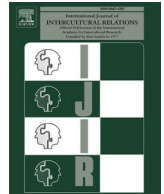




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## Immigration discourse in a polarized era: Insights from social media before and after the 2020 US presidential election

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## ABSTRACT

This study assesses changes in public attitudes toward immigration by using over 9 million tweets collected during the six months before and after the 2020 presidential election. It employs political and demographic variables, including political affiliation, income, and the proportion of foreign residents, to explore pro- and anti-immigration sentiment. The analysis reveals a decline in immigration-related tweets post-election, with a significant reduction in politically polarized topics. Republicans showed higher activity on immigration issues before the election, but both party supporters engaged similarly afterward. Throughout the study period, pro-immigration tweets outnumbered the anti-immigration ones, and the state-level factors most associated with pro-immigration attitudes were higher median incomes and the higher share of foreign populations. The study employs intergroup contact theory and group threat theory to explain shifts in public discourse, finding support for both perspectives. Qualitative analysis showed pro-immigration sentiment was primarily rooted in humanitarian and ethical concerns, while anti-immigration views centered around the immigration status and perceived economic, political, and security threats. At the same time, division was observed in the anti-immigration sentiment towards immigrants having legal and illegal status in the U.S. This research contributes to understanding how political events and demographic variables shape online immigration discourse. The study concludes that political events, such as elections, significantly influence the tone and frequency of immigration discourse on social media, contributing to both polarization and shifts in public sentiment.

## Introduction

The United States remains the leading destination for immigrants, with the foreign-born population surpassing 42 million in 2024, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau \(2024\)](#). Attitudes towards immigrants have notably shifted after key events like 9/11 ([Esses et al., 2002](#); [Schüller, 2016](#)), President Trump's first election ([Flores, 2018](#)), and the COVID-19 pandemic ([Esses et al., 2021](#)). Grasping public sentiment on immigration is essential, as it shapes policy, impacts everyday interactions between immigrants and the host population, and helps define national identity by determining who is considered a part of the ingroup ([Esses et al., 2002](#)). As immigration policies significantly affect the U.S. economy and are central to political debates, attitudes towards these policies also shape the country's interactions with foreigners. This highlights the importance of examining what drives pro- and anti-immigration sentiments

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across different contexts.

Past studies have shown that public sentiment is related to the demographics of immigrants. The demographics of immigrants to the U.S. has been fluctuating historically, along with the attitudes toward immigration, following the pattern of supply and demand. During large surges of immigration, the attitudes toward immigrants cooled, while after World War II when the foreign-born population was relatively low, there was a more positive attitude towards immigrants (Berg, 2015). After the Hart-Celler Act replaced the national origins quota system in 1968, there was a drastic increase in the number of non-White and non-European, as well as Hispanic, immigrants. According to Pew Research Center, in 1994, 63 % of Americans viewed immigrants as a burden to the country by taking jobs, housing and health care, conversely in 2019, 66 % of Americans viewed immigrants as strengthening the country through hard work and their talents.

Research on immigrant perceptions and public attitudes emphasizes the importance of conducting updated studies, particularly during political transitions such as U.S. elections. Many past studies rely on surveys, which are often subject to positivity bias. In addition to traditional survey methods, new digital tools have emerged to capture public sentiment more dynamically. Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, has been used extensively in the study of a wide variety of social science issues, including tracking political opinion, estimating life satisfaction, and tracking real-time information during disasters and public health emergencies (Mejova et al., 2015). This study investigates the perceptions of residents of the United States on Twitter toward foreigners. By examining Twitter, we are able to obtain field observational data and reveal how Americans discuss and feel about immigrants on a public platform before and after the U.S. presidential election.

## Theoretical framework

Various theoretical frameworks aim to explain public sentiment toward immigration, but Berg (2015) argues that no single theory is sufficient. Instead, a multilevel approach, where theories interact, rather than simply add to each other, best explains immigration attitudes. This review will explore major theories and propose a multilevel model combining several of them.

The Contact Hypothesis, a classic social theory, suggests that attitudes between different groups are often shaped by stereotypes and prejudices. Allport (1954) argued that initial negative attitudes stem from faulty generalizations, but with continued interaction, these misconceptions can be reduced, leading to more positive attitudes (Crystal et al., 2008; McLaren, 2003). However, if certain conditions aren't met during these interactions or the groups are segregated, they can instead reinforce existing misconceptions (Brown & Enos, 2021). Allport (1954) outlined four conditions that need to be met for the result to be a positive attitude: 1) equal status within the situational context; 2) support by institutions to have contact; 3) the pursuit of common goals; and 4) a certain amount of cooperation to achieve the common goals. The more of these conditions are present, the higher the probability for a positive attitude (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Plethora of studies can be found in support of contact theory (e.g., see Dixon, 2006; Ha, 2010; McLaren, 2003; McKay, 2018; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Rocha & Espino, 2009; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010). A recent study testing Contact Hypothesis across extended contact (indirect cross-group experiences) examining 20 years of research has further provided support for Contact Hypothesis (Zhou et al., 2019).

The Group Threat Theory, often seen as contrasting with Contact Hypothesis Theory, suggests that the majority group may develop negative attitudes toward the minority group when they perceive competition for scarce resources (Blalock, 1967). Some scholars focus on how the realistic threat affects attitudes toward immigration (Bobo, 1983), while others argue that perceived threat, regardless of the reality, plays a role in attitude formation (Alba et al., 2005; Rios et al., 2018; Rohmann et al., 2006; Schneider, 2008). More recent studies and adaptations of the Group Threat Theory include Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan et al., 2015), which distinguish between realistic and symbolic threats, while other scholars focus on individualistic vs. group threat (Rios et al., 2018). A common method for measuring threat is analyzing the relative size of the minority group in different geographic areas, which is also linked to intergroup Contact Hypothesis, as more diverse areas tend to have higher levels of interaction between groups.

One of the proposed multilevel theories is Blumer's (1958) group position theory which includes both social psychological and contextual elements. Blumer (1958) outlines four feelings that lead to the formation of a negative attitude toward minority group members: "1) a feeling of superiority, 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, 3) a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and 4) a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race." This attempts to explain why the majority develops negative attitudes, while the Contact Hypothesis outlines the four tenants leading to positive attitudes. Other studies, although not part of a formal theory, have focused on other contextual factors. For example, pro-immigration attitudes are often explained with cultural values and beliefs, such as religion (Brown & Brown, 2017), cosmopolitan worldview (Haubert & Fussell, 2006), morals (Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2022) as well as basic human values (Dennison, 2020). However, the majority of the past research on immigration attitudes in the U.S. have implemented survey design, while data from social media has been used to study anti-immigration sentiment in the U.K. (Nasuto & Rowe, 2024; Menchikova & van Tubergen, 2022), as well as in Canada (Walsh, 2023). Therefore, in this study, we use the eight tenants from the Contact Hypothesis and Blumer's theory, together with contextual elements, to explore pro- and anti-immigration attitudes expressed on social media.

### *Contextual Factors of Americans Views of Foreigners*

Past studies have examined the foreigner-American dynamic focusing on the relationship between perceptions of foreigners, threat, and competition (O'Neil & Tienda, 2010; Wilson, 2001). Both proponents and opponents of immigration in the U.S. offer reasons to support their respective stances (Davis & Deole, 2015; McCann & Boateng, 2020). According to Waldinger (2018), Donald J. Trump

during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election emphasized the dangers of immigration, which helped him win support. The rise in the anti-immigration sentiments following Donald Trump's 2016 Presidential campaign has prompted several studies investigating the causes and effects of these sentiments (Campani, Fabelo Concepción, Rodríguez Soler, & Sánchez Savín, 2022; McCann & Boateng, 2020; Enns & Jardina, 2021).

Overall, there is an incongruence in the literature on the factors that affect formation of American attitudes toward foreigners. Previous studies have analyzed immigration sentiment during election periods, as this is when public discourse and issue framing are most prominent and accessible (Gruzd & Roy, 2014). According to Walch (2023) "election offers a fruitful site for interrogating migration's digital mediation" (p. 2623). Public attitude toward immigration in the U.S. has fluctuated in the last 10 years with division between Republican and Democrat priorities in immigration policy, but has not been examined in the field prior to and after the election period on social media in the United States.

Some scholars suggest that despite recent Republican campaigns promoting anti-immigration stances, public attitudes toward immigration are more positive than they appear. Hout and Maggio (2021), noted that American views on immigration have become more favorable, with attitudes increasingly aligning with political party affiliation. Since 2010, Republicans' views have remained steady, while Democrats have become more pro-immigration. These shifts were evident in the 2016 election, where attitudes on race and immigration strongly predicted votes for Trump or Clinton (Hout & Maggio, 2021). At the time, the trends suggested that xenophobic views were waning, as the political landscape leaned toward more immigration and progressive views on racial disparities. Significant discourse surrounding U.S. immigration policies is evident in online discussions, making it a crucial topic for examining immigration and interethnic attitudes, as well as testing existing theories in a digital context (Menshikova and van Tubergen, 2022). A recent study by Nasuto and Rowe (2024) suggests our current understanding of how immigration sentiment spreads through social media during the election period is limited. Furthermore studying polarization is important because high levels of polarization may lead to isolation in content consumption, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs about immigration (Nasuto & Rowe, 2024). Nasuto and Rowe (2024) note that assessing the level of polarization can aid in developing strategies to address its impact, however "there is limited understanding of the extent of polarization in social media discussions about immigration" (p. 2). To fill this gap, the following three hypotheses will explore how the discourse on immigration changed from before, compared to the period after the 2020 presidential election on Twitter:

**H1.** : The frequency of posts about immigration is greater before the election than after it.

**H2.** : The top topics are more politically polarized before the election than after it.

**H3.** : The proportion of anti-immigration tweets to pro-immigration will be greater before the election than after it.

#### *Variables Associated with Anti and Pro-Immigration Sentiment*

Several variables have been identified as linked to anti- and pro-immigration sentiment in the United States. Whether examining small-scale neighborhoods or larger national contexts, researchers have found that the makeup of a community, such as the proportion of immigrants and ethnic diversity (Rios et al., 2018 Citrin et al., 1997), socioeconomic status (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001), rural vs urban area of residence (Fennelly & Federico, 2008), as well as other demographics, play a role on public opinion toward immigration (Berg, 2015; Dixon, 2006; Ha, 2010; Hopkins 2010). More recently, Knowles and Tropp (2018), showed how exposure to racial diversity can either heighten perceived threat and strengthen "white" identity, increasing support for Trump, or foster intergroup contact, reducing threat and weakening white identity, leading to less support for Trump.

Studies have demonstrated that demographic composition plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward immigration across various levels of society. In this study we will focus on four germane factors associated with immigration attitudes of Americans: 1) population of the out-group, 2) the political affiliation of the in-group, and 3) the income level of the in-group.

#### *Demographic Composition*

Group Threat Theory (Blalock, 1967) postulates that as the size of the out-group increases, it is perceived more negatively by the in-group (Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010). Alba et al. (2005) state that Americans' perceptions about the size of different minority groups affect their attitudes towards immigrants. This suggests that the amount of foreigners or immigrants in the area would be a driving force for the negative perception of foreigners. However, as previously discussed, the contact hypothesis predicts that the more contact the native population has with the out-group, the more positive the attitude will be towards it, if certain conditions are met. Both Group Threat Theory and Contact Hypothesis, although they predict opposite effects, point to the variable of the size of the foreign population as being an important factor in explaining the attitudes toward foreigners.

#### *Political Affiliation*

A contrary view is offered by O'Neil and Tienda (2010), who state that competition and threat are not as germane to the negative perception of foreigners, and instead the political affiliation and level of education of the in-group are the determinant factors. Conservative individuals who value individualism and American pride are more likely to show anti-immigrant sentiment and support restrictive policies (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). Republicans, who are more conservative than Democrats, are more prone to expressing anti-immigrant sentiment and favoring stricter immigration policies (Berg, 2009). Hawley (2011) and Hopkins (2010) found that in the U.S. fears of group threats and political ideologies are more pronounced among Republicans in areas with higher foreign-born populations (Fussell, 2014). Since political beliefs greatly affect views on immigration, it's important to examine how these beliefs

manifest on social media during important events like elections.

### *Income Level*

A survey conducted by the Cato Institute in 2021 revealed that people in the United States who favored immigration were more likely to possess a graduate degree and have a higher income (Ekins & Kem, 2021). The Brookings Institute has found that the majority (61 %) of white working-class voters say that “immigrants weaken us by taking jobs, housing, and health care”, and 71 % think that immigrants hurt the economy (Galston, 2016). Outside the US, attitudes towards immigration have been shown to be nuanced, depending on the perception of tax burden brought by the new arrivals, as well as the generosity of the welfare state (Meseguer & Kemmerling, 2016). As economic impact is one of the main talking points of the American immigration debate, the relationship of the locale’s income to the sentiments expressed toward immigration may quantitatively reveal these concerns.

The evidence of the importance of these three variables in understanding the public attitudes toward immigration led us to the following research question:

**RQ1.** : Which of the following variables: 1) personal political affiliation, 2) foreign population in their locale, or 3) income level in the state has a stronger association with immigration attitudes in the U.S.?

### *Discourse around Pro and Anti-Immigration*

Overall, there is an incongruence in the literature on how Americans view foreigners in the U.S. in relation to themselves and why the views polarize. Online discussions of the U.S. immigration policies is a key issue for studying immigration and interethnic attitudes while testing existing theories in online context (Menshikova and van Tubergen, 2022). As previously stated, the Contact Hypothesis posits that a closer interaction with foreigners will lead to positive attitude toward them, while Threat Theory supports the idea that more foreigners will lead to a (possibly only perceived) economic and security threat. The reason why some Americans perceive foreigners negatively, while others see diversity positively, still remains unclear. To investigate this relationship, it is essential to examine the perspectives of both anti-immigration and pro-immigration groups, which brings us to the following research question:

**RQ2.** : What is the discourse associated with anti- and pro-immigration tweets?

**RQ2a.** : Is there evidence of threat perception in anti-immigration side?

**RQ2b.** : Why are the people on pro-immigration side supporting immigrants and what do they say about it?

## **Methods**

**Data collection.** Tweets were collected using Twitter Streaming Application Programming Interface (API) with the following keywords: ‘foreigner’, ‘immigrant’, ‘immigration’, ‘emigrant’, ‘migrant’. We purposefully selected neutral terms to avoid bias in the collection, unlike previous works (Grover et al., 2019). We select the data spanning 6 months before the US Presidential Election, and 6 months after, resulting in two periods: May 3 - Nov 3, 2020, and Nov 4, 2020 - May 3, 2021. The API provides not only the text of the tweet, but also information about the user who has posted (or reposted) it, including their username and their self-disclosed description and location. We apply several cleaning steps to this data. First, we make sure the query terms are indeed present in the text of the tweet. Second, we exclude tweets whose text is no more than 10 characters after the removal of URLs and mentions of other users. Following (Grover et al., 2019), we keep only tweets in English (Twitter provides a language label) and tweets of users who self-identify to be in the United States. To find such users, we use the approach used in previous literature (Mejova & Kourtellis, 2021) to map the *location* profile field provided by the users to the GeoNames (<https://www.geonames.org/>) database. To make sure the matching is correct, we manually check the matches for the top 1500 most popular matches. Using this procedure, we identify 9283, 550 tweets relevant to our study. Note that this procedure identifies Twitter users claiming to live in the United States, not the country’s citizens.

**Political leaning.** We further enrich the dataset by considering the self-identification by the user in their profile description as having a political leaning. To do this, we begin with a small set of keywords fairly unambiguously identifying a supporter of the Republican candidate, such as #trump2020 and Democratic candidate, #biden2020 (relying on a clear affiliation of the hashtags, as in (Weber et al., 2013)). We then iteratively expand this set of hashtags by retrieving profiles that include them, and adding additional hashtags that would distinguish the two sides (using the difference in the probability that a hashtag appears in one set, and not another). During the manual selection, hashtags that were popular, but do not distinguish the two sides, such as #american or #election2020 were excluded. Finally, we identified 129,160 accounts with their political leaning: 58,356 Republicans and 70,804 Democrats. We compare the proportion of the two sides to the share of vote each candidate received during the 2020 election, finding the proportion of users identified as Democrats correlating with the percent votes for Biden in the 50 states at Pearson  $r = 0.75$ , and users identified as Republican with Trump vote at  $r = 0.77$ . The keywords are available in the Appendix. To validate this labeling criteria, we select 50 users labeled as Republican, and 50 as Democrat, and manually label them. The annotated labels matched with those produced by our heuristics well, having an accuracy of 95.9 %.

**Opinion detection.** We continue the analysis of the dataset by finding opinion “communities”: users who often retweet each other, and who often share the same opinion. Using a technique common in Twitter network analysis (Garimella et al., 2018; Cinelli et al., 2021), we create an “endorsement” network that has users as nodes and edges between two users if one has retweeted another. The weight of that edge is the number of times one retweeted the other. Following the above cited literature, we first sparsify the network

by removing edges with weight 1 (which removes links that might have been there by chance). To this network, we apply the community detection algorithm Louvain (Blondel et al., 2008), which groups users who often retweet each other. We then consider the 5 largest groups identified by the algorithm, which cover 71 % of the users in our dataset. To understand the stances on migration that the users in these groups express in their tweets, we select 100 users who had the most retweets from each group and annotate their tweets for being pro- or anti-immigration. We found the users within each group to have very similar positions on the issue, with the smallest stance to range between 2 % and 16 %, meaning that very few users within each group “disagreed” with the majority. The final step of the process was to propagate the majority opinion to users within each group, (similar to other opinion modeling literature (Lenti et al., 2023; Garimella et al., 2018)), resulting in 409,226 users having a stance: 79,376 pro-immigration and 17,606 anti-immigration.

**State-level statistics.** We relate the posting of these stances with political leaning (described above), and two variables concerning the potentially relevant information about the users’ surroundings: percentage of foreign residents and the median household income. The former comes from the US Census, estimates from the year 2022 (U.S. Census Reporter). The latter is the Real Median Household Income by state for 2022, downloaded from the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis. To correlate these state-level statistics to our data, we aggregate the opinion stances, we first compute an average migrant opinion score for each user, defined as  $(N_{\text{pro}} - N_{\text{anti}}) / (N_{\text{pro}} + N_{\text{anti}})$  where  $N_x$  is the number of posts having  $x$  stance, and then average these within each state. The score ranges from 1 (most pro-migration) to -1 (most anti-migration).

**Qualitative methodology.** To characterize the different arguments made around pro- and anti-immigration stances, we first computed Odds Ratio of words used by both groups: this score signifies how unusual is the usage of a word in one group, compared to its usage by another. For both of the sides (pro and anti-immigration), we consider the top 10 words by Odds Ratio (as used in, e.g., (Mejova & Hommadova Lu, 2023)). For each of those words, we randomly sample 50 tweets that contain it. We began with initial open coding, and then conducted a qualitative analysis of these tweets using a constant comparative method using axial coding and finding themes (Charmaz, 2006). The data were divided into pro- and anti-immigration groups and further categorized into major themes, which were refined into self-focused, other-focused, and situational tweets. Initial coding was open, with subsequent rounds involving more detailed comparisons. The emerging categories were not mutually exclusive and were further divided into subcategories. For transparency, the data are available for cross-examination (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1woH5jE8hJ9lbN7D8DZrC3paWtc4F513b4hZoiaRO4C8/edit?usp=sharing>).

## Results

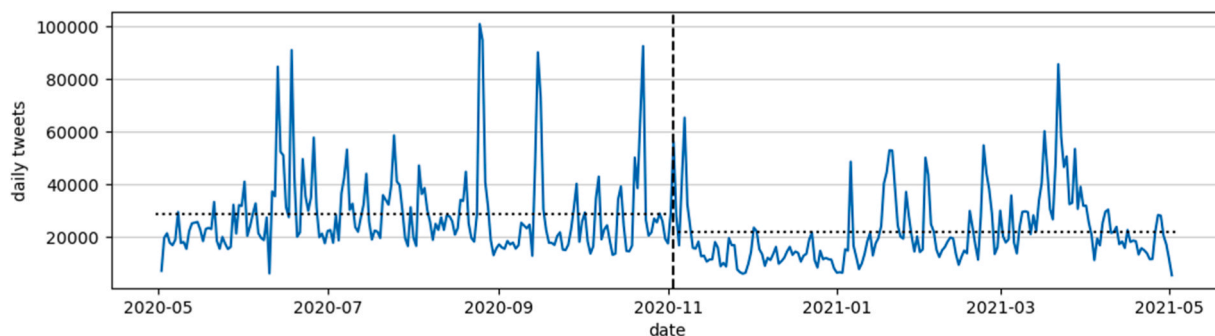
### H1. : The frequency of posting about immigration is greater before the election than after it.

As mentioned in Methodology, 9283,550 tweets were found to be coming from the U.S. having words related to migrants. The daily volume of these tweets is shown in Fig. 1. The posting is bursty, with some days reaching up to 100,000 tweets. On average, the posting volume is greater before the election: 28,587 (SD 15,890) daily posts before, compared to 22,070 (SD 13,376) daily posts after (difference is significant at  $p < 0.0001$  using independent  $t$ -test).

We also plot the daily tweets by users we were able to identify as leaning Democrat or Republican in Fig. 2. We observe that the spikes are not always synchronized between the supporters of the two parties, indicating attention to different events. Here, we also observe the overall decrease in volume after the election, although for Republicans it is a bit smaller (decrease of 30 %) compared to Democrats (decrease of 34 %). Republicans tweeted much more about migration than Democrats before the election: 2684 tweets per day before by Republicans (vs. 2445 by Democrats), with the difference being statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  using Mann-Whitney  $U$  test. However, after the election, users of both parties tweet amounts that are not statistically different: 1892 tweets by Republicans vs. 1637 by Democrats.

### H2. : The top topics are more politically polarized before the election than after it.

To understand the extent of polarization of the discussion around immigration before and after the election, we group tweets by



**Fig. 1.** Daily number of tweets, vertical line indicates US Election, horizontal dotted lines show the mean daily volumes before and after the election.



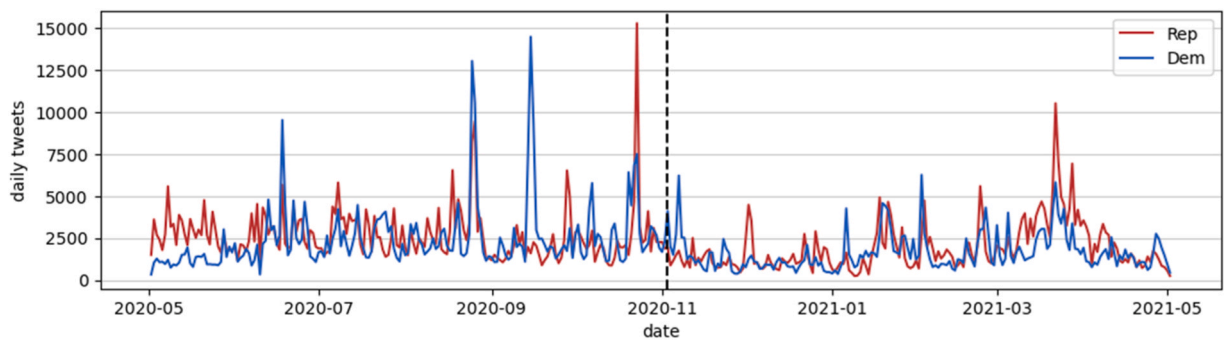


Fig. 2. Daily number of tweets by users supporting Republican or Democrat, vertical line indicates US Election.

topics (see Methods). We then examine how many users that self-identified as Democrats or Republicans have tweeted or retweeted the posts in each of the topics. Table 1 shows the top 10 topics (signified by the top 15 words) for the tweets posted before the election and after. We also show the proportion of Democrat ( $D_p$ ) and Republican ( $R_p$ ) retweeters. Finally, we show a score for whether the proportion can be considered to be polarized ( $P$ ) as 1 if either  $D_p$  or  $R_p$  is under the threshold of 0.15 and 0 otherwise. When we consider this polarization score across all 35 topics in each set, we find that 83 % of topics found before the election display polarization, whereas only 56 % after the election do.

### H3. : The proportion of anti-immigration tweets to pro-immigration will be greater before the election than after it.

Similarly, we examine the pro- vs. anti-immigration stance of the tweets over time. Fig. 3 shows the daily volume of tweets identified as having these two stances. Overall, we find the pro-immigration tweets outnumber the anti-immigration ones, accounting for 75.4 % of the tweets for which a stance was identified. This proportion changes slightly from before (71.4 %) to after (75.9 %) the election ( $p < 0.001$ ).

### RQ1. : Which of the following variables: 1) personal political affiliation, 2) percent foreign population in their locale, or 3) income level in the state has a stronger association with immigration attitudes in the United States?

Recall that, first, we compute an average migrant opinion score for each user, defined as  $(N_{\text{pro}} - N_{\text{anti}}) / (N_{\text{pro}} + N_{\text{anti}})$  where  $N_x$  is the number of posts having  $x$  stance. The score ranges from 1 (most pro-migration) to  $-1$  (most anti-migration). We use this user-level

Table 1

Top 10 topics and their 15 most characteristic terms for tweets before and after the election, followed by proportion of retweets by users self-identifying as Democrats ( $D_p$ ) and Republicans ( $R_p$ ), and the polarization score ( $P$ ).

Topics before the election		$D_p$	$R_p$	$P$
1	country, people, like, america, even, hinder, one, never, legal, know, citizen, speak, better, woman, english	0.14	0.86	1
2	children, ice, enforcement, breaking, federal, administration, detention, trump, border, lawyers, say, customs, law, inn, families	0.34	0.66	0
3	citizenship, test, status, ability, become, people, stop, workers, covid, services, free, census, please, citizen, fyi	0.98	0.02	1
4	new, trump, asylum, immigrants, system, anti, work, administration, community, cruelty, need, atrocities, covid, communities, Latino	0.97	0.03	1
5	black, kids, people, children, matter, sex, fucking, cages, talking, things, white, another, talk, lives, outside	0.08	0.92	1
6	american, workers, central, great, performing, immigrants, rosenstein, debates, son, labor, security, citizenship, video, given, say	0.05	0.95	1
7	trump, president, policy, administration, obama, house, order, policies, vote, donald, take, executive, america, vice, built	0.00	1.00	1
8	women, biden, rights, joe, care, health, trump, vote, debate, climate, plan, change, people, mass, reform, lgbtq	0.98	0.02	1
9	reports, demanded, back, us, trump, country, go, today, migrants, said, people, may, covid, bodies, many	0.95	0.05	1
10	illegal, vote, immigrants, party, americans, legal, voted, president, democrats, pay, sanctuary, democrat, biden, welfare, trump	0.00	1.00	1
Percentage of topics having leaning over 15 % (including additional 25 topics)				83 %
Topics after the election		$D_p$	$R_p$	$P$
1	biden, border, president, trump, crisis, joe, policies, illegal, southern, surge, policy, administration, new, former, open	0.01	0.99	1
2	reform, bill, biden, workers, congress, citizenship, system, gop, act, need, house, pass, immigrants, illegal, senate	0.64	0.36	0
3	children, administration, border, biden, trump, facility, families, unaccompanied, admin, separated, parents, facilities, texas, breaking, held	0.51	0.49	0
4	states, legal, united, like, illegal, country, would, far, please, get, year, one, jen, cnn, much	0.73	0.27	0
5	illegal, border, patrol, us, laws, law, biden, aliens, agents, illegally, citizens, mexico, kamala, sanctuary, first	0.01	0.99	1
6	border, asylum, pandemic, camps, administration, concentration, children, get, borders, country, biden, trump, us, mexico, cannot	0.94	0.06	1
7	care, action, health, change, climate, days, wage, biden, gun, rights, minimum, reform, getting, jobs, texas	0.98	0.02	1
8	tell, word, republicans, minority, gonna, super, like, absolutely, talking, syria, attempted, gay, next, women, knew	0.00	1.00	1
9	today, decades, ice, green, senator, without, first, work, immigrants, vp, foolish, biden, earned, woman, card	0.50	0.50	0
10	first, america, biden, us, president, nation, every, join, cruz, potus, day, let, border, trump, act	0.78	0.22	0
Percentage of topics having leaning over 15 % (including additional 25 topics)				56 %

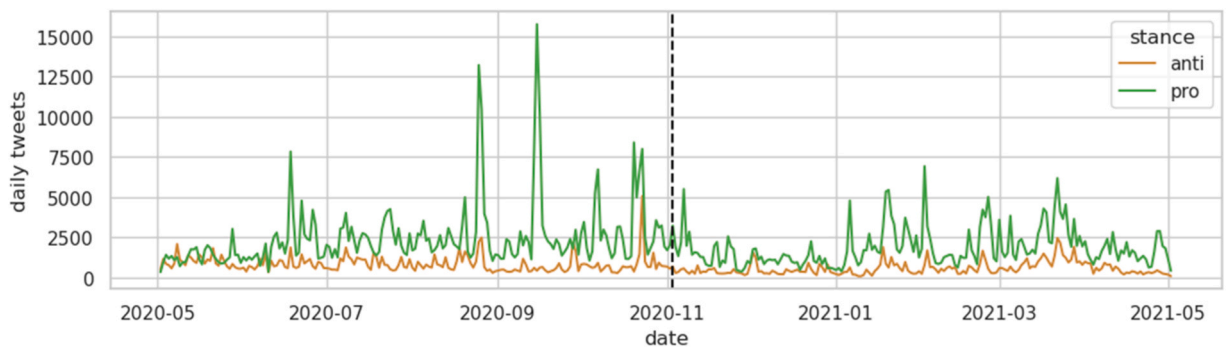


Fig. 3. Daily number of tweets having a pro- or anti-immigration stance, vertical line indicates US Election.

score to examine Political Affiliation. Second, for each state we average this leaning score, and use it for analysis of Percentage Foreign Population and Median Household Income.

When comparing the average opinion score about migration for users self-identifying as Democrats or Republicans, we find strong tendencies for both: Republican users have an average score of  $-0.59$  (std:  $0.48$ ), while Democrats have  $0.81$  (std:  $0.32$ ) (see Fig. 4.a). When we turn to state-wide analysis, and compare the percentage of foreign population in the state with the average opinion score, we find a Pearson correlation  $r = 0.51$  ( $p = .00011$ ) (see Fig. 4.b), indicating that Twitter users in states with higher percentage of foreign population are more likely to post tweets more favorable to migration. The by-state correlation is even higher for the median household income at  $r = 0.64$  ( $p = 3.40e-07$ ) (see Fig. 4.c), that is, users in states with higher incomes are more likely to post tweets supportive of migration. We conclude that all three variables are highly related to the expression of support for migration on Twitter.

To compare the strength of association of these three variables, we binarize the political affiliation variable (Republican coded as 0 and Democrat as 1) and aggregate it to the state level. We can then run an Ordinary Least Squares linear regression that models the average immigration leaning score of a state using the average political affiliation of its users, as well as the percent population foreign and the median household income. Results are shown in Table 2. The Adjusted  $R^2$  of the model 0.958, and the most significant predictor is political affiliation, showing the positive association between Democratic affiliation and pro-immigration. The other two variables, percent of foreign population and median household income, are not significant. We performed a similar regression analysis by instead propagating the state-level variables to the individual user level, and find similar results, with political affiliation having the strongest association with (in this case, individual user) immigration leaning score, with the other two variables not passing the significance threshold of 0.01 (results are omitted for brevity).

**RQ2. : What are the disagreements in the discourse associated with anti- and pro-immigration tweets?**

**RQ2a. : Is there evidence of threat perception in anti-immigration side? (qualitative)**

The qualitative analysis of anti-immigration tweets aligns with the existing literature on Group Threat Theory; however, the categories identified through the constant comparative method focus more on the types of immigration rather than the perceived type

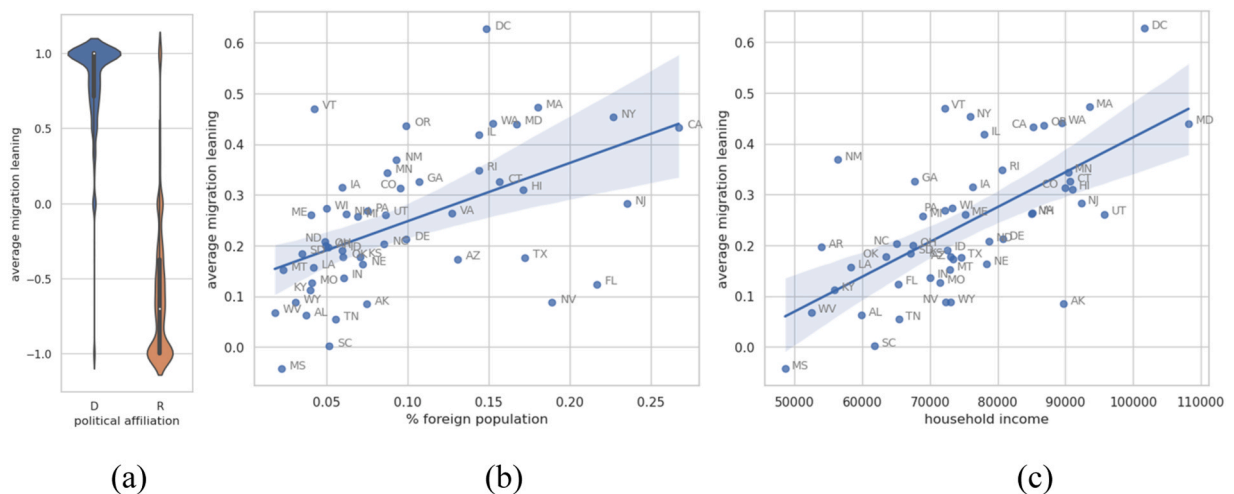


Fig. 4. (a) Distribution of migrant opinion scores for users identifying as Democrats or Republicans. (b) Correlation of the average migrant opinion score and percent of foreign population, by state. (c) Similarly, correlation of the score with median household income, by state.

**Table 2**Coefficients and *p*-values of an OLS regression modeling average immigration leaning in a state.

	coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
(constant)	−0.613	.000
political affiliation	1.539	.000
% foreign	0.151	.104
median household income	−7.7e <sup>−7</sup>	.134

of threats posed by immigrants. The analysis revealed three anti-immigration categories: all types of immigration, illegal immigration, and refugees, with the perceived threats differing based on the immigrant type.

Opponents of all immigration view foreigners as threats to national identity, politics, security, and the economy. The most frequently cited concern is economic, as many believe that immigrants take jobs away from the American workers. Security threats are also highlighted, particularly in relation to news reports of crimes committed by immigrants. Politically, there is a fear that the Democratic Party's efforts to create a voter base from new immigrants could harm the Republican prospects in future elections. Additionally, there are references to a "Marxist" threat to democracy claimed by the Republican users, although they do not specify how specifically Marxism poses a threat. Countries like China, Venezuela, and Cuba, along with movements such as Black Lives Matter, are also mentioned as threats. Lastly, general negative sentiments about immigrants, including claims that they are "ungrateful," are seen as threats to American norms and values, with many statements expressing broad anti-immigration views lacking specific justification, some representatives tweets are: "*End All Immigration Forever End Neocon Foreign Wars End Globalist Free Trade Preserve this Nation Protect our people Put America First.*" There was also a general anti-foreigner sentiment such as: "*Decades of weak immigration rhetoric and open borders policies have convinced many foreigners that they have the right to live here. #AmericaFirst*"

Unlike the above group, the anti-illegal immigration category is distinct in its views on foreigners: many express pro legal immigrant opinions and do not view immigrants as a threat to national identity. On the contrary, some state they love legal immigrants: "*This LEGAL IMMIGRANT tells Americans why she will NEVER vote #Democrat 🇺🇸 We love her! Show her some love usus* ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ 🇺🇸 🇺🇸 #MAGA #KAG2020 #DemocratsAreDestroyingAmerica #VoteRedToSaveAmerica @realDonaldTrump #Trump2020 is our ONLY choice to save USA"

Some of those expressing anti-illegal immigration views based their beliefs on the principle of fairness and the importance of enforcing the law and the burden on the taxpayers, as illegal immigrants are perceived as "stealing social benefits." Two distinct threats that emerged from this category were: 1. Threat of illegal immigrants to existing minorities and 2. Health threat. The minority groups such as the legal immigrants and black community were perceived to be negatively affected by illegal immigration, for example: "*Illegal Immigration hurts the black community more than any other community yet we're always advocating for more. Thank @realDonaldTrump for understanding this. #BuildTheWall #4MoreYears*". The health threat was in reference to COVID as expressed as follows: "*@jsolomonReports I have been warning about this. Unless we stop illegal immigration, we will never be prepared for the next virus. #BuildTheWall*".

Finally, the last category is very specific to refugees that are perceived as a political and security threat that are very similar to those expressed in the anti all immigration category.

#### **RQ2b. : Why are the people on pro-immigration side supporting immigrants and what do they say about it?**




Pro-immigration attitudes are overwhelmingly stemming from humanitarian values and ethical beliefs. The tweets highlight abuses faced by immigrant children, women, and families, underscoring a moral imperative to address these injustices and protect vulnerable groups. Reports of medical abuse and detainment conditions, alongside advocacy by public figures and activists, emphasize the need for humane treatment and justice for immigrants. Anti-immigration sentiment is criticized as racist, which aligns with a pro-immigration perspective that sees immigration policies through the lens of racial and social justice. There is an emphasis on human rights violations, such as the cruel treatment of immigrants and forced medical procedures, which strengthens the call for compassionate and fair immigration policies. The recognition of these issues as serious human rights abuses supports a pro-immigration viewpoint. Although very few tweets mentioned it, religion was one of the reasons, with religious leaders, like Pope Francis, condemning the separation of migrant families, reinforcing the moral and ethical argument for humane immigration practices. Separate from ethics, there was an emotional appeal to compassion and family values advocating for a more empathetic approach to immigration.

The other two major categories were economic and governmental reasons. Economic reasons included the economic benefits and contributions of immigrants, including their role in essential work and business ownership. The other economic reason overlaps with ethical consideration and addresses the economic disparities affecting immigrant communities and highlights the need for policies that rectify systemic inequalities and support economic justice for all workers. Governmental themes included public policy and international relations. Policy that advocates for reforms to fix the immigration system and protect immigrant communities aligns with a pro-immigration agenda focused on inclusivity and justice. International relations involved criticizing foreign entities and Republican political figures who perpetuate anti-immigration rhetoric and policies underscoring the argument for more humane and fair immigration policies (See example tweets [Table 4](#))

To summarize the results of RQ2, the divide between pro- and anti-immigration stances stems from contrasting perceptions of immigrants. Anti-immigration supporters, influenced by Group Threat Theory, view immigrants as a threat to economic stability,



**Table 3**  
Anti-immigration categories and tweet examples.

Stance	Type of Immigration	Reason	Example
Anti Immigration	All Immigration	National Identity Threat	God said love thy neighbors- not live with them. Forced diversity by third world Immigration isn't an idea based in love, rather it's just the opposite. It's an act that wipes out national identity, culture, and religion.
		Political Threat	Minneapolis is a great example of what the future of our country will look like if we do not address the issue of mass immigration. Are you Pro-life? Pro-2A? Pro-LEO? Well, In 20 years, you're going to be outnumbered, and outvoted.
		Economic Threat	Why are you bringing in each year 1 million people to work in the U.S. when we got 23 million who are unemployed or underemployed? What are you doing to your own people?
		Other Threat	Every problem we face as a nation today can be traced back to the fact that we lack Proper immigration in this nation. We import the worst from around the world, give them the world & their kids to hate everything we are! #RememberInNovember #BuildTheWall
		Security Threat	The disgusting mainstream media want us to forget that this young man was murdered and 7 others stabbed on the streets by an Immigrant from Somalia. We wont let them brush it under the carpet RIP Jacob Billington   Please RT
	Illegal Immigration		
			The only reasonable position on illegal immigration is #BuildTheWall and #DeportThemAll. No more amnesties and no more delays. Deportations save American lives.
		Threat to social order	I Don't Like Illegal Immigration One bit but Legal Immigration is Cool with Me!!! Nobody Likes getting Skipped in Line!!!! The System Needs to be Tightened Up and I Suspect that's Exactly what @realDonaldTrump is Doing
		Threat to established order	I am the only candidate in #FL19 who will work to END illegal immigration and #BuildTheWall We need to enforce our border laws. If you're here legally, we love you, but if you're here illegally you have to go back. It's just a matter of enforcing our laws. Protect the border!
		Threat to Existing Minority Groups	My wife is Mexican and we're in Mexico waiting for her visa. Mexicans know that it's the democrats fault for incentivizing illegal immigration. The jig is up.#LatinosForTrump #WalkAway
	Refugees	Other Threat (health threat)	@jsolomonReports I have been warning about this. Unless we stop illegal immigration, we will never be prepared for the next virus. #BuildTheWall
		Stealing Social Benefits	.@realDonaldTrump & @RichforGA agree that legal, merit #immigration benefits our country but those coming in illegally 4 free social benefits our citizens must pay for should be deported immediately. #BuildTheWall
		Political Threat	Refugee resettlement racket is a multi-billion-dollar business for #openbordersinc NGOs, Vatican, Dems, SorosWorld, immigration lawyers. Trump cracked down on Obama Democrat voter importation plan masquerading as compassion. Reducing 3rd World refugee flow puts
		Security Threat	Anyone else tired of hearing about this ungrateful refugee committing fraud, felonies and crimes regarding immigration, marriage, campaign finance violations or election integrity and have nothing done about it? Is this still America? #maga

national security, and cultural identity, which is used to justify restrictive policies. In contrast, pro-immigration supporters, aligning with Contact Hypothesis, focus on humanitarian concerns such as justice, compassion, and fairness, portraying immigrants as victims of mistreatment rather than threats.

However, the so-called "pro-immigration" stance appears to be less about highlighting the benefits immigrants bring or the need for immigration, and more about opposing deportation and cruelty toward undocumented immigrants. Notably, none of the pro-immigration tweets advocate for increasing immigration levels, despite concerns such as the aging U.S. population and declining birth rate. Furthermore, economic benefits are mentioned in only a small subset of tweets, with the dominant focus being on ethical and humanitarian arguments, rather than the advantages of immigration. Ultimately, the core divide centers on whether immigration is framed through fear-based narratives that drive immigration restriction policies or as a moral responsibility that demands compassionate reform.

## Discussion

This study explores public discourse on immigration before and after the 2020 U.S. presidential election, utilizing Twitter data to assess sentiment trends, political polarization, and theoretical frameworks of Blumer's Group Position Theory and Allport's Contact Hypothesis. The findings offer new insights into how immigration discourse shifts during pivotal political events and provide a foundation for understanding the dynamics of public attitudes toward immigration.

An important topic in the U.S. political discourse, immigration was discussed significantly more before the election than after. Interestingly, our findings reveal that the Republicans addressed the issue significantly more than the Democrats prior to the election, whereas no significant difference in tweet frequency was observed between the two groups post-election. This raises the question of

**Table 4**

Pro-immigration categories and tweet examples.

Pro Immigration	Ethics	Abuse of immigrant children, women and families	Women: BREAKING: LA Times documents the accounts of 19 mostly Black and Latinx immigrant women who suffered medical abuse while detained at Irwin #ShutDownIrwin Children Workers: Eva Longoria, known for her philanthropic work bringing awareness to child migrant farm workers, closing education gap plaguing Latinas, confronting Latinx poverty, initiating victory funds to help elect more Latinx candidates, as well as acting, will lead Monday's programming. Families: As a Puerto Rican American, I can't see how anyone in my Latinx community can support someone who let over 3000 American in PR die or someone who cages, abuses immigrant families or orders illegal hysterectomies on Latin immigrant women like it's Nazi Germany. Anti-immigration is racist If true, it's unthinkable, abhorrent, and a grievous human rights violation. Cruelty and dehumanization of the most vulnerable have been a constant feature of Trump's immigration policy. But performing involuntary hysterectomies on immigrants? We need a full investigation.
		Racism	
		Human Rights	
		Justice and fairness	Despite keeping this country from going hungry, essential immigrant workers have been excluded from #COVID19 relief. We must do right by all communities, immigrants included. #ImmigrantsAreEssential
	Emotional	Religion	In a new documentary, Pope Francis says separating migrant children from their parents is "something a Christian cannot do. It's cruelty of the highest form
		Compassion	The Biden administration inherited a broken immigration system. Republicans think cruelty can fix it. America should choose family values and compassion.
	Economic	Economic Benefit to U.S.	Across the road from where Trump bragged about his monument to hate, Latino and immigrant farmworkers are doing the hard, essential work of feeding America.
		Economic injustice	"nobody cares" is where predominantly immigrant hands pick the fruits and vegetables -in sun or rain, for below minimum wage- that ya'll use to sustain your "cruelty free" diets in both NOR and SO cal. and in the rest of the U.S. I'm not standing for Central Cal disrespect. .@POTUS knows we need to fix our broken immigration system. It's about Dreamers. It's about TPS holders. It's about farmworkers. And it's about 11 million people who fuel our economy & call this country home. We need to deliver a pathway to citizenship. #USCitizenshipAct
	Governmental	Public Policy	Trump benefits from daily disasters that keep the country's focus off the pass he gave Putin for bounties on American troops & the migrant kids in cages. Ignoring his role in the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in China is a national disgrace.
		International Relations	

whether this pattern is consistent across other election cycles or influenced by the election results. Additionally, the data showed considerably higher polarization in topics discussed before the election compared to after. Notably, pro-immigration tweets outnumbered anti-immigration tweets both before and after the election, although this may be partially explained by the neutral keywords used for data collection. These findings align with previous literature highlighting heightened issue framing during elections (Hout & Maggio, 2021; Nasuto & Rowe, 2024).

Considering the effect of political affiliation, diversity and socioeconomic status, our results indicate: 1) Democrats being significantly more pro-immigration, while Republicans are more anti-immigration, 2) lower income is associated with more anti-immigration sentiment and higher income states are more pro-immigration, 3) more diverse regions of the U.S. are less anti-immigration compared to more homogeneous areas. This is consistent with the findings of Knowles & Tropp, 2018 on the role of intergroup threat on the support of Trump in the election.

Regarding anti-immigration sentiment, Blumer's (1958) four conditions for negative group attitudes were evident in the data. Blumer attributed negative attitude toward outgroups to the following four conditions: 1) a sense of superiority over the minority group, 2) a perception that the minority group is inherently different and alien, 3) a belief in an exclusive right to certain privileges and advantages, and 4) a fear that the minority group seeks to undermine the rights and privileges of the majority group. Examining the anti-immigration data, we observe clear evidence of perceived threats, with the type of immigration playing a significant role in shaping anti-immigration sentiment. In the general category of "all immigration is bad," a sense of superiority often emerges, as seen in tweets implying immigrants are inferior. For example, one tweet states, "*We import the worst from around the world, give them the world & their kids to hate everything we are!*". In the "anti-all immigration" group, there is no clear justification provided for why immigrants are seen as inferior or undeserving of the same privileges as non-immigrants. In this category, aligning with Blumer's second condition, immigrants are perceived as inherently different due to factors such as national identity, culture, religion, or the assumption that they vote differently and hold distinct political affiliations.

The "anti-illegal immigration" group justifies its stance by framing illegal immigrants as a threat due to their violation of the law. This aligns with Blumer's third condition, which asserts that privileges and benefits should be reserved for the dominant group. Additionally, tweets suggest that legal immigrants and minorities are unfairly disadvantaged by benefits being extended to illegal immigrants.

Regarding economic threats, Blumer's fourth condition—perceived threats to the dominant group's prerogatives—it is evident in tweets claiming that immigrants are taking jobs that belong to the dominant group (see Table 3). The perceived security threat is a recurring theme across both "anti-all immigration" and "anti-illegal immigration" tweets, consistent with Blumer's fourth condition. Blumer's second condition, which views foreigners as intrinsically different and alien, also resonates in these tweets, particularly in

references to cultural, identity, and religious differences that are framed as threats to national identity. This Blumers framework can help better understand the anti-immigration sentiment on Twitter, while the conditions of Allport's Contact Hypothesis are less evident in the anti-immigration data.

The anti-immigration data shows that the [Allport's \(1954\)](#) four conditions of the Contact Hypothesis, which are essential for fostering positive attitudes toward immigrants, are not met. Immigrants—whether legal, illegal, or refugees—are not perceived as having equal status (first condition). Political and pro-wall sentiments highlight a lack of institutional support for fostering increased contact (second condition). Immigrants are often depicted as having conflicting goals, with many tweets suggesting they harm the U.S. economically or threaten national security, undermining the possibility of shared objectives (third condition). Lastly, there is no indication of a perceived need for cooperation (fourth condition).

In contrast, the tweets containing a pro-immigration stance, most likely expressed by the detected Democratic users, show some alignment with the Contact Hypothesis. There is a strong focus on the equality of status between immigrants and Americans, emphasizing shared humanity and the universal right to dignity. Institutional support is referenced through mentions of figures like President Biden and Pope Francis. Shared goals, such as the positive contributions of immigrants to the U.S., like "feeding America," are highlighted. However, evidence of collaborative efforts to achieve these goals is limited, and no specific examples of joint action were found in the data. This may be due to the short-form nature of the medium that has been shown to support short, sometimes de-contextualized statements, barring deeper, more nuanced discussion ([Han, 2022](#)).

### Limitations

The present study has several notable limitations. Twitter (now, X) is a platform known for its polarized discourse (a property which we take advantage of during the opinion stance analysis), with affordances that foster echo chambers and partisanship ([Garimella et al., 2018](#)). The users of this platform tend to be younger, male, and educated ([Pew Research Center, 2024](#)), and are likely not an unbiased subset of the general population in the US. It is intriguing, however, that the opinion signals we find in this data correspond to real-world indicators around income and immigration (note that ample previous literature shows relationships between public opinion on Twitter and, for instance, US elections outcome ([Nugroho, 2021](#))). Thus, we encourage the reader to focus on the comparison of opinions within the dataset, and not treat the raw numbers reported here as a census of the general population. Besides the data selection, each methodological step introduces noise in our analysis. The geolocation, although shown to perform well internationally ([Paoletti et al., 2024](#)), may have uneven performance across different states within the US. Note that by considering the author's self-indicated Location field, we are likely including those who are not sincere about their location. Further, the network-based approach to opinion classification may assign the wrong label to as many as 16 % of users within a community (as judged by manual annotation of a data sample). The keyword-based political affiliation classification method surely leaves out those using different vocabulary to express their political opinions, and of course does not reach those who choose not to disclose their opinions on the platform. Whenever possible, we provide estimates of the accuracy of these methods using manual examination. The expression on social media platforms (and Twitter specifically, at the time of the study) is moderated by the platform in order to make sure the users comply with its Terms of Service. Such moderation has been contested as having a political bias ([Bond, 2022](#)), which, if true, would affect the political expression, including on the topic of immigration. We would also like to acknowledge the inclusion of potentially vulnerable groups in our data.

Future studies may consider performing a longitudinal study and conducting a comparative analysis across elections. Further, comparing the discourse on immigration across several social media platforms can capture a wider variety of views and be more representative of the population. Although focused on U.S. immigration discourse, in future studies, the methodology and insights used in this study can be applied to understand immigration attitudes in other countries, particularly in politically polarized environments.

### Theoretical and Practical Implications

Analyzing anti-immigration sentiments through Blumer's theory can guide the development of targeted interventions to address perceived threats and foster more balanced and inclusive discussions. Insights from online discourse can help policymakers better understand public attitudes and refine how immigration policies are framed. The study identifies unique perspectives within anti-immigration groups, including those advocating for legal immigrants while opposing illegal immigration. Understanding these nuances can help advocacy groups and policymakers address the specific needs and concerns of different subgroups. Distinguishing between types of immigration and emphasizing areas of agreement can help reduce polarization compared to treating all immigrants as a single, uniform group. Further, by highlighting the unmet conditions of Allport's Contact Hypothesis, we aim to offer actionable insights for policymakers and institutions to create environments that facilitate positive intergroup interactions, such as equitable representation, supportive policies, and opportunities for collaboration.

To improve immigration discourse and intercultural relations, policymakers could promote positive narratives emphasizing immigrants' contributions and foster community programs that encourage interaction and shared goals as suggested by Allport's Contact Hypothesis. Addressing digital polarization through media literacy and balanced content can help counter misinformation and reduce divisive narratives. Initiatives such as the "Belonging begins with us" campaign by the American Immigration Council, are a step toward the right direction, but in addition to encouraging people to come together ([American Immigration Council, 2024](#)), teaching history of immigration's benefits could help mitigate stereotypes. Policies that streamline legal immigration, provide institutional support for integration such as Immigration Workforce Integration Initiative can help alleviate perceived threats and foster fairness. Finally, leveraging data on public sentiment and working collaboratively with international partners can inform adaptive, inclusive,

and globally responsible immigration policies.

## Conclusion

To summarize, this study demonstrated that the immigration discourse was more prevalent and more polarized prior to the election compared to after. Interestingly the number of pro-immigration tweets outnumbered the anti-immigration tweets. Furthermore the anti-immigration sentiment varied greatly across types of immigrants. The integration of Blumers Threat theory and Allport Contact Hypothesis help bridge the gap in understanding positive and negative attitudes toward immigration. Finally the data showed political affiliation is the strongest predictor of immigration attitudes, with Democrats generally showing more pro-immigration stances. State-level factors, such as income and the proportion of foreign-born residents, also correlate with more favorable attitudes toward immigration.

## Disclaimer

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used ChatGPT in order to check spelling, grammar, syntax and improve readability of the manuscript. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Hommadova-Lu Anya:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization.  
**Mejova Yelena:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation.

## Appendix

Hashtags of accounts leaning right:

17, 1776, 1a, 2a, 2adefender, 2nd, 2nda, 2ndamendment, 3stars4genflynn, 45plus4, 4moreyears, abortionismurder, alllivesmatter, alwaystrumper, america1st, americafirst, americanpatriot, americansfirst, armyfortrump, backtheblue, benghazi, benghaziaingoingaway, bestpresidentever, bidencheated, billgatesgate, bluelivesmatter, buildthatwall, buildthewall, ccot, ccw, chooselife, conservative, constitution, constitutionalist, cruzcrew, cult45, darktolight, defendthepolice, defundpp, democrat-saredestroyingamerica, democratshateamerica, deplorable, deplorables, digitalsoldier, digitalsoldiers, digitalwarrior, donttreadonme, drain, drainswamp, draintheswamp, endthefed, fightfortrump, finishthewall, fourmoreyears, freeflynn, godblessamerica, godwins, greatawakening, holdtheline, iamthenra, ifbp, istandwithtrump, kag, kag2020, kaga, keepamericagreat, keeptexasred, latin-osfortrump, lawandorder, leadright, liberalismisamentaldisorder, lockherup, lovemyresident, maga, maga2020, magaa, make-americagreatagain, molonlabe, nationalist, neverforgetbenghazi, nodaca, nomasks, nosharia, nosocialism, nra, nralifemember, oathkeeper, obamagate, parler, patriot, patriotparty, patriotsfight, patriotsunite, patriotsunited, pedogate, pizzagate, potus, presidenttrump, pridetfamily, pro2a, progun, prolife, promisesmadepromiseskept, protrump, proudamerican, prouddeplorable, q, qanon, qarmy, qsentme, realdonaldtrump, redpill, redpilled, redwave, redwave2020, republican, saveourchildren, savethechildren, school-choice, sethrich, socialismkills, socialismsucks, standforthe flag, stopthesteal, taketheoath, taxationistheft, tcot, teamtrump, teaparty, thebestisyettocome, thegreatawakening, themighty200, thinblueline, trump2016, trump2020, trump2020landslide, trump2020landslidevictory, trump2020nowmorethenever, trump2024, trump2q2q, trump45, trumparmy, trumpismypresident, trump-landslide2020, trumplican, trump Pence2020, trumpsupporter, trumptrain, trumptrain, trumptrain2020, trumpwon, trusttheplan, twgrp, voted, voted2020, votedtosaveamerica, votedtosavecalifornia, voterid, walkaway, winning, womenfortrump, wwglwga, wwglwga worldwide

Hashtags of accounts leaning right:

abolishice, abolishpolice, abolishthepolice, aclu, allblacklivesmatter, ally, alwayswithher, americaortrump, antifascist, antiracist, antitrump, bernie2020, biden2020, biden2020iguess, bidenharris, bidenharris2020, bidenharris2020landslide, bidenwon, black-livesmatter, blacktranslivesmatter, blizzard, bluenomatterwho, blueoasis, bluetsunami, bluetsunami2020, bluewave, bluewave2020, breonataaylor, breonnataaylor, cancelstudentdebt, climate, climateaction, climatechange, climatechangeisreal, climatecrisis, closethecamps, convicttrump, corruptgop, daca, dcstatehood, defenddaca, defundpolice, defundthepolice, demcastor, democrat, dem-voice1, ditchmitch, dumptrump, dumptrump2020, emptythetanks, endcitizensunited, endgunviolence, endracism, equalityforall, factsmatter, familiesbelongtogether, fbrparty, feminist, flip2020, flipthesenate, flipthesenateblue, fuckice, fuckmaga, fucktrump, geeksresist, generalstrike, georgefloyd, gojoe, goodtrouble, goptraitors, greennewdeal, greenparty, guncontrol, guncontrolnow, gunreformnow, gunsense, harris, healthcareforall, iamantifa, icantbreathe, impeach, impeach45, impeachagain, impeachthemf, impeachtrump, instillwithher, imwithher, indigenousrights, indivisible, joe2020, joe Biden, joe Biden2020, joe Bidenforpresident2020, justiceforbreonnataaylor, justiceforgeorgefloyd, justicematters, kamalaharris, khive, khiveforbiden, leftisbest, liberal, livingwage, lockhimup, loveislove, marchforourlives, maskup, medicare4all, medicareforall, metoo, mmiw, moscowmitch, nastywoman, native-livesmatter, neveragain, neverrepublican, nevertrump, nevertrumper, nojusticenopeace, notnypresident, onevoice1, peoplesparty, persist, presidentbiden, prochoice, progressive, prouddemocrat, publichealth, rbg, removetrump, resister, resisters, resisttrump, ridenwithbiden, ridinwithbiden, rightmatters, saveourdemocracy, savethepostoffice, savetheusps, sayhername, saytheirnames, science, sciencematters, socialjustice, stayhome, stillwithher, strongertogether, taxtherich, teambiden, teamjoe, traitortrump,

translivesmatter, transrights, transrightsarehumanrights, trashtrump, tre45on, trumpcrimefamily, trumpisacriminal, trumpliesa-boutcoronavirus, trumpliesamericansdie, trumpliespeople, trumpresign, trumpresister, trumprussia, trumpvirus, truthmatters, turntexasblue, uniteblue, veteransagainsttrump, vetsagainsttrump, votebiden, votebidenharris, voteblue, voteblue2020, voteblue2022, votebluenomatterwho, votebluenomatterwho, votebluenomatterwho2020, votebluenomatterwho2022, votebluetoenthisnightmare, votebluetosaveamerica, votehimout, votelikeblackwomen, votetrumpout, votingrights, warrendemocrat, wearadamnmask, wearmask, wearyourmask, wokeaf, womenforbiden, womensrights, wtp2020, wtpblue

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