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IMMIGRATION INFORMATION AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES: A SCOPING REVIEW OF SURVEY EXPERIMENTS AND RELATED EVIDENCE

ABSTRACT: This focused scoping review maps experimental evidence on how immigration- and asylum-related information, frames, and migrant attributes affect public beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences, and behavior. Based on 47 empirical studies published between 2010 and 2025, we compare intervention types, measured outcomes, candidate mechanisms and contextual moderators without pooling effect sizes. Factual corrections sometimes improve knowledge without changing policy preferences, whereas economic messages, framed claims, and profile attributes yield more variable effects. Conjoint studies estimate profile preferences rather than the effects of factual correction; a smaller group of experiments observes consequential donation decisions. We propose a conditional information-processing framework distinguishing stimulus, interpretation, outcome, and contextual moderators. The evidence is concentrated geographically and is methodologically heterogeneous. Missing historical search dates and database exports limit reproducibility, and several study-level classifications require further full-text checking. Future research should use transparent searches, longer follow-up, cross-national replications, and behavioral outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *immigration policy; asylum policy; information provision; survey experiments; public attitudes; scoping review; framing; public policy*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Survey experiments increasingly inform public policy research by estimating how randomly varied information, frames, narratives and policy cues influence citizens' judgments. Immigration and asylum are particularly demanding applications of this approach. Evaluations of admission, integration, welfare rights and humanitarian protection combine empirical beliefs about economic and demographic consequences with normative commitments, national identity, perceived cultural threat and assumptions about deservingness. As a result, a successful factual correction need not produce a corresponding change in support for a policy (Haaland et al., 2023; Jørgensen & Osmundsen, 2022).

Methodological reviews discuss information-provision experiments, while individual studies show divergent responses across policy domains (Haaland et al., 2023; Grigorieff et al., 2020). An immigration-specific evidence map can clarify what treatments manipulate and what outcomes they actually measure. Without those distinctions, preferences for skilled migrants in conjoint experiments may be mistaken for the effect of statistical corrections, or a short-lived survey response for lasting behavioral change.

The present review therefore maps core information-provision experiments alongside adjacent experimental evidence, including vignette and conjoint profiles, priming, framed arguments, narrative interventions and behavioral tasks. The review is intentionally broader than a meta-analysis of a single causal effect but narrower than an exhaustive census of all experimental work on migration. Its contribution is to identify where the literature provides evidence of factual updating, attitudinal change, preference trade-offs and consequential behavior, and where comparisons across these outcomes are not warranted.

The empirical synthesis includes 47 studies published between 2010 and 2025. The selection criteria, analytical approach and limitations of the available search documentation are described in Section 3 and the Supplementary Material.

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2. SURVEY EXPERIMENTS AND RELATED EVIDENCE

2.1 Experimental Designs and Their Causal Targets

Survey experiments combine a survey's measurement structure with randomised variation in the information or stimuli seen by respondents. However, "survey experiment" denotes a family of designs rather than one intervention. Core information-provision experiments expose randomly assigned respondents to verifiable statistical, economic, demographic or policy information and then assess factual beliefs, perceptions or policy preferences. Related designs may manipulate wording, framing, visual cues, personal narratives or the attributes of hypothetical immigrants or refugees. Conjoint studies estimate the influence of experimentally varied profile attributes and associated trade-offs; the identification and interpretation of those effects differ from the estimation of learning after factual correction (Hainmueller et al., 2014).

2.2 Factual Belief Updating, Motivated Reasoning and Policy Preferences

The information-deficit hypothesis implies that inaccurate perceptions are a major reason for public opposition to immigration and that corrections can therefore increase informed support. Factual belief updating is an observable intermediate result, but it is not conceptually identical to a change in policy preference. The corrected belief must matter for a respondent's preferred policy, be accepted as credible, and outweigh competing goals or concerns. Respondents may accept statistics about population composition yet continue to prioritize cultural integration, sovereignty or distributive consequences.

Jørgensen and Osmundsen (2022) show that corrective information can improve immigration-related factual beliefs without appreciably changing policy opinions. Other experiments demonstrate different patterns: Grigorieff et al. (2020) report more favorable attitudes after providing information, while Lergetporer et al. (2021) find that refugee-education information can alleviate fiscal concerns while increasing concern about labor-market competition. These results imply neither that factual correction usually fails nor that it reliably persuades. They demonstrate the need to specify which belief changed, which policy preference was measured, and which background concerns structured the response.

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Motivated reasoning and identity-protective interpretation offer plausible explanations for this divergence. A person may discount, reinterpret, or selectively weight information when it conflicts with commitments tied to party identification, national identity or perceived cultural threat. Such mechanisms cannot, however, be inferred solely from treatment heterogeneity. Evidence of moderation by prior beliefs or ideology is not automatically evidence of causal mediation, which requires a more demanding design and measurement strategy.

2.3 Framing, Priming, Narratives and Source Credibility

Framing changes which consequences of immigration are salient: labour supply, fiscal costs, security, humanitarian obligations, social integration or policy trade-offs. Priming brings particular considerations to mind without necessarily supplying new information. Narrative interventions may foreground a personal experience and evoke identification or empathy. Messenger identity may influence whether otherwise similar arguments are perceived as legitimate. These mechanisms can complement factual correction, but none should be treated as a universally persuasive technique.

The distinction between cognitive and affective pathways is especially important. Florio (2022), for example, directly compared an informational lesson with contact with a refugee in an educational setting and found stronger average effects for the information intervention on several outcomes. The finding cautions against assuming that storytelling or contact is intrinsically more effective than statistics. Other studies show that policy sources and audience characteristics can shape reactions to immigration messages (Donnelly et al., 2020).

The policy relevance of framing is also linked to outcome choice. A reported intention to support refugees, a hypothetical admission ranking and a consequential donation decision are not equivalent indicators. Cattaneo et al. (2025) and Walentek et al. (2025) illustrate how experimental designs can measure actual donation behavior, whereas many earlier studies focus on expressed preferences or immediate attitudes. Such behavioral evidence is stronger for the measured donation task but cannot automatically be generalized to voting, long-term integration, or broader policy legitimacy.

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2.4 A Conditional Framework and Its Testable Implications

Our framework distinguishes four elements: assigned stimulus and design; interpretation or candidate mechanism (e.g., belief updating or perceived threat); measured knowledge, attitude, preference or behavior; and respondent or institutional moderators. It is a guide to comparing heterogeneous findings, not a claim that each causal pathway has been identified experimentally.

The framework yields testable propositions: correcting a policy-relevant belief may affect matched preferences more than unrelated outcomes; economic information may shift fiscal and labor-market concerns differently; and narratives may affect empathy or behavior without durable factual learning. Future studies can test these pathways using baseline beliefs, randomized sources, preregistered measures, delayed outcomes and consequential tasks.

3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Aim, Research Questions, and Analytical Scope

The primary aim is to identify how survey-experimental and related designs have been used to study the effects of immigration- and asylum-related information and stimuli, the outcomes they examine, and the conditions under which their effects vary. Four research questions structure the review and its analytical framework:

RQ1. What research designs, treatment and stimulus types, target populations, and outcome domains characterize the survey-experimental and related evidence on immigration and asylum attitudes?

RQ2. What effects do factual information, economic and human-capital information, framing, priming, narratives, vignettes, and conjoint treatments have on public attitudes, policy preferences, perceptions, and behavioral intentions?

RQ3. Through which cognitive, emotional, and identity-based mechanisms do these effects operate, and how are they moderated by prior beliefs, ideology, national identity, perceived threat, source credibility, and institutional trust?

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RQ4. How does the evidence vary across national and institutional contexts, and what do the geographical and methodological concentrations of the literature imply for external validity and policy communication?

3.2 Review Design and Reporting Approach

A scoping review was selected because the literature combines factual provision, framing, priming, narratives, vignettes, conjoint tasks, and classroom interventions that do not share a common estimand. We therefore use narrative synthesis rather than a pooled effect size. Study selection is presented in a PRISMA-style flow chart informed by PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018), without claiming verified compliance with every item: the historical search record cannot be reconstructed.

3.3 Sources and Reported Search Strategy

The original methods report searches in Web of Science (Author Keywords: survey experiment) and Scopus (title, abstract and keywords: survey experiment AND 'public policy'). Initially reported returns were 1,981 and 4,193; journal and subject-area filters reduced them to 752 and 549 respectively, totaling 1,301 records. These figures are taken from the original submission, not new database searches.

Exact search dates, executable query histories, database settings, and complete filter lists are unavailable. The displayed terms therefore describe the historical strategy but cannot establish exact reproducibility. Screening for immigration and asylum relevance followed the broad methodological search, allowing variation in migration terminology while also risking omissions. The findings are consequently described as a focused mapping, not exhaustive retrieval.

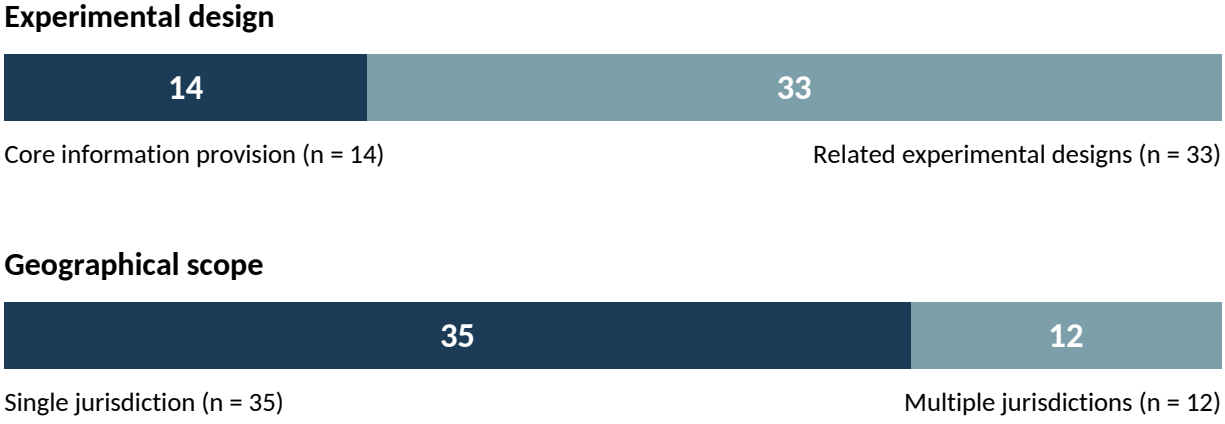
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3.4 Eligibility Criteria and Study Selection

Studies were eligible when they: (a) addressed immigration, asylum, refugees, migrant integration, immigrant selection, migration-related redistribution, or a closely related policy issue; (b) reported empirical results from a survey experiment or a related experimental intervention; (c) measured at least one relevant belief, perception, attitude, policy preference, threat or deservingness assessment, behavioral intention, or observed action; and (d) fell within the 2010–2025 publication window stated for the original review. Purely conceptual publications, reviews, records outside the substantive scope, duplicate publications, and studies without a relevant intervention or outcome were excluded (see Figure 1).

The final qualitative synthesis comprises 47 eligible empirical studies. Figure 1 displays the composition of the included studies. The corresponding study-level records are provided in the Supplementary Material.

Figure 1: Composition of the 47 included studies (extraction-based coding)



Source: *Authors (using ChatGPT)*

The available documentation does not establish whether title/abstract or full-text screening was undertaken independently by multiple reviewers or how disagreements were resolved. Independent dual screening and agreement statistics are therefore not claimed. A fully reproducible future update would require dated database exports and a prospectively documented screening log.

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3.5 Design Classification and Treatment of Hybrid Studies

Core information-provision experiments randomly assign immigration- or asylum-related factual content, with a control or another active intervention. Related designs manipulate immigrant attributes, vignettes, frames, narratives, prompts, source cues, or choices of donation recipients. Distinguishing these groups preserves the different causal quantities they estimate; it is not a ranking of study quality. Active-treatment comparisons estimate relative effects, not effects against no intervention.

Hybrid designs were assigned by their primary treatment and research question. Getmansky et al. (2018) was coded as refugee-message framing. Florio (2022), comparing an informational lesson with refugee contact but not with no treatment, was coded as information provision. Kage et al. (2022) was treated as related survey-experimental evidence; individual experimental contrasts require inspection of its original methods. The classifications are pragmatic, mutually exclusive, and documented in the supplement.

3.6 Data Extraction and Outcome Coding

The supplement lists the 47 retained studies and four exclusions. For each study, the extraction table reports author, year, setting, sample when available, stimulus, measured outcome, comparator, and reported principal result. Publisher/repository checks and unresolved methodological questions are recorded separately. Original methods and results have not been independently re-extracted for every study.

Outcome measures are not interchangeable and will be separated into (a) factual beliefs or knowledge; (b) affective and evaluative attitudes; (c) immigration- or asylum-related policy preferences; (d) perceived threat, identity, or deservingness judgments; (e) stated behavioral intentions; and (f) observed or incentivized behavior where such measures are actually reported. A reported willingness to donate or sign a petition is not treated as equivalent to an observed donation or petition signature unless the design confirms that the behavior occurred.

Mechanisms such as belief updating, empathy, perceived threat, motivated reasoning, and identity protection are distinguished from measured moderators (for example, ideology, prior beliefs, trust, respondent characteristics, and national setting). The presence of a

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proposed mechanism in the discussion of an article is not counted as causal evidence of mediation unless the underlying study tested it.

3.7 Evidence Assessment and Narrative Synthesis

The original review did not document a formal risk-of-bias assessment, and none is claimed retrospectively. Interpretation considers available information on random assignment, sample, comparator, baseline beliefs, follow-up and observed versus self-reported outcomes. 'Not reported in the extraction' does not establish that a feature was absent from the primary publication.

Synthesis proceeded by mapping setting, stimulus and outcome (RQ1 and RQ4), comparing findings within comparable intervention–outcome pairs (RQ2), and interpreting moderators or proposed pathways (RQ3). Positive, adverse, mixed and null effects were retained. Contradictions were not averaged across distinct causal estimands. Mechanism claims were separated from formally tested mediation.

3.8 Limitations of Search Documentation and Evidence Base

The search dates, complete database histories and individual screening decisions cannot be retrieved. Provisional treatment classifications are based on the earlier extraction table rather than full independent recoding. The included studies also differ in design, geography and outcome timing. Thus, the review does not establish exhaustive coverage, formal risk-of-bias ratings, or pooled effectiveness.

Third, study-level designs and outcomes are heterogeneous, and the 47-study provisional classification requires full-methods verification. Fourth, most outcomes are short-term and expressed in surveys, although some included experiments examine consequential donations. Fifth, no retrospective risk-of-bias scores or inter-reviewer agreement coefficients are claimed. In particular, the present eligibility audit does not repair missing search exports or amount to a new prospective systematic search.

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4. RESULTS

4.1 Characteristics and Design Composition of the Evidence (RQ1)

The 47 retained studies cover 2010–2025. Applying journal-issue publication years, 16 articles were published in 2024–2025 and 31 in 2010–2023. Thirty-five articles focus on one principal jurisdiction and 12 involve multiple jurisdictions. The mutually exclusive design coding assigns 14 information-provision studies and 33 related experimental designs. These groupings describe the available evidence map, not a formal risk-of-bias classification.

The revised working classification assigns 14 studies to core information provision and 33 to related experimental designs. This is based on the available extraction table and targeted primary-source checks, not a complete independent re-review of methods. All 47 studies have a provisional assignment; boundary cases are documented in the supplement and should not be interpreted as validated design frequencies (see Tables 1 and 2)

Table 1: Descriptive profile of the 47 retained studies (extraction-based coding)

Dimension	Category	Studies (n)
Publication year	2010–2023	31
Publication year	2024–2025	16
Jurisdictional scope	Single principal jurisdiction	35
Jurisdictional scope	Multiple jurisdictions	12
Core versus related design	Core information provision	14
Core versus related design	Related experimental designs	33
Core versus related design	Not applicable (all 47 classified)	0
Main stimulus family	Factual/statistical information	13
Main stimulus family	Profile/vignette/conjoint/attribute	21
Main stimulus family	Framing/priming/narrative/other cue	11
Main stimulus family	Survey-question comparison	1
Main stimulus family	Insufficient design detail	1

Source: *Authors*

Note: The design categories sum to 47. The stimulus family codes are based on the submitted extraction and have not been recoded for all original experimental arms; outcome domains overlap and are not mutually exclusive. These descriptive counts are not causal effect frequencies.

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Outcomes overlap: 30 studies were tagged for policy preferences, 20 for attitudes, seven for factual beliefs, six for threat or deservingness, and four for intention or behavior-related measures. These tags describe the supplied extraction, not uniformly verified primary measurement instruments; several studies contribute to more than one domain.

Table 2: Outcome domains represented in the extraction table (non-exclusive provisional tags)

Outcome domain	Studies with domain (n)	Coding interpretation
Policy preferences or support	30	Admission, asylum rights, migrant selection, integration or redistribution preferences
Attitudes and social evaluation	20	General or group-specific evaluations, acceptance and social distance
Factual beliefs or knowledge	7	Perceived population size, education, labor-market or other factual attributes
Threat, identity or deservingness	6	Economic/cultural threat, identity measures or deservingness judgments
Behavioral intentions or behavior-related measures	4	Petition willingness or donation-related measures; implementation not uniformly documented

Source: *Authors*

Note: Tags were assigned from the Supplementary Material, not independently checked against measurement instruments. Accordingly, the figures should be read as a structured description of the available extraction table rather than a validated inventory of every outcome included in the original studies.

4.2 Effects of Treatments and Stimuli (RQ2)

The evidence does not support a uniform information effect. Jørgensen and Osmundsen (2022), Huang (2023) and Hopkins et al. (2019) each report factual corrections with limited corresponding change in immigration-policy attitudes. Whether learning influences preferences depends partly on which prior concern the corrected belief addresses.

Other information-provision studies report more favorable attitudes or greater support for immigration following selected factual treatments. Lergetporer et al. (2021) describe improved beliefs about refugees' education and more favorable general evaluations, although perceived labor-market competition also rose. Grigorieff et al. (2020) report both corrections of population and unemployment estimates and increased support for legal

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immigration. Abascal et al. (2021) report increased immigration support after information on crime, jobs and taxes but no comparable effect of information on English proficiency. Dylong and Uebelmesser (2024) describe reduced welfare concerns and greater immigration support, alongside treatment-dependent labor-market concerns and unchanged redistribution preferences. These examples indicate selective rather than automatic transmission from learning to political support.

A methodological distinction is important for Florio (2022): the published study randomized 18 school classes between two active interventions (an information lecture and refugee contact), without an untreated control group. Consequently, the evidence identifies the relative difference between these approaches, not a stand-alone causal effect of either intervention compared with receiving no intervention. The information arm produced more favorable average responses on several immigration-related outcomes than the contact arm. This limits the causal claim that can be drawn from that particular design.

Information can also increase concern or opposition, depending on its content. Hayo and Neumeier (2023) associate information emphasizing refugee-related fiscal costs with stronger opposition to the right of asylum; Finseraas et al. (2024) report heightened concerns about welfare-state sustainability after exposure to fiscal-pressure cues, especially among respondents with lower trust. Taken together, the extracted findings do not justify describing information interventions as intrinsically pro-immigration: the content and perceived implications of the message matter. In Hayo and Neumeier (2023), 2,048 respondents were initially randomized across information conditions; the manuscript's previously reported 2,015 corresponds to the analyzed sample, rather than the randomized count.

Getmansky et al. (2018) experimentally varied messages about Syrian refugees in Turkey, including adverse economic, demographic, and security claims and a humanitarian message. The published evidence indicates that some messages worsened refugee evaluations among non-Kurdish respondents but generally did not change support for the Turkish–Kurdish peace process; these are different outcomes and should not be conflated.

Conjoint and vignette studies primarily estimate preferences for experimentally varied migrant attributes, not the effect of more factual information. Respondents often favor education, employment and linguistic integration, with results conditioned by origin, religion or policy context (Turper et al., 2015; Hedegaard & Larsen, 2023; Bilodeau & Gagnon, 2024).

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Such findings can reveal perceived deservingness and admission trade-offs without showing that statistical information has persuaded respondents.

Framing and narratives introduce further heterogeneity. Cattaneo and Grieco (2021) find more favorable beliefs and action-related responses following a positive narrative; Donnelly et al. (2020) find that source and audience matter. Walentek et al. (2025) measure a consequential donation decision and report an increase after humanitarian framing, unlike security and economic-burden framing. Cattaneo et al. (2025) similarly measure recipient-specific donations. Neither experiment implies durable changes in general immigration-policy attitudes.

Table 3 reports selected contrasts rather than the number of all studies showing each pattern. Several studies report more than one result. It is therefore inappropriate to infer treatment-wide probabilities of success or to compare effect sizes without a common outcome definition and access to the original estimates.

Table 3: Contrasting findings that should be retained in the narrative synthesis

Evidence pattern	Examples in the included material	Implication for interpretation
Beliefs improve; policy attitudes do not	Jørgensen & Osmundsen (2022); Huang (2023); Hopkins et al. (2019)	Factual accuracy is not a sufficient proxy for policy persuasion.
Beliefs and some support both improve	Lergetporer et al. (2021); Grigorieff et al. (2020); Abascal et al. (2021)	Persuasion is possible, but depends on message, audience, and outcome.
Mixed outcomes within a treatment	Dylong & Uebelmesser (2024); Lergetporer et al. (2021)	One treatment may alleviate some concerns while heightening others.
Information increases perceived costs or opposition	Hayo & Neumeier (2023); Finseraas et al. (2024)	Direction depends on whether the intervention foregrounds costs or benefits.
Conditional or null results	Huang (2023); Alarian & Neureiter (2021); Walentek et al. (2025)	Null conditions and subgroup differences are substantive findings.
Attribute-based preferences, not simple correction	Hedegaard & Larsen (2023); Semyonov et al. (2023); Bilodeau & Gagnon (2024)	Conjoint/profile estimands should not be conflated with information effects.

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4.3 Mechanisms and Moderators (RQ3)

The results support conditional interpretation rather than a single pathway. Some studies document factual updating, but translation into policy support varies. Economic treatments may lower perceived fiscal costs while raising labor-market concerns (Lergetporer et al., 2021). Claims about mediation are more tentative where mechanisms were proposed rather than experimentally identified.

Identity and perceived cultural distance are prominent in profile and framing studies. Rich et al. (2021) report different levels of acceptance across refugee-origin groups in South Korea; Semyonov et al. (2023) document within-group preferences linked to religion and origin in Israel; and Bilodeau and Gagnon (2024) show that skill attributes can attenuate, without eliminating, preferences based on national origin. These studies identify attributes and evaluations that condition policy support, but their evidence alone does not establish that cultural threat or identity protection has been causally mediated in every experimental design.

Responses vary by message source, salience, and prior values. Donnelly et al. (2020) identify source–audience interactions; Kustov (2021) shows distinctions between national-benefit considerations and universal altruism; Finseraas et al. (2024) find welfare-sustainability cues more consequential for particular trust and income groups. These are study-specific moderators rather than evidence that a single psychological mechanism operates everywhere.

4.4 Geographic and Institutional Variation (RQ4)

The 47 retained studies cover a range of political and institutional settings, albeit unevenly. Many single-country experiments focus on the United States or Northern and Western Europe, with further included studies in Japan, South Korea, Turkey, China, Hong Kong, Qatar, and Israel. Multiple-country studies encompass distinct welfare regimes and migration histories, including some Central and Eastern European countries. The list is illustrative rather than exhaustive; multi-country articles are counted as one study in descriptive totals.

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4.5 Cross-Study Synthesis

Four recurring patterns emerge: factual learning without policy change; persuasion in the direction of a treatment-relevant concern; reinforcement of prior identity-related evaluations; and null or countervailing effects. Their apparent prevalence cannot be inferred from these illustrative studies because treatments, outcomes, and research settings are heterogeneous. The interpretive framework therefore preserves study-specific comparisons.

5. DISCUSSION

This discussion interprets the 47 included empirical studies retained after retrospective eligibility reassessment. It distinguishes claims supported by publisher/institutional records from results that still need full-text verification. Information-provision experiments, conjoint designs, framing interventions, and behavioral tasks are not treated as estimating one common effect. The proposed conditional information-processing framework is an interpretive synthesis, not a causally identified model tested as a whole.

5.1 Interpreting the Evidence: Belief Updating Is Not Equivalent to Policy Change

The distinction between learning a fact and changing a policy preference is more than a methodological detail. Information may influence an outcome only when the corrected belief is relevant to the respondent's evaluative criteria and when the source and the message are accepted as credible. Jørgensen and Osmundsen (2022) provide a clear illustration: randomized corrections concerning non-Western immigrants' welfare dependence, criminality, and population share prompted factual updating among Danish respondents, but the authors found selective interpretation and no corresponding change in immigration policy preferences. This result constrains strong claims that misinformation correction by itself can reliably transform immigration attitudes.

The contrast is not absolute. Grigorieff et al. (2020) report improved estimates of immigrant population characteristics together with greater support for legal immigration after a factual-information package. Conversely, Dylong and Uebelmesser (2024) show that correcting beliefs can change welfare-state concerns and labor-market worries in different

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directions. These findings call for analysis of the specific information, baseline beliefs, and measured policy outcome, rather than a general claim that factual correction works or fails.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution: A Conditional Information-Processing Framework

The review proposes a conditional information-processing framework that separates four analytically different stages: (i) experimentally delivered content or stimulus, (ii) psychological interpretation, (iii) respondent- and context-level boundary conditions, and (iv) measured outcomes. This separation extends a simple knowledge-deficit account by making explicit that successful reception and comprehension of factual information is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for changing all types of immigration-related policy preferences. Equally, it distinguishes the causal effect of assigning a stimulus from untested assertions about the mechanisms through which that stimulus operates.

The stimulus stage distinguishes statistical corrections, fiscal claims, cultural cues and attributes of hypothetical people. These treatments manipulate different informational objects. Effects of profile attributes cannot be interpreted as direct estimates of learning from a factual correction, even when both are elicited through a survey.

Candidate mechanisms include belief updating, re-evaluation of fiscal consequences, empathy, threat salience, and perceived deservingness. Yet many included experiments identify total treatment effects without separately identifying a mediator. The framework therefore treats these as possible pathways unless directly tested.

Moderators include prior knowledge, ideology, national identity, trust, institutional environment and perceived group distance. Such factors can affect whether an accurate message seems relevant or credible and whether factual learning changes preferences. Cross-study variation remains suggestive because these moderators were not measured consistently.

The final stage concerns the outcome. Factual recall, empathy, immigration-policy support, hypothetical admissions, and incentivized donations are analytically distinct. Walentek et al. (2025) and Cattaneo et al. (2025) measure decisions involving real donations, but those outcomes are not interchangeable with voting, long-term policy support, or

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everyday intergroup behavior. Outcome-specific interpretation is essential to avoid apparent contradictions that merely reflect different endpoints.

Table 4 summarizes the framework as an interpretive device. It is a theory-guided organizing typology rather than a meta-analytic result, and its proposed mechanisms should be subjected to explicit experimental tests in future work.

Table 4: Conditional information processing: stimulus, candidate mechanism, boundary conditions, and outcome

Experimental stimulus	Candidate pathway (not assumed proven)	Boundary conditions	Relevant outcome and illustrative evidence
Population size / factual corrections	Revision of statistical beliefs; reassessment of relevance	Prior beliefs; source credibility; strength of identity commitments	Knowledge can rise without policy change (Jørgensen & Osmundsen, 2022).
Refugee education / economic information	Reassessment of fiscal or labor-market consequences	Baseline concerns; perceived labor-market competition	Fiscal and labor-market concerns can move in different directions (Lergetporer et al., 2021; Dylong & Uebelmesser, 2024).
Profiles, vignettes, shared-value cues	Attribute evaluation; perceived similarity; deservingness	National history; social and political identity	Changes in stated admission or restriction preferences (Turper et al., 2015; Jiang et al., 2024).
Contact and personal narratives	Identification, perspective taking, or affective salience	Audience; intensity and comparator of intervention	No universal narrative superiority over factual lessons (Florio, 2022).
Visual media framing	Salience and humanitarian concern	Ethnocentrism; ideology; country and media environment	Observed decision to donate part of remuneration (Walentek et al., 2025).
Recipient or target assignment	In-group affinity and out-group distance	Political orientation; perceived group distance	Actual donation and cash-share decisions (Cattaneo et al., 2025).

Source: *Authors*

The theoretical contribution is not the general observation that information has conditional effects. It is a design-sensitive mapping of where informational, identity-based and evaluative processes may intervene between experimental stimulus and specific public-policy outcomes, and of which moderators merit direct testing. The framework generates hypotheses for comparable experimental designs rather than claiming that every proposed pathway has already been causally demonstrated.

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5.3 Implications for Public Policy and Central and Eastern Europe

Public communication should be evaluated against its stated objective. Accurate knowledge requires factual measurement; informed deliberation about costs, eligibility or rights requires balanced comprehension; participation requires behavioral evidence. Policymakers should not infer legitimate or lasting consent from short-term changes in expressed support. Communication should be transparent, substantively accurate, and open about uncertainty and trade-offs.

The findings do not justify indiscriminate "persuasion optimization." For example, a public agency disseminating information on demographic pressures should not treat a statistically significant increase in expressed support as sufficient evidence of legitimacy or durable persuasion. The communication must also remain factually sound, responsive to public concerns, non-stigmatizing toward affected groups, and open to scrutiny. Information interventions are tools for improving the quality of public understanding, not substitutes for democratic decision-making.

Central and Eastern European contexts merit explicit testing because migration experiences, welfare institutions, media systems, and trust differ across countries. The reviewed evidence includes the region: Walentek et al. (2025) studied Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Croatia alongside other European countries. Its intervention preceded the February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, limiting its transfer to later refugee experiences.

A result from Germany, Japan or the United States is not automatically transferable to Czechia or neighboring states. Relevant future experiments should vary message source, migration context, identity salience and local institutional trust, use harmonized measures across countries and test behavioral as well as attitudinal outcomes.

5.4 Limits of the Evidence and Priorities for Future Research

The 47-study sample is reconstructed from a prior extraction table rather than repeatable search exports; historical dates, full queries, and screening logs are missing. Its selection totals are consistent but not independently replicated. Accordingly, this is a focused, PRISMA-informed mapping, not a newly conducted comprehensive systematic review.

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Second, core information-provision experiments are combined with adjacent designs that use different randomization units and target different constructs. Some tests examine the effects of receiving information; others manipulate attributes of hypothetical persons, question wording, exposure to images, or recipients of donations. Evidence for each design must be interpreted at the level of its own intervention and outcome. The provisional core/related coding remains subject to verification against primary methods sections and cannot yet be treated as a validated census of designs.

Third, outcomes are heterogeneous in their timing, external validity, and consequentiality. Several experiments assess immediate survey reactions; some include delayed assessments, while a smaller subset elicits choices such as donations from participants' remuneration. A behavioral task provides stronger evidence about that task than a hypothetical preference question but may still lack external validity for voting, day-to-day intergroup contact, or long-run policy support. Future research should distinguish immediate knowledge change, delayed attitude change, verified behavior, and institutional or policy-level consequences.

Country coverage is uneven, and no formal risk-of-bias assessment has been completed. Missing information on sample representativeness, treatment implementation, attrition or preregistration prevents reliability-weighted comparison across every study. Unknown quality should not be presumed equivalent quality; full-text verification is a priority.

The strongest future priorities are pre-registered tests of cognitive and emotional mechanisms, direct comparisons of factual corrections with identity-relevant framing in matched samples, longer-term measurement, and cross-national replications using meaningful behavioral outcomes. An important limitation of the present evidence map is that source-level full-text methods and effect estimates have not been independently replicated for every included article. The synthesis therefore avoids pooled claims of intervention effectiveness and identifies claims supported by the supplied extraction and targeted primary-source checks.

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6. CONCLUSION

This review has mapped 47 empirical articles on survey-experimental and related interventions concerning immigration and asylum attitudes published between 2010 and 2025. By distinguishing core factual information provision from profile, vignette, framing, narrative, and behavioral designs, it avoids treating heterogeneous experimental estimands as evidence for one uniform effect of information. The findings demonstrate that factual updating can occur without changes in immigration-policy preferences, while selected economic information, profile cues and humanitarian frames can alter other attitudes or outcomes under specific conditions.

The central theoretical contribution is a conditional information-processing framework that separates experimental stimulus, its interpretation, measured outcome, and respondent or institutional context. For public policy, the findings support communication that is empirically accurate, attentive to diverse sources of concern, and evaluated against explicitly defined outcomes rather than presumed political persuasion. Their application to Central and Eastern European countries requires contextual validation rather than direct extrapolation from Western European or US experiments.

Missing historical search records and incomplete full-text verification limit reproducibility; heterogeneous research designs, short-term outcomes, and uneven geographic coverage limit generalizability. Future research should prioritize transparent retrieval, harmonized measures, longitudinal and cross-national designs, and consequential behavioral outcomes.

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