

## The nature, drivers, and frequency of immigration misperceptions in Switzerland

Marco Bitschnau, University of Konstanz and Philipp Lutz, Vrije Universiteit

### Abstract

Public perceptions of immigration are notoriously inaccurate, with many people being inclined to overrate both the number of immigrants and their negative impact on society. While gaining some attention in recent years, the study of these misperceptions about immigration has been hampered by a striking lack of data and difficulties to develop sound empirical measurements. This presentation will address these constraints by introducing a novel survey module for such misperceptions. Based on a multilingual large-N survey conducted in Switzerland, evidence concerning their nature and frequency among the general population will be presented. Finally, the presentation will discuss several implications of the conceptualization and measurement of misperceptions about immigration, and how they can help us to advance our understanding of popular attitudes and policy preferences alike.

### Biography

**Marco Bitschnau** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz (Germany), where he is affiliated with both the Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality” and the Department of Sociology. After studying sociology, political science, and economics in Friedrichshafen, Paris, and Cambridge, he received his PhD from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland) in 2022. His research interests lie at the intersection of political sociology and comparative politics, and include migration, populism, and social conflict— with a particular focus on the origins and measurement of politically relevant misperceptions.

**Philipp Lutz** is a Senior Researcher at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and Assistant Professor in Political Science at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Netherlands). He obtained his PhD in 2019 from the University of Bern (Switzerland) on comparative migration politics and the question of how European governments respond to the competing pressures for economic openness and political closure. His wider research interest is in understanding the political consequences of international migration covering comparative politics as well as international governance. A more recent research agenda seeks to advance our theoretical understanding and empirical measurement of public perceptions and misperceptions about immigration.