown to be positively associated with attitudes to immigration (e.g. Mayda, 2006). Theoretically this association may result from education socialising students to certain norms and higher social trust (Velasquez and Egar, 2022; Kratz, 2021; Margaryan et al, 2021); or it endowing increased cognitive ability, or, rather than being causal, simply a result of self-selection by more pro-immigration individuals into higher education (Lanceed and Sarrasin, 2015; Finseraas, et al., 2018) or simply that younger, more educated, generations have more pro-immigration views for other reasons (Lindskog and Oskarson, 2022). Supporting the idea of education leading to norms-transmission, Lee (2022) shows that Taiwanese educational reforms to increase national identity led to more anti-immigration attitudes. Overall, the extant literature suggests that the typically observed strong association between education and attitudes to immigration is only partially causal and that its socialising and cognitive effects are both contingent on content, national context, and generation. Effects partially operate via broader psychological indicators such as trust and threat perceptions.

The effect of immigration-origin diversity in one's early life is also theorised to positively affect attitudes to immigration in later life (Eger et al, 2022) even if the effect slows as a country's diversity increases (Schmidt, 2021). Relatedly, national culture affects an individual's attitudes to immigration, particularly ethnic rather than civic identities (McAllister, 2018; often via a history of war and territorial loss, Hiers *et al*, 2017), particularistic rather than universalistic cultures (Feinstein and Bonikowski, 2021), and collective rather than individualistic cultures (Meeusen and Kern, 2016; Shin and Dovidio, 2016). Other less commonly tested, personal socialisation effects include being born abroad, being an ethnic minority, being an immigrant and one's level of integration, and religious

attendance (Espenshade and Calhoun, 1993; Haubert and Fussell, 2006; Branton 2007; Knoll, 2009; Helbling and Traunmüller, 2015).

### Psychological predispositions

A range of psychological mechanisms have been proposed to explain attitudes to immigration. Because attitudes to immigration are themselves psychological, these explanatory factors share the assumed characteristic that they at least partially more causally distal by acting as deeper predispositions. Broadly, such predictors can be divided between non-political and political psychological determinants.

Relevant non-political predispositions include one's:

1. Personality traits. The “Big Five personality traits” have been repeatedly applied to attitudes to immigration: agreeableness and, especially, openness are positively associated with attitudes to immigration and conscientiousness (and, in one study, neuroticism) is negatively associated (Dineson et al., 2016; Gallego and Pardos-Prado, 2014; Ackermann and Ackermann, 2015). There is some evidence of moderation via perceptions of share of foreigners in local population, economic threat, and ideology.
2. Personal values. Schwartz's (1992) theory of Basic Human Values has been most applied to attitudes to immigration, with the “self-transcendence” value of universalism (and sometimes benevolence) repeatedly shown to have a positive effect and the “conservation” values of conformity, security, and tradition shown to have negative effects (Davidov et al, 2008; Davidov and Meuleman, 2012; Dennison et al, 2020).
3. Cultural values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Hofstede, 1984; Schwartz, 2006) have less often been applied to explaining attitudes to immigration (though, Voicu et al, 2022). Leong and Ward (2006, also Leong, 2008; also Joshanloo, 2022) show that two of Schwartz's (2006) seven cultural values have statistically significant relationships—“harmony” positively and “mastery” negatively—while all of Hofstede's (1980) four value dimensions—“power distance”, “masculinity”, “uncertainty avoidance”, and “collectivism”—have negative relationships. Joshanloo (2022) replicates the findings

using Hofstede's worldwide, finding the four dimensions to be more powerful predictors of attitudes to immigration than socio-economic factors.

4. Social trust (Pellegrini et al, 2021).
5. Risk aversion (Gottlieb and Boomgaarden, 2022).
6. Ambiguity aversion ("need for closure", Baldner and Pierro, 2019).
7. Threat sensitivity (Dennison and Geddes, 2021).

These non-political psychological factors are partially determined by socialisation factors such as those described above, but also by cognitive and physiological aspects that cause variation between individuals despite similar socialisation experiences. Similarly, one's psychological predispositions also affect one's life choices—such as where one lives, and the educational and career choices they make—meaning that one's socialisation is also affected by their psychology (Gallego and Pardos-Prado, 2014).

Less fundamental are those political psychological predispositions which affect one's attitudes to immigration but less clearly precede them causally. These have been extensively studied in the political psychological literature and include:

1. authoritarianism (Pellegrini et al, 2022).
2. in-group consciousness, identity, and favouritism (primarily in ethnic terms: Fussell, 2014).
3. political values and ideological outlook (Pantoja, 2006).

### Economics

Economic factors have received vast attention from the earliest studies of attitudes to immigration and, to some extent, remain the default starting point, yet offer mixed if not disappointing results as effective predictors (Dennison and Vranceanu, 2022: 376). The common causal supposition amongst these theories is typically framed in unidirectional terms so that *opposition* to immigration can be explained by economic hardship, either (1) personal or sociotropic (e.g. national); (2) objective or subjective, or (3) existing or potential terms. In recent years the focus on economics has become increasingly contested and juxtaposed against

more powerful yet vaguely conceptualised “cultural” factors, yet there remain important economic contributions.

1. Objective personal indicators such as household income and (un)employment have received mixed support (Ablelaaty and Stelle, 2022) while labour market competition has received some recent confirmation (Pardos-Prado and Xena, 2018) as has welfare competition (Huber and Oberdabernig, 2016).
2. Subjective personal economic or financial indicators, such as pessimism, are similarly mixed (Melcher, 2021).
3. The macro picture is similarly mixed. Economic downturns having negative effects lead has received some support (Ruist, 2016) as has unemployment rates (Heizmann and Huth, 2021;) and inequality (Magni, 2020). That said, others find weak or no effects (Schmidt, 2021)

### Media effects and party cueing

Theories of cueing—whereby political actors encourage their supporters to hold certain attitudes—and media on political attitudes share the assumption that, because citizens are too busy, too disinterested, too uninformed or—more pessimistically—manipulable to independently analyse each policy issues, they defer to the statements of other actors when forming their attitudes. However, the effects of media cueing have been summarised as “inconclusive” (Štětka et al, 2021: 539). They find that being exposed to public service media reduces negativity whereas exposure to more diverse news sources increases negativity (also Schlueter and Davidov, 2013: 179). Gottlob and Boomgaarden (2022) show that news framing immigration as a material risk affects attitudes, but those that present it as a general risk (e.g. to culture) do not. That said, others find no (Theorin et al, 2021) or small and contingent effects (Knoll et al, 2011; Bloemraad et al, 2016).

Regarding the effects of party cues, ‘less is known’ than other sources of attitudes to immigration (Vrânceanu and Lachat, 2021: 31), who show across Europe that the immigration positions of the party one have strong attitudinal effects. Similarly, Hellwig and Kweon (2016) use European and Danish data to show that individuals follow their party positions on immigration, particularly the more educated, suggesting that the mechanism is not as a heuristic

for the uninformed. Dekeyser and Freedman (2021) show that individual attitudes are more negative close to elections, which they theorise results from anti-immigration policy platforms. The effects of politicians' positions have been shown to be stronger in US states with high levels of immigration than elsewhere (Jones and Martin, 2017). Careja (2016), however, showed that cues only had effect on acceptance of inter-ethnic marriage rather than immigration policies in Europe. Crucially, Sanders and Toka (2013) show that, though individuals follow the views of the party they identify with, parties also follow opinions of their supporters.

### Context

Some of the most studied determinants of attitudes to immigration focus on the impact of short-term contextual change, above all, the effects of personal contact with immigrants, on the one hand, and changes in the broader immigration context, such as local and national immigration rates, on the other. The effects of other short-term phenomena have also been studied. Together, these effects are related to socialisation, except rather than the focus being on the on-going effects of events happening early in life, they typically are theorised as more immediate, finite, and equally impactful regardless of age.

#### *Contact and group threat*

Contact theory posits that meeting immigrants (or other “out-groups”) increases positivity to immigrants and immigration. As a social science theory it has reached a remarkable level of prominence—to some extent entering popular consciousness. This prominence both explains and results from its extensive academic study. Equally remarkable is that it is mirrored by an—importantly, not entirely—inverse theory of “group threat”, which posits that increasingly visible local immigrant populations will lead to greater negativity due to the various threats—economic, cultural, political—that doing so may trigger. Findings in support of both positive “contact theory” effects (e.g. de Coninck et al, 2021;) and negative “group threat” ones (e.g. McLaren, 2003) are numerous. More recent studies have unpacked these seemingly contradictory results by (1) distinguishing between the positive effects of “intimate” (i.e. conversational and regular) contact and negative effects of non-intimate contact, including

local immigration rates, (2) demonstrating the contingencies of one's psychological predispositions, pre-existing levels of diversity and speed of change, and the ethnic origin of the immigrants in question; (3) and disentangling increased threat from policy preference change (Prati et al, 2022).

### *Broader immigration context*

Whereas contact theory focusses solely on one's personal contact with immigrants, group threat theory can be extended far beyond the personal to local, regional, and national immigration trends—though here contrary expectations of “backlash” and “habituation” can also be found. Authoritatively, Claasen and McLaren (2022) find evidence of a short- and medium-term backlash, later eclipsed by habituation within one to three decades. Czymara (2021) show that effects are contingent on ones' pre-existing political ideology whereas Peshkopia et al, 2021, show they are contingent on political trust. Weber (2019) shows that, in Germany, the positive effects of contact are offset by threat effects in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of migrants.

Of relevance to both theories, Kustov et al (2021) show that attitudes to immigration are remarkably stable so ‘scholars should exercise caution in using changing context to explain immigration attitudes’ despite contrary assumptions being widespread. This finding is reflected in the works of Nordø and Ivarsflaten (2021) and van der Brug and Harteveld (2021) who find no effect of the refugee crisis, Dennison et al (2022) who find no effect of the Covid pandemic, Alarian and Neureiter (2021) who find no effects of integration policies; and Castanho Silva (2018) who all find no or quickly disappearing effects of terrorist attacks. That said, cross-sectionally, Vrânceanu and Lachat (2021) show that more liberal immigration policy regimes and higher immigration stocks both have negative effects on attitudes, whereas Schlueter and Davidov (2013) show that European countries that actively pursue immigrant integration policies foster lower levels of feelings of group threat amongst their citizens. Finally, Schwartz et al (2021) and Dennison and Kustov (2023) respectively show that Brexit and the success of radical right parties increased positivity to immigration via negative partisanship and a desire to distance oneself from social stigma.

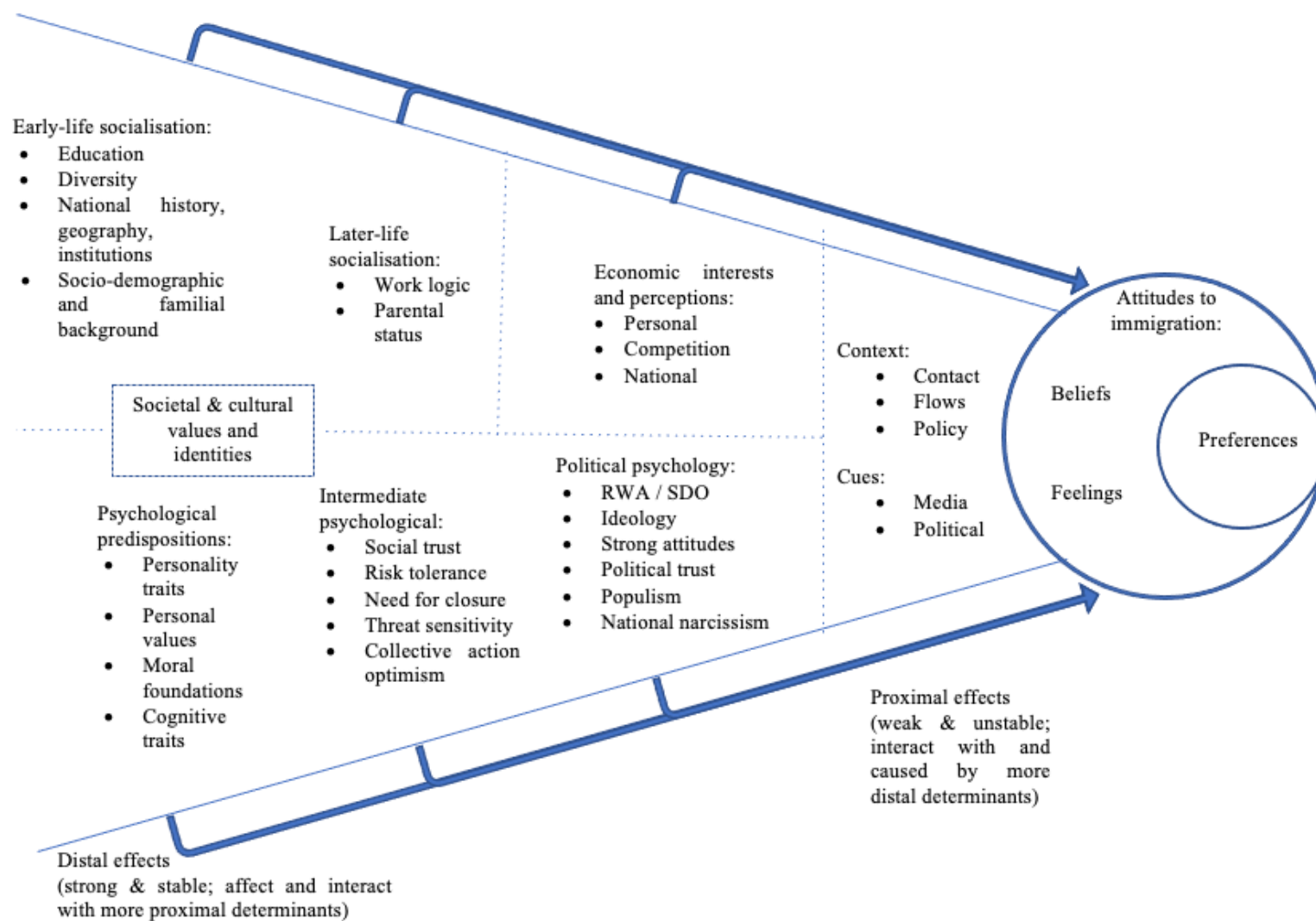
Recently, scholars have further posed the question of how *emigration* may affect attitudes to immigration, with initial findings suggesting that the two may be positively associated so that individuals are likely to oppose or support *both* (Kustov, 2022).

*Integrating the findings: a “funnel of causality”*

What can we do with so many findings? Many of the causal mechanisms identified are related to, interact with, and, often, are reliant upon one another. As such, we can use a so-called “funnel of causality” that places factors according to their causal ordering and distance from the phenomenon of interest—attitudes to immigration—with those effects that are distal, large, and more exogenous at one end and those that are proximal, more contingent, and more endogenous at the other; with the direct, indirect, and interaction effects and covariances flowing through the funnel *iteratively* from the distal effects to towards the dependent variables. Such a funnel for attitudes to immigration, based on the review above, is presented and postulated by Figure 7, with distal effects on the left, culminating in attitudes to immigration on the right, which itself includes beliefs and sentiment, reflecting the cognitive and emotive element of attitudes, and finally policy preferences.



Figure 7. Funnel of causality of attitudes to immigration





## What are narratives and why does their popularity vary?

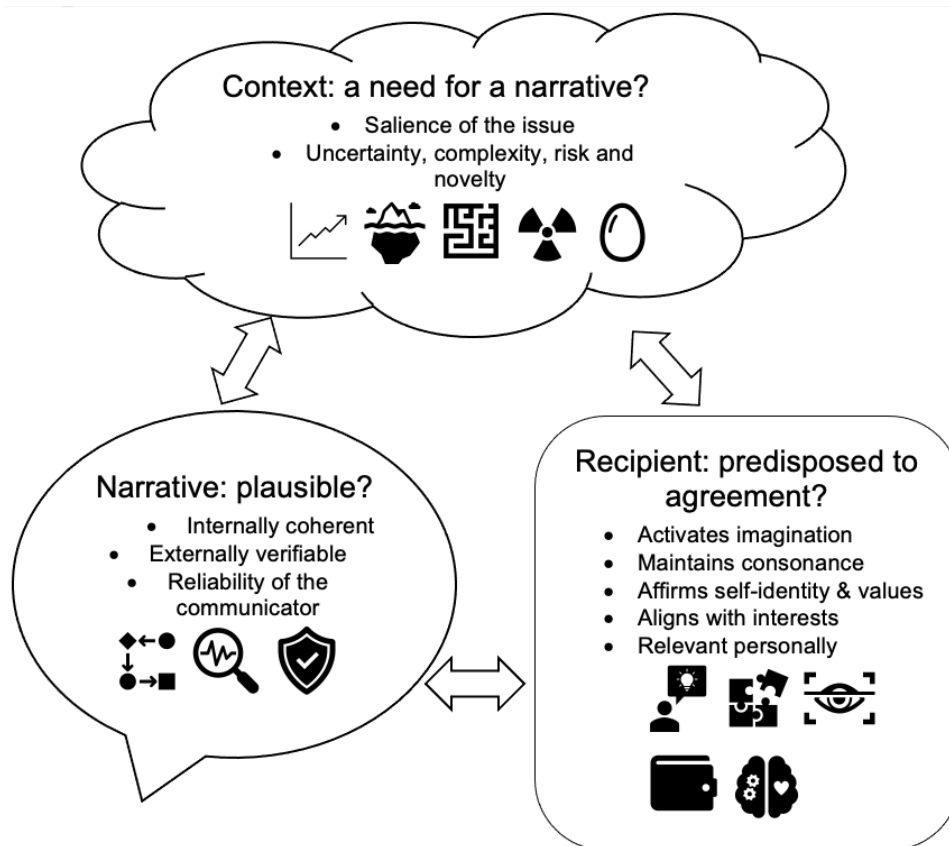
Dennison (2021) defines narratives as: *selective depictions of reality across at least two points in time that include a causal claim*. Furthermore, narratives are:

1. Necessary for humans to make sense of and give meaning to complex reality;
2. Generalisable and applicable to multiple situations, unlike specific stories;
3. Distinct from related concepts such as frames and discourses;
4. Implicitly or explicitly normative, in terms of efficacy or justice
5. Essentially limitless in number, but with few gaining widespread popularity

The importance of narratives to communicators is because:

1. Narratives are an inescapable part of humanity's attempts to understand their own reality. As such, policymakers and communicators must prioritise the effective use of narratives in their work to be understood and believed.
2. As demand for understanding an issue increases, multiple, competing narratives may simultaneously become popular. As such, the popularity of narratives must be used as a gauge of public opinion with extreme caution.
3. A narrative's popularity is partially reliant on its plausibility: both in terms of being internally theoretically logical and supported externally with evidence. In short, facts—when combined with compelling logic—*do* matter.
4. However, other factors matter too: communicators and policymakers must construct their narratives and make their points around the recipients' own pre-existing cognitive pillars rather than challenge them or try to recreate them from scratch.
5. Individuals may be likely to agree with most *plausible* positive and negative narratives on immigration simultaneously. However, only some narratives effectively change preferences.
6. The causes of variation in the popularity of narratives is captured in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Causes of variation in the popularity of migration narratives (Dennison, 2021)



## Intervening to affect public attitudes to immigration: changing what people think about immigration

In the previous section we saw that the size and direction of the effects of immediate stimuli—such as exposure to media—on attitudes to immigration is highly contingent on the recipient’s deeper psychological beliefs and early-life socialisation experiences. Based on this, how should those seeking to affect attitudes to immigration—either by, for example, seeking to reduce polarisation, correct misperceptions, or reduce prejudice—tailor their communication approaches?

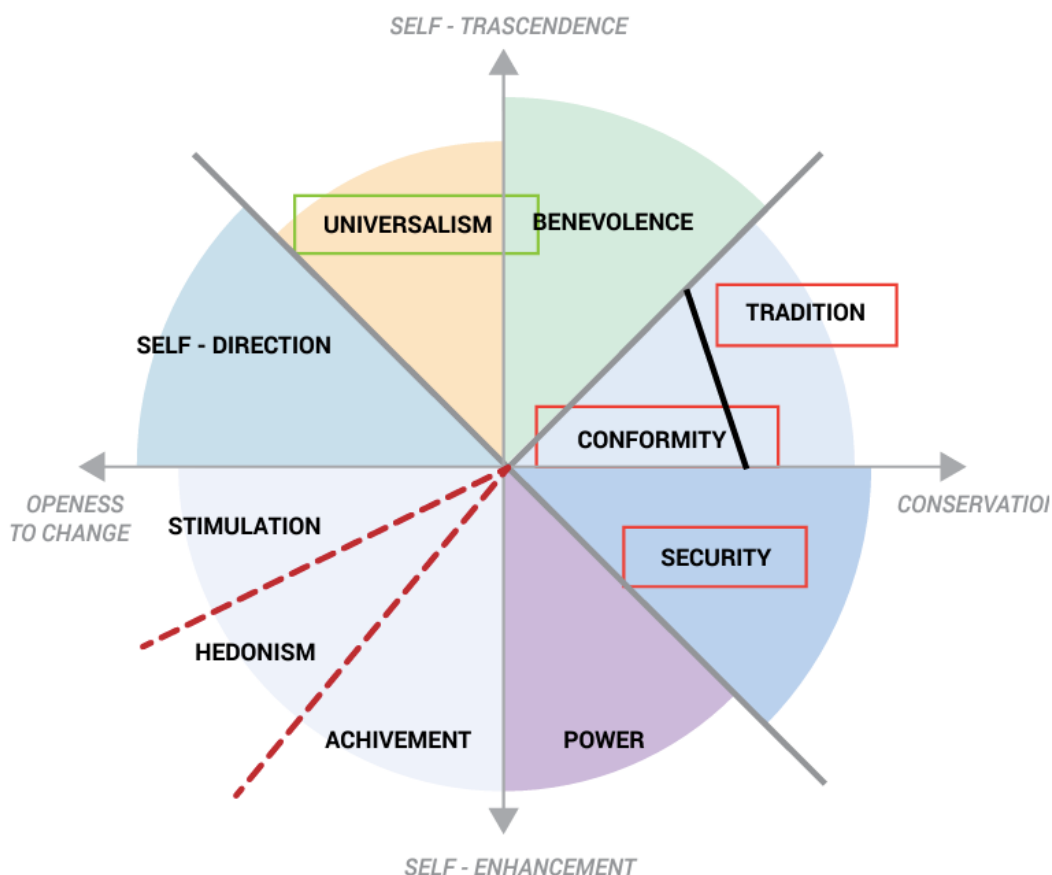
Table 1. Summary of key recommendations from existing best-practice guides for migration communication

	Sharif (2019)	Banulescu-Bogdan	Marthouz (2006)	Bamberg (2018)	Welcoming America	Christiano (2017)	GFMD (2020)	OHCHR (2020)
<i>Strategic arrangements</i>								
Develop a proactive communications strategy	X	X					X	
Set up partnerships for communications/support others	X		X				X	X
Research and target moveable audience, know their perceptions and prejudices	X		X	X	X		X	
<i>Communications content</i>								
Focus on values	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Appeals to emotion	X				X	X		
Hope/positivity/solutions/vision focus	X		X					X
Avoid attacking audience		X						
Avoid repeating opposing ideas / increasing their salience		X		X				X
Find common ground		X					X	X
Neutralise opposition arguments			X				X	
Use storytelling				X		X	X	X
Be responsive to (local) context							X	X
Acknowledge complexities							X	
<i>Communications delivery</i>								

Choose credible messengers, including migrants or moderates	X	X					X	
Use succinct / digestible / focussed messaging	X			X	X	X		
Be visual	X					X		
Test impact							X	

In Table 1 we see a summary of key recommendations from past best-practice guides for migration communication, including that of the GFMD (2020). The most common recommendation is to focus on values-based messaging. Dennison (2020) builds on these findings to consider what values-based messaging is and what type of value-based messaging is likely to work regarding migration. The academic literature on values is broad but one of the most utilises values schema created by psychologists is Schwarz's theory of basic human values. These are defined as broad, stable motivational goals that individuals hold in life, which predict attitudes to specific issues and behaviour. The relationship between these ten values—universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, self-direction and stimulation—are graphically displayed in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Schwartz's (1992) Basic Human Values



Dennison (2020) and others show that universalism, benevolence, stimulation and self-direction are associated with pro-immigration attitudes, whereas conformity, security, tradition and power are associated with anti-immigration attitudes. Aligning one's migration policy communication with the target audience's values is likely to elicit sympathy for the message. However, values-based messages that do not align with those of the audience are less likely to elicit sympathy and may elicit antipathy. These relationships are shown in Table 2, below.

Table 2. The effect of the values-basis of pro- and anti-immigration messaging on attitudes to immigration

Argument type	Appeal to values of ...	Result
Pro-immigration	Universalism, benevolence, self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissuade moderates</li> <li>• Energise supporters</li> <li>• Increase polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
	Conformity, tradition, security, power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convince moderates</li> <li>• Supporters indifferent</li> <li>• Decrease polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
Anti-immigration	Universalism, benevolence, self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissuade moderates</li> <li>• Energise supporters</li> <li>• Decrease polarisation / salience</li> </ul>
	Conformity, tradition, security, power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energise existing supporters</li> <li>• Supporters indifferent</li> <li>• Increase polarisation / salience</li> </ul>

Dennison (2020) also analyses migration policy communication examples from an ICMPD inventory of 135 campaigns. Few pro-migration campaigns contained value-based messaging, whereas all anti-migration campaigns did. Similarly, very few pro-migration campaigns included values besides 'universalism' and 'benevolence', whereas anti-migration campaigns included values associated with both pro- and anti-migration attitudes. Examples of each case are visually demonstrated.

Similarly, to values, we may expect that messaging is more or less effective when aligned with its target audience's personality types. Given that, as discussed above, the most significant personality type to have a negative relationship with attitudes to immigration has been repeatedly shown to be conscientiousness, pro-immigration messaging that seeks to appeal to moderates should avoid at all costs characteristics associated with *low* levels of conscientiousness—as shown in Figure 10, carelessness. Similarly, because agreeableness and openness have both been shown to have the strongest positive relationships with attitudes to immigration, pro-immigration messaging aimed at moderates should show some degree of regard for characteristics associated with low levels of those two traits: respectively, those who are challenging and detached and those who are consistent and cautious.

Figure 10. Big 5 personality types and associated characteristics

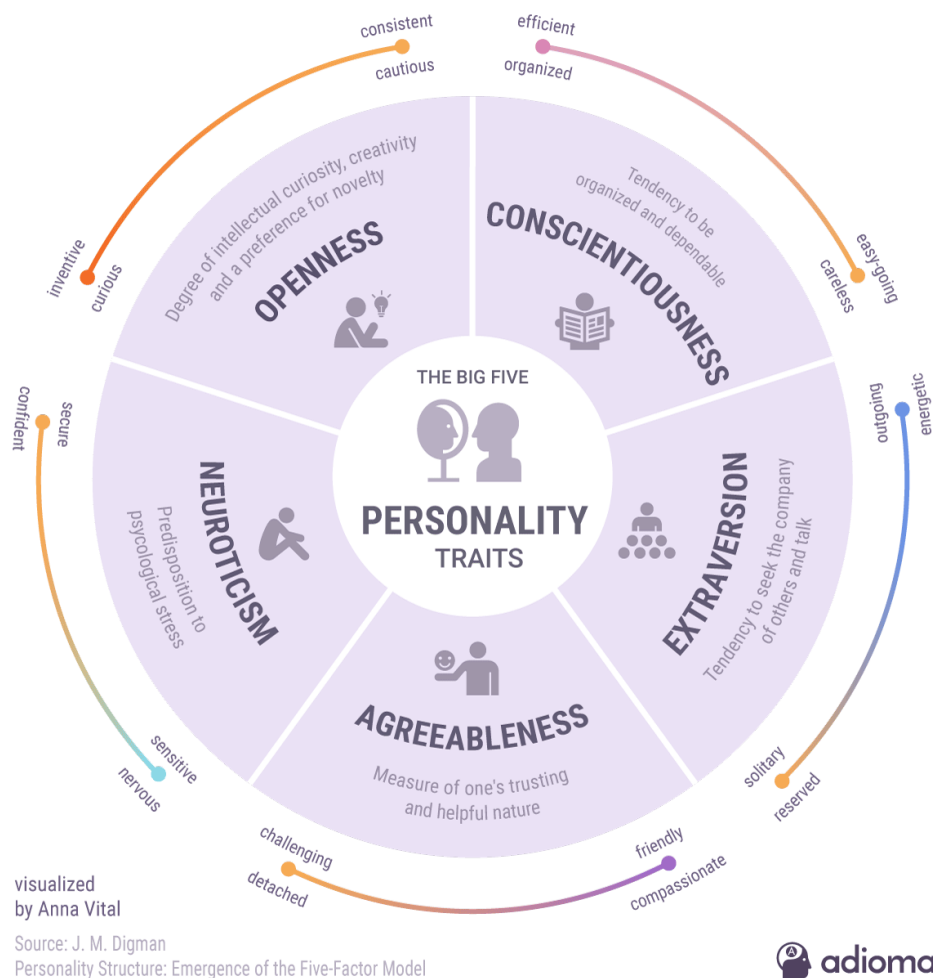
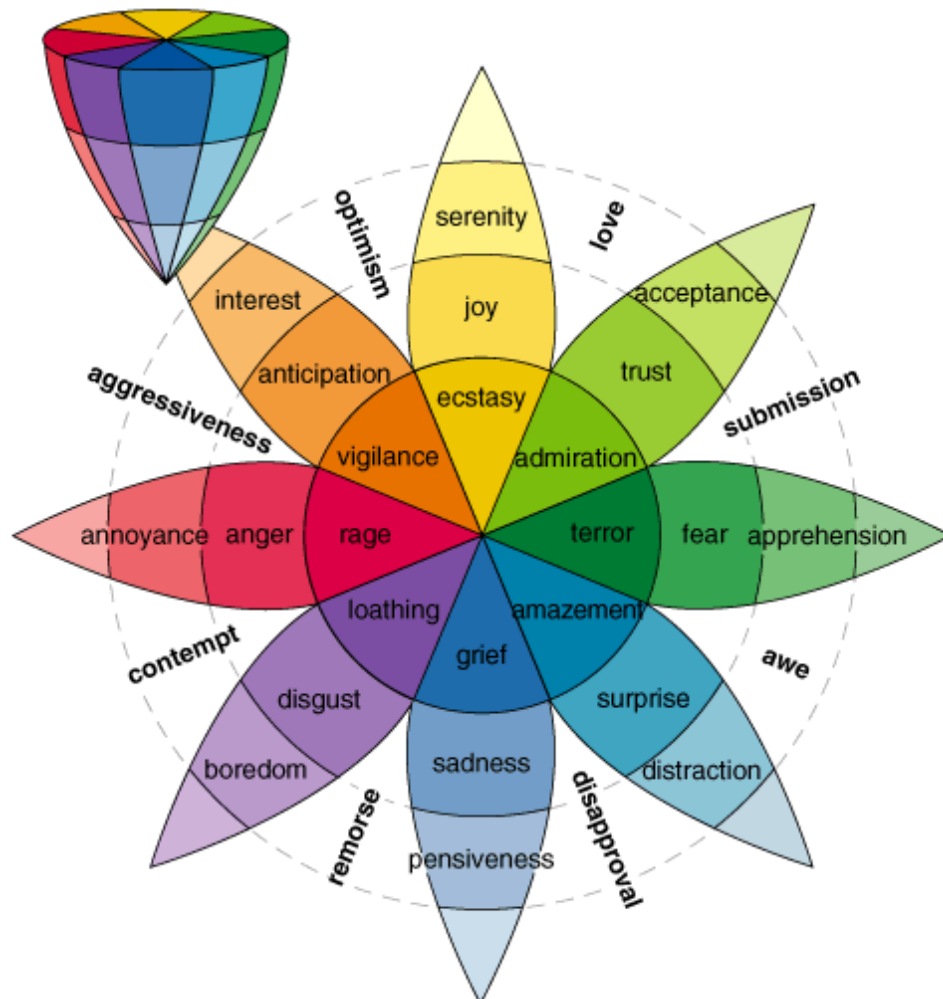


Table 1 shows that “emotions” are also regularly cited as vital components of effective strategic communication in the world of migration and beyond. Dennison (2023) argues that emotions are vital to persuasion because attitudes have a cognitive (thinking) component and an emotional (feeling) component. Moreover, eliciting emotions causes involuntary but predictable physiological and behavioural reactions. Emotions can be used in communication to make one’s messages more resonant and impactful on both attitudes and behaviours, supporting policy objectives via persuasion. One’s choice of emotions to elicit matters greatly for the type of reaction it is likely to receive. For example, we can see in Figure 11 Plutchik’s (1980) “wheel of emotions”, as derived from his ‘General Psychoevolutionary Theory of Basic Emotions’, that a discrete number of emotions are arranged according to their intensity (by their verticality in the cone) and their similarity to each other (by their position in the circle) and the basic emotion from which they derive (by their colour with the primary emotion in the middle) giving eight basic emotions with four pairs of opposites. We also see primary “dyads” between each of the eight sectors—these are theorised to be combinations of two primary emotions. As such, for example, disapproval is a combination of—at its most intense—grief and amazement.



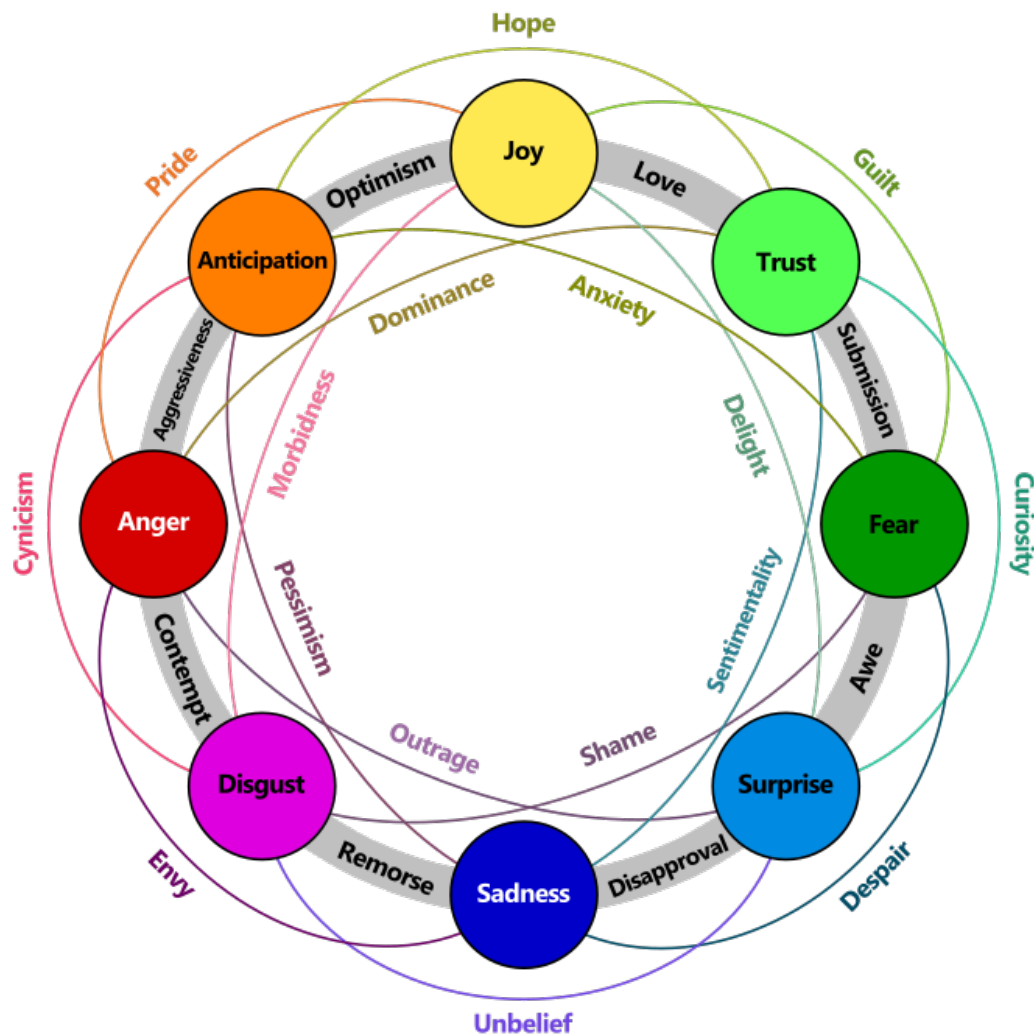
Figure 11. Plutchik’s “Wheel of emotions” of increasing emotional intensity and “dyad” combination emotions



In Figure 12, we see additional secondary and tertiary “dyads” formed by primary emotions that are two sectors apart (so that “hope” is a combination of “anticipation” and “trust”) or three sectors apart (so that “outrage” is a combination of “anger” and “surprise”), respectively.



Figure 12. “dyad” combination emotions



Dennison (2023) argues that communicators should choose the desired emotional reaction according to the desired physiological and behavioural reactions. In Table 3, below, we see 32 separate emotions and their physiological reactions. Notably:

- eliciting trust encourages an individual to support a cause (persuasion)
- eliciting anticipation encourages an individual to examine (awareness raising)
- eliciting joy encourages an individual to connect (behavioural change)

Table 3. 32 emotions and the physiological and behavioural reactions caused by evoking them

Emotion	Physiological reactions (with examples of behavioural reactions to basic emotions)
<i>Basic emotions</i>	
Joy	Connect (e.g. join, contact, meet, converse)
Sadness	Withdraw (e.g. turn inwards, avoid, be passive)
Fear	Feel small (e.g. retreat, submit, plead)
Anger	Feel big (e.g. confront, assert, impose, dismiss)
Anticipation	Examine (e.g. observe, consider, compare)
Surprise	Jump back (e.g. hurry, defend, react)
Disgust	Reject (e.g. remove, distance, separate)
Trust	Embrace (e.g. accept, support, celebrate)
<i>Primary dyad</i>	
Love (joy + trust)	Connect and embrace
Submission (trust + fear)	Embrace and feel small
Awe (fear + surprise)	Feel small and jump back
Disapproval (surprise + sadness)	Jump back and withdraw
Remorse (sadness + disgust)	Withdraw and reject
Contempt (disgust + anger)	Reject and feel big
Aggressiveness (anger + anticipation)	Feel big and examine
Optimism (anticipation + joy)	Examine and connect
<i>Secondary dyad</i>	
Guilt (joy + fear)	Connect and feel small
Curiosity (trust + surprise)	Embrace and jump back
Despair (fear + sadness)	Feel small and withdraw
Unbelief (surprise + disgust)	Jump back and reject
Envy (sadness + anger)	Withdraw and feel big
Cynicism (disgust + anticipation)	Reject and examine
Pride (anger + joy)	Feel big and connect
Hope (anticipation + trust)	Examine and embrace
<i>Tertiary dyad</i>	
Delight (joy + surprise)	Connect and jump back
Sentimentality (trust + sadness)	Embrace and withdraw
Shame (fear + disgust)	Feel small and reject
Outrage (surprise + anger)	Jump back and feel big
Pessimism (sadness + anticipation)	Withdraw and examine
Morbidity (disgust + joy)	Reject and connect
Dominance (anger + trust)	Feel big and embrace
Anxiety (anticipation + fear)	Examine and feel small

Communicators can use the above framework to ensure that the emotions, and physiological and desired behaviours of their campaigns are aligned and thus effective. Eliciting unsuitable

emotions may have adverse reactions from audiences. Narratives, personal-based messages, facial expressions and body language, and colours and aesthetics can be used to create emotional resonance and reduce psychological distance. Frames, ordering (“emotional flow”), intensities, and combinations certain combinations can also be used to elicit different emotions with predictable outcomes. Emotions should be used to make one’s argument more resonant but the argument should not be simply based on the emotional reaction—the “appeal to emotion” logical fallacy. Indeed, for emotion-based communication to work it should also use facts, values, identities, and efficacy.

### Experimental evidence of immigration communication

Finally, Dennison (2022) overviews 84 recent experimental studies on how communication interventions affect attitudes to immigration, the vast majority published since 2015 and a large proportion since 2020. Findings are categorised into nine strategies, shown in Table 4.

- Appealing to common interest rather than self-interest, appealing to conformity rather than diversity, emphasising common ground, and eliciting empathy are consistently shown to be effective.
- Fact-checking on the effects of migration and eliciting emotions are mostly shown to be effective, though there is some contrary evidence, as is appealing to identity, although this is not always applicable.
- By contrast, emphasising diversity is consistently shown to be ineffective, while correcting information about migrant flows and appeals to self-interest in migration are mostly shown to be ineffective.
- The effects of certain types of messengers and eliciting empathy have been relatively understudied, despite the emphasis placed upon them outside of academia.

Table 4. Summary of experimental evidence of strategic communication on attitudes to immigration

Strategy	Evidence on effectiveness	Contingencies, mediations, and specificities
1a. Correcting information on stocks/flows	often ineffective (4/8 studies show statistically significant effects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shown to be effective when combined with immigrant’s unemployment rate or revenue information.</li> <li>• More effective when exposure was longer.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on flows shown to lead to greater negativity than stocks.</li> </ul>
1b. Fact checking on effects of migration	mostly effective (9/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective when exposure to information was longer.</li> </ul>
2. Eliciting emotions	mostly effective (4/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective when exposure was longer.</li> <li>Correcting information works less when emotions have been elicited</li> <li>Shown to be more powerful than information</li> <li>Anxiety amplifies effects of negative news stories</li> <li>Emotive language shown to have effects</li> </ul>
3a. Appealing to self-interest	mostly ineffective (3/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Self-interest” economic concerns are primarily via concerns on tax burdens, rather than job competition, and can also be conceived as a common interest concern.</li> <li>Some evidence of depolarisation instead of uniform effects</li> </ul>
3b. Appealing to common interest	effective (4/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both economic and otherwise are shown to be effective, if framed as good for country / fellow citizens</li> </ul>
4. Emphasise conformity or diversity (respectively for positive or negative effects)	effective (7/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrants shown to be attempting to integrate more powerful than already integrated migrants.</li> <li>Social integration, language and food shown to matter</li> </ul>
5. Types of migrants	effective (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attributes matter less than adherence to rules (regularity) or sense of fairness</li> </ul>
6. Emphasising common ground	effective (2/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridging shown to be more effective than appeal to political values or information</li> </ul>
7. Eliciting empathy	effective (4/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanitarian messages shown to elicit empathy</li> <li>Communication based on individuals shown to be more effective than groups or statistics</li> </ul>
8. Messenger (who I delivering the message) effects	mostly ineffective (1/3)	
9. Appealing to identity	Mostly effective (4/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contingent on (1) assumptions behind the identity and (2) migrants holding that identity</li> </ul>

## Six examples of persuasive communication on immigration

In this section we overview six campaigns seeking to affecting public opinion on immigration in some way that useful exemplify the lessons from above.

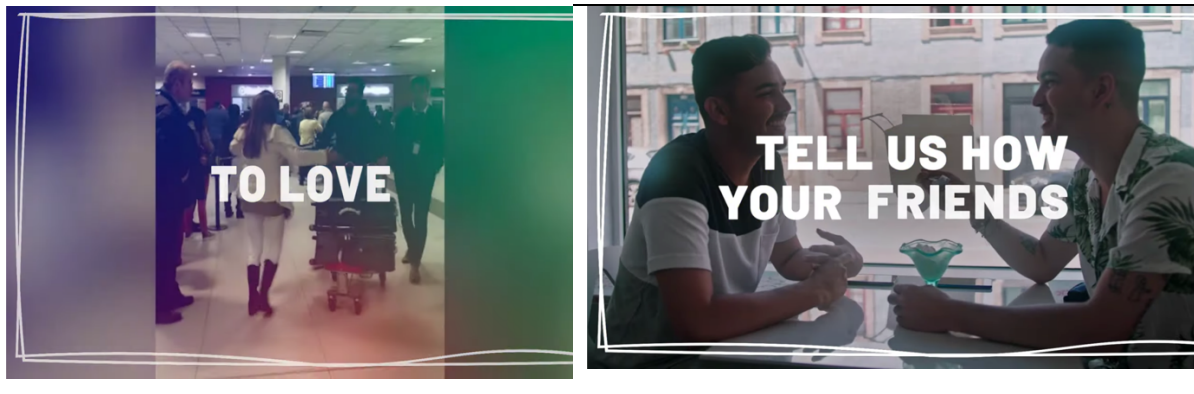
### *It Takes A Community (global)*

The “It Takes A Community” (ITAC) is a global campaign that was started in 2020 by the Global Forum on Migration and Development’s (GFMD) Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, a multi-stakeholder initiative to promote a balanced and evidence-based public narrative on migration. More specifically, its first phase—now completed—had the stated aim to “celebrate how all people, regardless of where they are born, can contribute to making our communities better places for us to live and call home.” Overall, we can surmise that the campaign seeks to increase positivity to immigration (attitudes) and increase integration and positive interaction (behaviour). The theory of emotions above suggests that we should thus elicit trust, which encourages individuals to accept, support, and celebrate, and joy, which encourages individuals to join, meet, converse, and contact. In terms of values, to persuade moderates, the campaign should not only appeal to universalism, benevolence, and self-direction, but also conformity, tradition, security, and power.

Figure 13: Stills from “It Takes A Community” video campaign







In Figure 13, we can see stills from the video of the campaign that express emotion via facial expressions and montages. The video clearly elicits joy, above all, but also trust (which combined with joy elicits love) and anticipation (which combined with joy elicits optimism). These emotions are largely in line with those we would expect from a campaign that seeks to persuade and encourage behaviour. That said, there is little use of “emotional flow” in the videos—whereby differences between negative outcomes and positive ones are exemplified through changing emotional tones. More seriously, there is little obvious values basis to the campaign besides universalism—with the focus on “diversity”—unlikely to sway conservation-minded citizens concerned by conformity, tradition, security, and power and the associated negative perceived effects of immigration outlined in the first section of this report (though celebration, rather than persuasion, is the campaign’s primary stated objective).

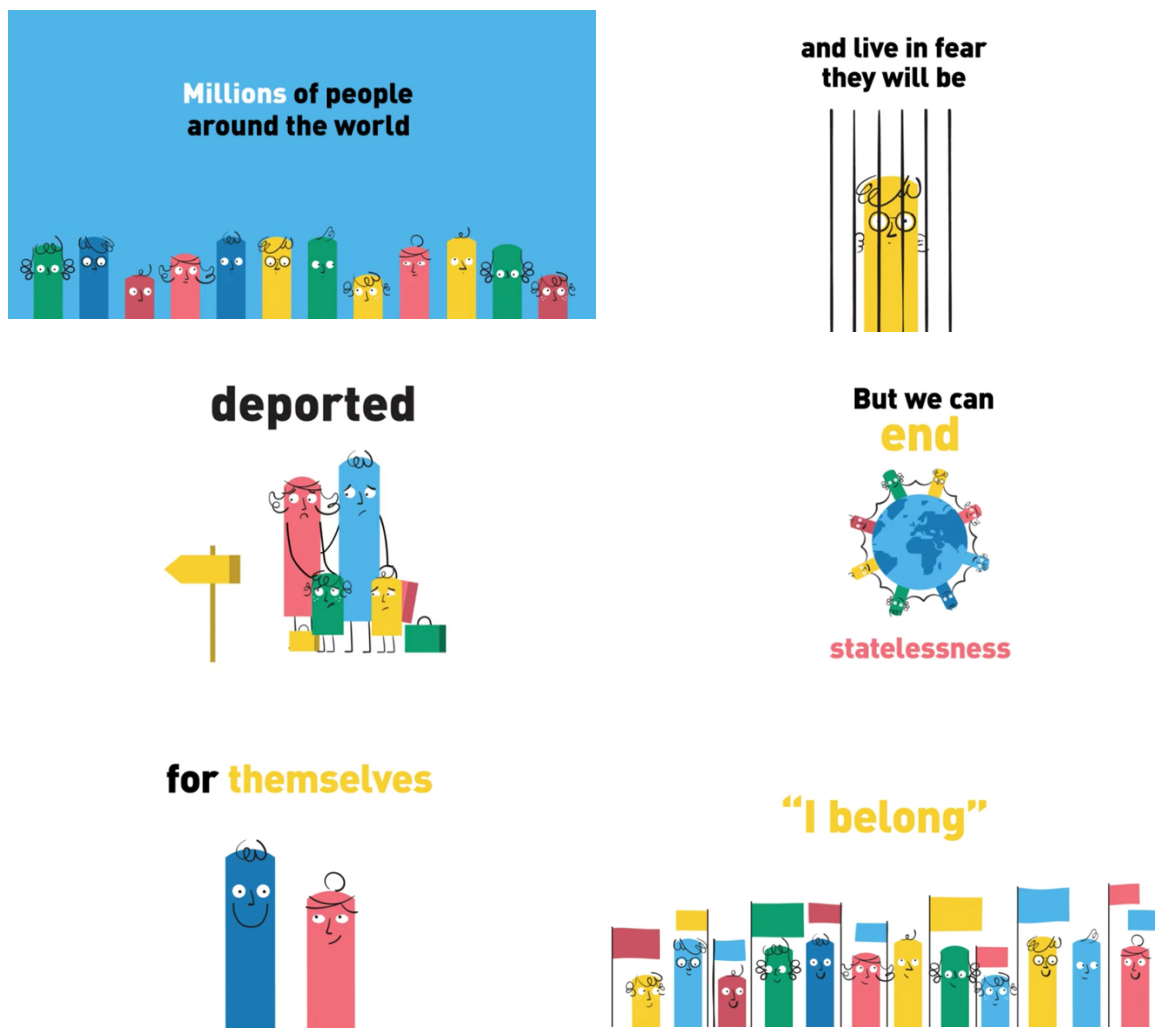
#### “#Ibelong” campaign (global)

The UNHCR’s “#Ibelong”<sup>4</sup> campaigns have a global target and were started in 2019. The campaigns ‘aims at raising awareness about the situation of stateless people in the world ... and call citizens to take action.’ As such, the campaign seek to both inform and encourage behaviour, although the type of behaviour—taking action—is not entirely clear, but likely involves confronting the status quo to create legal change regarding stateless persons. Stills from the campaign are shown below in Figure 14. The clips use animation, music and facial expressions to in turn evoke emotions of fear and sadness (the combination of which is despair), joy, and finally anticipation and trust (combined making hope). These have the physiological reactions of making one feel small and withdraw, connect, and examine and embrace. The use

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/>

of emotional flow such as this is likely to make the final message more resonant and thus increase awareness raising. That said, joy is more clearly evocated than anticipation so the outcome of optimism less clearly links to the campaign's desired objectives. Finally, the values-basis of the campaign is not clear and thus may be less persuasive—though persuasion is not one of the stated goals of the campaign and the use of “belonging” and a degree of conformity may appeal to moderate and conservative value orientations.

Figure 14: Stills from “#Ibelong” campaign



"We can give a lot to one another" (Greece)

The IOM's 2019 "We can give a lot to one another" campaign<sup>5</sup> had several objectives. The stated goals include: "to raise awareness of the Greek population regarding migrants' integration ... make the Greek population feel closer to migrants by witnessing that they have and they could have a lot in common ... while they could benefit from each other. The campaign targets the general Greek population and in particular those who are not aware of common cultural characteristics between local and migrant population. The campaign also targets migrants in the context of the Helios Programme." As such the campaign seeks to raise awareness and change attitudes ("feel closer"). It starts with specific target audience—"those who are not aware of common cultural characteristics"—and in doing so, a values-basis: conformity. It also sought to change migrant behaviour. Even with the fairly simple flyer, shown in Figure 15 below, we see a rich message based overwhelmingly on the emotion of joy—leading to connection—via the use of facial expressions. That said, the flyer does relatively little to use emotions to raise awareness via anticipation.

---

<sup>5</sup>

Flyer

Link:

[https://greece.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11086/files/documents/HELIOS\\_A5\\_01.pdf](https://greece.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11086/files/documents/HELIOS_A5_01.pdf)





Figure 15: Flyer from "We can give a lot to one another" campaign

### HOW CAN BENEFICIARIES REGISTER IN THE PROJECT?

The **HELIOS** staff offers interested beneficiaries detailed information on the project, its services, and the enrollment process. **HELIOS** teams visit facilities of the official accommodation schemes of the Greek Reception System on a weekly basis, while specialized staff is present Monday to Friday (9am-5pm) at the **HELIOS Integration Learning Centers**:

1. Alkminis 36-38, Kato Petralona, Athens	8. Nikolaou Germanou 1, Thessaloniki	15. 3rd km Trikala - Kalambaka road, Trikala
2. Kolokythous 23, Metaxourgio, Athens	9. Olympiados 24, Kardamitsia, Ioannina	16. Chaironeias 39, Livadia
3. 3rd Septemvriou 24, Omonoia, Athens	10. Ef. Polemiston 103, Chania, Crete	17. Moskof 8, Kilkis
4. 28th Octovriou 20-22, Omonoia, Athens	11. Andrea Papandreou 107, Amoudara, Heraklion, Crete	18. Androutsou 30, Katerini
5. 25th Martiou 7, Tavros, Athens	12. Piskokefalou KEGE (PO Code: 71202), Sitia, Crete	19. Alexandrou Soutsou and Nafpliou, 22100, Tripoli
6. Tsorlini 26, Thessaloniki	13. Sokratous 111, Larissa	
7. Kostantinou Oikonomou 5, Thessaloniki	14. Charilaou Floraki 22, Karditsa	

**WhatsApp numbers**  
(Monday - Friday | 9am - 3pm):

Arabic - Sorani - Kurmanji: +30 690 665 6134  
Farsi - Pashto: +30 690 665 6125  
Urdu - Hindi - Punjabi: +30 690 695 6107  
English - Greek - French: +30 690 986 8980

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## HELIOS - HELLENIC INTEGRATION SUPPORT FOR BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

## WHAT IS THE HELIOS PROJECT?

HELIOS is a pilot integration project implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its partners, aiming to support beneficiaries of international protection to smoothly integrate into the Greek society. The project is funded by the European Commission (DG HOME) and is supported by the Greek Government.

## WHO CAN JOIN THE PROJECT?

Beneficiaries of international protection (refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection), who have been granted asylum in Greece after 01/01/2018 and are registered and reside in the official Greek reception scheme (Open Accommodation Center, Reception and Identification Center, FILOXENIA hotel or ESTIA apartment) at the moment of the notification of the decision granting them international protection, can enroll in the project and benefit from the support provided under HELIOS.

## HOW DOES HELIOS SUPPORT BENEFICIARIES?

### INTRODUCTION TO AUTONOMOUS LIVING IN GREECE

HELIOS beneficiaries receive targeted assistance in finding and leasing their own house in Greece. Accommodation support under the project consists of the provision of rental subsidies (from 6 to 12 months), specialized workshops, interpretation and translation support, and access to the HELIOS pool of apartments.

### BRIDGING THE GAP WITH THE HOST COMMUNITY

Integration courses provide enrolled beneficiaries (over 16 years old) with the opportunity to learn how to write and speak Greek and acquire basic soft skills allowing them to navigate through their daily life in Greece. Classes are provided for three (3) hours on a daily basis in three shifts (morning, afternoon, evening), with a total duration of six (6) months.

### ENABLING ACCESS TO THE LABOR MARKET

Beneficiaries (over 16 years old) can build on their capacities and enhance their chances to find steady employment in Greece through individual job counselling sessions, connection with the local labor market and targeted events.

“We are Upper Austria” (Austria)

Three social media posts from one 2017 campaign—‘We are Upper Austria’ (*Wir Sind Oberösterreich*)—are shown below in Figure 16. While the posters show an emotions-basis (joy, leading to connection, and perhaps trust, leading to embracing), they are more notable for their values-basis, described below. It is also notable that they emphasise commonality throughout (see Table 1).

Figure 16. Values-based pro-migration messaging. “We are Upper Austria”;



Most obviously this is in terms of the economic or labour contribution of each of the migrants pictured. In Schwarz’s values-scheme, this would fall under the value category of ‘power’. However, more subtly, each of the pieces of communication speak to other values that fall under the ‘conservation’ higher order value type. Each shows migrants collaborating with native Austrians, in two cases wearing uniforms: this is an allusion to ‘conformity’. The examples of the firefighter, medic and nurse, each concerned with health and safety, point to the value of ‘security’. Finally, the implied apprenticeship (or similar) relationships in the top two examples may also allude to the value of ‘tradition’. Overall, each of these messaging examples has a value-basis that includes at least one of the values regularly associated with

anti-immigration sentiment. According to this report’s theoretical model, we should therefore expect these to be more effective examples of persuasive messaging.

#### #Standup4migrants (Australia and Malaysia)

The OHCHR’s #Standup4migrants campaign is based on the belief that there is an urgent need to question and change the way we speak about migrants and migration to ensure that human rights are upheld. Campaigns in Australia and Malaysia are shown in Figure 17, below. Both campaigns—resulting in multiple videos—are based on the commonality of sharing food, touching on the values of tradition and conformity, while also heavily emphasising the emotion of joy. Finally, the videos are connected by the narrative that ‘we can all find commonalities and connect when we make room for each other over a meal.’

Figure 16. Narrative-based messaging from the OHCHR’s #Standup4migrants campaign



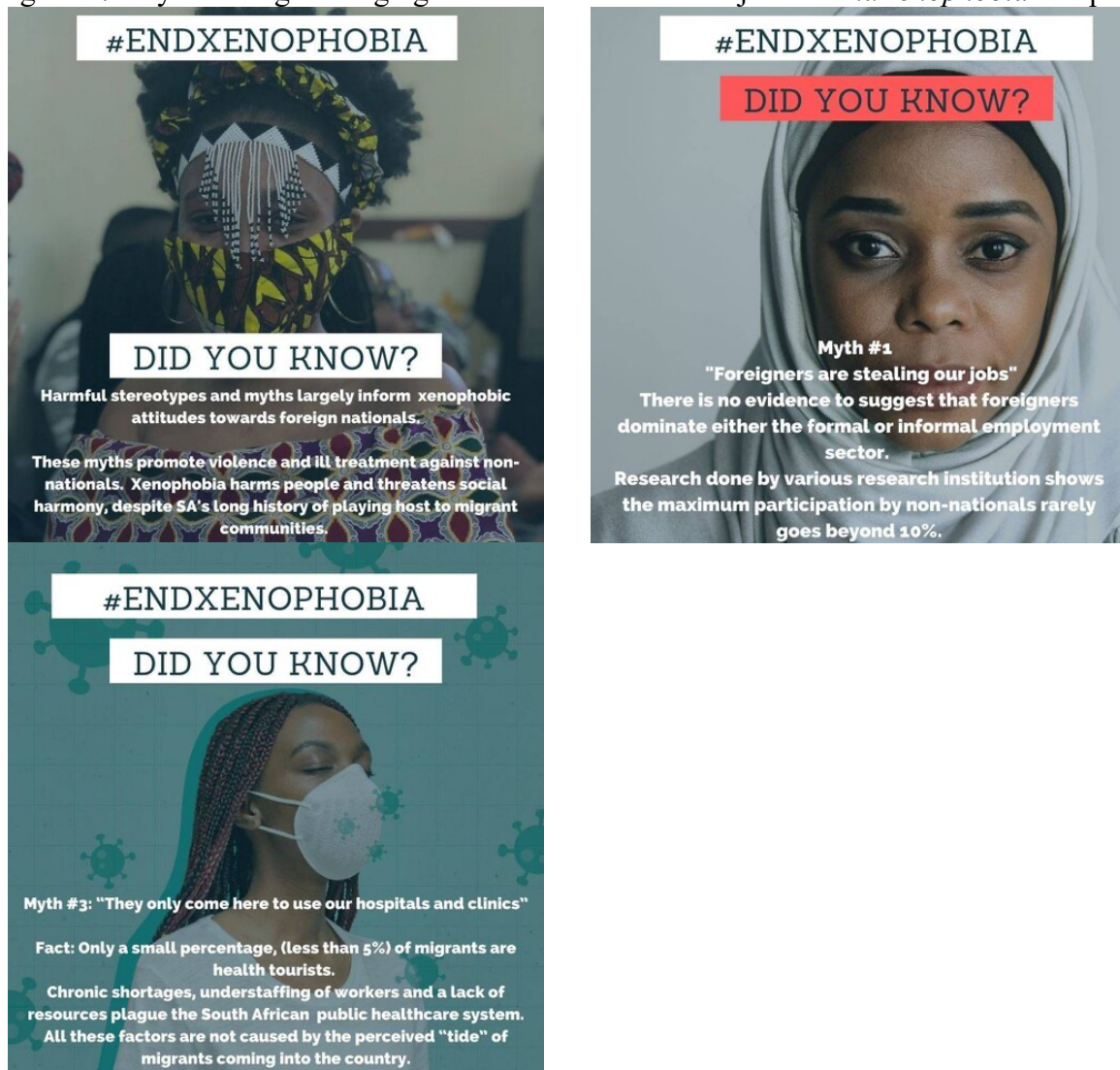
#### #EndXenophobia (South Africa)

#EndXenophobia was a ‘10-week social media campaign to help change public opinion on migration and build engagement with South African religious and community leaders, politicians and celebrities, to help reshape the negative views, attitudes and beliefs about



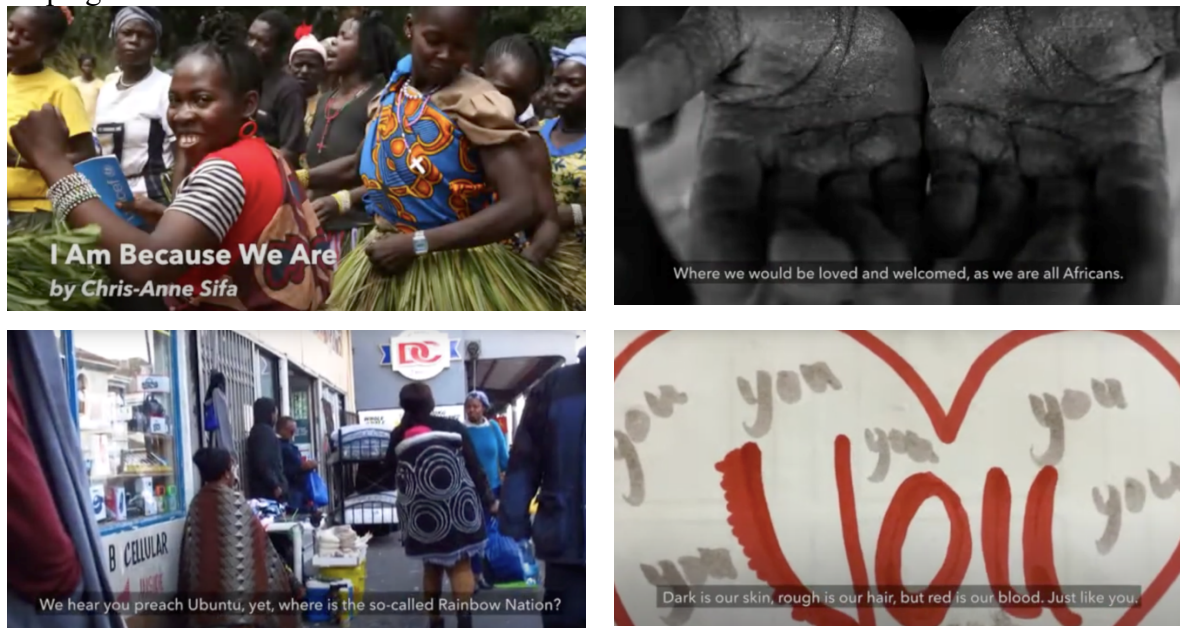
foreign nationals in South Africa.”<sup>6</sup> It was developed and launched by the Adonis Musati Project in November 2000. Its four objectives were to ‘amplify the voices of migrants’, ‘increase exchange of credible information on migrants’ rights’, ‘greater public awareness of migrants’ rights, issues, and stories’, and to ‘increase dialogue through stories shared ... with non-national women and youth’. The campaign’s primary method of meeting these objectives was via myth-busting regarding the job- and services-stealing narratives as shown in Figure 17, along with use of national identity (the history-of-hosting-migrants narrative) and, in a film in Figure 18, the use of common (African) identity.

Figure 17. Myth-busting messaging from Adonis Musati Project’s *#EndXenophobia* campaign



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.adonismusatiproject.org/endxenophobia>

Figure 18. Common identity messaging from Adonis Musati Project's #EndXenophobia campaign – “I am because we are” video



## Examples of collaboration and observatories dedicated to understanding and affecting public attitudes to immigration

### *The GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration: An example of multi-stakeholder partnerships for communication*

In addition to the above campaigns, the GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration was created in February 2020 to bring all GFMD stakeholders together to promote a balanced and evidence-based public narrative on migration<sup>7</sup>. Upon the proposal of the Government of Canada, the GFMD Steering Group unanimously endorsed the creation of the Working Group. Recognizing the important role of cities and local communities in achieving balanced narratives on migration and promoting social inclusion and integration for migrants, the Steering Group also endorsed for the first time that a GFMD Mechanism -- the Mayors Mechanism -- should act as a Co-Chair of a GFMD Working Group alongside governments. In September, the Government of Ecuador also volunteered to co-Chair the Working Group.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gfmd.org/gfmd-ad-hoc-working-group-public-narratives-migration#:~:text=The%20GFMD%20Ad%20Hoc%20Working,creation%20of%20the%20Working%20Group.>

The Working Group has three objectives: 1) enhancing capacity of WG members and the broader GFMD community on the subject of migration narratives; 2) fostering the creation of concrete partnerships and joint activities that will contribute to shifting the narrative on migration; and 3) providing recommendations on the topic of migration narratives for the GFMD's contribution to the implementation, review and follow up of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). See Table 1 for recommendations from the GFMD's report (GFMD 2020).

### *The Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM)*

OPAM is based at the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute in Florence, Italy<sup>8</sup>. It aims to enhance understanding of attitudes to migration through presentation, analysis and evaluation of data from all EU member states. OPAM was the first Observatory of its kind dedicated to producing comprehensive, pan-EU data and accounts of public attitudes to migration in Europe. OPAM was established in 2017 as part of the Migration Policy Centre within the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. The OPAM team aim to produce a step-change in our collective understanding of perhaps the definitive public policy issue of the twenty-first century in Europe. Since 2017, OPAM has produced online hubs of (1) data on attitudes to immigration, (2) a scientific hub on academic findings, and (3) a communication campaigns database. In addition, OPAM has produced dozens of policy reports and original scientific articles.

### *The IADB's Citizen Perception Laboratory on Migration*

The Inter-American Development Bank's (IADB) Citizen Perception Laboratory on Migration .<sup>9</sup> The Laboratory 'offers information, resources and tools to accompany governments in their response to xenophobia . Get access to updated information on the evolution of perception on migration in the region, a comprehensive archive of research and studies on perceptions, xenophobia and public opinion on migration and the results of our latest experiments to learn how to promote positive attitudes towards migration.'

<sup>8</sup> <https://migrationpolicycentre.eu/opam/about/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.iadb.org/en/who-we-are/topics/migration/migration-initiatives>

## Conclusion

This report asked what individuals across the world think about immigration, why they think what they do, and what communication is likely to affect what they think. In doing so, it made three contributions: (1) It provided a global outlook of what public attitudes to immigration are; (2) It brought up to date the rapidly developing scientific literature that explains attitudes to immigration; (3) It provided guidance to communicators on what types of communication are likely to be effective, along with examples.

Across 63 countries globally, citizens' immigration policy preferences are shown to be far more moderate than radical and—in countries with a recent history of immigration—relatively stable over time. That said, important country differences exist. Outside of a few “western” countries, citizens prefer that national are prioritised over immigrants for jobs in every country. Prejudice against immigrants is usually held by a minority, albeit a significant one. Citizens across the world are shown as believing both positive and negative narratives about immigration simultaneously. Even in very pro-immigration countries, belief in immigration's negative effects is widespread. That said, immigration preferences seem to be informed by a complex mix of the extent to which immigration is seen as affecting unemployment, crime, terrorism, social conflict, but also filling jobs and enriching culture. The perceived importance of immigration, compared to other political issues, to one's country is shown to be highly volatile and episodic across several European countries. By contrast, its perceived importance to individuals personally is consistently perceived to be very low across all countries.

Individual attitudes to immigration are shown as resulting from deeper, stable psychological predispositions and early-life socialisation which then affect the size and direction of more immediate factors, such as the economic situation, migratory context, and messaging that they receive. These factors are combined in a so-called “funnel of causality” that highlights how attitudes are formed over time and the relative importance and positioning of various factors in the causal chain. In addition, the report overviewed why some narratives become popular and some do not, again reflecting the predispositions of the audience but also the particular characteristics of the narrative, its effects, and the context in which it operates. A range of guidelines are then overviewed on what constitutes effective communication on migration,



with a particular focus on personal values and emotions. Finally, six examples are displayed and discussed to better understand how such lessons can be used in practice.

Future research should now move beyond identifying individual and exemplary attributes of effective communication and towards formalising a framework across the full range of factors suggested in this report.



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