

University of Nevada, Reno

**“Bad Hombres” - Racialized Rhetoric in Trump’s Immigration Policy**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
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## **Abstract**

This project interrogates several aspects of racialized rhetoric as it pertains to Trump's immigration legal policy for Latinx migrants on the Southern U.S. border, as well as public comments made in support of it. Through usage of color-blind racial rhetoric, along with the usage of "alien" as a metaphor to describe Latinx migrants, Trump and his administration have de-legitimized Latinx bodies as potential citizen, causing Latinx migrants and citizens alike to be subject to hatred and violence from xenophobia and reassured racial fears. In this project, I also discuss the role of Fox News opinion media in perpetuating and cycling such rhetoric in symbiosis with Trump, cementing such racial prejudices in the minds of the Trump voter base. This research captures the current racial sentiments towards Latinx individuals of Donald Trump, the current U.S. president, and his voter base.

## Contents

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 .....</b>	<b>67</b>

## Chapter 1

### Theory and Methods

On May 19, 2016, Donald Trump, in a heated debate with Hilary Clinton during the 2016 campaign, stated the following –

“The single biggest problem is heroin that pours across our southern borders. Just pouring and destroying their youth It is poisoning the blood of their youth and plenty of other people. We have to have strong borders. We have to keep the drugs out of our country. Right now, we're getting the drugs, they're getting the cash. We need strong borders. We need absolute, we cannot give amnesty. Now, I want to build the wall. We need the wall. The border patrol, I.C.E., they all want the wall. We stop the drugs; we shore up the border. One of my first acts will be to get all of the drug lords, all of the bad ones, we have some bad, bad people in this country that have to go out. We're going to get them out. We're going to secure the border. And once the border is secured, at a later date, we'll make a determination as to the rest. But we have some bad hombres here and we're going to get them out.”

(Politico, 2016)

*Bad Hombres.* These words, and phrases like it, became cornerstones of the Trump campaign when referring to Latinx migrants. The words that Trump used here echoed through the rest of his campaign, accompanied by the disdain he pours out on Latinx migrants. To the Trump voter base, Latinx migrants were presented as problematic, drug abusers, criminals (rapists, even), and deserve little to no quarter in the United States.

Already, Latinx migrant populations in and approaching the United States feel the weight of such vitriolic rhetoric. While these attacks mainly target migrant populations, all Latinx communities across the country have felt the weight of the suspicion and violence that has escalated in this country. Latinx communities are targets of both the administrative community, as well as an emboldened racist public, in various ways. Attacks against Latinx communities keep occurring in cities such as El Paso, leaving manifestos behind that echo Trump's particular brand of racism (Baker & Shear, 2019). Asylum seekers and other Latinx migrants are being placed in inhumane detention camps, where they are repeatedly housed in cold, dangerous conditions, waiting sometimes years to have their voice heard in a court of law (Serwer, 2019).

This project focuses on several facets of the Trump administration's rhetoric: its perpetuation of racism through modern colorblindness, racial scripting of metaphor, and the dispersal of this rhetoric into the common purview. Through these analyses, I find that the Trump administration has engaged in a coordinated effort to delegitimize Latinx migration in both legal rhetoric, as well as amongst Trump's voter base. By incorporating such narratives and rhetoric into legal text, this administration aims to cement their racist ideologies into policy and feeling that lasts long after the next election.

### **Theoretical Overview**

This analysis seeks to contribute to the academic discussion on current border rhetoric and metaphors under the Trump administration, particularly ones that re-frame our conversations of border activities. Many scholars have looked towards re-framing the conversations of borders through various commitments to decolonial thought as well as

critical rhetorical standpoints. Through analyzing the various artifacts chosen for this project, I seek to advance theories of borders and immigration rhetoric, racialization in rhetorical immigration studies, and Trump's rhetorical style.

Due to the complexity of discussing Trump's rhetoric without perpetuating the same racialized rhetoric I wish to critically analyze, I have opted to make some rhetorical choices within this document. Anywhere that problematic language must be used to paraphrase or quantify a racialized viewpoint is *italicized* so as to not suggest my own usage of such terminology. Additionally, I switch occasionally between "Latinx migrant" "Latinx bodies", and "immigrant". For any references that are specific to those crossing the border, I attempt to quantify them as "Latinx migrants". However, in cases where I am speaking of larger communities made up of those that are not specifically migrant peoples, I prefer the term "Latinx bodies". "Immigrant" is generally used as a catch-all term when not referring to migrants of Latinx descent.

### **Borders & Immigration Rhetoric**

The relationship of the United States with its southern border shared with Mexico is one that has always been tenuous. Each president brings a new, shifting policy platform into the White House, changing many of the rules that the previous administration had left behind. Minority immigrants have always had to face a confusing and ever-shifting system of laws and policies defining "legal" and "illegal" ways of entry into the United States, as was the case with programs such as the *bracero* program, which saw *legal* Hispanic immigrants come in, and *illegal* Hispanic immigrants simultaneously be pushed out through enforcement efforts like the derisively named Operation Wetback (Hernández, 2006, pp. 425–427). Starting with the Reagan administration, the call for a

physical border, as well as additional physical border patrol presence became the direction of the political tide in regards to the U.S.-Mexico divide (Spotts, 2002). The last few decades have been marked by increased border security, along with surveillance and enforcement in the borderlands (Chávez, 2012). Even looking at current policing activities, the Customs and Border Patrol defines the border as an “external boundary,” but additionally operates within 100 miles north of the border as well (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2018), suggesting that the geographical divide between U.S. and Mexico is not where the “border” ends. The concept of a *physical* barrier, i.e. a wall, only really began to take form in the last 20-30 years, with the first physical barrier being only 14 miles long, erected on the border between San Diego and Tijuana from 1996 – 2004 (Nuñez-Neto & Garcia, 2007). The first legally enshrined border fence effort was the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which authorized 700 miles of double-stacked fencing on the US-Mexico border, though it was not a comprehensive barrier (109th United States Congress, 2006).

If the border is more than a physical construct, then it is also important to understand border rhetoric and metaphors. The concept of *border rhetoric* is one that has been taken up by many critical cultural scholars, and focuses on agency and identity on and around borders (Cisneros, 2012). Scholars such as Ono (2012) have argued that the concept of border can be understood *figurally* rather than as a geographic constant, and that the border not only fences people physically, but also rhetorically. Many scholars have looked towards re-framing the conversations of borders through to decolonial thought as well as critical rhetorical standpoints. Chávez (2012) has argued that, in order to better understand much of the political conversation surrounding border enforcement,



we need to re-orient our understandings of Southern U.S. border enforcement towards stronger terminology to fully understand the gravity of current border policing, favoring terms such as “militarization” over “securitization.” This sentiment is echoed in Hasian Jr. and McHendry Jr.’s (2012), discussing how the federal government willingly legitimized the Minuteman Project vigilante organization, claiming that they were seen as a stopgap to a perceived migration overrun. Indeed, borders, both physical and psychosocial, permeate every discussion of migrant communities.

Cisneros (2012a) argues that recent law has contributed to a type of “border anxiety,” where borders create anxiety by seeming ever encroaching, expanding their reach beyond physical domains, permeating both the body and the geographical reality of many migrant experiences. The discussion of the border is not just one that exists on the southern perimeter of the U.S. mainland, but one that exists within various migrant communities across the country, including groups outside of Latinx communities. Wanzer-Serrano (2015) discusses how the New York Young Lords actively attempted to resist bordering practices in El Barrio (an area of New York City), resisting racist practices such as the city’s refusal to collect trash, and equity in educational settings. Hollywood portrayals is little exception – their portrayals on Latinx migrants, particularly in movies such as *Traffic*, portrays wildly doctored portrayals of the borderlands, often using a sepia filter to evoke monotone, negative portrayals of dangerous non-white territory intimate to the borderlands. Furthering the idea that the Southern U.S. border (and, indeed, all borders) are primarily sociopolitical constructs, it is therefore important to analyze these borders with a critical eye towards inherent power structures and racism that has structured U.S. border relations.

## **Race and Racialization in Rhetorical Immigration Studies**

It is impossible to ignore the racialized reality of border enforcement on the Southern U.S. border. Flores (2003) argues that the rhetoric of race frequently seen in immigration law and discourse is, in part, *how* borders are constructed in the U.S., with such discourses shaping who is left on either side of the metaphorical wall. The concept of *borders* is a highly racialized construct that has changed over the course of history, particularly regarding the US-Mexico border. The United States has, for many years, had a tenuous relationship with its Southern border, with various modulations in acceptance and definition of Latinx migrants since its “inception” as a physically policed boundary in the early 1920’s (Sassen, 1998). Immigration policing of Latinx peoples in the following 30 years depended largely on economic need of US people for Mexican labor.

To decouple a critique of U.S. border rhetorics from those of race would be to ignore the historical realities of the U.S. relationship to racism, and particularly, the concept of whiteness. The immigrant is subject to a form of nativist racism that has shaped immigration policy throughout the history of United States (Chang & Aoki, 1997). While the initial exclusion policies of the United States targeted Asian immigrants from entering over the Southern border, enforcement officials quickly turned its gaze as Hispanic migrants were no longer economically welcome, particularly as the 1920s arrived with the Great Depression not too far behind (Hernandez, 2010). Beginning in with the 1924 Immigration Act, Latinx bodies on the southern United States border were subject to racial scripting. Racial scripts, according to Molina (2014), are narratives assigned to minority individuals that classify them as non-white bodies. Molina (2014) also identifies how immigration policy, including the naturalization process, has been

crafted over time to identify brown bodies as unwanted, excluding them from immigration paradigms by labeling them through medical, social, and perceptual means.

Latinx migrants have also been linked to conceptions of disease and contagion throughout U.S. history. Ono and Sloop (2002), in analyzing rhetoric surrounding California's Proposition 183 (a notorious piece of immigration policy), additionally identified a characterization of Latinx migrants as economically and socially disadvantageous, with them even being associated with infection, both biologically and culturally. Many of these factor into concepts of purity. Dorothy Nelkin and Mark Michaels (1998) identified such logic amongst public discourse regarding immigration in the 1990's, pointing towards conversations that warned that Latinx migrants could dilute and weaken the purity/cleanliness of the U.S. genetic pool. Otto Santa Ana (2002) identified racialized immigrant narratives when the nation is seen as a physical body. In these characterizations, Latinx migrants are shown as burdensome, and more often, a pathogen, something that must be eradicated (Santa Ana, 2002).

These narratives and metaphors do not arise without significant detriment to Latinx migrants in the United States. Latinx migrants are pushed to carry the border with them, being identified Anzaldúa (1987) wrote about the border being a psychological reality that Latinx migrants carry around with them, being in a limbo reality. They are not welcome by their homeland, nor their new destinations, and therefore have a split *mestiza* consciousness – being Latinx, migrant, but also within the U.S., they are forced to juggle cultures. Other researchers have noted this split consciousness – Carrillo Rowe (2008), in wrestling with her own positioning as a researcher, labels herself a *chicana falsa*, a

Chicana who occupies a place of liminality, of uncertainty. Flores (2003) notes this as a form of creation of a perpetual immigrant, someone never welcomed into the role of citizenry. Taking on this concept of shifting cultural identity, Lechuga (2019) expands on Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of mestiza consciousness, linking this liminality with ideas of nomadic movement, and highlights the difficulty that this creates for Latinx migrants in the U.S. to navigate citizenship, running counter to imperialism of stasis. This "bordering" of individuals creates a system in where minorities must act legal to not have suspicion warranted of their character/status, creating systems of coercion and fear for those targeted by immigration laws (Cisneros, 2012a). The socially constructed border continuously oppresses primarily Latinx peoples, regardless of citizenship, and burdens individuals and communities with the constant threat of violence. Knowing that race plays a critical role whenever questions of migrations and southern borders arise, I wish to turn briefly to discussing the role of the president, Donald Trump, to the rise of legitimized racist speech towards migrant populations.

### **Trump's Rhetorical Style**

The first two chapters of this analysis deal exclusively with legislation and remarks made unilaterally by the White House administration. The legislative acts spoken about are within a category of what are called "unilateral executive decisions" (also colloquially referred to as Executive Orders). Unlike traditional policy that worked through the houses of Congress, the President can leverage this power to enact specific type of legislation on a moment's notice, ordering his cabinet members and bureaucratic administrations to begin enforcing policy. Due to the unchecked nature of such orders, it gives us rare insight into the personal wishes and racist ideologies of Donald Trump,

rather than an amalgamation of his wishes alongside other stakeholders, like many senate-sponsored bills.

Candidate Trump in the 2016 election and before was highly critical of the previous administration's usage of executive powers, considering it governmental overreach and an example of misuse of executive power. There are several documented instances of Trump critiquing unilateral executive actions (typically in the form of executive orders) during the Obama administration before and during his candidacy (Washington Post, 2019). However, post-candidacy Trump seems to perceive no issue with the usage of these unilateral actions, and was very quickly pointed out to be on track to be the most prolific user of executive orders from any president in the last 50 years (Cillizza & Petulla, 2017). This curious paradox can be explained through an understanding that sees his executive actions as fixing previous unstated loopholes and broken executive action in the past. Trump articulates a cogent example of this justification:

The biggest loophole drawing *illegal aliens* to our borders is the use of fraudulent or meritless asylum claims to enter our great country. An alien simply crosses the border illegally, finds a Border Patrol agent, and using well-coached language — by lawyers and others that stand there trying to get fees or whatever they can get — they're given a phrase to read. They never heard of the phrase before. They don't believe in the phrase. But they're given a little legal statement to read, and they read it. And now, suddenly, they're supposed to qualify. But that's not the reason they're here. (Trump, 2018)

In remarks like this, Trump gives a type of reasoning for his actions – he’s only ordering things because the way that it is *right now* is fundamentally broken. This can be seen in other types of executive actions that his administration has taken towards immigration, notably by going over the heads of Congress and attempting to broker deals that would restrict the definition or legitimacy of asylum seekers (Alvarez, 2018). In many ways, the relationship that Trump has with executive power is one of convenience – if it supports the narrative and issues that the administration seeks to uphold, then it is not an oversight, but a benign usage of executive ability when Congress may not be an option for the administration to go through. In conjunction with Trump’s frustration with a molded narrative immigration, his views on executive orders give us insight into how Trump uses the executive order system to create immigration policy and to create narratives. Having established the Trump administration’s connection and fascination with unilateral executive decisions, I wish to move now to attempting to understand *why* Trump uses such rhetoric, and the efficacy behind it.

Academics have attempted to make sense of Trump’s belligerent rhetoric within his public statements. Gunn (2018), in his article “On Political Perversion,” claims that Trump not invented his particular style of rhetoric, but popularized something that had long been part of U.S. political rhetoric, utilizing , this rhetoric because we, as American citizens, have been conditioned to enjoy such perversities.. Dow (2017) echoes this, claiming that the “unrestrained discourse” that Trump employs is a rhetorical tool, one that allows Trump’s *form* of speaking and being to speak louder than his *content*, or what he actually said (p. 137). This form-before-content approach, while superbly effective at enticing the Trump base (as evidenced by his elective victory), has permitted many

particularly vulgar, indeed, violent narratives to be leveled against numerous marginalized groups, including Latinx migrants from the Southern border. Johnson (2017) highlights some of the conceptual refusal of the “other” in the administration’s rhetoric, claiming that Trump attempts to reach out to the mistaken perception of white people as threatened, and points to his treatment of Latinx migrants as an example of this. By classifying Latinx migrants on the southern border as “rapists,” and “not the best,” the Trump administration attempts to use fear and misguided anger to get people to support the border wall initiative and view Trump as the hero that is assuaging their fears (p. 242). This type of rhetoric has also been partially inspired with the rise of Twitter, according to Ott (2017), who claims that Twitter’s encouragement of uncivil discourse, as well as its focus on simplistic messages, has heightened the effectiveness of the non-complicated claims of the Trump administration through undermining the ability of many people to parse complicated conversations and discuss them.

### **Methods and Texts**

For this project, I analyzed various textual artifacts relating to Trumpian rhetoric and Fox News. I engaged these texts using the methodology of rhetorical criticism, and identified overarching arguments that are being made throughout the texts (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997). This allowed to me identify common patterns throughout the texts. While conducting this analysis coded information to understand the themes and ideas related to my research questions present within each of the artifacts (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997). I also engaged in a descriptive analysis of both the actors and audiences, allowing for a better appreciation of the positionality of both groups, and how this rhetoric is being received (Kuypers, 2016).

## **Artifacts**

Each chapter addresses a specific artifact of interest regarding racialized immigration policy. First, analyzed official statements and memorandums released by the White House. Then, analyzed the legal text of what is considered the “Border E.O.,” or Executive Order 13767. I finalized my analysis identifying commonalities between right wing Fox News pundits and Trump administration rhetoric through a selection of cable news shows. All these texts give insight into how the rhetoric of the current administration and cable news media affects brown/Latinx communities, enables racist discourse about migrants, and is absorbed and processed by popular media for common consumption.

## ***Policy Documents and Executive Orders***

The first two chapters of my thesis address Trump’s rhetoric through an examination of various policy documents published by the White House. In particular, I chose three documents to analyze. The first two documents, which consist of media statements that Trump made, as well as a framework document outlining Trump’s policy guidelines for Southern immigration enforcement, are analyzed together to gain a clearer picture on the full extent of Trump’s racialized rhetoric. The final document is an Executive Order, or a unilateral policy enactment by Trump himself. This Executive Order, 13767, outlines the requirements that Trump has for the building of a physical border wall on the Southern U.S. border. Split into various sections, the Executive Order tasks its varied audiences with their duties to enact Trump’s wishes. Analyzed in conjunction, these two documents give insight into both colloquial racisms espoused by the president, and the insidious racial rhetoric imbued into legal doctrine.



### ***Right Wing News Media & The President***

While Trump himself has constructed a tense relationship with most “mainstream” media, accusing them of dishonesty and falsehoods on more than one occasion, one organization, in general, seemingly flowed in tandem with the potential president and his campaign. Fox News, a Rupert Murdoch bastion of conservative cable programming and news reporting, leveraged much of their energy towards supporting the campaigning nominee, and it paid off. Two-thirds of Trump’s support, according to Suffolk Polling, came from viewers that identified their most trusted news source as being Fox News (Bump, 2016), solidifying its place as an ally of the president coming into office. Tweets from the President, some with wild inaccuracies concerning policy matters, aired on Fox’s “Fox and Friends” just hours before appearing on Twitter as proclamations from the Commander-in-Chief (Gertz, 2018). This feedback loop, while tested at times, seems to be a symbiosis between the Murdoch-operated news media and the administration, with only minor spats where disagreements on portrayals of issues show up. Scholars from various disciplines have long been examining the link between media sources (primarily cable television and Internet sources) and political institutions, and raise worries about large, conglomerated media sources, with the right-wing monolith being primarily identified as Fox News. Particularly in areas where Fox News is one of the primary channels being cast in the local municipality, data shows that the presence of Fox News potentially significantly encouraged an uptick of both conservative leaning in those areas, as well as increasing Republican voter turnout from anywhere from three percent to nearly 28% (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007, p. 1191).

### ***Fox News Publications***

Fox News publishes several wide-ranging publications on a daily basis within its cable news empire. President Trump has purportedly favored the reporting on the channel, having it on in both the White House, and during travel on Air Force One (Oyedele, 2019). The president frequently attributes a controversial or misleading argument he made directly back to the arguments made by pundits on one of Fox's various news/opinion programming (Gertz, 2019). With this understanding, I focus on specifically some of the major programs that have been mentioned by the President or linked to being his preferred media, specifically Fox and Friends and Sean Hannity, looking at every airing from 2015 – 2019 referencing immigration, and selecting specific airings to expand upon themes and racialized scripts seen amongst the wider set. In total, I analyzed about 50 hours of recordings, and draw out three major themes for analysis.

In the next section, I outline my analysis of these rhetorical artifacts. I additionally detail some of the major analytical points that I uncover in each chapter, introducing the major findings in each contribution. In my concluding chapter, I tie together my findings, and ruminate about implications that my thesis has for further research.

### **Chapter Introductions**

In this section, I outline each of the chapters that I have in the thesis, and briefly overview the analysis work I undertake in each chapter. Each chapter deals with a specific facet of Trump's rhetoric. Chapter 2 uses Bonilla-Silva's (2014) color-blind race theory to analyze the Border Memorandum and Trump's statements on immigration to the press, while Chapter 3 dives into the text of a single Executive Order, and traces racialized rhetoric throughout. Chapter 4 then goes on to critique and explore Trump's

relationship to Fox News punditry. In Chapter 5, I summarize my findings from the thesis, and additionally look towards future research to further these analyses.

## **Chapter 2: Color Blind Rhetoric and the White House**

In Chapter 2, I use Bonilla Silva's four frames of color-blind racism (*abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism*) (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 74) to analyze and expose color-blind racist language within Trump's rhetoric, exploring both his publicly addressed statements, as well as a memorandum on border enforcement and policy, intended to be enacted over his time in office. Through my analysis, I reveal that both public statements and legal texts hold insidious forms of racism within their rhetoric that creates danger for Latinx individuals, especially migrant populations.

## **Chapter 3: Constructing Alien: White House Executive Metaphor**

In this chapter, I analyzed Executive Order 13767 and identified the rehashed metaphor of *alien* being imprinted among the subjects of the Executive Order. I use concepts from Cisneros, as well as rhetoricians like Ono, and Ferguson, to conduct a metaphorical analysis on the term "alien", seeking to understand the concrete cultural ideals the metaphor contains. In analyzing the usage of the term *illegal aliens* to describe Latinx migrants that are undocumented in the United States, as well as to describe even those *approaching, not within* the United States yet, I find that the current portrayals of migrants in this Executive Order draw on the racial metaphor of alien to construct imageries that paint Latinx migrants as dangerous, unkempt individuals, criminals within their own right. Media portrayals using the term have anecdotally linked egregious crimes with "*illegal aliens,*" and the administration has been quick to capitalize on this,

cycling the metaphor through various news sources. In my final chapter, I analyze the relationship that one of these outlets, Fox News, has to the Trump administration and how they perpetuate their rhetoric.

#### **Chapter 4: Fox News and Trump: Right Wing Media and Rhetorical Oppression**

In this chapter, I analyze the relationship between Fox News and the Presidency and address how each organization relies on the other for both legitimacy and for the continuous ability to influence the conservative voter base. In identifying common racial scripts within the shared narratives of both institutions (Molina, 2014), I also incorporate Cacho's (2012) theory of the indelible "illegality" of immigrant bodies arguing that this is a primary rhetorical strategy of both institutions used to other immigrant bodies. I argue that this symbiosis creates a daily system of racial reinforcement, cycling racist values and ideals within the conservative voter base.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

In my final chapter, I summarize the findings of the previous three chapters. I additionally go on to draw together the various conclusions made in the chapters. I also speak to the implications that this thesis has for future insights. I outline what I see as potential dangers of Trump's immigration rhetoric, specifically in regard to the idea of an expanding border, as well as a border that is under increasing levels of surveillance. Through these analyses, I find that the Trump administration has engaged in a coordinated effort to delegitimize Latinx migration in both legal rhetoric, as well as amongst Trump's voter base. In doing so, the Trump administration has called into question not only the legitimacy of Latinx migration across the southern border, but registers Latinx individuals alien regardless of their official status. To be a citizen is not a

default position granted to Latinx members of the United States, but a status that, even when held, is viewed as suspect.

## Chapter 2

### **Color Blind Rhetoric and the White House**

One of Trump's remarks suggests violence towards Latinx migrants might be reasonable –

“We will consider that the maximum that we can consider that, because they're throwing rocks viciously and violently. You saw that three days ago. Really hurting the military. We're not going to put up with that. If they want to throw rocks at our military, our military fights back. We're going to consider — and I told them, consider it a rifle. When they throw rocks like they did at the Mexico military and police, I say, consider it a rifle.” (Trump, 2018)

This startling racism seems to rise from some unknown place; however, this sentiment speaks to the pervasive nature of color-blind racism pervasive within Trump's remarks. Drawing on the work of Bonilla-Silva, I outline the theoretical body of work that influenced this analysis. Using this framework, I uncover two dominant narratives: the narrative of fairness in the debate over immigration and the continuation of dominant racist metaphors in immigration policy and law. I also assert that the Trump administration uses ideals of security and fairness to cloak more insidious racialized ideals about migrants, cloaking their true racist intentions behind more easily digestible topics for their voter base.

### **Theoretical Overview**

I use Bonilla-Silva's (2014) color-blind racism theory to analyze the Trump administration's rhetoric. Bonilla-Silva argues that color-blind racism is a particularly

“slippery” type of racism (p. 15), as it uses the language of liberalism in a way to re-define race issues and relations through abstraction. Bonilla-Silva also claims that white people tend to wish to maintain their preferred order in their dominant world. White people explain away racial inequalities and avoid conversations about racial inequality by filtering this reality through “frames” of *abstract liberalism*, *naturalization*, *cultural racism*, and *minimization of racism* (p. 74). Abstract liberalism can be referred to as economic liberalism and eschews equal opportunity as the penultimate goal. Whenever minorities may gain an advantage, it is perceived as unfair, regardless of historical oppressions. Naturalization hides racism by claiming that the system works in a specific way, and that things that appear racist are simply the way things must be, while cultural racism prescribes racist views as observations about specific facets of culture. Minimization of racism uses all of these to claim that racism isn’t as big of a problem as it is perceived to be.

Other scholars have applied these frames to previous legislature and comments made by legislators in the United States, notably Douglas, Saenz, & Murga<sup>2015</sup>, in which the authors analyzed landmark immigration in the last few years through these frames, arguing that “color-blind conservatism” has become a central concept to the discussion of racism in immigration policy, in which the usage of equality and individualism are used to disguise the underlying white supremacist fear of Latinx “invasion” and “loss of American culture” (p. 1445). I will also be using Jacobson’s (2008) ideas about the framing of Latinx minorities as a “privileged” class of minority by color-blind racists, what he coins the “falsely advantaged minority (pp. 72–74), as an additional lens to examine this administration’s rhetoric. While Jacobson focused mainly

on Californian views of Latinx migrants and their somewhat unique positioning as a border state, I believe that this framing can be applied to the current Trump administration's policies, given the urgency and attention they have assigned to matters regarding the Mexico border. Additionally, I seek to further connect Bonilla-Silva's frame of naturalization to previous research done on metaphors in political discourse by Santa Ana (1999).

This "framing" of the discourse of official White House documents will provide a unique lens to the debate over both the Trump administration's enabling and participation of racist views as it applies to immigration. By applying Bonilla-Silva's (1999) framework to official documents, we can gain a deeper understanding of the common themes and tropes that the administration employs and be able to call them out when they arise in media and in future administrations. We are seeing a shift towards a markedly different form of racist reality, particularly in discussions around immigration, that is marked by elite populist rhetoric and dangerous permissibility of previously socially damned discourse. By beginning conversations about this type of rhetoric now, we can both see the bluster of the Trump administration as a real threat to minority communities that it targets and strategize to counter such rhetoric.

### **Analysis**

As stated before, Bonilla-Silva claims that color-blind racism exerts itself through four frames of reference – 1) *abstract liberalism*, 2) *naturalization*, 3) *cultural racism*, and 4) *minimization of racism* (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 74). In the analysis of the two White House documents, I demonstrate that throughout the documents at various forms,



racialized particularly within the sentiments that Trump eschews in personal remarks on matters of immigration. In the next few pages, I analyze the sentiments and rhetoric used in these documents, going through the four frames and highlighting evidence of where each frame arises.

### **Abstract Liberalism - We Need Better Immigrants**

The frame of abstract liberalism is defined by discourse that favors removing the perception or reality of preferential treatment towards a specific group on the basis of race (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Bonilla-Silva (2014) also claims that this particular frame creates a false sense of fair competition, claiming that through advocating for “equal opportunity” and “meritocracies,” it ignores historically significant discriminations and prejudices (p. 80). In the Trump administration documents, this idea of equal opportunity has been abused.

In the White House Framework on Immigration Reform & Border Security, this concept of abused opportunity underlies many of the points that the administration suggests that we, the voting citizenry need. A key component of this document rests on the idea of meritorious immigrants from minority countries being the *preferred* option for entrance into the United States. The section titled “Eliminate Lottery And Repurpose Visas” claims that the United States should reject its random lottery system, and instead focus on granting visas to families and those with highly skilled employment backgrounds (White House, 2018). This official stance is additionally enshrined by Trump’s remarks on November 1<sup>st</sup>, with Trump remarking that the legal way is through “merit,” and that this is simply a measure to ensure that the playing field is fair for all those competing, in this case, within the workforce (Trump, 2018). A key example of this

sentiment of illegal border crossers being *unfair* towards the system of equal opportunity lies in Trump's remarks, as he states:

Mass, uncontrolled immigration is especially unfair to the many wonderful, law-abiding immigrants already living here who followed the rules and waited their turn. Some have been waiting for many years. Some have been waiting for a long time. They've done everything perfectly. And they're going to come in. At some point, they're going to come in. In many cases, very soon. We need them to come in, because we have companies coming into our country; they need workers. But they have to come in on a merit basis, and they will come in on a merit basis.

(Trump, 2018)

In dissecting the narrative in these remarks, we see evidence of what can be best described as protected meritocracy. The model minorities rise through the legal system, do everything perfectly, and follow the rules that have been laid out before them. The system before, according to this administration, didn't allow equal opportunity, and instead ignores the individual merits of immigration, leaving those with merit waiting on the border for their turn. Douglas et al (2015) pointed out a similar rhetoric that they dubbed "color-blind conservatism," in which this language was used to suggest that the illegal Latinx migrants were unfair to everyone else, consuming resources that they had not earned (p. 1444).

These statements, both in formal settings, and in personal remarks by the President, are veiled racism masquerading as policy touted as "equal." Both of the documents refuse to acknowledge how the southern border is plainly the focus of these documents. No mention is made, in either of these documents, of the question of

overstayed visas by European peoples, or of Canadian immigrants, even though the framework laid out by the White House explicitly begins the document with “Securing the Southern and Northern border of the United States...” (White House, 2018, emphasis added). There is no mention in either of the statements by the administration that the northern border of the United States will be restricted, nor immigration from European states, other than a single bullet point within the Border Framework that tags on “northern border improvements and enhancements” to a mandate for \$25 billion in funds for security, never explicitly saying what those enhancements would be (White House, 2018). It can safely be said, then, the equality of such enforcement in the name of merit undeniably favors white bodies, considering them to be *safer* than the brown and black bodies of those from Latinx cultures. The White House administration is not looking for better minority applicants across the board, rather, they are racially criminalizing non-white bodies as threats to fairness and equality.

### **Naturalization – Immigrants Are Lazy Animals**

I found a rather odd juxtaposition in the application of the naturalization frame of these documents. Trump spends much of his personal remarks on the matter of border crossings reveling in the sheer number of illegal Latinx migrants, claiming, in quick succession that “the overall number could be 10 million people; it could be 12 million people; it could be 20 million people” (Trump, 2018). This alarming number suggests huge swathes of people roaming around the continental United States, with an aggregated size larger than the current population of 40 states. Trump states that “millions of people,” particularly these undocumented Latinx migrants, disappear after being released into the United States, never showing up for court dates, simply dissolving into the

community (Trump, 2018), suggesting that these people are not only criminals, but unwilling to engage in the legal community.

The ideal that a large majority do not show up for legal dates is demonstrably false. According to a data from a Justice Department report on immigration, the rate of Latinx migrants not showing up for their first trial was 25% in 2016, suggesting that nearly three-fourths of all Latinx migrants showed up for their initial trial hearings (U.S. Office of Planning, Analysis, & Statistics, 2017). In Trump's remarks about Latinx migrants, he suggests a *natural* tendency for Latinx migrants to avoid responsibility, claiming that it is something that they are inclined to do because it does not benefit them to do so. Trump employs similar rhetoric in talking about migrant "caravans," claiming that the caravans being allowed in are emboldening larger caravan movements, as they flock together, coming due to broken policies and the promise of handouts from the United States (Trump, 2018). There is no mention of issues within their home country, no discussion of why this community has decided to flee their homes, rather, a simple explanation of that's the way it is. According to the remarks of the President these caravans are a natural consequence of policies, a failure of politicians to legally control the mass of people. This tired trope, of an immigrant hungrily seeking public benefits and handouts, like an animal, was a dominant metaphor that Santa Ana identified in media dialogues around previous immigration policies (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 200).

The policies that the administration suggests in its framework imply similar animalistic treatment of border crossers, with discussions of catch-and-release policies and legal loopholes not as conversations about removing human beings, but removing *public safety concerns* (White House, 2018). The administration treats migrants as if they

were feral beings, unable to be controlled due to the nature of their illegality. The assumption behind these statements and policies is that the illegal immigrant community is one of fortune seekers, and that they have no interest in engaging the United States in any practical way when they are here.

### **Cultural Racism/Minimization of Racism – Every Illegal A Criminal**

This is possibly the most dominant frame that can be identified within the rhetoric of both White House documents. This frame is identified by the reframing of racist views as cultural realities. Bonilla-Silva (2014) articulates this as “blaming the victim” in American society, where whites tend to see the problems of minorities as the fault of their cultural values and norms (pp. 89–90). Within these documents, the idea of victim blaming is applied to their legitimacy to cross over into the country in the first place. This happens in two distinct places within these documents: the association of the concept of the immigrant with violence, gangs, and drugs, and their “misuse” of the asylum system. I identified two major sub-themes within the document – violence as characteristic of illegal Latinx migrants, and asylum seekers being cast as illegitimate.

### ***Violence as Illegal Immigrant Characteristic***

Both documents associate Latinx migrants closely with the threat of outward violence. The Border Framework document spends much of its largest section, titled “Border Security,” discussing the various actions that need to be done, at *minimum*, to ensure a safe border for the United States. These measures include –

- \$25 billion to reinforce the southern border wall and ports of entry
- Removing catch-and-release policies to deter entry
- Detaining violent criminal aliens, including gang members and felons

- Ensuring synthetic drugs like fentanyl do not make it into the United States from borders

(White House, 2018)

The Trump administration ties these measures to Latinx migrants. Regardless of why they come, the perception of this administration is that they are tied to cultures that bring violence into the United States. Notably, the catch-and-release policy is referred to as “dangerous” by this administration in their recommendations on revisions to border policy (White House, 2018). These blanket recommendations suggest that Latinx migrants, in general, from the southern border are dangerous, associated with heinous acts such as gang affiliation and aggravated assault, and that the current policies of letting non-violent illegal Latinx migrants go exacerbates these criminal tendencies entering the United States. This culture of violence has been assigned and plastered onto illegal Latinx migrants and has been enshrined in the administration’s response to them. The actions of a few Latinx migrants who committed violent crimes are not seen as individual crimes, but a cultural disease among Latinx migrants that needs to be stopped, becoming part of the assumed makeup of the culture prescribed to every migrant. Volpp (2013) comments on this, saying that, particularly for non-white societies, these cultural determinations are prescribed onto all individuals that claim that culture, rather than on select individuals. This ideal of violence being part of their cultural makeup is seen in Trump’s remarks about the migrant caravans’ relationship with Mexican police, claiming that the act of throwing rocks at the Mexican police showed how “tough” these people are, claiming that white U.S. citizens don’t want these people within their communities because of their criminal tendencies.

Trump's remarks go further than this, pitting the *legal* immigrant vs. the *illegal* immigrant, claiming that the law-abiding members of the *legal* side are exempt from such cultural backgrounds, as they waited their turn to enter the country. While these legal Latinx migrants are viewed as having positive cultural characteristics, Trump's rhetoric in his remarks turns vitriolic when it comes to illegal Latinx migrants, pointing to large groups of Latinx migrants as "invasion" (Trump, 2018). Reinforcing this is the relationship that the administration draws between the drug trade (specifically fentanyl), and illegal immigration. Trump claims that a "substantial portion" of fentanyl comes through the southern border and claims that the drug is "killing our youth." The drugs become linked to the *culture* of those who cross illegally, even though they are not the manufacturers or the suppliers of fentanyl (O'Connor, 2017, p. 6), and become responsible for the deaths of those who took these drugs. The illegal immigrant is culturally separated from both good Americans, and good Latinx migrants, unfairly burdened with the concept of violence as something that is simply part of their culture.

#### ***Asylum Seekers – Legal Failures***

Another narrative that is highlighted in looking at these documents through the lens of cultural racism is the narrative that paints asylum seekers as legal failures, users of a broken system rather than justified claimants of fear. The Trump administration claims in its Border Framework that there are legal "loopholes" that have legitimized the claims of many people immigrating across the southern border. Trump articulates what he sees as the biggest loophole in his remarks:

The biggest loophole drawing *illegal aliens* to our borders is the use of fraudulent or meritless asylum claims to gain entry into our great country. An alien simply

crosses the border illegally, finds a Border Patrol agent, and using well-coached language — by lawyers and others that stand there trying to get fees or whatever they can get — they're given a phrase to read. They never heard of the phrase before. They don't believe in the phrase. But they're given a little legal statement to read, and they read it. And now, all of a sudden, they're supposed to qualify. But that's not the reason they're here. (Trump, 2018)

While many of the previous examples dealt specifically with concepts about *illegal* Latinx migrants, this specific discourse seeks to place many that would be considered good, legal Latinx migrants by legal status and de-legitimize them, placing them within the formed culture that they assign to illegal Latinx migrants. In both ways, Latinx migrants on the southern border are seen as illegitimate. Whether these Latinx bodies attempt to come over through legally correct ways, or through illegal means, they are categorized by the administration as culturally bankrupt, associated with crude violence and underhanded tactics.

I continue this analysis by discussing the ramifications of color-blinded racism for Latinx migrants. I argue that the framework and Trump's remarks aim fundamentally shift the scales on where and why Latinx migrants enter the United States. I also contend that Trump's remarks and policies echo and expand on older racist portrayals by White House administrations before him, recycling tired scripts to classify migrants.

### **Discussion**

Bonilla-Silva (2014) claims that the color-blind racist frames allow for racism to hide behind an abstraction layer in modern day society, cloaking racist views and stances from plain sight. As I stated previously, I believe that this administration uses the guise



of security and fairness to cloak their racist views. This analysis helps scholars further understand two central concepts: the narrative of fairness in the debate over immigration and the continuation of dominant racist metaphors in immigration policies.

### **Shifting Fairness**

Jacobson (2008) noted that, in the metaphors and discourse surrounding the Proposition 187 debate in California, that the idea of fairness became linked to the political stance of the anti-immigration advocates. The legal legitimacy of Latinx migrants became the key emphasis of the debate – those who were legitimate were seen as culturally similar, while those who did not were seen as illegal *and* criminal, being associated with public health and dangerous overuse of resources. The analysis conducted in this document further confirms that this is a central theme of this administration’s rhetoric and constructed narrative and describes how legitimacy as a concept for *legal* Latinx migrants is further undermined through the questioning of the current laws within the immigration world. This Trump administration claims that, due to loopholes and coached Latinx migrants, the legal immigrant community is largely criminal as well, suggesting that laws set in place were not thorough enough, or did not meet their intended purpose. This is a curious shift – no longer does the concept of fair come from the currently enshrined laws that Jacobson pointed out as being central to narratives surrounding immigration, but of the personal ideals of the law and the administration. This dangerous goalpost shifting has enabled this administration to further narrow the legitimacy of Latinx migrants. This leaves Latinx migrants with few avenues to explore for seeking asylum and safety in the United States and leaves them uncertainty on how to be seen as legitimate. This de-legitimization further enforces the “foreignness” that

Americans perceive as a cultural threat (Kibria, O’Leary, & Bowman, 2018, p. 2), and creates hostility to both legal and illegal Latinx migrants. By encouraging this hostility, the administration has created real threats to all Latinx and brown peoples. A recent report from NPR highlights the fact that, due to increased frustration and anger of Americans at Latinx migrants, hate crimes against Latinx peoples have increased by nearly 50% since 2016 (Hinojosa, 2018), suggesting that this rhetoric already wreaked havoc on vulnerable Latinx communities. The shifting goalposts of *fair immigration* stokes the fire of anger and hatred, giving its opponents a larger swathe of people to strike at.

It is already difficult enough for asylum seekers to gain refuge into the United States. Golash-Boza (2018) remarks that the criteria for asylum, rather than focusing their imminent death whence returning to their home country, but that the asylum claim must be based on “race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (p. 35). This shift of fairness harms those that are most vulnerable to institutional marginalization.

### **Racist Metaphors in Administration Portrayals**

As Santa Ana (1999) pointed out, the portrayal of Latinx migrants around media discourses enables racist narratives that manifest through the usage of dominant metaphors within the discussion. By applying Bonilla-Silva’s (2014) framework to what seems, at first glance, documents that seem mainly concerned with the idea of security, we are able to see many of the same metaphors arise, particularly the concept of Latinx migrants as “animals” (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 200), as well as the nation as a “castle” (a fortified settlement) against such animals (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 200). These racist

frameworks were illuminated once again in this analysis – by linking illegal Latinx migrants to severe violence, we once again see these tired racist tropes trotted out into the public rhetoric. Latinx migrants become an invasive force, a violent tide that marches towards the southern border, with violent intents and actions being left in their wake. This rhetoric has empowered the administration to approve somewhat heinous actions, actions that are condemned even in wartime by most countries, such as the usage of tear gas to deter Latinx migrants away from the southern border crossing (Horton, 2018). By employing these metaphors of animal, Latinx migrants, and the reinforcement of the border as a necessary consequence of this, the administration has devalued Latinx lives as being less worthy of traditional considerations that are made when dealing with human lives.

Additionally, the linking of Latinx migrants to violence as a cultural norm furthers this discussion of dominant metaphors and racism. Volpp (2013) claims that, by constructing non-hegemonic cultural ideals as fixed, rather than relational, those with power can prescribe the facets of culture and present it as seemingly objective fact about those who subscribe to those cultural norms. By assuming that Latinx migrants are naturally motivated to be proponents of violence, we undermine our ability to have complex, deep conversations when it comes to emotion. The simplistic language that has accompanied the rise of Trump's brand of rhetoric has exacerbated this, with, instead of partially cloaked metaphors being suggested in subtext, it rises to the forefront, with little regard to the factuality of claims. I believe that the analysis undertaken in this research presents avenues to dissect this new rhetoric in a deeper way, moving beyond the shock factor of such open boldness and prejudice, and understanding the underlying foundations

of racism that enable it.

### **Conclusion**

Upon examining these documents, it quickly becomes apparent that what becomes enshrined in legal text, while forged by the belligerent rhetoric of Trump, disguises itself by subtly associating Latinx migrants with laziness, criminality, and other less-than-desirable human traits. By doing so, the Trump administration has recycled old racist discourse to bring about new policy change through such enforcement as the border wall, additional ICE and Border Patrol staff, and changing definitions of asylum to effectively limit the progress of immigrants into the country. These legal texts, especially given the possibility of a re-election, will be what defines immigration policy for years to come. It is important, as scholars, and particularly as rhetoricians, to identify where in these documents racialized discourse has become legally legitimized, and work towards creating policy that avoid such stereotyping and discrimination.

In the next chapter, I narrow my focus down to one landmark piece of legal text – Executive Order 13767, the “Border Wall” Executive Order, and trace the racialized metaphor of “alien” throughout the legal text. In doing so, I argue that, through the resurgence of the term *alien* in legal contexts, this administration seeks to rob Latinx migrants of their political and social legitimacy, as well as set the stage for expanding both the physical and rhetorical understandings of the border.

## Chapter 3

### **Constructing Alien: White House Executive Metaphor**

While the first chapter of this analysis dealt with the pervasiveness of insidious racism on a broad scale, my second chapter of analysis traces the metaphor of “alien” in Executive Order 13767. The Trump administration has repeatedly demonstrated, through their campaign promises, as well as through their actions taken once controlling the Executive office, that the US-Mexico border, and tightening of immigration along it, would be a primary concern of the executive branch during its tenure. The White House’s official central page on immigration positions currently contains around 180 documents, which include “fact sheets,” official statements made by President Trump and various executive officers, and official policy that has been enacted by the Executive branch, including Executive Orders (White House, 2019). While these documents vary in scope, one of the most extensive and critical documents to understanding this administration’s intents is a cornerstone Executive Order regarding the US-Mexico border, Executive Order 13767. In conjunction with Trump’s usage of belligerent rhetoric, his views on executive orders give us insight into how Trump uses the executive order system to create immigration policy and to create narratives. Trump has shown his willingness to uproot both his own administrative members, as well as sharply criticize and subvert Congress to implement his vision. Through contextualizing and understanding the rhetoric that Trump uses to justify his use of executive action, we can come to understand both the tactics of the current administration, and the danger it poses for Latinx migrants.

This behavior seeks to spread itself far into the Trump presidency, and as Trump’s dissatisfaction with the progression of policy change on the Southern border grows, his

frustration and direct movement within the legal and political realm surrounding immigration has increased. Just recently, Trump's DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen was just recently routed from the White House, reportedly for failing to move quickly enough on implementing sweeping border policy changes (Paula Reid, 2019). Trump has also threatened the usage of executive orders on many occasions, most recently, in speaking to Axios, to potentially end birthright citizenship in the United States (2019).

The importance of immigration to the Trump administration is the perceived threat to both communities, as well as "justice" in the United States. Trump spends much of his personal remarks on the matter reveling in the sheer number of *illegal* immigrants, claiming, in quick succession that "the overall number could be 10 million people; it could be 12 million people; it could be 20 million people." (Trump, 2018) Trump states that "millions of people," particularly these undocumented Latinx migrants, disappear after being released into the United States, never showing up for court dates, simply dissolving into the community (Trump, 2018), suggesting that these people are not only criminals, but unwilling to engage in the legal community to face justice. Not only are these cries of millions of illegal Latinx migrants damaging to the national discourse, the ideal that a large majority do not show up for legal dates is demonstrably false.

According to a data from a Justice Department report on immigration, the rate of Latinx migrants not showing up for their first trial was 25% in 2016, suggesting that nearly three-fourths of all Latinx migrants showed up for their initial trial hearings (U.S. Office of Planning, Analysis, & Statistics, 2017). Additionally, cries of increasing masses of migrant peoples can also be disproven fairly quickly, given that since 2007 the number of Latinx migrants living in the United States from Mexico and other countries has *declined*,

according to work done by the Pew Research Center (Ana Gonzalez-Barrera & Jens Manuel Krogstad, 2018).

Executive Order 13767 is a highly contentious piece of legal script that was issued by President Donald J. Trump in January of 2017 and outlines the legal order of the President regarding changes to how the Southern U.S. border is policed and defined. Within this Executive Order resides a number of small clauses, each addressing some facet of how the President and the administration define how this new border augment will be carried out by other legal administrative and bureaucratic offices. It also defines specific terms that pertain to moving forward with execution of the demands of the order. This document, while it is primarily a legal order, is also a rhetorical artifact that provides us insight into the Trump administration's rhetoric as it pertains to the Southern U.S. border. Conveniently, Section 1 of Executive Order 13767 begins by stating the explicit purpose for which it was written. Trump argues that illegal immigration is of critical importance to the White House. Illegal Latinx migrants, according to Trump, poses a significant threat to the United States' security through the influx of drugs and crime from un-screened individuals.

This Executive Order, therefore, gives us not only a physical manifestation of Trump's real-world execution of his immigration promises, but also gives us insight into how the Trump administration perceives Latinx migrants and prescribes metaphorical meaning to them. This Executive Order legally enshrines the administration's perceptions of Latinx migrants in a way that not many other executive actions could do. This paper seeks to analyze the metaphorical implications within this Executive Order surrounding the term "aliens," both in historical groundings and current-day implications, as well as

examine the real-world implications that this metaphorical positioning can have on immigration and the construction of both physical and socio-political borders. I contend that the use of alien builds legitimacy for the White House administration, particularly for Trump, by creating *urgency* and *purpose* to his enforcement endeavors, as well as rhetorically widening the current understanding of “border” to encompass space and bodies that are not currently within the purview of such definitions.

Executive Order 13767 is a relatively short document, taking up only four pages within Volume 82, Issue 18 of the Federal Register where it was officially published. Within those four pages, there are 15 specific references to “*illegal aliens*,” or some variation thereof, used to outline official border policy. While it may seem inconsequential at first glance, this was an intentional rhetorical shift from the previous administration. In searching through the archived websites of the Obama administration, there was *no* mention of the term “alien.” The administration instead used terminology such as “undocumented immigrants” (“U.S. Immigration Reform,” 2014). By moving away from more equivocal language, Trump sets up a metaphorical discourse that *others* immigrants, placing clear delineations between legal immigration and illegal immigration.

In the order’s “Purpose” section, the term alien can be seen, bolded and italicized below –

“***Aliens*** who illegally enter the United States without inspection or admission present a significant threat to national security and public safety. Such ***aliens*** have not been identified or inspected by Federal immigration officers to determine their



admissibility to the United States. The recent surge of illegal immigration at the southern border with

Mexico has placed a significant strain on Federal resources and overwhelmed agencies charged with border security and immigration enforcement, as well as the local communities into which many of the *aliens* are placed.” (Trump, 2017)

But why use the term/metaphor alien so ubiquitously, even going so far as to instruct the Justice Department to use this term long after they had abandoned it in their rhetorical toolbox (Megan Flynn, 2018)? In investigating further, I believe that the Trump administration is seeking to turn public opinion and public perception of immigrants by returning to this term by weaponizing the baggage that the term *illegal alien* comes laden with. Additionally, the usage of the term in media allows Trump to appeal to his political base, rejecting previous conventions in journalism favoring different, supposedly less charged terminology to describe Latinx migrants.

### **Theoretical Overview**

The immigrant is subject to a form of nativist racism that has shaped immigration policy throughout the history of United States (Chang & Aoki, 1997, pp. 315–316). Beginning in with the 1924 Immigration Act, Latinx bodies on the southern United States border were subject to racial scripts that categorized them as nonwhite, frequently being categorized as not white, but indigenous, more related to Indians than the white person (Molina, 2014). Molina (2014) also identifies how immigration policy, including the naturalization process, has been crafted over time to make Latinx migrants ineligible for citizenship. In discussing this, Molina (2014) claims that Latinx migrants, along with

other groups, were “made deportable” (115) by linking Latinx migrants to major medical issues and danger, as well as creating centers of deportation enforcement within their local communities. Molina claims that racial scripts have the power to racialize and group both migrants and non-migrants together, with the scripts affecting all Latinx peoples. Ono and Sloop (2002) in analyzing rhetoric surrounding California’s Proposition 183 (a notorious piece of immigration policy), additionally identified a characterization of Latinx migrants as economically and socially disadvantageous, with them even being associated with infection, both biologically and culturally .

### **Metaphor Analysis**

Metaphors such as alien are more than just symbolic, but rhetorical tools that help political and social cognition (Hart, 2006). By connecting difficult concepts to cultural understandings and experiences, metaphors aid in creating common understandings amongst those with shared cultural norms (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In discussions around immigration, metaphors are pervasive, with some like *melting pot*, *quilt*, and *kaleidoscope* describing assimilation of Latinx migrants into American culture, while others take on a less neutral frame, such as *alien*, *border security*, and *amnesty*. These metaphors help frame conversations with specific intent and collective memory. Ivie (1997) claims that when metaphor becomes literalized, we stop thinking about one thing *in terms* of another, and think of it as *being* another. In discussions of immigration, many metaphors have become literalized at the expense of the humanization of Latinx migrants.

The intent of this specific metaphorical analysis is to trace the usage of one such metaphor, *alien*, through legal immigration text, in order to understand the concrete

framing and racialization that this metaphor brings with it, and to continue to build a body of research around the metaphor that contributes to our knowledge of its usage. Moving forward, I will touch on the usage of alien metaphor in U.S. history, and explain its framing within various immigration discussions.

### **Alien Metaphor**

The metaphor of *alien*, is largely used to classify Latinx bodies that did not come into the United States through a port of entry, or those that do not have documentation that they are within the U.S. as a legal subject (K. R. Chávez, 2009; Marciniak, 2006; Ngai, 2003, 2005). Both legal and rhetorical scholars have identified this metaphor in understanding U.S. immigration law. In a study for the *Fordham Law Review*, Cunningham-Parmeter identified *4200 instances* in which the metaphor can be found (using information found in federal court databases) cited in federal court decisions from 1965 onwards (2011). This concept of alien did not come from a vacuum, but instead, came from systematic racism pervasive in the culture of the United States. Alien has been used to denote both enemy combatant and foreign, dangerous body amongst minority individuals (Carol Van Valkenburg, 2011; Cisneros, 2012a; Douglas et al., 2015). This concept of alien dehumanizes individuals, making them unknown bodies rather than human beings.

Other scholars have identified this concept of “looking” illegal as appearing in both legal documents and public discourse. Cisneros (2012a) argued that Latinx bodies were seen as excess and suspicious in Arizona’s SB 1070. Douglas et al’s (2015) article identifies clear trends of color-blind (or “post-racial”) logics in the discourse of several members of Congress, labeling Latinx migrants as *illegal aliens*, robbing immigrants of

legitimacy by categorizing them as illegal and foreign from the beginning (p. 1447). In regard to Executive Order 13767, this legal usage is inherent throughout the document. There are 15 separate usages of the terminology of *alien*, and *illegal alien* within the document, all classifying various required actions of the characters involved within the text, and it helps classify who is directly affected by these policy changes. A metaphorical analysis of legal policy put out by the Trump administration can contribute valuable insight into how these metaphors have expanded, and how they are interacting in an era of emboldened racial rhetoric and political anti-immigration stances. Through advancing the body of knowledge and texts that can point to such metaphors, we can understand how these metaphors interact in both daily discourse and with political portrayals as well. Executive Orders contribute uniquely, as they function as both unilateral policy decisions by the executive branch, but more importantly, as a window into this administration's racial tones and choice of rhetorical tool used to construct and advocate for their political positions.

Another facet that Flores (2003) argues that the rhetoric of race frequently seen in immigration law and discourse is, in part, *how* borders are constructed in the U.S., with such metaphors shaping who is left on either side of the metaphorical wall. While the border in the Executive Order refers to what seems like a rational concept of a "border" that needs to be secured (Trump, 2017), the concept of *borders* is a largely socio-political construct that has changed over the course of history, particularly to the racialized southern U.S. border (Flores, 2003; K. Ono, 2012; K. A. Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 1999, 2002; Sassen, 1998). By analyzing documents with significance to this social construction, we can contribute to the body of knowledge that seeks to understand how

the border is socially constructed, and continues to shape and construct, in the current age. Border scholars have long pointed to the border, not as a geographically static item, but as a concept that shifts with the zeitgeist of the current political world. Even looking at current policing activities, the CBP defines the border as an “external boundary,” but additionally operates within 100 miles north of the border as well (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2018), suggesting that the geographical divide between U.S. and Mexico is not where the “border” ends. Scholars such as Ono (2012) have argued that the concept of border can be understood *figurally* rather than as a geographic constant, and that the border not only fences people realistically, but also rhetorically. This Executive Order is part of a body of legislation that further defines the border, both in geographical sense and a rhetorical sense. In analyzing alien metaphor within this Executive Order, I find alien to be a legitimizing force for the White House to restrict migration even further, linking Latinx migrants to conceptions of *enemy*, *criminal*, and *animal*, dehumanizing Latinx migrants further in legal texts.

## **Analysis**

### **Alien as Enemy**

The term *alien* is not a new term in political conversation, as with many scripts surrounding racial groups. Molina (2014) claims that many of the racial metaphors and scripts in the public eye today are recycled scripts, or metaphors and narratives that had once been applied to a specific racial group were repackaged and applied to other racial groups. The rhetoric of alien has indeed been used before in the political world, most notably in history to classify Japanese civilians during World War II as “enemy aliens,” and to justify their internment politically and socially to the American people (Carol Van

Valkenburg, 2011). As other scholars have noted, this metaphor has been used to classify Latinx migrants, both those who pursue legal and illegal migration over the border, as foreign, dangerous bodies (Cisneros, 2012a; Douglas et al., 2015), robbing legitimacy from both categories of migrant.

Section 11 of the Executive Order, wherein the asylum system, a previously legitimate system for foreign nationals to claim refuge through, is classified as *abused* by *aliens*, or those that threaten and cheat the United States. Previous administrations and congressional members have used this racialized metaphor to push political anti-immigrant narratives (Douglas et al., 2015). Around 1976, this metaphor began to be used in political discussions to point towards Latinx migrants (Massey & Pren, 2012), and was used by politicians and social commentators alike, linking the metaphor of alien to “invasion,” “crisis,” and other negative connotations (Massey, 2016). In comparing the language to another commonly referred to Executive Order (13769), known as the “Travel Ban,” only offhandedly uses the term *alien* preferring to metaphorically situate Middle Eastern immigration through the vehicle *terrorist* (Trump, 2017a). While not a preferable term, it does help us understand that this is not some universal term that the administration has chosen to adopt, but a metaphor that makes specific claims about the legitimacy of Latinx bodies to exist within the United States, particularly of Latinx bodies that did not come through sanctioned entry. The main danger that begins to appear is that of how this metaphor acts as a “filtering” of sorts for both political and public discourse within the country.

### **Alien as Criminal**

Trump, in using this metaphor, draws on the *criminal* aspect of *illegal aliens* to categorize immigrants as part of a wider network of criminality and improper behavior. The metaphor, while uncommon to find in most media publications, has become ubiquitous for right wing punditry and reporting. In all places where it is used, the metaphor ties migrant bodies to other criminal behavior. While searching current news articles on right-wing websites *TheBlaze* and *Breitbart*, I found various articles used *illegal alien* to describe the perpetrators of the following crimes and abhorred behavior: murder (“Sheriff Blames California’s Sanctuary City Policies for Illegal Alien’s Crime Spree - Here’s Why,” 2019), invasion of the U.S. (“Are Terrorist Cells Invading Our Southern Border?,” 2014), spousal abuse and child abuse (Binder, 2020), voter fraud (Binder, 2019), and kidnapping (Binder, 2018). These serious crimes became highlights of the political conversation and the justification of increased incarcerations and deportations of undocumented Latinx people, and the Trump administration uses this linkage in public addresses, placing anecdotal, one-off examples of *illegal aliens* as the baseline nature of undocumented immigrants within larger trends of criminality, as data would suggest (Adelman, Reid, Markle, Weiss, & Jaret, 2017; Light & Miller, 2018). The connection to criminality positions immigrant Latinx bodies as dangerous in the eyes of Trump’s base, those most willing to believe right-wing news sources and punditry, appealing to people’s fears rather than their rational minds. The metaphor, therefore, of alien becomes a cyclical trend – the administration advocates for the usage of the term as a justification for their policy, and as the official designation for undocumented peoples, and the right-wing news media perpetuates their “other-ness” and connection to criminality through anecdotal news reports and shock-value cases. The administration

then takes this and props it up as political fact, repeating this cycle. In this paradigm, the Trump administration has allied itself with news sources to perpetuate a metaphor that labels aliens legally as dangerous individuals, targeting specifically Trump's voter base.

### **Alien as Animal**

Cooper (1989) argues that Trump and his administration use alien metaphor as a tool to position immigrants as "other" in a legal sense, as non-human bodies, creating further stratification and distance in race and solidarity. Section 6 again makes reference to this non-human concept, saying "The Secretary shall issue new policy guidance to all Department of Homeland Security personnel regarding the appropriate and consistent use of lawful detention authority under the INA, including the termination of the practice commonly known as "catch and release," whereby aliens are routinely released in the United States shortly after their apprehension for violations of immigration law."(Trump, 2017). Catch and release, itself a term that has been criticized as dehumanizing, having been borrowed from fishing rhetoric ("Sheriff Blames California's Sanctuary City Policies for Illegal Alien's Crime Spree - Here's Why," 2019), is deemed by the administration as too humane, with undocumented immigrants not even having that animalistic right, being too dangerous or feral an animal to risk releasing into the mainland while their case processes. The order calls for a "Return to Territory" instead, refusing to use any terminology that may suggest some element of humanity in the subjects they refer to. .

In the next section, I discuss the implications of alien metaphorical language within Executive Orders and Trump's border rhetorics. I argue that this metaphor threatens to expand our border beyond its current geographical and rhetorical



understandings, encompassing increasing amounts of people and land in the United States.

### **Discussion**

The metaphor of alien, as explained in the previous section, is used in the Executive Order to disrupt knowledge and concepts of migrant peoples, seeking to classify migrants as dangerous, criminal bodies. I discuss this further below, as well as highlight how the border is intimately tied to the criminalization and racialization of alien rhetoric.

### **Borders and Aliens – Expanding the Border**

The literalized metaphor plays out in the way that border policy has been promoted and enacted by those who ascribe to the metaphor of *illegal aliens*. Compromise on border policy, for Republican lawmakers, is less about a complex national security issue, but about the threat of violent, criminal *others* towards the security of the United States and its citizens. Positioning migrants as aliens removes ideas of movement and transition in a liminal space and replaces it with racializations of foreign and dangerous bodies. Border policy in the United States closely ties into racial conversations at both the political and public conversations that occur (Flores, 2003). In looking at how the border is situated in this document, it becomes quickly apparent that, while this document acknowledges a physical border in the mandate to build a larger contiguous border wall (Trump, 2017, p. 8794), the border *figurally* follows *aliens* around wherever they go, and provides a tension of seeing aliens as geographically belonging in the border region, and dangerously existing outside of this region.

The building of a *physical* barrier, i.e. a wall, on the border is a relatively new

development, with the first physical barrier being only 14 miles long, erected on the border between San Diego and Tijuana (Nuñez-Neto & Garcia, 2007). The first legally enshrined border fence effort was the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which authorized 700 miles of double-stacked fencing on the US-Mexico border, though it was not a comprehensive barrier (109th United States Congress, 2006). The border has been largely subject to enforcement based on the political zeitgeist of the current administration in power of either the executive or legislative branches of the United States. By enacting policies during their tenure, each new administration has a chance to write new policy, either expanding or shrinking migration policies. Several sections address additional enforcement policies that recommend keeping aliens close to the border, with Section 5 “Detention Facilities” specifically mentioning constructing detention facilities that are “at or near” the Southern border (Trump, 2017, p. 8794), keeping *aliens*, those who have lost their metaphorical justification of *immigrant* to migrate through border lands, geographically and metaphorically linked to the border itself, the fringes of what is considered the United States. while they geographically tie aliens to the external border, they extend our conception of where the border and its governing principles of removal apply.

The Southern US border is subject to varying racialization over time. Mexican migrants are burdened with the weight of racial scripts and have been subject to such scripting for much of the history of the United States. Molina (2014) claims that the racial script around whiteness helped center much of the early racial conceptions of Mexican immigrants. Latinx migrants on the Southern US border are subject to historical racial scripts that compared them to black laborers, highlighting them as a danger to the

“purity” of the white US identity (Molina, 2014). While they did have a right to citizenship under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, this right hinged on their ability to relate to the US image of whiteness – the farther away they were perceived from being white, the less desirable they were for citizenship. This relationship ebbs and flows throughout administrative history and continues on today.

While previous administrations identified immigrants as undocumented when they physically passed the geographic boundary, *aliens* in this context defies geographical boundary lines, defining people before they cross into US sovereign land. When caravans of Latinx migrants crossed the *southern* Mexican border (bordering Guatemala), Trump warned of *illegal aliens* quickly moving towards the US-Mexico border, even though they were still thousands of miles away, with destination only known implicitly (Rios, 2018). *Illegal aliens* become examined bodies that do not escape the gaze of the government’s eyes because they do not fall into geographical positioning within border worlds, rather, they become surveilled subjects far before they commit any form of crime, having been metaphorically positioned as subjects linked to violent, dangerous crimes.

The border itself, in a way, is constructed as “alien” land – prone to violence, linked in media narratives to the most violent of crimes, including murders and kidnappings, and seen as dangerous territory within itself. Many have taken it upon themselves to patrol the border lands themselves, tracking migrants who migrate through the border, creating situations where civilians, not federal authorities, hold migrants at gunpoint to stop these “dangerous” aliens, unarmed and penniless as they are (Caldwell, 2019). Harkening back to historical border politics and metaphor, the same

weaponization of “*illegal aliens*,” and the dangers that this metaphor implied, led to the creation of border militias to deal with the “illegal alien problem” by none other than the notorious K.K.K. under David Duke, patrolling parts of the border within California and Mexico (Jones, 2019). The gaze and scrutiny that migrants face of not only governmental entities, but, due to the highly literalized nature of this metaphor, has made its way into the imaginaries of the American public, breeding discontent and fear surrounding Latinx migrants writ large.

### **Conclusion**

This analysis seeks to contribute knowledge to two fields— that of racial metaphor analysis regarding U.S immigration policy, as well as the discussion of the border as both a social and physical reality for those approaching it. It is my belief that, in order to do effective rhetorical criticism of rhetoric regarding the border, both perspectives must be understood. This Executive Order provides a glimpse into the Trump administration’s conception of the border in both a social *and* a legal reality, enshrining the beliefs of the administration in enacted policy. By analyzing this Executive Order, I uncovered alien functioning as three racialized metaphors – immigrant as enemy, immigrant as criminal, and immigrant as animal. conducting what Flores (2016) calls racial rhetorical criticism. By borrowing from other rhetorical scholars who have undertaken work related to understand the border, I hope that this analysis helps orient future scholars in understanding how this current administration frames immigration and bordered peoples.

Historically, we have seen the power of how racial metaphor played a role in constructing political narratives and legislation around the Southern US border, affecting those who migrate over it. The usage of the term *illegal aliens* to describe immigrants

that are undocumented in the United States, as well as to describe even those *approaching, not within* the United States yet, draws on previously shelved racial metaphor of alien to construct imageries that paint immigrants as dangerous, unkempt individuals, criminals within their own right. Media portrayals using the term have anecdotally linked egregious crimes with “*illegal aliens*,” and the administration has been quick to capitalize on this, cycling the metaphor by holding up news media reports that choose to use the metaphor in their reporting while major news agencies abandon it in favor for more nuanced reporting tactics (Colford, 2013). However, while this metaphor seeks to serve a political purpose and enforce campaign policy through justification of increased border enforcement, the metaphor is becoming literalized in the US imaginary, leading to real-world consequences for immigrants and those connected to them.

Because immigration on the Southern border is linked to racial identity for Latinx peoples, hate crime is on the rise. Hate crimes against Latinos are up 50 percent since 2016 (Hinojosa, 2018), and several shootings of Latinx people were reportedly linked to anti-immigrant sentiments such as chants of “build that wall” (Carless & Sankin, 2017; 2018). These realities have also been tied to civilian anger towards the borderlands themselves, where multiple groups have established militias, even going so far as to illegally detain migrants crossing through the US border at gunpoint. The Trump administration stokes the flames of hatred, and if not controlled, these tensions will quickly spiral out of control.

These metaphors have implications for how the borderlands and its subjects are conceptualized in the United States. The “illegal alien” is attached to the geographical realities of the border, and the border is further identified through the rhetoric that is used

to describe its subjects and surroundings. Executive Orders, as direct legal policy from the executive branch, give us a clear understanding of how those metaphorical aliens shape how the administration feels about immigrants, as well as how they plan on enacting future policy. The Trump administration has clearly shown that its disdain for immigrants has led them to see migrants as dangerous foreign bodies, subject to scrutiny well beyond the confines of simply the geographical border of the United States, and that drastic measures not done before in the history of southern border enforcement are the only way to stem these violent bodies from causing further damage to the United States.

Further research into unilateral executive policy, and legislation writ large, should continue to examine the metaphorical implications of the rhetorical choices made in legislation. While it can be easy to dismiss much of legal documentation as complex legal jargon, the selection of metaphors, and their dissemination into the public discourse, fundamentally changes the way that political discourse is shaped. Administrations choose their words carefully and choose them for thought out reasons. No political rhetoric comes unladen from historical and contextual baggage, including policies handed down by the executive branch. Further metaphor analyses should be done on legislative actions of Congress, as well as informal acts such as Presidential memorandums and Congressional hearings.

Having established the racial rhetoric inherent in the Trump administration's texts, I move on to analyzing the relationship of the Trump administration to one of the primary fountainheads of Trumpian logic – Fox News and their opinion channels. While I assert that Fox News opinion channels regularly cycle the president's rhetoric, I also acknowledge and discuss the mistrust that many of the news anchors have towards the

President's insistence on interfering with the free press of the United States.

## Chapter 4

### **Fox News and Trump: Right Wing Media and Rhetorical Oppression**

On June 22, 2018, Brian Kilmeade of *Fox and Friends* proclaimed “Like it or not, these are not our kids” (Fox News, 2018) when asked about the horrendous policy of family separation at the border. Coincidentally, just days before on June 19<sup>th</sup>, Donald Trump met with business leaders and exposed These similarities in rhetoric and in content, I believe, come from the close relationship that the Fox News opinion hosts have with Trump.

This relationship, I argue, is cyclical in nature. The White House, in conjunction with right-wing opinion sources, cycle each other’s rhetoric into the common purview, cementing beliefs in the minds of the conservative voter base. While not sharing terminology verbatim, they each stand to back up one another, creating a wall of perceived legitimacy when it comes to matters of immigration. Given the pervasiveness of Fox News as a media outlet, and its far reach into the most conservative households in the United States, it is important to understand this relationship more in depth, and to analyze its intricacies.

In the next section I overview the main bodies of literature that contribute to my analysis, including Molina’s (2014) racial scripts theory and Cacho’s (2012) theory of indelible (or de-facto) illegality of undocumented immigrants.

### **Theoretical Overview**

Since the election of Donald Trump, the political narrative surrounding immigration, as well as the social and political realities of the Southern U.S. border, has been rapidly changing, with new orders and decisions being made at lightning speed. Just



recently, the concept of a border wall went from an impossible future to a grim reality, with 50 foot tall segments being erected on the Southern U.S. border (Beckett, 2019). Donald Trump has been leading the charge in these political shifts, angrily declaring anti-immigrant sentiments and promising to come down hard on immigration. A new, emboldened wave of anti-migrant sentiment, focused mainly on brown people at the southern U.S. border, circles not only through the verbal sentiments of pundits and demagogues, but additionally physical attacks targeting Latinx communities. Anti-immigrant rhetoric has been one of the key ways that Trump flips what most people consider to be acceptable speech on its head; Trump blows through many social norms we have come to expect of candidates and presidents.

But Trump did not accomplish all this on his own. Throughout both his candidacy and his presidency, right-wing cable news outlets have echoed, expanded, and engaged in rhetoric that closely aligned with Trump's immigration agenda. Fox News, as the largest cable news network in the United States ("FOX News Channel Marks Ratings Milestone," 2017), holds a unique position of power, not just generally, but in particular with the conservative voter base that constitutes their primary demographic. While railing against "fake news" from more centrist, liberal, and left-leaning news sources, Fox News doesn't always escape the ire of the president's disinformation campaign. Fox News seems to be close behind the President day by day, with anchors and pundits echoing his immigration sentiments at every turn. One specific anchor on Fox and Friends, Brian Kilmeade, is open in making statements such as "they're not our kids" in justifying family separation policies (Scott, 2018). He also advances conspiracy theories relating to Mexican migrants, such as there being a Mexican "invasion" in the U.S, language also

used in massacres relating to Latinx bodies (Rupar, 2019). Trump live-tweets Fox segments, suggesting that he personally watches the show in real time

The similarities in the immigration rhetoric of Fox News and Trump do not occur by happenstance, but as a result of symbiosis between the network and the president. This symbiosis is an echoing of arguments between right-wing opinion heads and the White House, with each group drawing inspiration from each other. I argue that this symbiotic relationship is designed to reinforce a system of daily racial re-enforcement that dehumanizes and delegitimizes Latinx and migrant people to appeal to Trump's voter base and to mobilize them to support Trump's immigration policies. Additionally, through the Trump-Fox News relationship, violence against migrant bodies is legitimized through consistent dehumanization. At the same time, it makes Fox News a pseudo-state institution, rather than an independent journalistic outlet. In this next section, I will outline my theoretical commitments, as well as detail my methods that I will use to analyze news clips from right-wing news sources.

### **Methods and Texts**

For this project, I analyzed video excerpts relating to Trumpian rhetoric and Fox News. I engaged these texts drawing from rhetorical racial critics, and identifying overarching arguments that are being made throughout the texts (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997). I coded the information that I found to better understand the texts, grouping each broadcast into groups based on their overarching description of migrants (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997). Additionally, a brief descriptive analysis was done on

each excerpt in order to classify the actors and purpose of each broadcast (Kuypers, 2016).

I conduct my analysis using racial rhetorical criticism (Flores, 2016). Racial rhetorical criticism is reflective about, and engages in, understanding the persistence of racial oppression, logics, voices, and bodies, and that theorizes race as a rhetorical production (Flores, 2016). I treat my rhetorical analysis as an “act of political engagement” (McGee & Cisneros, 2018, p. 301), challenging normative practices in the hopes that future rhetorical scholarship shifts. I also seek to shift away from simple seeing race as something to include as a topic in rhetorical criticism, but as an imperative to study, transforming and liberating the rhetorical discipline and its methods (Baugh-Harris & Wanzer-Serrano, 2018; Hanchey, 2018; Houdek, 2018). I explore my artifacts for racial language, attempting to expose whiteness and xenophobia in the artifacts that I have chosen. In doing so, I seek not only to identify, but to be a social actor, one that critiques and argues against violent social rhetorics due to racial delegitimization.

I leverage Molina’s theory of “racial scripts”, or racialized narratives and metaphors assigned to minority groups (Molina, 2014), to identify several instances where Trump *and* Fox News’ cable rhetoric where they perpetuate similar, if not identical, rhetorical devices within their public comments to perpetuate and condone racial discrimination of immigrant and brown bodies. Molina’s (2014) theory postulates that Latinx migrants, through consistent racialized upkeep, are kept “perpetually illegal” (116), using older scripts with known understandings to continuously categorize migrants as ineligible from citizenship. Given this, I believe that Molina’s theory will allow me to

identify the specifics of the I also incorporate Cacho's (2012) theory of the indelible "illegality" of migrant bodies. Cacho asserts that, because of narratives that paint migration as a de-facto status crime (Cacho, 2012, p. 119) arguing that this is a primary rhetorical strategy of both institutions that they leverage to strengthen their discourse.

The artifacts that I have will use for this rhetorical analysis are news broadcasts ranging from 2016 to 2019, spanning the current tenure of the president's presidential career. While there are many pundits to choose from, with Fox having nearly 30 weekly broadcast opinion shows regularly airing ("Fox News Shows," n.d.), I found that Trump – *Hannity*, starring right-wing news pundit Sean Hannity, and *Fox and Friends*, a morning news show hosted daily on Fox. These two shows, aside from being shows that Trump has directly appeared on, also win major mentions on Trump's official Twitter account, with @foxandfriends being mentioned 260 times since his inauguration, and @seanhannity 93 ("Trump Twitter Archive," n.d.). While there were many opinion shows to choose from, *Hannity* and *Fox and Friends* regularly topped the charts for viewership numbers, which is why I chose to focus on those shows for this analysis. These shows are noteworthy due to their media presence and Trump's willingness to retweet their immigration content. Moving forward, I discuss the background of both shows, and demonstrate their connection with Donald Trump and the White House.

### **Fox and Friends**

Fox and Friends profits greatly in terms of viewership from its policy echoing and direct endorsement by Donald Trump. Viewership from his inauguration in 2016 to early 2017 increased nearly 46%, averaging 1.7 million viewers in February 2017 (Battaglio,

2017). The president has, on occasion, phoned directly into the program, joining the conversation as a guest. While Fox and Friends touts itself as a morning news show, it operationally functions as an opinion roundtable, with anchors Brian Kilmeade, Ainsley Earhardt, and Steve Doocy engaging in discussions about daily events. Trump was a regular contributor to the show during the Obama era, at one point providing commentary every Monday for the show (Grynbaum, 2018). The news anchors of the show frequently defend their relationship with Trump, labeling (other) news media as “enemies of the American people” (Relman, 2018). Immigration policy is a regular topic of discussion, particularly in times of a national story, such as those related to migrant caravans or family separation.

### **Hannity**

*Hannity*, hosted by the namesake conservative commentator, Sean Hannity, operates much more as a typical talk show. The cable news show is a booming enterprise on its own, claiming to be the top cable news show on the air, with an estimated 3.2 million viewers per broadcast (Joyella, 2019). There have been reports that Hannity has found a unique location in the communication world of the president, even having late-night phone calls with Trump, in which he has freely admitted to advising the president on certain policy matters (Nuzzi, 2018). At one point, Sean Hannity shared lawyers with Trump, purportedly being a client of Michael Cohen’s. This close relationship with the president is unique. While Hannity spends most of his broadcasts on perceived liberal bias against Trump, he discusses immigration policy when it becomes of national importance.

In the analysis below, I use specific excerpts to highlight three major themes I saw arising throughout the broadcasts: connections of migrants to the drug trade, migrant as invading force, and careful framing of crisis victimhood. Through the usage of exemplar evidence, I critique these documents to demonstrate that certain right-wing news media perpetuate the racialized language of Donald Trump, creating a cyclical reinforcement of racialized narratives that influences the voter base.

### **Analysis**

In conducting my analysis, I determined that there were three themes that arose from a large portion of the broadcasts – stories linking migrants to drugs, linking migrants to disaster, and a push to make the crisis of migrant resettlement look like a manufactured crisis. These themes are major topics that Trump has espoused in his own remarks and speak to the racism inherent in immigration narratives.

#### **Migrant Drug Connections**

Many of the clips that I analyzed spoke about the connections that the hosts perceived migrants on the southern border having direct or indirect connections to drug trafficking and cartel drug smuggling, with many talking points coming directly from White House sources. During Hannity's regular news show, Sean Hannity spoke about the "Border Emergency," and quoted White House officials and Border Enforcement about specific reasons why this emergency existed. The segment, titled "Playing Politics at the Border" (also with sub-header *Not a Manufactured Crisis*) linked border migrants with an increase in fentanyl smuggling and deaths, as well as linking migrants to the crisis of undocumented migrants, quoting "The White House." This White House quote

came directly from an address made on January 8 regarding the Border Wall initiative. Hannity uses specific rhetoric such as “smuggled minors” to describe the perceived illegality and danger of this system. Trump then took a quote from Hannity’s show directly to his Twitter, quipping:

“In 2018 alone, 20,000 *illegal aliens* with criminal records were apprehended trying to cross the Border, and there was a 122% increase in fentanyl being smuggled between ports of entry. Last month alone, more than 20,000 minors were smuggled into the U.S.”

*@realDonaldTrump*

An additional example occurred on January 31 of 2019, in another airing of Hannity’s show, Hannity accuses the Democratic party of letting in “heroin, fentanyl, human trafficking...” (*Hannity*, 2019) through the southern border, speaking about their neglect for the security of the nation. This echoed closely with remarks Trump made a few days before on January 26, 2019 on Twitter, claiming “Only fools, or people with a political agenda, don’t want a Wall or Steel Barrier to protect our Country from Crime, Drugs and Human Trafficking. It will happen - it always does!” (Trump, 2019). Again, we see Fox News opinions being informed by Trump’s recent remarks, again working in tandem to reinforce racialized immigration narrative.

These examples are not only evidence of the cyclical nature of rhetoric between the White House and Fox News opinion anchors, but an example of racialized logic of both parties. Many of crimes that the *illegal aliens* were accused of were previous immigration crimes (considered a misdemeanor for the first offense), not violent offenses

(Timm & Dann, 2019). Fentanyl smuggling as well becomes linked to migrant bodies, even though previous administration experts claim that most of the fentanyl smuggled comes through legal ports of entry into the United States (O'Connor, 2017). Even the terminology used to describe migrant children, having them “smuggled” into to the country suggests criminality. These crimes, while not *perpetuated* by all migrant bodies, have become excuses to criminalize those exposed or around it. Cacho (2012) describes this setting as de-facto criminality, or not viewing bodies as criminal because of what they've done, but because of the surrounding circumstances. In viewing this through Cacho's framing, migrant bodies are seen as criminal, and therefore worthy of monitoring and policing, due to their causal relationship with drugs and child kidnappings, not because they directly perpetrated these crimes. Being a migrant body becomes the crime.

By echoing the rhetoric of the White House, Hannity not only disseminated Trump's rhetoric, but further authorized it, defending his rhetoric throughout the specific piece. Hannity juxtaposed the migrant crisis with Speaker Pelosi's own district, conducting interviews that argued it was dirty, ridden with needles, and dangerous to be in. Hannity uses this juxtaposition to further claim that the Speaker should really focus her efforts on fixing her “own” people and community, rather than bringing in new migrants.

There is already good evidence through this first category that Trump and Fox News engage in similar rhetoric, creating defensive line for racialized rhetoric to flourish and thrive. I turn towards examples of migrants being portrayed as disastrous for the U.S. system.



### **Migrant as Disaster**

Another common theme seen was the narrative that forwarded the racist notion that migrants were part of an invading force. One excerpt comes from a roundtable discussion from Fox and Friends, shortly after Trump introduced new immigration policies that created a merit-based system within the immigration framework. While many sections touched on a variety of facets of meritocracy, none did it more explicitly than Fox and Friends. During this airing of Fox and Friends on May 17, Brian Kilmeade, one of the anchors, claimed that the migrant caravan as akin to "...times when Democrats and Republicans come together. When the market fell apart in 2008 and after 9/11, this is almost like that at the border," (Haltiwanger, 2019), relating . Kilmeade claims that the country united around a single enemy at that time, instead of trying to maneuver within partisan lines. Beyond just defending the action of the president, Fox and Friends grafted the concept of 9/11 onto the current migrant crisis, deploying the idea of *terror* and *terrorism* onto the bodies of migrant people.

Kilmeade perpetuates the concept of terrorist being part of the foundational makeup of migrant bodies. By suggesting that this was a similar incident, Kilmeade suggests that this border crisis should be taken seriously, given the threat of terror that it brings along with it. For those in the country, those that might be under suspicion of being undocumented, this now becomes a game of pretending – in order to not be under suspicion of being dangerous, Cacho (2012) claims that those who are under suspicion of

illegal acts (in Kilmeade's case, primarily Latinx bodies) have to *perform* in a certain way to prove that they are loyal subjects. According to Cisneros' (2012a), this scripting creates border anxieties, with communities adversely affected being scared and suspicious by the oppressions that this rhetoric has perpetuated.

### **Migrants as Crisis**

Another major theme I found is the contested nature of "crisis" on the border. While many Democratic senators and politicians saw the border security crisis as manufactured, many of Trump's key campaign promises hinged on it being an immediate problem, something that needed to be solve immediately. Hannity begins a conversation by asking Trump (whom he is interviewing) questions about Democratic senators, casting doubt on the idea of the border situation being a manufactured crisis. Hannity pokes at the crisis of easy access into the United States, saying "It would only take, what.... A minute and a half to walk across the river? If we had a barrier, this wouldn't happen." (Hannity, 2019). He continues to label the issue on the Democrats, claiming he has "tapes on 20 Democrats using the term "manufactured crisis". Right after dialoguing with the President on this, Hannity continuously speaks about how border patrol agents, families, and young men/women have been hurt or killed in the line of duty for Customs and Border Patrol. The President agrees, calling the Border Patrol "good people", saying that the job "could be a lot easier if the crisis was averted, and that Nancy [Pelosi] and Chuck [Schumer] are aware of that (Hannity, 2019). Trump and Hannity dialogue, agreeing that this was a grand tragedy, emphasizing the need for a concrete and steel border wall.

I was reminded of the many, many crimes the Customs and Border Patrol has perpetuated, from separation of families, to allowing children to die in their care from incomplete medical attention. This harkens back to Cacho's (2012) concepts surrounding *criminality* – the show only cared about one side of illegality, neglecting atrocities convened by the other side. Criminality is used as a script, then, to label migrants as “dangerous” and as a “crisis”. This can also be derived from the landscape of the interview – by looking at the outfits of the agents, all were geared for combat situations, including tactical helmets and armaments. By staging the interview this way, Fox News and Trump again become coalitional allies for PR purposes, using racially charged, mutual rhetoric to advance and enhance the rhetoric they push.

### **Discussion**

In all of the excerpts, racialized metaphors and scripts were perpetuated through the almost tag-team rhetoric of the White House. This analysis asserts that, through the organized repetition of racialized narrative and metaphor between the White House and the Fox anchors, the racialized language of Trump is consistently reinforced in the minds of the conservative voter base.

### **Racist Metaphors in News Medias**

The simplistic language that has accompanied the rise of Trump's particular brand of rhetoric, with Fox News as a loudspeaker for this information, has led to a further strengthening of bigotry. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) speaks of the “intimate terrorism” of the borderlands, or a conceptual positionality of migrants of not being accepted anywhere, not being able to move forward or backwards, not accepted from where they

came, or where they are attempting to move towards. One can imagine the impact that constant reinforcement within the news media does for those that already exist within this intimate terror – to be reminded constantly of the way that those in power, as well as their constituents, view them – dangerous, as an enemy of their very way of being. This is no empty fear, either – currently, border militias, as well as the Border Patrol themselves, enact wide scale surveillance and aggressive behaviors on innocent border dwellers and migrants (Bauer, 2016). The Border Patrol in particular has long attempted to link Southern U.S. migration to dangerous individuals to justify increasing surveillance and funding, and the continuous cycle of news stories and Trump’s own blustering provide them with plenty of material.

### **Unstable Allies – Cracks in the Continuity**

While it can seem at first glance that this relationship between Fox News and the Trump administration is perpetually symbiotic, there have been several experiences in where the façade drops on both sides, and the two entities drop the veil of mutual assuredness to visibly (and occasionally, fiercely) combat each other in open forums. While the talking heads of Fox News (their “opinion” cable broadcasting) largely remains aligned with the President, the same cannot be said for its news and polling division. Fox’s news anchors and polls regularly contest, and even outright challenge the claims that Trump makes. Trump seems to take personal offense at any image from the news organization that they may be endorsing anybody on the Democratic side. Neil Cavuto, a Fox News anchor running the show *Your World with Neil Cavuto*, rebuked the President for his previous complaints of unfair coverage towards the Democrats, saying “My job is to cover you, not fawn over you or rip you, just report on you. To call balls and strikes on

you. My job, Mr. President, our job here, is to keep score, not settle scores” (Nguyen, 2019). Other analysts and talking heads have said the same. Trump has ramped up his critique of the news network, claiming at one point that “watching Fake News CNN” was better than watching Shepard Smith’s broadcast, and claimed that Fox News was moving towards the losing side when they agreed to host a town hall with Pete Buttigieg, a Democratic presidential candidate (Koblin, 2019). This increase in dissonance suggests that Fox News, and the President, are beginning to rethink their unstable alliance. Fox News seems to be tiring of the barrage of attacks that the organization has had to endure, and Trump seems to become increasingly frustrated that the organization will not report what he demands.

For the purposes of understanding how this can be a place of resistance, there seems to be a struggle between the pundits who have allied themselves with Trump, and those at the organization that still hold to reporting some semblance of news. This is particularly hopeful in the light of an upcoming election – even with the next four years possibly being another Trump regime, perhaps this dissonance will crack into the punditry. I previously mentioned the power that Fox News holds on markets in which they exist – losing such disseminative power would be incredibly detrimental to holding onto his base votership. Perhaps, moving forward, we will see a policy shift within Fox to report more accurate, and less insidious rhetoric surrounding Latinx and migrant communities, but this is still a long way off.

## **Conclusion**

Fox News and the White House currently have a tenuous relationship, one that constantly reinforces the racial rhetoric discussed in this chapter, as well as the previous chapters. Fox and Trump operate in relative synchronicity, repeating, even quoting each other on political opinion broadcasting and Twitter, perpetuating ideals of criminality, disease, and danger amongst Latinx communities. However, this seems to be a temporary situation – while it may seem like the administration and Fox have a strong bond, cracks in the partnership have been opened, with anchors and analysts rebelling against such institutional support in favor of reporting the data that they have. Further examination and understanding of this partnership may lead to resistance pathways to disrupt the alliance that has been struck, disrupting the massive amount of racial reinforcement that it enables.

## Chapter 5

### **Conclusion**

The dehumanization efforts of Trump and his administration towards Latinx migrants has not gone unnoticed, particularly by other minority organizations. The Jewish community in the United States, with memories stretching back to their own experiences of dehumanization at the hands of the Nazis, have come out in force against the practices of ICE and the legal policies. Rabbi Jill Jacobs said in an interview to Associated Press that “Our entire history is about being kicked out of one place and trying to find a safe place to live.” (Tareen, 2019). A similar sentiment was shared by the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe in Texas, claiming migrants to not be dangerous, foreign entities, but “Rather, they are our primos, our cousins. Our border on the south doesn’t separate genetics; it doesn’t assign a different history or lineage” (Torres, 2019). These humanizing efforts from minority organizations speaks to the hope in which I wish to leave those who read this analysis with. While the present seems cold and grim, I hope that this analysis leads to further movement against racialized rhetoric and speaks to the necessity for coalition-building as a detriment against the destructive nature of the Trump administration. To conclude this analysis, I review my arguments made, as well as look forward towards a potentially hopeful future.

### **Overview**

This analysis analyzed three facets of the rhetoric surrounding immigration policy in the Trumpian era – public-facing comments directly from the administration, enshrined legal text, and the cyclical rhetorical machine that keeps such racialized rhetoric at the

forefront of the right wing American view. Overall, through my analysis, I showed that the Trump administration has worked to delegitimize Latinx bodies as it relates to immigration. By incorporating such narratives and rhetoric into legal text, this administration aims to cement their racist ideologies into policy and feeling that lasts long after the next election. In these concluding sections, I summarize my findings from the previous chapters, as well as speak to what these dehumanizing efforts mean for scholars that study both borders and rhetoric.

In chapter 1, I identified how Trump's public remarks, along with his directives, had racialized language within their portrayals of immigrants. Using Bonilla-Silva's (2014) frames of color-blind theory, I connected Trump's public directive rhetoric with the underlying racist tropes. Trump's public directives categorized Latinx migrant bodies as defaulting to "criminal" in nature, classifying them as violent and disease prone. Additionally, I asserted that the criminalization of migrant individuals echoed what Jacobson (2008) identified around the Proposition 187 debate – what was considered "legal" and "illegal" as forms of legitimacy in migration debates became skewed. As the Trump administration continues to claim that the current immigration system is inherently flawed, they gain the ability to shift where the "goalposts" of who gets classified as legitimate or illegitimate in the eyes of the immigration code. By suggesting a broken system, Trump creates an opening to redefine definitions of legal immigration, illegal immigration, and asylum.

In the second chapter, I focused specifically on the text found in Executive Order 13767, the "border wall" executive order, and traced the metaphor of alien throughout the



text in order to understand why the Trump administration returned to such loaded language, as well as to argue for the implications of returning to such language. I argue that the usage of alien metaphors creates an increasing sense of other-ness, and can be used to legitimize inhumane practices by removing the human aspect of the immigration rhetoric. “Illegal alien” additionally further expands how Latinx bodies associate with the border. While “immigrant” allows for space of movement and of transitory capacity, “alien” continuously separates, and rhetorically and geographically links immigrants to the border. After establishing this, I moved on towards my final chapter, wherein I analyzed the relationship between Fox News and the Trump administration as cyclical, reinforcing rhetorical stereotypes through a 24-hour news cycle.

My third and final chapter dissected the rhetorical reinforcement cycle between Fox News and the Trump administration, identifying the tentative alliance that Fox News’ channels have with the Trump administration. Upon identifying this relationship, I problematize their relationship as one that is shaky at best, with varying divisions of the Fox News empire (particularly the daily news anchors, *not* the opinion broadcasts) actively resist this alliance. Trump additionally follows the same pattern – when Fox anchors balk at something Trump has done, Trump repeatedly turns around and strikes back, spiting Fox. I theorize that this could be the first step in seeing a dissolution for this unkempt partnership, and that the small kinks in the armor that we see now will eventually grow into distrust, disdain, and an eventual falling out of this administration with its last partners.

## **Concluding Analysis**

To cross the border as a Latinx migrant today is a monumental task. Not only do many have harrowing journeys to approach the borders while already fleeing from possible danger. However, under the Trump administration, I believe that all Latinx migrants have become subject to more insidious racism from this administration. The common thread amongst all these analyses has been one of legitimacy – who gets to enter, and how are they classified? Over and over, the vociferous response from this administration is clear – Latinx bodies are suspect. As seen in Chapter 3, generally accepted practices, already dehumanizing to some degree, have become de-legitimized, with Latinx bodies seen as feral, dangerous, “alien”, suggesting criminal intent and malice. Not only is this enshrined in legal rhetoric, but the constant cyclical nature of this administration and its news counterparts constantly reinforces this to the general public, reminding them of the crisis that migration has caused, of the dangers that it brings, and of the type of person that is entering the United States. Latinx bodies are forced to carry the border with them as constant aliens. The expanded nature of the border, through my analysis, means that there is no safe haven for them in the United States. Without intervention on a large scale, the future of Latinx migrant legitimacy is one of constant question, forced again into the liminal state that Anzaldua speaks of, without haven, without home.

## **Implications and Directions for Future Research**

### **Expanding Borders**

Legal texts such as Executive Orders and Border Memorandums give us insight into who administrations wish their racism to be officially enshrined for the years or decades to come, and, as the rise of Trump has shown, we should be wary of how the border is defined, particularly in the case of a secondary Trumpian era. An expanding border is good for no one – already, we are a surveilled people, with Border Patrol stopping people as far as 100 miles from the Southern Border for proof of their citizenship before they are able to continue on their way. Immigration checkpoints at airports (which count as ports-of-entry, and therefore within immigration jurisdiction to strip citizens of their rights against search and seizure are ubiquitous.

The analysis that I have undertaken raises additional points of interest when viewing the three case studies together. A curious one for me is the continued study of the expansion of the border as a figural concept. With a border wall reportedly being constructed, the geographical realism of the border is well established, however, we are seeing an odd movement. Increasingly, the question with the Southern U.S. border is not what is being done on the border, but rather, what is being done to *expand* the border, both figural through increased ICE detentions and raids, and geographically through the construction of an immense order wall. This threat of an expanding border threatens the future of migrants and Latinx communities at large. If the border expands, physically or metaphorically, it threatens the safety of migrants by keeping them from reaching their destination.

## Surveillance and The Border

Expanding upon this project in particular, I wish to take these analyses and use them to bridge into the subject field of surveillance, effectively combining border rhetoric with the rhetoric of surveillance. In recent news, the Trump administration has increased its capacity to surveil and remove those that they deem “illegal”. The administration has been hard at work creating a state that has immense surveillance authority over Latinx bodies; just recently, the administration has gone so far as to deploy BORTAC, a special division of the Border Patrol, to sanctuary cities to improve their surveillance and ranged tactics capability (Caitlin Dickerson & Zolan Kanno-Youngs, 2020). In times of crisis, we have watched this administration take dangerous steps due to their de-legitimizing of migrant bodies.

As I sit writing these concluding thoughts, in the middle of the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020, for those reading this in later years, ICE made a conscious decision to continue raiding workplaces and homes of undocumented families, knowing that their lives were in danger, that these individuals, these *humans*, could contract a life threatening disease upon being exposed to the virus. I think back to Cisneros’ (2012a) thoughts on *looking* illegal – to be looked at as a minority does not always reflect back as being *seen*, but rather, of being dissected – of being inspected, put under scrutiny. You must *perform* the citizen role, this government warns brown bodies, or face intense surveillance and scrutiny. Further analysis would require investigating surveillance literature and investigating the effects that legal rhetoric has had on enforcement policies and aggression within ICE, the Border Patrol, and other enforcement agencies.

### **Trumpian Rhetoric**

Moving forward, I believe that more research needs to be done to further the arguments made in the rhetorical studies I have undertaken. Of particular note, I hope to see more rhetoricians undertaking the analysis of Trump era immigration rhetoric. While the relationship of the Southern U.S. Border and the wills of the administration have always been fraught with danger and discrimination, we are experiencing a time of heightened racist rhetoric, as well as violence against migrant populations. I believe it is the role of the scholar to be scholar-activist, particularly in times of inhumane detention practices. Ono (2012) speaks on how identifying and studying border discourse helps us understand how these social constructions affect people in real, constructed ways. I track upon the same lines that Ono does – our job, as rhetoricians, is to provide critique that can build bridges towards understanding and countering dangerous racist ideals, providing defenses for those marginalized by such language.

### **Final Thoughts**

This analysis was not easy for me to write, nor is it a complete manuscript of all the different ways I wished to go about these analyses. I remember sitting in my apartment in Los Angeles when Trump was elected in 2016, wondering in fear what this meant for my undocumented friends, for members of my communal family. I almost immediately began calling those loved ones I knew were going to be targeted, calling them, *begging* them to be safe, to hide, to go somewhere they wouldn't suspect you to be. I think of Anzaldúa's term *intimate terror* (2012) as a way to best describe the feelings that I had for many months after that, this feeling of having been stuck between two worlds – while I, a citizen, white-passing Latinx had very little to fear, I felt stuck, looked

at with dismay for who I was by the administration (as well as many of my peers at a predominately evangelical, white undergraduate institution), but not able to directly empathize with the utter terror that my undocumented and darker-skinned friends faced on a day to day basis. After hearing the rhetoric spilling out of Trump's mouth, the utter hatred he had for migrant populations, and Latinx populations in general after he became elected, it became evident to me that the corporate world that I had hid in would no longer be a comfortable refuge. Thus began my exploration back into academia, into critical rhetoric, and towards the project I work on here.

I chose to focus on legal text because of their public efficacy and their ability to stick around for long periods of time, spanning legislative bodies and administrations. I do not believe that this is the end of my endeavor into projects as this. Moving forward, I will continue to critically evaluate immigration policy and law. Hopefully, through the combined efforts of scholarship and activists, we can move forward towards a better future for migrants and Latinx individuals when it comes to their status as legitimized characters in the American consciousness. I hope that one day, through coalitional endeavors, we see a reversal of the Trump administration's vitriol, that the futures of migrants in America becomes a tale of social reckoning and responsibility. Our borders built of hatred, racism, and fear will not last forever – be it brick by brick, even the smallest changes must be celebrated with hope.

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