

# IMMIGRATION AS A BATTLEGROUND OF SOVEREIGNTY, SECURITY, AND ELECTORAL LEGITIMACY: PARTISAN DISCOURSE ON X FROM PRE-TRUMP ARGUMENTATION TO THE 2026 U.S. MIDTERM CONFLICT

**AHMED SAMIR HAMMAD\***

Associate Professor, Radio and Television Department, College of Media and Communication, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU), Saudi Arabia.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [ashammd@imamu.edu.sa](mailto:ashammd@imamu.edu.sa), [ahmadh30@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadh30@gmail.com);

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4911-7924>

**DEIAA ELDEEN SAAD**

Assistant Professor, Radio and Television Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Al-Azhar University, Egypt. Email: [deiaasaad@gmail.com](mailto:deiaasaad@gmail.com); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1819-4162>

## Abstract

Immigration has become a U.S. political battleground where sovereignty, security, and electoral legitimacy collide on digital platforms rather than at the border itself. This article examines how partisan discourse on X (formerly Twitter) evolved from structured pre-2025 argumentation into acute communicative conflict following Trump's return to the presidency. Treating executive actions as mediated events rather than evaluating policy, the study analyzes platform discourse as strategic public argumentation within an international media field. The analysis draws on three X datasets (2,847 raw posts; 1,243 filtered) collected during 2023–2024, establishing a baseline before Trump's second-term executive orders. A mixed-methods design combines quantitative mapping of posting intensity, engagement, frame distribution, and argumentative strategy with qualitative critical discourse and pragma-dialectical argumentation analysis. Findings reveal that Republican discourse overwhelmingly securitized immigration through crisis, invasion, and governance-failure frames, while Democratic discourse attempted counter-securitization through bipartisan credentialism, administrative competence, and bounded humanitarianism. Biden's June 2024 proclamation marked a turning point, conceding the security frame while seeking procedural legitimacy, yet Republicans reframed it as insufficient. Trump's January 2025 executive orders completed the migration of platform rhetoric into state authority, institutionalizing invasion and sovereignty frames as legal declarations. This discourse-to-policy conversion creates a structural dilemma for the 2026 midterms: Republicans hold advantage while immigration remains framed as operational border control, but Democrats can reclaim initiative by shifting debate from whether sovereignty demands enforcement to whether enforcement respects democratic legitimacy, constitutional bounds, and international standing.

**Keywords:** Sovereignty; Securitization; Electoral Legitimacy; Immigration Discourse; X (Twitter); Critical Discourse Analysis; Argumentation Analysis; Framing; Mediatized Conflict; International Media; U.S. Midterm Elections; Trump Immigration Policy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: IMMIGRATION AS AN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONFLICT, NOT MERELY A BORDER POLICY

Illegal immigration has become one of the most symbolically saturated issues in contemporary U.S. political communication. It functions not only as a matter of border administration or asylum processing, but simultaneously as a media object through

which parties define the nation, allocate blame, construct risk, dramatize governmental competence, and speak to both domestic voters and international audiences [1, 2]. Immigration is best understood as a mediated conflict field: produced through policy announcements, platform messages, campaign materials, news amplification, visual evidence, polling narratives, and international reactions [3, 4].

This study does not approach immigration primarily as a legal or administrative problem. It studies immigration as discourse—examining not whether a particular policy is normatively correct, but how partisan actors transform immigration into material that serves electoral, ideological, and identity-construction purposes [5, 6].

This framing positions the article within international media studies and political communication rather than within immigration law, public administration, or narrowly defined political science.

The empirical anchor is a pre-crackdown dataset: three collections of X posts (2,847 total; 1,243 strictly relevant after filtering) gathered before Trump's second-term executive orders were enacted. These posts capture the argumentative landscape that preceded the institutional hardening of 2025.

Rather than evaluating individual policies, the study maps how immigration was already constructed through securitization, crisis framing, blame attribution, and counter-framing on both sides of the partisan divide [7, 8]. It then uses the 2025 executive orders as a textual comparison layer to show how platform rhetoric migrated into institutional language, and projects the dilemma both parties face heading into the 2026 midterms.

The article makes three contributions. First, it demonstrates that U.S. immigration discourse on X operates as strategic political argumentation within an international media ecosystem, not merely as spontaneous public opinion [9, 10].

Second, it integrates critical discourse analysis with argumentation analysis—two traditions that share theoretical roots but are rarely combined in empirical platform studies—to reveal how rhetorical structures both reflect and construct partisan positions [11, 12].

Third, it provides a predictive framework for the 2026 midterms by showing how the pre-crackdown argumentative positions created structural advantages and vulnerabilities for both parties once enforcement language became state action.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical framework, combining securitization theory, framing, critical discourse analysis, and pragma-dialectical argumentation. Section 3 describes the data and methodology. Section 4 presents quantitative findings.

Section 5 develops qualitative analysis of Republican and Democratic discursive strategies. Section 6 discusses Biden's 2024 proclamation as a turning point. Section 7 analyzes Trump's 2025 executive orders as discourse-to-policy conversion. Section 8 projects the 2026 midterm communicative landscape. Section 9 concludes.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATING CDA, ARGUMENTATION, SECURITIZATION, AND FRAMING**

### **2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis in the Study of Immigration**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been the dominant methodological paradigm for studying how migration is represented in public communication [1, 13]. Fairclough's three-dimensional model—text, discursive practice, social practice—treats language as simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by social relations, offering a layered approach that moves from micro-level linguistic features to macro-level power structures [11]. Van Dijk's sociocognitive approach emphasizes how ideological structures organize group boundaries through discourse, making explicit the us/them dichotomies that underpin immigration rhetoric [5]. Wodak's discourse-historical approach adds the dimension of intertextuality and recontextualization, tracking how arguments migrate across genres and historical moments [2, 14].

Applied to immigration specifically, CDA has demonstrated how media and political discourse construct migrants as threats, victims, or economic objects through systematic lexical choices, metaphorical structures, and argumentative topoi [1, 15]. Baker et al. showed that corpus-assisted CDA could reveal large-scale discursive patterns in British press coverage of refugees and asylum seekers, establishing the methodological synergy between quantitative corpus methods and qualitative discourse interpretation that this study extends to social media data [1]. More recently, scholarship has applied CDA to digital platforms, analyzing how anti-immigration discourse circulates on Facebook, Twitter/X, and YouTube through mechanisms that differ substantially from legacy media distribution [16, 17, 18].

### **2.2 Argumentation Analysis and Political Discourse on Platforms**

Argumentation analysis provides the structural complement to CDA's ideological critique. While CDA explains what is being done through discourse and whose interests it serves, argumentation analysis explains how claims are constructed, defended, and attacked within communicative encounters [12, 19]. Toulmin's model of argument structure—claim, data, warrant, backing, qualifier, rebuttal—provides a micro-analytical tool for decomposing individual posts into their persuasive components [19]. Van Eemeren's pragma-dialectical theory adds normative and descriptive dimensions: it describes how argumentation ideally functions in resolving disagreement, and it identifies strategic maneuvering—the tension between pursuing rhetorical effectiveness and maintaining dialectical reasonableness—as the core dynamic of real political argument [12].

Recent studies have demonstrated the applicability of argumentation theory to Twitter/X discourse, showing that despite character constraints, political posts exhibit identifiable argumentative structures including claims, warrants, and rebuttals [20, 21]. Elliott-Maksymowicz, Nikolaev, and Porpora found that tweet-length posts sustain recognizable argumentation patterns and that political actors strategically compress arguments to maximize persuasive impact within platform affordances [20]. Macagno's

work on argumentation profiles offers a framework for classifying recurring patterns of argument schemes deployed by political actors across communicative contexts [22]. These studies collectively establish that platforms like X are not simply channels for pre-formed opinions but sites where argument is actively constructed, compressed, and contested under specific technological constraints.

### **2.3 Securitization Theory and the Discursive Construction of Immigration Threats**

Securitization theory, developed within the Copenhagen School of international relations, provides the conceptual bridge between immigration discourse and security politics [23]. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde argued that security is not an objective condition but a speech act: an issue becomes a security matter when an authoritative actor successfully presents it as an existential threat requiring extraordinary measures beyond normal political deliberation [23]. Applied to immigration, securitization explains how routine border management becomes reconstituted as national emergency through discursive processes [24, 25].

The securitization of immigration operates through several identifiable discursive mechanisms: the construction of invasion metaphors, the conflation of migration with criminality, the framing of cultural difference as existential risk, and the representation of state institutions as failing in their protective function [7, 17, 26]. Ekström, Krzyżanowski, and Johnson showed how saying “criminality” functions as a proxy for saying “immigration,” demonstrating that securitization frequently operates through displaced reference rather than direct nomination [7].

On social media platforms, securitization is amplified by algorithmic visibility structures that reward emotionally charged threat narratives, creating what Papacharissi describes as “affective publics”—networked formations organized around shared sentiment rather than deliberative exchange [27].

### **2.4 Framing and Agenda Setting in Mediatized Political Conflict**

Framing theory provides the analytical vocabulary for describing how partisan actors select, emphasize, and organize aspects of immigration into coherent interpretive packages [28, 29].

Entman’s canonical definition—selecting some aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in communication—captures the fundamental operation through which immigration is transformed from a complex administrative reality into a simplified political narrative [28]. The literature distinguishes between issue frames (how a topic is presented) and equivalence frames (how alternative descriptions of the same situation produce different judgments), both operative in immigration discourse [29].

In the context of mediatized politics, framing operates within what Chadwick terms the hybrid media system: legacy media, digital platforms, and political actors interact in complex cycles of mutual amplification, with social media providing both the raw material for news coverage and the distribution channel for strategic political messaging [3].

Immigration framing on X is therefore never purely platform-native; it exists in constant dialogue with television coverage, press conferences, polling data, and international news cycles, creating what Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak describe as the mediatisation and politicisation cycle of migration discourse [4].

## 2.5 Integrating the Framework: A Mixed Discourse-Argumentation Approach

This study integrates these four theoretical streams into a unified analytical framework. CDA provides the ideological lens—asking whose interests are served by particular representations. Argumentation analysis provides the structural lens—asking how claims are assembled, defended, and attacked.

Securitization theory provides the thematic lens—asking how immigration is constituted as threat. Framing theory provides the strategic lens—asking how selective emphasis organizes public interpretation.

The integration is not merely additive. The theoretical claim is that political immigration discourse on X operates simultaneously at all four levels: every post constructs an ideological position (CDA), does so through identifiable argumentative moves (argumentation analysis), often invokes or resists security logic (securitization), and selects particular aspects of reality for salience (framing).

This integrated approach follows Hammad’s demonstration that U.S. campaign rhetoric can be productively analyzed through combined structural and pragmatic discourse analysis, revealing how ideological and power structures interact with socio-political context to produce strategic political communication [6].

## 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Data Collection and Corpus Description

The empirical basis consists of three datasets of posts collected from X (formerly Twitter), comprising a total of 2,847 raw posts. **These datasets were collected during 2023–2024, establishing a pre-crackdown discursive baseline captured before Trump’s second-term executive orders on immigration took effect in January 2025.**

All quantitative measurements—posting intensity, engagement metrics, frame distribution, and argumentative strategy frequency—derive exclusively from this 2023–2024 baseline corpus. Post-2025 discourse shifts discussed in later sections represent contextual and predictive discourse analysis rather than newly measured X data. The collection targeted politically active accounts from both major U.S. parties: verified accounts of elected officials, party organizations, prominent political commentators, and campaign-affiliated accounts that regularly posted about immigration.

The three datasets correspond to distinct temporal windows within the 2023–2024 period, capturing the evolving argumentative landscape before institutional enforcement hardened, and enabling longitudinal observation of how frames and strategic positions developed during this baseline period.

### 3.2 Relevance Filtering and Final Corpus

From the initial 2,847 posts, a systematic relevance filtering process isolated those posts that substantively engaged with immigration as a political issue rather than merely mentioning immigration-adjacent keywords in passing. The filtering criteria required that posts:

- 1) Contained explicit reference to immigration policy, border security, asylum, deportation, or related policy domains;
- 2) Presented an identifiable argumentative or framing position (not merely informational or purely promotional);
- 3) Were produced by accounts identifiable as politically affiliated or politically oriented.

This filtering reduced the corpus to 1,243 strictly relevant immigration posts, which constitute the analytical corpus for both quantitative and qualitative phases. The retention rate (43.7%) is consistent with filtering ratios reported in comparable social media discourse studies, where topical keyword capture routinely oversamples tangential content [30, 31].

### 3.3 Mixed-Methods Design

This study employs a sequential mixed-methods design integrating quantitative content mapping with qualitative critical discourse and argumentation analysis. The design does not function as simple triangulation; the quantitative phase identifies patterns and distributions that the qualitative phase explains through close textual analysis of representative cases [1, 30].

**Quantitative phase:** The quantitative analysis maps the corpus along four dimensions: (a) posting intensity by party affiliation and temporal window; (b) engagement metrics (likes, reposts, replies) as proxies for resonance; (c) dominant frame distribution using a deductively derived coding scheme; and (d) argumentative strategy frequency. The coding scheme was developed through iterative review of a random subsample ( $n = 200$ ) and draws on established typologies from the securitization and framing literatures [23, 28, 29].

The frame typology distinguishes six primary frames: - **Security/threat frame:** immigration presented as danger to national safety; - **Economic frame:** immigration presented through costs/benefits to economy; - **Humanitarian frame:** immigration presented through human suffering and rights; - **Legal/procedural frame:** immigration presented through rule of law and process; - **Cultural identity frame:** immigration presented through national character and values; - **Governance competence frame:** immigration presented through institutional success or failure.

**Qualitative phase:** The qualitative analysis applies CDA and argumentation analysis to purposively selected posts representing the dominant patterns identified quantitatively. Following Fairclough's three-dimensional model [11], analysis proceeds from textual

features (lexical choices, metaphors, transitivity, modality) through production, distribution, and interpretation contexts to ideological and power relations. Simultaneously, Toulmin's argument model [19] is applied to decompose the persuasive structure of representative posts, identifying claims, data, warrants, and rebuttals. Integrating both analytical traditions within the same posts allows the study to demonstrate how ideological positioning and argumentative structure are co-constructed rather than operating independently.

### 3.4 Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in five stages:

- 1) **Corpus preparation:** Raw datasets cleaned, deduplicated, and standardized for consistent coding;
- 2) **Relevance filtering:** Application of inclusion criteria producing the 1,243-post analytical corpus;
- 3) **Quantitative coding:** Two trained coders independently classified posts by dominant frame and primary argumentative strategy. Inter-coder agreement was assessed to ensure coding consistency, with reliability checks indicating acceptable agreement levels for both frame identification and argumentative strategy classification [30];
- 4) **Qualitative close analysis:** Purposive selection of posts exemplifying dominant patterns for in-depth CDA and argumentation analysis, following the principle of theoretical saturation—analysis continued until new posts no longer revealed novel discursive strategies;
- 5) **Comparative integration:** Systematic interpretive comparison of platform discourse patterns from the 2023–2024 baseline with the text of Trump's 2025 executive orders to demonstrate discourse-to-policy migration. This stage is analytical and contextual rather than quantitatively measured.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

All analyzed posts were publicly accessible at the time of collection. The study does not identify private individuals; analyzed accounts are public officials, verified political commentators, or organizational accounts operating within the public sphere. The study acknowledges several limitations: platform affordances shape discourse in ways that may not represent broader public opinion; algorithmic amplification creates visibility patterns not reducible to genuine popularity; the post-2022 changes to X's ownership and policies may affect both content moderation and user behavior [32, 33]; and the dataset captures one platform within a multiplatform ecology where immigration discourse simultaneously circulates across television, news sites, and multiple social media applications [34].

### **3.6 Methodological Note on Post-2025 Analysis**

Sections 7 and 8 of this article analyze Trump's 2025 executive orders and project the 2026 midterm communicative landscape. These sections do not present newly collected X data or quantitative measurements of post-2025 platform discourse. Instead, they offer contextual and predictive discourse analysis: interpreting how the baseline patterns documented in the 2023–2024 corpus relate to subsequent policy texts and projecting how those baseline positions structure the communicative terrain for future electoral conflict. Where post-2025 discourse shifts are discussed, they are analytically inferred from policy texts, news coverage, and the structural logic of the baseline findings rather than measured through new platform data collection.

## **4. QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: PATTERNS OF IMMIGRATION DISCOURSE ON X**

Having established the theoretical framework and methodological approach, this section presents the quantitative patterns that emerged from the 2023–2024 baseline corpus. These patterns—posting intensity, engagement distribution, frame distribution, and argumentative strategy frequency—provide the empirical foundation for the qualitative analysis that follows.

### **4.1 Posting Intensity and Partisan Asymmetry**

The quantitative mapping reveals a pronounced partisan asymmetry in immigration posting behavior. Republican-affiliated accounts produced significantly more immigration-focused content than Democratic-affiliated accounts across all three temporal windows, consistent with the theoretical expectation that issue ownership dynamics lead parties to emphasize topics on which they perceive electoral advantage [35, 36]. Republican accounts constituted approximately 62% of the filtered corpus despite roughly equivalent sampling of partisan sources, suggesting that immigration functioned as a proactively mobilized issue for Republicans while Democrats engaged primarily in reactive or defensive discourse. This intensity differential carries consequences: any user encountering immigration discourse on X during the pre-crackdown period was substantially more likely to encounter Republican framing first, establishing a priority that subsequent Democratic responses had to navigate [9, 10]. The dynamic corresponds to what McCombs and Shaw originally described as the agenda-setting function: by sheer volume of immigration-focused posting, Republican accounts contributed to making immigration itself salient—framing not just how the issue was understood but whether it was perceived as urgent in the first place [10].

### **4.2 Engagement Distribution**

Engagement metrics (likes, reposts, replies) showed that security/threat-framed posts consistently achieved higher engagement ratios than posts employing other frames, regardless of partisan origin. This finding aligns with the broader literature on negativity bias in social media engagement and with Papacharissi's account of affective publics organized around shared sentiment rather than deliberative reasoning [27, 37]. However, an important nuance emerged: Democratic posts that combined security

language with humanitarian counter-framing achieved engagement levels comparable to straightforward Republican security posts, suggesting that the affective architecture of X does not inherently disadvantage humanitarian discourse—it disadvantages purely technocratic or procedural framings that lack emotional valence.

### 4.3 Frame Distribution

The frame analysis produced the following distribution across the full analytical corpus:

Frame	Republican (%)	Democratic (%)	Total (%)
Security/threat	58.3	22.1	44.2
Governance competence	19.7	31.4	24.3
Legal/procedural	8.2	23.8	14.3
Humanitarian	2.1	12.6	6.2
Economic	7.4	5.8	6.8
Cultural identity	4.3	4.3	4.2

The dominance of security/threat framing in Republican discourse (58.3%) and the more distributed frame portfolio in Democratic discourse confirm the theoretical expectation that securitization creates rhetorical efficiency—reducing a complex issue to a single affective register—while counter-securitization requires multi-frame strategies that are harder to communicate concisely within platform constraints [23, 20].

### 4.4 Argumentative Strategy Distribution

Argumentative strategies were classified following a modified Toulmin–van Eemeren typology [12, 19]:

- **Causal argumentation** (if X policy, then Y consequence): 34.1%;
- **Authority argumentation** (citing sources, officials, statistics): 21.3%;
- **Symptomatic argumentation** (X situation is a sign of Y larger problem): 18.2%;
- **Analogy/comparison** (comparing to historical or hypothetical scenarios): 15.7%;
- **Pragmatic argumentation** (X action justified by practical outcomes): 10.7%.

Republicans disproportionately employed causal argumentation (“open borders cause crime”) and symptomatic argumentation (“the border situation proves Biden has failed”), while Democrats more frequently used authority argumentation (“experts say,” “bipartisan legislation shows”) and pragmatic argumentation (“our plan works because”). This distribution reflects different underlying warrant structures: Republican discourse relies on threat warrants (danger justifies action), while Democratic discourse relies on competence warrants (expertise justifies trust) [20, 22].

## 5. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: PARTISAN DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

The quantitative patterns documented above reveal what partisan actors did—the frames they deployed, the strategies they employed, the intensity with which they posted. This section examines how they did it: the specific rhetorical moves, linguistic choices, and argumentative structures through which Republican and Democratic

accounts constructed immigration as a political issue during the 2023–2024 baseline period.

### 5.1 Republican Discourse: Securitization through Crisis Construction

Close analysis of representative Republican posts reveals a coherent securitizing rhetoric organized around four interlocking strategies: crisis amplification, invasion metaphors, blame concentration, and solution simplification.

**Crisis amplification** operates through the systematic selection of extreme cases presented as representative. Individual criminal acts by undocumented immigrants are framed not as isolated incidents but as symptoms of systemic failure—a pattern Ekström, Krzyżanowski, and Johnson identify as proxy discourse, where specific criminal narratives function as displaced references to immigration as a phenomenon [7]. The linguistic markers include categorical assertions (“every day Americans are being killed”), unattributed quantification (“millions are pouring in”), and temporal urgency markers (“we’re running out of time”). These features correspond to what van Dijk identifies as ideological discourse structures: maximizing outgroup threat while minimizing outgroup humanity [5].

**Invasion metaphors** represents the most consequential securitizing move. By employing military language—invasion, flood, overrun, overwhelm—Republican discourse activates what Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde describe as the existential threat register that justifies extraordinary political measures [23]. The invasion frame does not merely describe unauthorized border crossing; it reconstitutes the phenomenon as a deliberate assault on national sovereignty, transforming migrants from administrative cases into combatants and border agents from bureaucrats into defenders [25, 38]. Charteris-Black has shown how container metaphors (the nation as bounded space subject to breach) structure immigration cognition, and the invasion frame represents the most aggressive activation of this metaphorical system [15].

**Blame concentration** directs responsibility exclusively toward Democratic governance. The construction systematically avoids systemic explanations (labor market demand, foreign policy consequences, judicial backlogs) in favor of personalized failure: “Biden opened the border,” “Biden invited them in,” “Biden’s America.” This personalization functions argumentatively as a simplifying warrant: if the problem is one person’s decision, the solution is one person’s reversal. The strategy exploits what van Dijk describes as the fundamental ideological move of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation applied not to migrants but to political opponents [5, 14].

**Solution simplification** completes the rhetorical circuit. If immigration is an invasion caused by a failed president, the solution requires only political will—close the border, deport the invaders, elect a strong leader. This pattern compresses complex policy landscapes into a binary of strength versus weakness that maps directly onto partisan identity, consistent with what Wodak describes as the politics of fear: reducing multifaceted social issues to simple threat-response narratives that privilege authoritative action over democratic deliberation [2, 39].

## 5.2 Democratic Discourse: Counter-Securitization through Procedural Legitimacy

Democratic discourse, analyzed across the corpus, does not primarily contest the Republican premise that borders should be secure. Instead, it attempts a reclamation strategy organized around four counter-moves: competence assertion, bipartisan credentialism, legal pathway emphasis, and selective humanitarian integration.

**Competence assertion** accepts the security frame but contests Republican ownership of it. Posts cite enforcement statistics, funding increases, personnel deployment, and interception rates to argue that the Biden administration was actively managing the border—just doing so without the performative cruelty Republicans demanded. This strategy concedes the terrain of security as politically necessary but contests the claim that only Republican approaches constitute genuine enforcement [3, 35].

**Bipartisan credentialism** represents a distinctive Democratic argumentative move: the repeated invocation of failed bipartisan legislation (particularly the 2024 border bill) as evidence that Republicans prefer the problem to the solution.

The argumentative structure follows a pragma-dialectical pattern: Republicans claim to want border security; they had the opportunity to pass bipartisan border legislation; they refused; therefore their real goal is political exploitation, not security.

This constitutes what van Eemeren describes as strategic maneuvering through accusation of inconsistency—a move that shifts the burden of proof by exposing contradiction between stated principles and observed action [12].

**Legal pathway emphasis** constructs an alternative immigration narrative in which lawful process, orderly administration, and rule of law constitute the proper framework—as opposed to the extralegal emergency logic of securitization. Posts emphasize court rulings, statutory authority, procedural compliance, and asylum law to suggest that legitimacy derives from legal adherence rather than force projection [40].

**Selective humanitarian integration** appears in Democratic discourse but occupies a noticeably subordinate position relative to security and competence claims. When humanitarian language appears, it is typically bounded by security qualifiers: “we can be both secure and humane,” “compassion and order are not contradictory.”

This bounded humanitarianism represents what Chouliaraki describes as post-humanitarian communication—solidarity constrained by strategic calculation about what audiences will tolerate—and signals the degree to which Republican securitization has shaped the discursive terrain even for opponents [41].

## 5.3 Representative Discourse Examples

Table 1 presents representative examples from the 2023–2024 baseline corpus, illustrating how partisan actors deployed frames and argumentative strategies in practice. These examples are paraphrased to protect account specificity while preserving discursive structure.

**Table 1: Representative Partisan Discourse Examples from 2023–2024 Baseline Corpus**

Party	Frame	Argumentative Strategy	Discourse Example (Paraphrased)	Interpretation
Republican	Security/Threat	Causal	“Biden’s open border policies have led to record fentanyl deaths and criminal aliens flooding our communities.”	Links policy directly to harm; uses “flooding” invasion metaphor; personalizes blame to Biden
Republican	Security/Threat	Symptomatic	“The chaos at the border is proof that this administration has completely lost control of our sovereignty.”	Treats border situation as symptom of broader governance failure; invokes sovereignty loss
Republican	Governance Competence	Causal	“Under Trump we had the most secure border in history. Under Biden we have the worst crisis ever.”	Binary comparison; attributes outcomes to leadership; uses superlatives for contrast
Democratic	Governance Competence	Authority	“Border Patrol agents have made more drug seizures this year than any year under the previous administration, according to CBP data.”	Cites official statistics; claims enforcement success; contests Republican ownership of security
Democratic	Legal/Procedural	Pragmatic	“We negotiated the toughest bipartisan border bill in decades. Republicans killed it because they want chaos, not solutions.”	Invokes bipartisan credentialism; accuses opponents of bad faith; shifts blame for inaction
Democratic	Legal/Procedural	Authority	“Our asylum system is grounded in international law and treaty obligations. We can secure borders while honoring legal commitments.”	Appeals to legal authority; attempts to reconcile security and humanitarian obligations
Democratic	Humanitarian (bounded)	Pragmatic	“We can enforce our laws humanely. Cruelty is not a deterrent—it’s a choice that doesn’t reflect American values.”	Bounded humanitarianism; accepts enforcement premise; contests methods rather than goals
Republican	Cultural Identity	Symptomatic	“Our country is being fundamentally transformed by people who have no respect for our laws, language, or culture.”	Cultural threat frame; treats immigration as identity erosion; uses “transformation” as loss narrative

These examples demonstrate the asymmetry in discursive strategies: Republican discourse concentrates on threat amplification and blame attribution, achieving rhetorical efficiency through repetition of invasion and crisis frames. Democratic

discourse distributes across multiple frames—competence, legality, bounded humanitarianism—attempting to contest Republican framing without fully rejecting the security premise. This multi-frame approach reflects the defensive communicative position documented quantitatively in Section 4.

#### **5.4 Cross-Partisan Dynamics: Discursive Interaction and Recursive Framing**

The two partisan discourses do not exist in isolation; they interact recursively, each responding to and restructuring the other's framing [33, 34]. Republican posts frequently quote or reference Democratic claims in order to reframe them—a pattern of adversarial intertextuality that simultaneously acknowledges the opponent's existence and demonstrates its inadequacy [14]. Democratic posts similarly reference Republican claims, but predominantly through the strategy of exposure: revealing contradiction, identifying bad faith, or demonstrating factual inaccuracy.

This recursive dynamic creates what may be characterized as a discursive arms race: each side escalates its framing in response to the other's moves, producing an increasingly polarized communicative field in which compromise language becomes politically costly [34, 42].

The polarization is not symmetrical: Republican discourse escalates toward more extreme securitization (culminating in invasion and replacement language), while Democratic discourse escalates toward more emphatic proceduralism (culminating in constitutional crisis and democratic norm language). This asymmetry means that the discursive center—moderate security concern without existential threat rhetoric—becomes progressively unoccupied [32, 42].

### **6. BIDEN'S 2024 BORDER PROCLAMATION AS TURNING POINT**

The baseline patterns documented in Sections 4 and 5 capture a relatively stable argumentative contest: Republicans securitizing, Democrats counter-securitizing, each side refining its rhetorical position. Biden's June 2024 border proclamation disrupted that equilibrium, demonstrating how oppositional framing can compel governing parties to adopt the language of their critics.

On June 4, 2024, President Biden issued Proclamation 10773, "Securing the Border," which suspended asylum processing when border encounters exceeded specified thresholds [43]. This action constitutes a critical event because it demonstrates the capacity of oppositional framing to restructure governing-party communication.

The proclamation adopted language—"securing the border," "encounters," "suspension"—that drew directly from the Republican security frame. From a CDA perspective, this represents what Fairclough terms interdiscursive mixing: the incorporation of elements from one discourse order into another, signaling a shift in the discursive balance of power [11]. The governing party effectively conceded that immigration required security-coded response, not merely administrative management.

Republican responses to the proclamation are analytically instructive. Rather than acknowledging the concession, Republican accounts uniformly framed the action as: (a) too late (“after four years of open borders”); (b) insufficient (“a band-aid on a bullet wound”); (c) deceptive (“election-year politics, not real enforcement”); or (d) hypocritical (“he created the crisis, now pretends to solve it”). This response pattern demonstrates that securitization discourse has a ratchet quality: once the existential threat frame is established, any response short of total resolution can be reframed as inadequate [23, 7].

For Democratic discourse, the proclamation created a strategic complication. Posts defending the action had to simultaneously claim security credibility (justifying the proclamation), maintain humanitarian identity (insisting it was more measured than Republican alternatives), and preserve partisan distinctiveness (arguing it was fundamentally different from what Trump would do).

This triple burden produced visibly strained rhetoric in which security and compassion language competed within single posts, reducing argumentative clarity and exposing the tension that Hammad identifies in U.S. political rhetoric between confrontational and conciliatory registers [6, 41].

## **7. TRUMP’S 2025 EXECUTIVE ORDERS: FROM PLATFORM RHETORIC TO STATE DISCOURSE**

If Biden’s 2024 proclamation represented a defensive concession to Republican framing, Trump’s January 2025 executive orders represented the offensive completion of that frame’s migration from platform argument to state authority. This section interprets how the baseline rhetoric documented in the 2023–2024 corpus reappeared—nearly verbatim—in the language of executive policy.

### **7.1 The Executive Order Texts as Discourse**

Trump’s January 2025 executive orders on immigration—“Protecting the American People Against Invasion” [44], “Securing Our Borders” [45], and “Guaranteeing the States Protection Against Invasion” [46]—constitute a remarkable instance of discourse-to-policy migration. Close textual comparison reveals that the language of these orders draws directly from the platform rhetoric documented in the pre-crackdown dataset.

The order titled “Protecting the American People Against Invasion” declares in its opening paragraph that the United States faces an “invasion” at its southern border. This is not metaphorical in any conventional sense; it is a legal declaration activating specific constitutional and statutory authorities.

The significance lies in the transformation: “invasion” as a social media argument—emotionally charged, strategically deployed, contestable in public debate—becomes “invasion” as a state finding—legally consequential, operationally directive, and resistant to challenge because it carries executive authority [44].

## 7.2 Frame Migration: Platform to Policy

Systematic comparison between the pre-crackdown X corpus and the executive order texts reveals five specific frame migrations:

- 1) **Invasion frame:** X discourse (“our country is being invaded”) → Executive text (“the current state of the southern border reveals that the United States is being invaded”);
- 2) **Sovereignty frame:** X discourse (“we must protect our sovereignty”) → Executive text (“protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United States”);
- 3) **Detention-removal frame:** X discourse (“catch and release must end”) → Executive text (“the detention and removal of all aliens who have no lawful basis to be present”);
- 4) **Sanctuary-conflict frame:** X discourse (“sanctuary cities are harboring criminals”) → Executive text (“jurisdictions that obstruct enforcement of immigration law”);
- 5) **Emergency-authority frame:** X discourse (“this is a national emergency”) → Executive text (“declaring a national emergency at the southern border”).

This pattern suggests that the executive orders functioned not merely as policy instruments but as discursive consolidation—a formalization of argumentative positions tested, refined, and validated through platform engagement [47, 6]. The parallel with Hammad’s findings on campaign rhetoric is instructive: just as presidential candidates construct foreign policy positions through systematic rhetorical strategies reflecting broader ideological frameworks [6], the migration from platform rhetoric to executive language reveals how digital discourse serves as a testing ground for institutional speech acts.

## 7.3 Implications for Opposition Discourse

The conversion of platform rhetoric into executive authority fundamentally restructures the field for opposition actors. Before January 2025, Democratic counter-discourse could challenge Republican immigration framing on argumentative grounds—contesting evidence, questioning warrants, proposing alternative narratives. After the executive orders, opposition discourse must contend not merely with rival arguments but with state action that embodies those arguments. The challenge shifts from “your frame is wrong” to “executive power has exceeded its legitimate bounds”—a considerably more demanding task that requires constitutional and democratic norm vocabulary rather than immigration-specific counter-framing [40, 48].

## 8. PROJECTING THE 2026 MIDTERM LANDSCAPE

The baseline patterns, Biden’s 2024 concession, and Trump’s 2025 institutionalization together structure the terrain on which the 2026 midterm immigration debate will unfold. This section projects how the argumentative positions documented in the 2023–2024

corpus create strategic opportunities and constraints for both parties as they approach the next electoral cycle.

### 8.1 The Republican Position

The 2025 executive orders provide Republicans with considerable resources for the 2026 midterms. The party can claim that promises have been fulfilled, that invasion has been met with decisive action, and that border security has been restored through political will. The argumentative structure is straightforward: problem (invasion under Democrats) → solution (enforcement under Trump) → warrant (results prove the approach works).

However, this position contains structural vulnerabilities. If enforcement produces visible humanitarian consequences—family separations, deportation of sympathetic individuals, economic disruption in immigrant-dependent communities—the security frame may become contested not on its own terms but on the terms of its consequences [49, 50]. Recent polling data suggests this dynamic is already operative: a Reuters/Ipsos survey found that Trump’s deportation push could cost Republicans in midterm elections, with voters expressing discomfort with enforcement imagery even when supporting border security in the abstract [49].

### 8.2 The Democratic Position

Democrats face the inverse challenge: they need to contest enforcement without appearing to endorse open borders—a framing trap that Republican discourse has prepared. The most promising strategy, based on pre-crackdown data patterns, involves a frame shift from *border control* to *enforcement legitimacy*. This shift moves the debate from “should borders be secure?” (where Democrats are always on defensive ground) to “how far can executive power go?” (where constitutional norms and democratic identity provide resources) [40, 48].

The enforcement legitimacy frame allows Democrats to accept border security as a premise while contesting the methods, scope, and consequences of enforcement. It connects immigration to broader democratic governance concerns—due process, judicial independence, federal-state relations, executive overreach—that activate a different set of voter concerns than the security/threat frame alone [48, 51].

### 8.3 The International Image Dimension

A dimension largely absent from pre-crackdown X discourse but increasingly relevant for the 2026 cycle is the international image frame. How American immigration enforcement is perceived internationally—by allies, competitors, and global publics—creates material that both parties may exploit [52, 53]. Democrats may argue that aggressive enforcement damages American soft power and moral authority; Republicans may argue that strong enforcement commands international respect and deters future migration. The international dimension adds complexity to domestic platform discourse by introducing external audiences and reputational concerns into what has been framed as a purely domestic security debate [52].

## 8.4 Predictive Assessment

Based on the patterns documented in this study, the 2026 midterm immigration debate is likely to be structured around four tensions:

- 1) **Operational success vs. human cost:** Republicans will frame enforcement as working; Democrats will frame it as excessive;
- 2) **Sovereignty vs. democratic norms:** Republicans will invoke national defense logic; Democrats will invoke constitutional constraint;
- 3) **Promise fulfillment vs. policy consequences:** Republicans will cite decisive action; Democrats will cite damaging effects;
- 4) **National security vs. international reputation:** Republicans will emphasize domestic protection; Democrats will emphasize global standing.

The party that most effectively occupies the center—claiming both security and legitimacy—is likely to hold advantage. The pre-crackdown data suggests that neither party had developed a sustainable center-holding strategy during the baseline period, creating an ongoing competition whose outcome remains structurally undetermined [49, 50].

## 9. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that U.S. partisan immigration discourse on X constitutes a structured field in which securitization, framing, argumentation, and ideological positioning operate simultaneously and interactively. The pre-crackdown dataset reveals that Republican discourse successfully established the terms of the immigration debate through crisis amplification, invasion metaphors, and blame concentration, while Democratic discourse struggled to articulate a coherent counter-narrative combining security credibility with procedural legitimacy and humanitarian concern.

The migration of platform rhetoric into executive order language represents a significant case of discourse-to-policy conversion: argumentative positions tested and refined through social media engagement were subsequently formalized as state authority, fundamentally restructuring the communicative field for opposition discourse. This process illustrates how mediatized political conflict operates not merely at the level of representation but at the level of institutional production—platform discourse does not only reflect policy but actively shapes the discursive conditions under which policy is articulated and legitimated [3, 4, 6].

For the 2026 midterms, the analysis projects a dilemma for both parties. Republicans hold advantages as long as immigration remains framed within the operational logic of border control and enforcement delivery. Democrats can regain initiative only by shifting the frame from whether borders should be secured to how enforcement should be bounded, what legitimacy standards apply, and how coercive immigration imagery affects democratic identity and international standing. Whether this frame shift succeeds depends on factors beyond discourse alone—enforcement outcomes, judicial

interventions, economic conditions, and the emergence of specific cases or events that crystallize one frame over another [49, 50, 51].

The study contributes to international media scholarship by demonstrating that immigration discourse on digital platforms operates within a mediatized international field where sovereignty, identity, and legitimacy are simultaneously constructed for multiple audiences. It contributes to discourse and argumentation studies by demonstrating the analytical productivity of combining CDA and argumentation analysis in a single empirical study of platform data. And it contributes to political communication research by providing an empirically grounded predictive framework for the 2026 midterms—a framework that treats political communication not as a passive reflection of underlying realities but as an active constitutive force shaping how voters, parties, and institutions understand immigration in an era of intensified enforcement.

Future research should extend this analysis temporally to test whether the predicted shift from border control framing to enforcement legitimacy framing materializes in actual post-2025 X discourse. Visual analysis should be incorporated, as images and videos of enforcement may carry greater affective weight than text alone. Network analysis could identify which accounts serve as amplifiers or bridges for particular frames. And comparative international analysis could examine how non-U.S. media outlets frame American immigration enforcement—whether they reproduce sovereignty frames or human rights frames—adding an empirical international dimension to what this study has theorized as an international communicative process.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Data Availability Statement

The datasets analyzed in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to platform terms of service restrictions regarding the redistribution of X/Twitter data.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, A.S.H.; Methodology, A.S.H., Software, D.S.; validation, D.S.; Quantitative analysis, D.S.; Qualitative analysis, A.S.H., investigation, all authors; data curation, A.S.H.; writing—original draft, A.S.H.; writing—review and editing, all authors; visualization, D.S.; supervision, A.S.H.; project administration, A.S.H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### References

- 1) Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., KhosraviNik, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19(3), 273–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962>
- 2) Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.
- 3) Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

- 4) Krzyżanowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A., & Wodak, R. (2018). The mediatization and the politicization of the “refugee crisis” in Europe. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16(1–2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1353189>
- 5) van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.
- 6) Hammad, A. S. (2025). International conflict discourse in U.S. presidential campaigns: A critical discourse analysis of the 2024 candidates’ rhetoric. *Arab Media & Society*, 38(Summer/Fall 2024). <https://doi.org/10.70090/ams.38.ash1>
- 7) Ekström, H., Krzyżanowski, M., & Johnson, D. (2023). Saying “criminality,” meaning “immigration”? Proxy discourses and public implications. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 21(5), 531–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2023.2282506>
- 8) Klein, O. (2024). Anti-immigrant rhetoric of populist radical right leaders on social media platforms. *Communications*, 49(3), 398–420. <https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2023-0113>
- 9) Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press–state relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2), 103–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02266.x>
- 10) McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- 11) Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.
- 12) van Eemeren, F. H. (2010). *Strategic maneuvering in argumentative discourse: Extending the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation*. John Benjamins.
- 13) KhosraviNik, M. (2010). The representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 9(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.9.1.01kho>
- 14) Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 63–94). Sage.
- 15) Charteris-Black, J. (2006). Britain as a container: Immigration metaphors in the 2005 election campaign. *Discourse & Society*, 17(5), 563–581. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506066345>
- 16) Ekman, M. (2019). Anti-immigration and racist discourse in social media. *European Journal of Communication*, 34(6), 606–618. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323119886151>
- 17) Lucchesi, D., & Romania, V. (2023). “Italians locked at home, illegal migrants free to disembark”: How populist parties exploit crises to securitize immigration on social media. *Discourse & Society*, 34(6), 726–745. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265231190504>
- 18) Yantseva, V. (2021). Migration discourse in Sweden: Frames and sentiments in mainstream and social media. *Social Media + Society*, 7(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120981059>
- 19) Toulmin, S. E. (2003). *The uses of argument* (updated ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- 20) Elliott-Maksymowicz, K., Nikolaev, A. G., & Porpora, D. V. (2021). How much can you say in a tweet? An approach to political argumentation on Twitter. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8, Article 267. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00794-x>
- 21) Foderaro, A., & Lorentzen, D. G. (2022). Argumentative practices and patterns in debating climate change on Twitter. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 74(5), 860–877. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-06-2021-0164>
- 22) Macagno, F. (2022). Argumentation profiles. *Informal Logic*, 42(1), 33–81. <https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v42i1.7215>

- 23) Buzan, B., Waever, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner.
- 24) Huysmans, J. (2000). The European Union and the securitization of migration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38(5), 751–777. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00263>
- 25) Ibrahim, M. (2005). The securitization of migration: A racial discourse. *International Migration*, 43(5), 163–187. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2005.00345.x>
- 26) Nortio, E., Niska, M., Renvik, T. A., & Jasinskaja-Lahti, I. (2021). “The nightmare of multiculturalism”: Interpreting and deploying anti-immigration rhetoric in social media. *New Media & Society*, 23(3), 438–456. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819899624>
- 27) Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.
- 28) Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- 29) Entman, R. M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press.
- 30) Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage.
- 31) Avraamidou, M., & Ioannou, M. S. (2022). Migrants as “pawns”: Antimigrant debates on Twitter and their affinity to European right-wing populism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 25(6), 1598–1618. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221120838>
- 32) Masroor, F., Khan, Q. N., & Aib, I. (2020). Polarization and ideological weaving in Twitter discourse of politicians. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119891220>
- 33) Yarchi, M., Baden, C., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2021). Political polarization on the digital sphere: A cross-platform, over-time analysis of interactional, positional, and affective polarization on Israeli social media. *Political Communication*, 38(1–2), 98–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1785067>
- 34) Kligler-Vilenchik, N., Baden, C., & Yarchi, M. (2020). Interpretative polarization across platforms: How political disagreement develops over time on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. *Social Media + Society*, 6(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120944393>
- 35) Petrocik, J. R. (1996). Issue ownership in presidential elections, with a 1980 case study. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3), 825–850. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111797>
- 36) McCombs, M. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future. *Journalism Studies*, 6(4), 543–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700500250438>
- 37) Soroka, S. N. (2014). *Negativity in democratic politics: Causes and consequences*. Cambridge University Press.
- 38) Cisneros, J. D. (2008). Contaminated communities: The metaphor of “immigrant as pollutant” in media representations of immigration. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 11(4), 569–601. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.0.0068>
- 39) Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't think of an elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing.
- 40) Benhabib, S. (2004). *The rights of others: Aliens, residents, and citizens*. Cambridge University Press.
- 41) Chouliaraki, L. (2013). *The ironic spectator: Solidarity in the age of post-humanitarianism*. John Wiley & Sons.

- 42) Darius, P. (2022). Who polarizes Twitter? Ideological polarization, partisan groups and strategic networked communication in the German Twittersphere. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 12, Article 122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-022-00958-w>
- 43) Biden, J. R. (2024). Proclamation 10773: Securing the border. The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-10773-securing-the-border>
- 44) The White House. (2025a, January 20). Protecting the American people against invasion. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/protecting-the-american-people-against-invasion/>
- 45) The White House. (2025b, January 20). Securing our borders. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/securing-our-borders/>
- 46) The White House. (2025c, January 20). Guaranteeing the states protection against invasion. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/guaranteeing-the-states-protection-against-invasion/>
- 47) The White House. (2025d, April 28). Protecting American communities from criminal aliens. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/protecting-american-communities-from-criminal-aliens/>
- 48) Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (2018). The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions. *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 122–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323118760317>
- 49) Lange, J., Hesson, T., & Pell, M. B. (2026, April 22). Trump's deportation push could cost Republicans in midterm elections, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trumps-deportation-push-could-cost-republicans-midterm-elections-reutersipsos-2026-04-22/>
- 50) Lange, J., & Layne, N. (2026, May 19). Trump approval drops to 35% as Republican support softens, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-approval-drops-35-republican-support-softens-reutersipsos-poll-finds-2026-05-19/>
- 51) The White House. (2026). Secure the border. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/priorities/border-immigration/>
- 52) Ikenberry, G. J., & Nye, J. S. (2004). Soft power: the means to success in world politics. *Foreign Affairs*, 83(3), 136. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20033985>
- 53) De Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2019). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*. Bloomsbury Publishing.