

Elections in Europe (1), see extremist parties weaponizing migration and exiles who would be sources of all the evils suffered by Western society - employment (unfair competition vis-à-vis nationals), housing (refugees would take the places of nationals), or crime (exiles, and particularly those in an irregular situation, would be potential criminals)... It is common on social networks to pin a terrible news item, committed by a foreign person and/or in an irregular situation, to draw categorical and general conclusions (2). This is a well-known strategy – the 'diversion event' described by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (3). The scientific proof of the facts contradicts these outrageous and misleading analyses, but the damage is done - the wrong information travels faster than the right one. Negative emotions (anger, hatred...) blind minds and throw confusion away.

Migrants are vital for the economy, society and cultural identity in Europe as well as in the US, a very telling example in difficult times for foreigners with a very aggressive policy of the anti-migration police (ICE) intended to hit the spirits. Migration is an essential component of the "American dream" - a melting pot of people from different countries who have contributed for centuries to the construction and growth of the United States. In June 2025, 51.9 million immigrants lived in the United States, and represented 15.4% of the country's population. The United States is the world's leading destination for migrants, with 17.2% of all migrants in 2024, even though it represents only 4.2% of the global population (4)

Most migrants choose to go to high-income countries such as the United States, Canada or European countries for their great economic and social stability. The reasons for immigrating migrants are generally classified according to their motivations for leaving their country - positive pull factors (positive factors) and negative push factors (reasons to flee their country). In both cases, the demanding migratory journey they had to overcome explains that they respect the rules of the host country and do not belong to a "risk" group for crime. Their expectations are high upon arriving in the United States and they wish to build a new personal, social, and professional life.

In 2023, unauthorized immigrants accounted for 27% of all immigrants in the US, up from 22% in 2021 (5). Their number reached a record level of 14 million in 2023 after two consecutive years of growth. Since January 2025, the population of unauthorized immigrants has started to decrease, with the expulsions and the reduction of protections decided by the Trump administration. The label "unauthorized immigrants" brings together a complex range of statuses, including immigrants who have legally entered the United States (a large majority) and whose visa has expired. A minority has entered the United States illegally. The number of "illegal" immigrants in the American workforce rose from 7.8 million in 2021 to a record 9.7 million in 2023. They accounted for 5.6% of the US workforce in 2023, a new high after a previous peak of 5.4% in 2007.

Based on crime data published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and demographic data from the United States Census Bureau, the American Immigration Council (6) studied the relationship between total crime rates and the share of immigrants in the population between 2017 and 2022. No statistically significant correlation exists between the share of migrants in

the population and the total crime rate regardless of the State. The AIC compared crime data with demographic data from 1980 to 2022 (most recent available data). As the share of immigrants in the population increased, the crime rate decreased. In 1980, immigrants accounted for 6.2% of the US population and the total crime rate was 5,900 crimes per 100,000 people. In 2022, the share of migrants had more than doubled to 13.9%, while the total crime rate had dropped by 60.4% to 2,335 crimes per 100,000 people. The rate of violent crime decreased by 34.5% and the rate of property crimes dropped by 63.3%. Immigrants to the US commit fewer crimes than the US-born population (8). This is true for all groups of immigrants, including "unauthorized" immigrants. This is supported by research and results from the only US state, Texas, that tracks criminal arrests and convictions based on immigration status. Immigration can even reduce criminal activity, particularly violent, with inclusive policies and social environments with well-established immigrant populations (7).

In France, the Observatory for Immigration and Demography (OID) enjoys a certain media notoriety acquired with some opinion media (CNews, Europe 1..belonging to the French tycoon Vincent Bollore, with a conservative spirit). For a researcher from the Center for Prospective Studies and International Information (CEPII), the OID uses good figures published by public organizations (INSEE, the French Institute for National Statistics, OECD...) but its members do not publish in scientific journals; their work is not recognized by the academic community (8). The director of the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) praised the "original" angle of study of the OID which would insist, according to him, on "the social effects of immigration". Yet many specialists and experts such as the French researcher and professor in demography François Héran, who held the Migration Chair at the Collège de France, points to "method biases allowing for increasing orders of magnitude". For example, citing absolute figures on the number of migrants makes no sense if one does not relate them to the host country's population. France is not "overwhelmed by immigration" as the OID warns - according to OECD or UN data, France ranks 35th in the world for the proportion of immigrants and 17th in Western Europe. An economist from CEPII also highlights some surprising approximations and calculations, such as the impact of immigration on the French economy. According to the OECD, foreigners contribute 86% of public spending, for the OID the ratio is only 45.3% - 40 points of difference that change everything.

When the message is emotional and passionate, it is no longer objective, especially on a subject as conflicting and political as migration. This an example of the "aptitude of numbers to betrayal" – the more sensitive the subject, the more threatening the weapon.

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- (1) The legislative elections in the Netherlands in October 2025 where the far-right Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders, anti-European and anti-migration, was defeated by a new liberal, pro-European party
- (2) A Sudanese refugee who had killed and assaulted passersby during a knife attack in Romans sur Insère (Rhône Alpes region in France) in 2020, is trialed in October 2025 - he suffered from a psychotic state and a delusion of persecution, a passage to act during a period of confinement that aggravated his paranoia, Soren Seelow 'Le Monde' Tuesday 28 October 2005
- (3) Pierre Bourdieu (1996), « Sur la télévision », BNF-
<https://essentiels.bnf.fr/fr/extrait/c2daf9d1-f010-4c49-926f-fb7593648529-sur-television>
- (4) Migration Policy Institute and data published by the UN (2024) used by [Stephanie Kramer](#) and [Jeffrey S. Passel](#), “**What the data says about immigrants in the U.S.**”, Pew Research Center, 21 August 2025- <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/08/21/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>
- (5) [Jeffrey S. Passel](#) and [Jens Manuel Krogstad](#) “U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023”- 21 Août 2025- <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2025/08/21/u-s-unauthorized-immigrant-population-reached-a-record-14-million-in-2023/>
- (6) Hannah Boyke and Yared Avalos Iniguez, “Immigrants Do Not Commit More Crimes in the US, Despite Fearmongering”, October 17, 2024, American Immigration Council (AIC) <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/immigrants-do-not-commit-more-crimes-in-the-us-despite-fearmongering/>
- (7) Matthew T. Lee & Ramiro Martinez Junior “Immigration reduces crime, an emerging scholarly consensus”, in Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance, Volume 13, 3-16, Esmerald Group Publishing-
<https://www.umass.edu/preferen/You%20Must%20Read%20This/Lee%20Immigration%20and%20Crime.pdf>
- (8) Julia Pascual “Le think tank qui fabrique la peur de l’immigration », Le Monde, jeudi 30 octobre 2025