

## Lesson 3

# Myths about immigration and immigrants and how they may be addressed



**Learning  
for Living  
Together**  
Project

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## Lesson 3

# Myths about immigration and immigrants and how they may be addressed

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session you should be able to:

- 3.1 Summarise the various misconceptions (myths) concerning immigration and immigrants
  - 3.2 Describe why misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants may exist
  - 3.3 Summarise strategies that could be used to dispel misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants
  - 3.4 Describe with examples how misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants may be dispelled
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# Task

## Working in groups

- ▶ Brainstorm misconceptions about immigration and immigrants that you know
- ▶ Describe why you think such misconceptions exist



# Feedback from groups

- 1.
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# Myth 1

## Immigrants are all Terrorists



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## Research Evidence

New [research from the University of Warwick](#) (Bove, & Böhmelt, 2016) on migration flows between 145 countries shows that immigration is actually associated with a decline in terrorist acts

"When migrants move from one country to another they take new skills, knowledge and perspectives," the lead researcher writes. "If we subscribe to the belief that economic development is linked to a decrease in extremism then we should expect an increase in migration to have a positive effect."

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/684679>



## Myth 2

# Immigrants are all criminals



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# Research Evidence

Research in large countries of immigrants for example the US and the UK show that, Immigrants are **Less Likely** to be Criminals Than the Native-Born (Rumbaut, et al 2015).

Immigrants commit fewer offenses and less frequently end up in prison than the native population. Even as the number of illegal immigrants tripled between 1990 and 2013 to over eleven million, the crime rate reversed dramatically.

The same is true for the UK: a few years ago, researchers from the London School of Economics reported that the crime rate had fallen significantly in areas that had experienced mass immigration from Eastern Europe.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states>



# Myth 3

## Immigrants will undermine social cohesion



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## Research Evidence

- ▶ Recent research shows that there is no correlation between diversity and social cohesion (Thomas 2014)
- ▶ Diversity therefore is not to blame for the lack of cohesion in modern day society.
- ▶ Research by ( Abascal & Baldassarri, 2015) show that  
"It is not the diversity of a community that undermines trust," but rather the disadvantages that people in diverse communities face."

## Myth 4

# They'll take our jobs, plus Cheap immigrant labor will force our wages down



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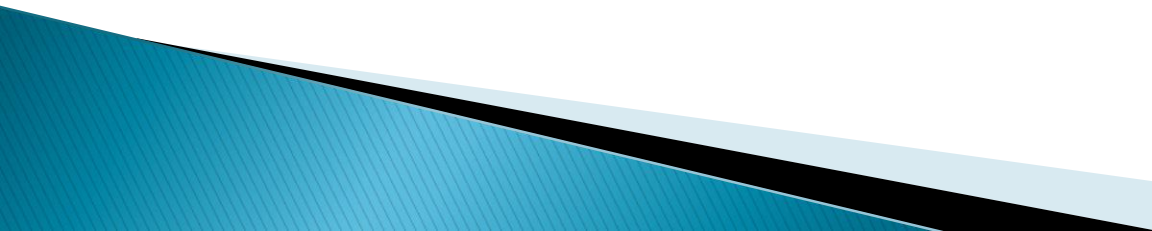
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## Research Evidence

- ▶ Recent research by the Center for Immigration Studies in the US (Anon, 2013) found that immigration has virtually no effect on wages.
  - ▶ Other research (Heidi Shierholz 2010) show that new arrivals lead to a rise in the earnings of the domestic workforce.
  - ▶ Hardworking immigrants boost productivity, which brings paycheck payoffs to everybody.
- 



# Myth 5

## Immigrants are a burden on the tax payer



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## Research Evidence

- ▶ There's no evidence that immigrants are more likely to apply for assistance than native citizens.
- ▶ Evidence from a discussion paper from the EU shows that in reality, immigrants actually take less advantage of public assistance.  
<http://ftp.iza.org/dp6075.pdf>
- ▶ Overall, the net value of immigrants is almost wholly positive. In countries like Austria, Ireland, Spain, and England, they even bring in more tax revenue per capita than the native population. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2013\\_migr\\_outlook-2013-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2013_migr_outlook-2013-en)

## Research Evidence cont.-

- ▶ Some countries decide not to give immigrants the right to government assistance, until after a minimum number of years, or not until they've paid, a certain amount in taxes e.g, \$50,000 in taxes
- ▶ Some countries set up parameters to send immigrants back if they don't find a job.





# What Research Tells Us

- ▶ Large scale research in the United States and a variety of European countries conducted by the economists (Alberto Alesina et al 2018) found that people across the board vastly overstate their immigrant populations. [https://www.dropbox.com/s/89ikl2y9v0ualif/Alesina\\_Miano\\_Stantcheva\\_Immigration.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/89ikl2y9v0ualif/Alesina_Miano_Stantcheva_Immigration.pdf?dl=0)
- ▶ For example, in the U.S., the actual number of legal immigrants is 10%, but the average perception is 36%
- ▶ In Italy, the true share of immigrants is 10%, but the perceived share is 26%.

# Misinformation about the composition of immigrants

- ▶ The belief that immigrants are more likely to come from more culturally distant regions (which are often branded as “problematic” (in the public debate) that they are economically much weaker and less able to contribute to their host country
- ▶ Also in most countries the public perception is that immigrants are less educated, poorer, more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to receive government benefits than they are in reality.

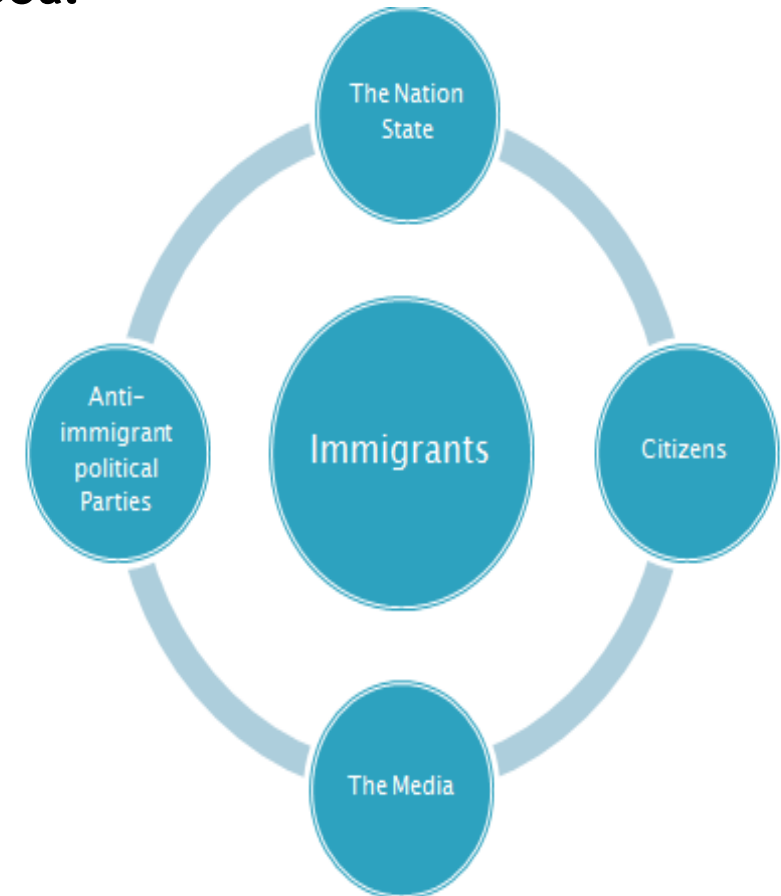
# Vicious circle of Misconceptions/misinformation about immigrants

Recent Research Alberto (2018) shows that much of the debate about Immigration and immigrants takes place in a world of misinformation about immigrants . Unless they inform themselves. The more natives are misinformed the more they become hostile to immigrants.

1. Citizens and voters have distorted views about Immigrants
2. Anti immigrant parties foster misinformation
3. The way the media reports on immigrant issues may exacerbate the problem

For example immigrants who commit crime or who free ride on the welfare system may receive more Media coverage that non – immigrants doing the same

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/89ikl2y9v0ualif/Alesina\\_Miano\\_Stantcheva\\_Immigration.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/89ikl2y9v0ualif/Alesina_Miano_Stantcheva_Immigration.pdf?dl=0)




# Task

- ▶ Working in groups
- ▶ Summarise strategies that could be used to dispel misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants
- ▶ Describe with examples how misconceptions about immigrants may be dispelled





# Feedback from Groups

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# Strategies that could be used to dispel misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants

- ▶ Raising awareness -making people aware of contributions of immigrants,
- ▶ Publishing accurate information about exact welfare benefits the state provides to immigrants (if any)
- ▶ Providing accurate information about the professional expertise immigrants bring and the economic contributions they make.
- ▶ Accurate reporting of immigrant issues by the media
- ▶ Proactively creating inclusive spaces of interaction between indigenous people and immigrants to foster inclusiveness
- ▶ Improving barriers to social inclusion that immigrants face for example access to some employment sectors
- ▶ <https://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/publications/immigration/ImmigrationStrategy.pdf>

## Examples Dispelling misconceptions of immigration and immigrants

- ▶ Educate the public with evidence about positive contributions immigrants make for example how historically countries like the USA and the UK were built by immigrants.
- ▶ Economic contributions made by immigrants
- ▶ Contributions through sports
- ▶ Contribution of immigrants to demographics changes: countries with ageing populations need for younger people to care for ageing population
- ▶ Highlight with examples challenges and positives of Immigration and cultural diversity

# Examples of economic contributions made by immigrants

Labour markets	<p>Migrants accounted for 47% of the increase in the workforce in the United States and 70% in Europe over the past ten years.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.Migrants fill important niches both in fast -growing and declining sectors of the economy.</li><li>2.Like the native -born, young migrants are better educated than those nearing retirement.</li><li>3,Migrants contribute significantly to labour market flexibility , notably in Europe</li></ol>
The public purse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4.Migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits.</li><li>5.Labour migrants have the most positive impact on the public purse.</li><li>6.Employment is the single biggest determinant of migrants' net fiscal contribution</li></ol>
Economic growth	<p>Migration boosts the working age population. Migrants arrive with skills and contribute to human capital development of receiving countries Migrants also contribute to technological progress.</p>

Migration Policy Debates 2014

<https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf>



# Highlight Examples of Immigrants Contributions through Sports



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# Positive examples of ways in which immigrants support changing demographics in ageing societies

- ▶ Example Italy is currently the country with the second highest number of older people – behind Germany. In 2013, it was estimated that more than 12 million elderly people were living in Italy – accounting for 21.2% of the whole population



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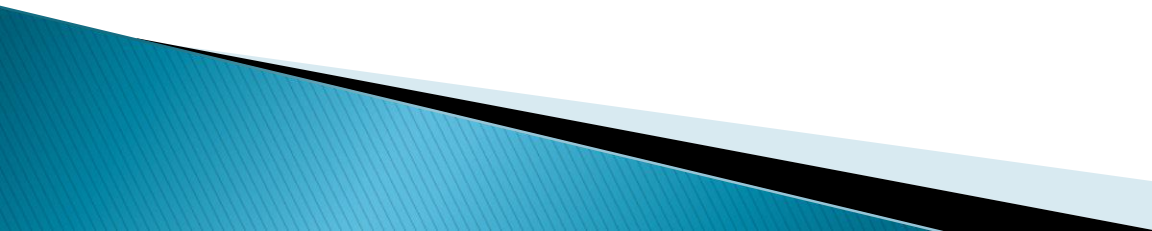


# Cultural diversity



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# Show positive examples of how cultural diversity enriches society

- ▶ Dispelling misconceptions about cultural diversity can be achieved by creating opportunities for cultural learning between indigenous communities and immigrant communities
  - ▶ Educate the public about how cultural diversity enriches society and about the damaging effects of racism and discrimination
  - ▶ Create social inclusion activities to foster understanding of migrant and host cultures
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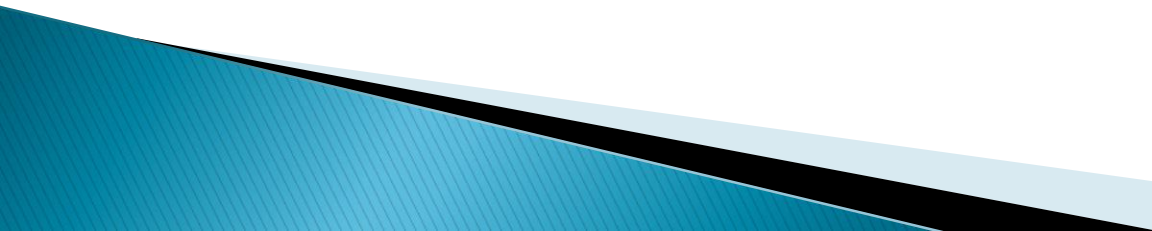
# Film clip – debunking some misconceptions about immigrants

- ▶ Unit 3.1 [https://youtu.be/l\\_VU1bhhaz8](https://youtu.be/l_VU1bhhaz8)



- ▶ Photo on <https://foter.com/re2/f7829f>>Foter.com</a>

# Summary of what we covered

- ▶ Explored misconceptions(myths)concerning immigration and immigrants
  - ▶ Examined why misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants may exist
  - ▶ Explored strategies that could be used to dispel misconceptions concerning immigration and immigrants
  - ▶ Examples Dispelling misconceptions of immigration and immigrants
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- ▶ (Heidi Shierholz 2010) <https://www.epi.org/publication/bp255/>