

# Report Reminds Us That Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric Harms Us All

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If you follow news headlines around migration, you could easily be forgiven for thinking it's a concept that has no benefits whatsoever. Of course, that couldn't be further from reality, and the latest in a long line of [research](#) to support that stance comes from the Club de Madrid, which is an association of former Presidents and Prime Ministers from around the world.

AS FEATURED ON  
the **TechTalk** show

The report aims to directly tackle much of the misinformation that currently surrounds the migration debate. The authors address various issues in depth and find that migration is seldom as clear-cut as the narrative suggests, and a nuanced approach is much more sensible.

"Migration has long been at the center of public debate, but it is rarely treated as a complex public policy," the authors explain. "For decades, political practice has reduced migration to a question of security—border control, enforcement, deterrence—while neglecting its broader economic and social dimensions."

## Various benefits

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The authors explain that much of the debate around migration is framed around security, and therefore migrants are perceived in a threatening way. Not only is the supposed security risk significantly overblown, but it also overlooks the many other benefits migration brings to a host society.

One of the key areas is around jobs. Opponents often argue that migrants take the jobs of locals, or suppress wages at least, but the reality is different. This is largely because most Western countries are experiencing an aging population that is shrinking the available workforce (while also increasing the number of dependents).

"The net growth in the U.S. labor force since 2008 has been driven almost entirely by growth in foreign-born workers, reflecting growth across all skill levels driven by undocumented and visa-managed flows alike," the report says.

With so many Western economies struggling with sclerotic productivity, this has real implications. Migrants are well known to bring new ideas and create new companies, while the taxes they pay also support a wide range of social programs.

## An economic boost

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The report cites a number of studies showing that an increase in migration is typically linked to rises in employment, productivity, and economic growth. Indeed, a 1% rise in migration was linked with a 0.2% rise in employment among native-born workers. This may seem counterintuitive, as surely more workers means more competition, but the reality is that not only do migrants create new companies, they also allow native-born workers to take on more specialized work.

Of course, while migration is typically a boost to the economy, the authors are not blind to the various challenges caused either, especially in areas such as housing and rising demand for public services as migrants integrate themselves into both the economy and wider society.

That integration is something the report tackles head-on. For instance, the authors argue that successful integration requires moving beyond siloed engagement within immigrant communities and instead strengthening mainstream institutions—such as public services, employers, and NGOs—so they can effectively serve both newcomers and native-born populations.

They emphasise creating accessible platforms that allow immigrants to shape the services they receive, while ensuring those services are culturally responsive and trauma-informed, given the challenges many newcomers face. Ultimately, they recommend framing immigrant inclusion as a shared societal benefit, highlighting the economic, social, and civic contributions newcomers make to their communities.

## Political targets

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Sadly, across the Western world, immigrants have become easy political targets in recent years, even as logic highlights their importance to economies and societies. This is especially so among right-wing populist parties, which are exploiting anti-immigrant sentiment to divide societies and erode democracy itself.

Sadly, many mainstream political parties have taken to countering this by adopting a similarly hardline strategy against immigration themselves. It's an approach the report reminds us is inherently flawed.

"It's a tempting strategy, and we see it happening where mainstream parties shift their rhetoric in a more anti-immigrant direction to remain politically viable," the authors explain.

"Sometimes, in the short term, they succeed, but often they don't. In the process, they legitimize and reinforce some of the really false narratives about immigrants."

A better approach is to do much better to help immigrants integrate and include themselves in society. If we're not looking to demonize someone just because of their nationality, this is of

fundamental importance, both to the individuals themselves but also to our democracies.

## **A Choice for the Future**

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The evidence is clear: migration, when properly managed, strengthens economies, enriches societies, and helps address demographic challenges facing aging Western nations. Yet the choice before us isn't merely about accepting this reality, it's about how we respond to it.

Will we continue down a path of divisive rhetoric that ignores economic necessity and human dignity alike? Or will we invest in the institutions, policies, and social frameworks that enable successful integration and unlock migration's full potential?

The answer will shape more than migration policy. It will determine whether our democracies can tackle complex challenges with nuance and evidence, or whether we'll continue to sacrifice long-term prosperity for short-term political gain.

The Club de Madrid's research makes one thing abundantly clear. We can't afford to treat migration as simply a security issue any longer. Our aging populations, labor shortages, and economic challenges demand a more sophisticated approach. It requires an approach that recognizes migrants not as threats, but as contributors to our collective future.

The question isn't whether we need migration. It's whether we have the political courage to build the systems that make it work for everyone.