

Appendix: The Muted Consequences of Correct Information about Immigration

August 17th, 2017

Appendix A: Manipulation Check

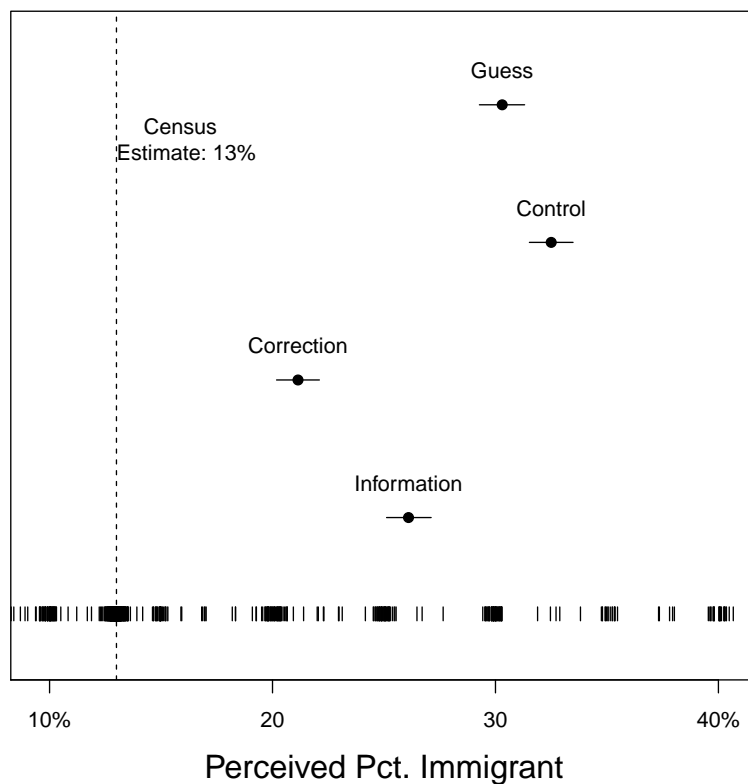


Figure 1: This figure depicts a manipulation check in the 2017 Morning Consult experiment in which respondents were asked to again report their guesses about the share of U.S. residents born abroad after the experimental manipulations. It reports estimated coefficients and 95% confidence intervals when regressing 7,558 non-Hispanic respondents' guesses on indicators for each experimental condition. The vertical lines at bottom illustrate the distribution of guesses.

Appendix B: Local Information

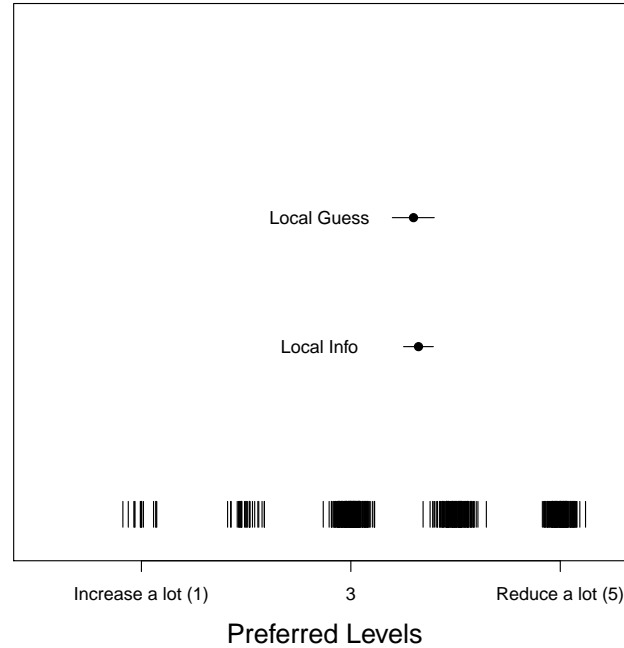


Figure 2: This figure shows the results of being provided information versus guessing about the share of respondents' ZIP code made up by immigrants on respondents' preferred immigration levels. The dependent variable's distribution is depicted on the x-axis, and it varies from 1 (increase immigration a lot) to 5 (decrease immigration a lot). N=308 from 2008 KN.

Appendix C: Unauthorized Immigration

Although most of our experiments focus on attitudes toward authorized immigration, debates about unauthorized immigration are among the most salient and divisive (see also Wright, Levy and Citrin, 2016). Our results may be limited because of a mismatch between the information provided (which is about the total immigrant population) and the information likely to motivate attitudes (which is about unauthorized immigration).

We tested that possibility using another experiment embedded in the 2006 CCES, in which a separate group of 470 respondents were asked to guess the size of the unauthorized population nationwide. The mean estimate in this case was approximately 21%; the median estimate was 10%. Although there is no reliable census of illegal immigrants, in 2006 the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that approximately 3 percent of those living in the US came here illegally (Passel, 2006). If this is accurate, then the mean estimate of 21% in the CCES is off by a factor of 7.

Randomly chosen respondents were then corrected using a question about a news story similar to those in the main manuscript, one which tells respondents that about 3% of U.S. residents are unauthorized immigrants: “[w]e are interested in whether you’ve heard about a story that has been in the news lately. The story is: researchers have estimated that about 3 out of every 100 people living in the United States entered this country illegally. Have you heard about this story?” The control group’s members were asked if they had seen a news story about illegal immigration, but without any reference to the estimated share of the population here without authorization (“...The story is about a new report on illegal immigration in the United States. Have you heard about this story?”).

Respondents were then asked five questions about their preferred policy toward unauthorized immigration:

- How serious of a problem do you think the issue of illegal immigration is for the country right now?
- Which of the following two statements comes closer to your point of view? 1) Illegal immigrants in the long-run become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes; 2) Illegal immigrants cost the taxpayers too much by using government services like public education and medical services. Do you feel strongly or not so strongly about that?
- One proposal would allow illegal immigrants who have been living and working in the United States for a number of years, and who do not have a criminal record, to start on a path to citizenship by registering that they are in the country, paying a fine, getting fingerprinted, and learning English, among other requirements. Do you support or oppose this proposal?
- Another proposal is to toughen immigration laws by making it a felony to be in the United States illegally. It also establishes mandatory prison sentences for reentering the United States illegally after having already been deported. Do you support or oppose this?
- Now that you have heard some of the immigration legislation proposed by some members of Congress, which would you prefer: 1) An approach that only focuses on tougher enforcement of immigration laws; OR 2) An approach that includes both tougher enforcement of immigration

laws and also creates a guest worker program that allows illegal immigrants to work legally in the U.S. on temporary visas.

These questions were combined into an index. There was no discernible difference in immigration attitudes between the two experimental conditions ($b=0.06$, $s.e.=0.13$), as demonstrated in Figure 3.

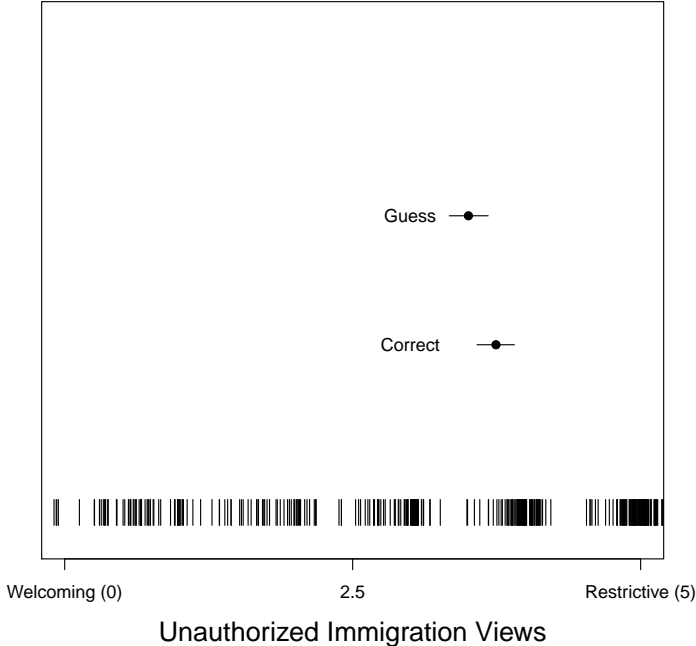


Figure 3: This figure shows the results of being corrected versus guessing on an index of policy attitudes related to unauthorized immigration. The dependent variable is depicted on the x-axis with random jittering, and it varies from 0 (welcoming) to 5 (restrictive). $N=470$ from 2006 CCES.

Appendix D: Effects by Party

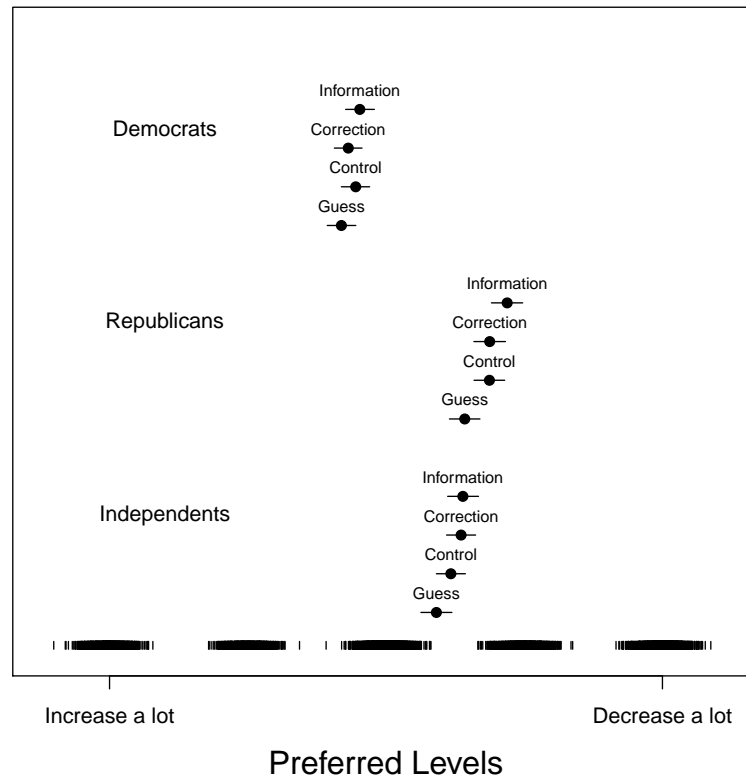


Figure 4: This figure uses the 2017 Morning Consult data to examine the experimental results separately for self-identified non-Hispanic Democrats (n=2,638), Republicans (n=2,442), and Independents/others (n=2,478).

Appendix E: Effects by Education

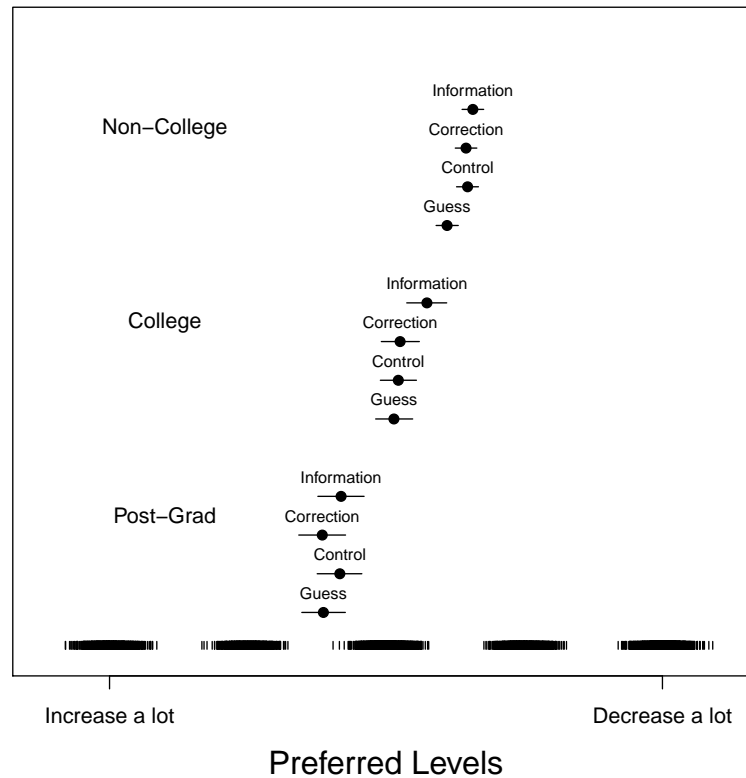


Figure 5: This figure uses the 2017 Morning Consult data to examine the experimental results separately for non-Hispanic respondents without a college degree ($n=4,877$), with a college degree ($n=1,436$), and with post-college education ($n=1,245$).

References

- Passel, Jeffrey S. 2006. "The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the United States." Pew Hispanic Center.
- Wright, Matthew, Morris Levy and Jack Citrin. 2016. "Public Attitudes toward Immigration Policy across the Legal/Illegal divide: The Role of Categorical and Attribute-based Decision-making." *Political Behavior* 38(1):229–253.