

SECURITIZED MIGRATION UNDER DONALD TRUMP:

A STUDY OF U.S. MIGRATION 2024 - 2025

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS



**UNIVERSITAS
ISLAM
INDONESIA**

Written by:

Muhammad Muchlisin Habibie

22323085

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA

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Proposed to the Department of International Relations

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As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn

Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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Defended in front of Board of Examiners
in the Department of International Relations
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Validated by

Department of International Relations
Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences
Universitas Islam Indonesia

Head of Department



Karina Utami Dewi, S.I.P., M.A.

Board of Examiners

- 1 Alfredha Shinta Putri, S.IP., M.H.I.
- 2 Karina Utami Dewi, S.IP., M.A.
- 3 Hangga Fathana, S.I.P., B.Int.St., M.A.

Signature

[Handwritten signatures of Alfredha Shinta Putri, Karina Utami Dewi, and Hangga Fathana]

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own independent scientific work, and that all material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) has been stated, and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated.

No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

20 November 2025



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muhammad Muchlisin Habibie".

Muhammad Muchlisin Habibie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	: United States Customs and Border Protection
CDC	: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DHS	: Department of Homeland Security
DoD	: Departement of Defense
DOJ	: Department of Justice
EO	: Executive Order
ERO	: Enforcement and Removal Operations
ERT	: Enforcement of Response Team
GOP	: Grand Old Party
ICE	: United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
MAGA	: Make America Great Again
MPP	: Migrant Protection Protocols
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
UN	: United Nations
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCIS	: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

ABSTRACT

This study examines the securitization of migration under Donald Trump's administration and how migration governance in the United States was restructured through security-oriented practices. In the context of rising populism and nationalist politics, migration has been increasingly framed not as a humanitarian or administrative issue but as a source of disorder threatening territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national identity. This research employs Philippe Bourbeau's securitized migration framework, which conceptualizes securitization as an ordering process operating through institutional indicators and the security nexus rather than an isolated speech act. The study argues that migration securitization under Donald Trump represents a sustained and institutionalized governance strategy produced through the interaction of policy statements, issue saliency, legal codification, and coercive enforcement practices. Using qualitative document analysis of speeches, executive action, and policy documents across Trump's first presidency (2017-2021) and renewed political period (2024-2025), this study finds that migration has been normalized as a permanent security concern. Institutional framing constructed migration as disorder, while interdiction and detention materialized securitization into everyday governance practices, transforming U.S. migration governance into a durable security regime characterized by exclusion, deterrence, and coercive control.

Keywords: Donald Trump; Migration Governance; Securitization; Securitized Migration; Security Nexus

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Over the last decade, migration has increasingly shifted from being framed as a humanitarian or economic concern to a matter of security, sovereignty, and identity. The contemporary political climate, marked by the resurgence of populism and nationalism, has enabled political leaders to strategically construct migration as an existential threat to the state strategically (Huysmans, 2006; Buzan et al., 1997). This shift also reflects a much longer historical pattern in the United States, where immigration has been perceived as threatening since the 19th century, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), the restrictiveness of the 1920s, and Cold War suspicion toward foreign entrants. These earlier episodes established a durable narrative that immigration could endanger national identity and security, forming the historical roots that later allowed Trump to revive protectionist sentiments. This transformation is not a reflection of objective threats, but rather a product of discursive practices that portray migration as disorder, risk, and instability. Political elites employ narratives that associate migrants with criminality, terrorism, and cultural invasion, legitimizing extraordinary measures in the name of protection and control (Bigo, 2002; Buzan et al., 1997). Within this securitized framework, migrants are no longer seen as individuals in search of safety or opportunity but as “threats” to a nation's identity and order (Bourbeau, 2011). These inherited anxieties have become central to

Donald Trump's claim that immigration is weakening the United States and undermining its greatness.

In the United States, migration has generated a combination of economic, social, and political impacts that shape public debates and state responses. Immigrants contribute significantly to the labor market in sectors such as agriculture, construction, health services, and domestic care, with research demonstrating that immigration has minimal negative effect on native employment and yields long-term economic benefits (Pew Research Center, 2016; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (U.S.). Panel on the Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration, 2017). However, despite these positive contributions, public opinion is often influenced more by perceived risks than by empirical data. Media framing, political rhetoric, and isolated incidents frequently amplify concerns about crime, welfare strain, or cultural change, even though studies consistently show no correlation between increased immigration and rising crime rates (Nowrasteh, 2019). These created the perfect conditions for Trump's slogans, "America First" and "Make America Great Again", to resonate by suggesting that immigration poses an economic, cultural, and security threat to the well-being of American citizens. Under these narratives, immigration was a mechanism. Immigrants are framed not only as outsiders but as contributors to national decline, thereby strengthening public acceptance of exclusionary policies. This framing deliberately constructs a correlation between migrant mobility and physical violence, drug trafficking, and transnational crime. From a critical security perspective, these populations do not inherently constitute an objective national security threat. However, by linking human mobility to

structural violence, the administration successfully generates a state of moral panic that shifts public policy away from humanitarian management toward punitive state control.

In the United States, this securitization process reached a peak under Donald Trump, whose political discourses and policy agenda have redefined migration as a security crisis. From the moment he launched his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump's rhetoric has consistently framed immigrants, particularly those from Latin America and Muslim-majority countries, as sources of disorder and national vulnerability (Wodak, 2013; Brown, 2015). He has described Mexican migrants as "rapists" and "drug dealers" and repeatedly warned of an "invasion" at the southern border (Trump, 2018). This framing is deeply tied to his "America First" worldview, which portrays immigrants as a threat to American jobs, identity, and sovereignty, and has helped justify policies designed to restore what he has depicted as a weakened nation. Trump's dislike toward immigrants is rooted in nationalism, economic protectionism, and the mobilization of white working-class grievances, enabling him to portray immigration as the principal cause of American decline. Such discourse exemplifies the (Bourbeau, 2011) terms of *securitization of migration*; the process by which migration becomes an issue of "order and disorder," and by extension, of national security. In this framing, migrants are positioned as "outsiders" whose mobility must be controlled through expanded enforcement mechanisms.

Trump's approach is not merely rhetorical. It has been institutionalized through a series of executive actions and policy initiatives, including the 2017 travel ban targeting Muslim-majority countries (The White House, 2017), the

“zero tolerance” family separation policy, and the construction of the border wall (Pierce et al., 2018; Gramlich, 2020). Through these measures, securitization has been embedded directly into federal governance and administration. One of Trump’s earliest steps in office was issuing the travel ban during his first week, signaling that immigration was his primary national security concern. This was followed by expanded ICE operations, increased deportation powers, and heightened border militarization, demonstrating that Trump considers immigration as not merely as a policy issue, but as a foundational threat to American order. Trump’s speeches often juxtaposed the idea of “law-abiding citizen” with “illegal aliens,” reinforcing a binary distinction that legitimized harsh enforcement (Chavez, 2008; Srikantiah & Sinnar, 2019). His use of crisis language, referring to migration as an “invasion,” “onslaught,” or “national emergency”, has contributed to a moral panic that has been used to justify militarized border control (Parsons & Riva, 2024).

The theory of migration securitization developed by Bourbeau (2011) provides an effective analytical framework for understanding this process. Unlike classical securitization theory, which focuses primarily on state-centered speech acts, Bourbeau emphasizes *practices of ordering*, in which discourses, institutional behavior, and everyday governance are constructed as sources of disorder and thereby justify exceptional measures. He argues that securitization is a form of ordering practice through which societies seek to reestablish control and stability amid perceived disorder (Bourbeau, 2011). In this sense, the U.S. government’s approach under Trump represents not merely border control but the reassertion of political authority through the exclusion of the “other.” By

constructing migrants as disorderly and dangerous, securitization enables the suspension of normal politics and legitimized exceptional action, detention, deportation, and border militarization (Huysmans, 2002; Bigo, 2014).

Trump's is particularly illustrative of what Bourbeau describes as the "emotional dimension" of securitization. Fear, anxiety, and resentment are mobilized as political tools to sustain support for exclusionary measures (Pain, 2009; Ahmed, 2014). In campaign rallies and online communication, Trump invokes a sense of existential vulnerability by portraying migration as an assault on American identity and sovereignty. This narrative, amplified by the conservative media ecosystem, has constructed a collective sense of insecurity that transcends empirical data. Even as immigration rates declined during parts of his administration, Trump's political messaging continued to intensify, demonstrating that securitization operates more through material conditions (Eremin, 2021; Sitompul & Cipto, 2023).

In alignment with Bourbeau's methodological inquiry, this study adopts a broad definition of international migration that encompasses refugees, asylum seekers, and unauthorized entrants (Bourbeau 2011, p. 5). The analytical criteria used to identify the distinct targeted migrants group do not rely on static administrative assumptions, but rather trace how the state's security apparatus purposefully provokes an elision and confusion of migration categories to maximize political flexibility (Bourbeau 2011, p. 6). Following Bourbeau's ontological proposition that identities constitute interests and action, the criteria for these groups are mapped based on how political and media agents discursively link specific human mobilities to societal disorder, threat, and public anxiety

(Bourbeau 2011, p. 7). As shown in Table 1, Trump’s securitization practices have targeted these categorized migrant groups using racialized and fear-based framing that have been translated directly into policy enforcement mechanisms.

Table 1: Specific Migrant Groups Targeted in Trump’s Migration Securitization

Migrant Group	Region/Origin	Securitized Label/Narrative	Policy Impact/Outcome
Mexican and Latin-American migrants	Central & South America	Labeled as “criminals,” rapists,” part of a “border invasion.”	Border militarization, family separation, and expansion of ICE raids
Muslim migrants and refugees	Middle East & North Africa	Framed as potential “terrorists” or threats to national security	Travel Ban (Executive Order 13769)
Caravan migrants	Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador)	Described as an “invasion” threatening sovereignty	Military deployment at the southern border, “Remain in Mexico” policy
Asylum seekers	Global South (Latin America & Africa)	Depicted as “fake refugees” exploiting the system	Asylum restrictions, safe-the-country rules

Source: (Gramlich, 2020; Baker Institute for Public Policy, 2024; American Immigration Council, 2021; American Immigration Council, 2024)

This table demonstrates how securitization processes are not abstract but socially targeted, reproducing hierarchies of belonging and exclusion. Migrants from the Global South, particularly Latin America and Muslim-majority regions, are most frequently positioned as existential threats. Such framing has legitimized

state practices that would otherwise violate human rights norms and international refugee law (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2025; Amnesty International, 2024).

Beyond discourse, securitization is also materialized spatially. The U.S.-Mexico border embodies the territorial logic of securitization, in which fences, surveillance drones, detention centers, and patrol zones translate political language into physical control (Jones & Johnson, 2016; Mountz, 2020). **Picture 1** visualizes how enforcement zones and migration corridors have been militarized during Trump's presidency, translating securitization into spatial governance.

Pictures 1. U.S.–Mexico Border Migration Routes and Enforcement Zones (Color-Coded)



Source: (Baker Institute for Public Policy, 2023)

The spatial aspect of securitization reinforcement (Bourbeau, 2011) the nation of ordering practices; the order becomes an apparatus of control that defines who belongs and who does not. Through walls, checkpoints, and detention regimes, migration becomes governed through visibility, surveillance, and containment (Monod et al., 2010; Featherstone et al., 2011). Trump renewed calls for “the largest deportation operation in U.S. history” during his 2024 campaign, illustrating how securitization persists beyond a single administration and becomes a normalized political logic (Gramlich, 2020).

Despite extensive literature on migrants, populism, and security, a critical research gap remains. Much scholarship has examined the *politics of war* (Wodak, 2013) and populist rhetoric, yet relatively few studies have applied Bourbeau's securitization of migration framework to the U.S. case, particularly during

Trump's two political phases (2017-2021 and 2024-2025). Existing studies often treat securitization as a European phenomenon (Huysmans, 2006; Bigo, 2002) or analyze U.S. migration policy without integrating theoretical perspectives on discourse and identity. This study fills that gap by examining how Trump has constructed migration as a governance problem centered on order, sovereignty, and national identity. By examining his speeches, policy documents, and media statements, this research uncovers how the U.S. government legitimizes exceptional measures under the guise of national security and border integrity.

Understanding the securitization of migration under Donald Trump is essential for grasping how democratic states normalize exclusion and control through discourse and practice. Securitization is not merely a reaction to threats but a governance strategy that produces order through fear (Bourbeau, 2011). In Trump's America, securitization of migration has transformed borders into symbols of protection and migrants into embodiments of disorder. This study, therefore, examines protection and migrants through a border lens, examining how political leaders use security narratives to redefine the moral and political boundaries of belonging in an age of populism and global mobility.

1.2 Research Question

How does the institutionalization of migration under Donald Trump shape the governance practices heading into his second term?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine how migrants are securitized under Donald Trump through ordering practices that construct migrants as sources of disorder and legitimize enhanced state control over mobility in the United States.
2. To analyze Bourbeau's securitized migration framework as the theoretical foundation for understanding how ordering practices operate, and to situate Trump's approach within broader scholarly debates on migration governance and security politics.
3. To assess the implications of migration securitization under Donald Trump for the governance of migration in the United States, particularly its effects on public discourse, policy direction, and normalization of exclusionary border management practices.

1.4 Research Scope

This research examines the securitized migration process under Donald Trump's administration by focusing on his second presidential period, spanning from 2024 to 2025. The analysis is limited to Trump's speeches, executive orders, policy blueprints, and public communications that define migrants as sources of instability and justify enhanced state control during this renewed political era. This study employed Bourbeau's securitized migration framework as its primary analytical lens, emphasizing discursive and governance practices rather than evaluating policy effectiveness. To achieve a precise and focused assessment, this study isolated Donald Trump's second term, treating his initial presidency

(2017-2021) strictly as a structural baseline and historical backdrop rather than an active period of investigation. The analytical justification for this scoping is grounded in the need to evaluate how populist security regime design reactivates and intensifies its administrative framework after a period of electoral transition. Consequently, by strictly evaluating the policy trajectory heading into Donald Trump's second term, specifically analyzing his 2024 campaign blueprint as a transitional agenda and his subsequent 2025 administrative reactivation, this research tracks how these renewed security practices normalize a permanent state of exceptionality independent of intervening political cycles. Empirical attention centers on the U.S.-Mexico border dynamics, while global migration patterns, legislative negotiations, and long-term policy outcomes fall outside the study's scope.

1.5 Literature Review

To establish a comprehensive analytical foundation for examining the securitization of migration, it is imperative to situate this study within the broader academic discourse surrounding global mobility, sovereignty, and security politics. Existing scholarship has extensively debated how states utilize discursive and institutional mechanisms to transform routine migration management into permanent emergency administration. By critically reviewing prior literature, this section maps the conceptual evolution of threat construction, institutional routinization, emotional politics, and multi-actor involvement within migration governance. More importantly, this literature review serves to identify a critical research gap, highlighting how previous studies predominantly focus on single

presidential terms in European contexts while leaving an empirical vacuum regarding the structural reactivation and intensification of the security framework. Consequently, reviewing these foundational works justifies the necessity of this research, which isolates Donald Trump's second term (2024-2025) as a specific area of active investigation to tract the durability of a populist security regime design.

Balzacq, Leonard & Ruzicka - “*‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases*” (2015) reconceptualized securitization as a processual and relational practice shaped by strategic positioning, contextual cues, and audience reception. Their argument challenges the Copenhagen School's narrow focus on speech by illustrating how security emerges through repeated interaction across institutions and social environments. This perspective is essential for understanding securitized migration, as it frames security not as an objective threat but as an evolving ordering practice that creates instability and legitimizes state intervention. This present study uses their approach as a conceptual foundation to analyze how Donald Trump's political communication contributes to the construction of migration as a security issue (Balzacq et al., 2015).

Bello, in “*The Spiralling of the Securitisation of Migration in the EU*” (2022), demonstrated how repeated institutional and media framing convert routine mobility into a perceived crisis, producing a spiralling effect whereby successive measures of control are normalized through administrative routine and policy repetition. The study shows that such normalization is not caused by objective increases in danger but by a persistent representation of disorder that justifies escalating governance responses, which is analytically parallel to the U.S.

context in which political actors can transform public concern into routinized enforcement (Bello, 2022).

Adamus & Grežo, in “*Attitudes Toward Migrants and Preferences for Asylum and Refugee Policies Before and During The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: The Case of Slovakia*” (2024), analyzed how public attitudes toward migrants shift under conditions of geopolitical tension, highlighting that emotional and symbolic threats play a central role in shaping policy preferences. Their findings show that fear, cultural anxieties, and perceptions of instability significantly increase support for restrictive asylum and migration policies, even when objective risks remain low. Their study demonstrates that emotional responses, not factual danger, drive the intensity of securitizing attitudes, making migration appear as a destabilizing force during moments of crisis. This emotional mechanism is relevant to securitized migration in the U.S. context because it highlights how political actors can amplify symbolic threats to justify ordering practices and enhanced state control (Adamus & Grežo, 2024).

Brown, in “*The New ‘Southern Strategy’: Immigration, Race, and ‘Welfare Dependency’ in Contemporary U.S. Republican Political Discourse*” (2016), examined how Republican political discourse constructs immigration through racialized and economically charged frames that associate migrants with cultural threat, welfare burden, and social disorder. Her analysis demonstrates that migration is politicized through narratives that link immigration, particularly Latin American populations, to long-standing racial tropes historically used to mobilize conservative voters (Brown, 2016). The study reveals how racial coding, economic stereotypes, and claims of dependency become tools to justify

exclusionary governance and demands for the restoration of political actors, thereby legitimizing expanded state control and restrictive policy interventions (Brown, 2016). Brown's findings are particularly relevant for analyzing U.S. migration under Donald Trump, whose rhetoric frequently draws upon similar racialized associations to portray migration as a challenge to sovereignty, identity, and domestic stability.

Planas Gifra, in "*Securitizing Migration in Times of Crisis: Private Actors and the Provision of (In) Security*" (2024), examined how migration becomes securitized not only by states but also by private actors, including NGOs, security companies, humanitarian organizations, and media institutions. Her study shows that during moments framed as a "crisis," private actors actively shape public perceptions of insecurity by exemplifying narratives of disorder, vulnerability, and threat, thereby justifying expanded state intervention. Rather than viewing securitization as a top-down process, the article argues that it emerges through the interaction between states and non-state actors, who co-produce discourses of (in)security in ways that normalize exceptional governance. This perspective is highly relevant to analyzing U.S. migration politics under Donald Trump, as conservative media ecosystems, think tanks, and advocacy groups have repeatedly reinforced the depiction of migrants as destabilizing forces, helping institutionalize securitized responses at the border (Gifra, 2024). By emphasizing crisis-driven, multi-actor involvement, the study complements Bourbeau's framework and demonstrates how securitized ordering practices gain legitimacy beyond formal government channels.

The five studies collectively demonstrate that the securitization of migration is a multidimensional process shaped by discursive construction, emotional responses, racialized political framing, and the involvement of both state and non-state actors. Migration has been framed as a disorder through iterative, institutional, and media-driven narratives that gradually normalize exceptional governance (Balzacq et al., 2015; Bello, 2022). Emotional and symbolic threats, rather than empirical risk, have been shown to intensify public support for restrictive asylum and migration policies, particularly during geopolitical tension (Adamus & Grežo, 2024). Racialized tropes, cultural stereotypes, and economic narratives further embed migration within the framework of threat, especially in U.S. conservative political discourses (Brown, 2016). Additionally, securitization is strengthened by the participation of private actors, such as media organizations, security companies, and NGOs, which amplify crisis narratives and legitimize exceptional governance practices (Gifra, 2024).

Despite these contributions, a clear research gap persists. Existing scholarship tends to focus on short-term crises, single administrative periods, or regional cases, particularly within the European context, without analyzing how securitized migration evolves across multiple political phases under a single leader (Balzacq et al., 2015; Bello, 2022; Adamus & Grežo, 2024; Brown, 2016; Gifra, 2024). No study applies Bourbeau's ordering-based securitized migration framework to the United States, nor examines how discursive, emotional, racialized, and multi-actor mechanisms interact longitudinally throughout Donald Trump's 2017 - 2021 presidency and his renewed 2024 - 2025 administration. This

study addresses that gap by integrating these theoretical dimensions to explain how Trump has constructed migration as an issue of order and national protection, and thus of instability.

1.6 Research Framework

The Securitization of Migration by Philippe Bourbeau:

The analytical foundation of this research is Philippe Bourbeau's *Securitized Migration* framework, which conceptualizes migration as not a naturally occurring practice. Bourbeau argues that securitization must be understood as an "ordering process," a continuous effort by state and societal actors to reestablish stability in moments perceived as disorderly (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 19). Moving beyond the traditional Copenhagen School, which treats security as a binary threshold, this framework explicitly anchors Securitization Theory within a constructivist approach to account for the polymorphous character of power and multifaceted contextual factors (Bourbeau 2011, p. 2). By engaging this constructivist corrective, the framework establishes that security emerges through the mutual constitutiveness of agents, specifically political and media agents, and socio-historical context, which collectively define who belongs and who constitutes a source of instability (Bourbeau 2011, p. 3). This framework is particularly relevant for analyzing migration politics under Donald Trump, whose discourse and governance treat mobility as a crisis of order, identity, and sovereignty.

Bourbeau's framework identifies two core indicators of securitized migration: the *Institutional* and *Security Nexus*, each with distinct sub-indicators.

These indicators act as analytical tools that allow researchers to detect how migration becomes progressively framed, governed, and enforced as a security matter. The indicators and sub-indicators are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Indicators of Migration Securitization Under Donald Trump
(Based on Bourbeau's Framework)

Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Explanation
Institutional	Legal Component	Legal framing that classifies migrants as a security object
	Policy Statements	Official discourse frames migration as disorder
	Saliency	Elevation of migration as a high-priority security issue
Security Nexus	Interdiction	Practices blocking or restricting migrant mobility
	Detention	Use of detention as a tool of security governance

Source: (Bourbeau, 2011)

By applying these indicators, this research examines how Trump's political communication and policy actions collectively construct migration as a threat requiring exceptional responses. The institutional indicators enable analysis of how legal instruments, public statements, and agenda-setting elevate migration into a domain defined by "order versus disorder." Meanwhile, the security nexus indicator captures how interdiction and detention practices translate discursive claims into material enforcement, aligned with Bourbeau's assertion that securitization operates through practices as much as language (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

This framework allows the study to trace securitization across Trump's first presidential term and his resumed administration, identifying both continuity and transformation in the ordering of migration. By grounding the analysis in Bourbeau's indicators, this research demonstrates how Trump's rhetoric and governance mutually reinforce the construction of migration as a security issue, producing a durable logic of control, surveillance, and exclusion.

1.7 Provisional Argument

This research argues that migration under Donald Trump became securitized through a continuous process of ordering rather than through isolated political actions. Drawing on Bourbeau's framework, the study contends that securitization emerged from the interaction of discourse, institutional framing, and material enforcement (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 19-20). Trump's rhetoric elevated migration through the Institutional Indicators, which are strictly visible in the legal components through the institutional codification of emergency authorities, the formulations of executive policy statements that frame migration as a state of chaos and invasion, and heightened agenda saliency that transforms mobility into a high-priority national security threat leading into the 2024-2025 period. At the same time, this institutional framing was materialized and operationalized through practices under the Security Nexus, specifically the execution of interdiction mechanisms implemented by the federal security apparatus to block and restrict migrants' mobility, alongside detention operations that normalize prolonged confinement and bodily control, which reinforced migrants as sources of instability requiring exceptional control. By combining these specific institutional

and empirical mechanisms, Trump normalized migration as a permanent security issue embedded within U.S. governance, systematically aimed at restoring political and territorial order during his second terms.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1 Type of The Research

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical research design to examine how migration became constructed as a security issue through Donald Trump's political communication. A qualitative approach is appropriate because securitization emerges through meaning-making, ordering practices, and discursive framing rather than measurable variables. This method enabled an in-depth interpretation of how institutional action and rhetorical patterns reflect the dynamics of migration securitization (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 19-20).

1.8.2 Subject and Object of The Research

The subject of this study is the U.S. migration governance under Donald Trump's administration, with Donald J. Trump positioned as the central political actor shaping securitization narratives. The object of the research is the securitization of migration, analyzed through official speeches, policy statements, executive actions, and institutional practices that frame migration within a security logic.

1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

The research uses document analysis, including Trump's official speeches, press statements, and policy documents, supported by scholarly

articles and credible media sources, to enable systematic interpretation of securitization themes (Bowen, 2009).

1.8.4 Process of The Research

The research process involved identifying and selecting relevant documents, categorizing them into thematic clusters, and analyzing them using Bourbeau's two indicators, *institutional* and *security nexus*, to trace how *legal components*, *policy discourse*, *interdiction*, and *detention* practices constructed migration as a security issue.

1.9 Thesis Outline

a. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter outlines the research background, problem formulation, scope, objectives, and methodological orientation. It also justifies the relevance of Bourbeau's Securitized Migration framework for analyzing how migration became ordered as a security issue under Donald Trump.

b. Chapter II: Institutional Indicators of Securitized Migration under Donald Trump

This chapter examines Bourbeau's Institutional Indicator, focusing on legal components, policy statements, and issue saliency, to explain how institutional ordering has framed migration as a security problem under Donald Trump.

c. Chapter III: Security Nexus of Migration under Donald Trump

This chapter analyzes Bourbeau's Security Nexus, focusing on interdiction and detention, showing how border enforcement practices materialize migration securitization.

d. Chapter IV: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the findings, reflects on theoretical implications, acknowledges limitations, and offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS OF SECURITIZED MIGRATION: LEGAL, POLICY, AND SALIENCY UNDER DONALD TRUMP

This chapter analyzes securitized migration as an institutional process embedded in U.S. governance rather than as a purely discursive phenomenon. Drawing on Bourbeau's ordering approach, securitization is understood as the outcome of sustained institutional practices through which perceived disorder is translated into legal authority, administrative prioritization, and political urgency. Accordingly, this chapter analyzes three institutional indicators, Legal Component, Policy Statement, and Saliency, following their theoretical sequence within Bourbeau's framework. By examining these indicators, this chapter demonstrates how, under Donald Trump, migration has been institutionally constructed and normalized as a security issue requiring continuous state intervention rather than routine administrative management.

2.1 Legal Component as The Institutional Codification of Securitized Migration

The legal component constitutes the primary institutional indicator within Bourbeau's securitization of migration framework, as it represents the earliest moment at which security narratives are translated into binding authority and enforceable state power. Unlike policy statements or agenda-setting practices, legal instruments formalize securitization by embedding threat perception into statutory categories, executive orders, and administrative procedures that authorize coercive state action. Through legal codification, migration is not

merely framed as a potential risk but is institutionally redefined as a condition of disorder that legitimizes exceptional governance, surveillance, and exclusionary control (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 19-21).

Within this framework, law operates not as a neutral regulatory mechanism but as an ordering device that stabilizes security logic over time and across political cycles. Legal categories determine who may enter, remain, or be removed, while simultaneously constructing hierarchies of belonging and suspicion. Scholars argue that legal language such as “inadmissible,” “illegal,” or “security risk” embeds moral and political judgments that position migrants as objects of control rather than as rights-bearing subjects (Chavez, 2008, p. 48). Once encoded into law, these classifications normalize extraordinary measures by presenting them as routine legal necessities, enabling securitization to persist independently of fluctuating public opinion or empirical threat levels (Huysmans, 2006, p. 47).

To demonstrate how securitization has been institutionalized through law in the United States under Donald Trump, it is necessary to examine concrete legal instruments that translate threat narratives into binding authority. Rather than remaining at the level of political discourse, migration securitization has been codified through executive orders, statutory reinterpretations, and enforcement mandates that authorized exclusion, detention, and deterrence. These legal instruments have functioned as institutional mechanisms through which migration has been formally redefined as a security problem requiring exceptional governance (Bourbeau 2011, pp. 19-21). The table below outlines key legal measures that have codified securitized migration during Trump’s administration.

Table 3. Key Legal Instruments Condensing The Securitization of Migration under Donald Trump

Legal Instrument	Year	Issuing Authority	Core Legal Provision	Policy Output	Sanction Mechanism	Securitization Function
Proposed Expansion of Executive Enforcement Powers	2025	Executive policy proposals	Calls for expanded detention authority and border militarization	Projected increase in detention and military involvement at the border	Proposed expansion of detention authority and border militarization	Reinforced durability of legal securitization across political cycles
Executive Order on Border Enforcement Infrastructure (Project Homecoming)	2025	President of the United States/DHS	Authorized the emergency reallocation of federal and defense funds to build mass detention infrastructure and suspended routine visa processing renewals for targeted nationalities.	Nationwide acceleration of ICE administration arrests and expansion of temporary border holding facilities.	DHS and the Department of Defense (DoD) cooperate to enforce fund reallocations, while CBP executes immediate visa cancellations and entry denials at ports of entry.	Active Second-Terms codification: Translates second-term existential threat narratives into binding, enforceable executive power.
ICE Enforcement Directive on Expanded Removal Priorities	2025	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	Revoked all previous enforcement prioritization guidelines, authorizing the immediate detention and fast-track removal of any undocumented individual regardless of criminal history.	Institutionalization of generalized enforcement routines; sharp increase in domestic raids and immediate border expulsions.	ICE administrative officers and field agents carry out warrantless workplace/domestic raids, custodial detentions, and expedited physical deportations.	Coercive Administration: Operationalizes bodily control within domestic territory, solidifying the durable security regime.
Mass Deportation Program Blueprint (Agenda 47 / Project 2025 Framework)	2024	Executive Policy Proposals & Campaign Platforms	Discursive and programmatic commitments to execute the largest domestic removal operation in U.S. history.	Programmatic roadmaps for massive military-backed removal operations and spatial control.	Proposed coordination between ICE, National Guard units, and local law enforcement to systematically	Transitional Agenda: Uses institutional memory to project future security frameworks and maintain high saliency.

Legal Instrument	Year	Issuing Authority	Core Legal Provision	Policy Output	Sanction Mechanism	Securitization Function
					identify, detain, and process undocumented populations.	
Campaign Platform on Mass Deportation	2024	Trump campaign platform/policy agenda	Proposal to revive and expand detention and deportation	Planned expansion of detention centers and deportation operations	Proposed expansion of ICE-led deportation and detention operation	Reactivated securitization through a legal institutional memory
Continuation of Border Emergency Authorities	2021	Executive branch/DHS enforcement structure	Maintained an emergency-based border enforcement framework	Ongoing use of emergency border enforcement logic	Continued enforcement through detention, removal, and expanded border surveillance	Demonstrated institutional persistence of securitization beyond crisis
Title 42 Public Health Order	2020	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Authorized immediate expulsion of migrants without asylum screening	Rapid cross-border expulsions without due process	Immediate migrant expulsion carried out by CBP under the DC public health authority	Suspended asylum law through emergency security logic
Expansion of Expedited Removal Rules	2020	Department of Homeland Security	Broadened fast-track deportation authority nationwide	Accelerated deportation without court hearings	DHS officers are authorized to detain and deport migrants without full court proceedings	Normalized rapid exclusion as routine security governance
National Emergency Declaration on Border Wall	2019	President of the United States	Reallocated military funds for border infrastructure	Expansion of the border wall and military involvement	Border enforcement expansion implemented by DHS and the Department of Defense	Militarized migration governance

Legal Instrument	Year	Issuing Authority	Core Legal Provision	Policy Output	Sanction Mechanism	Securitization Function
Zero Tolerance Policy	2018	U.S. Department of Justice	Mandatory criminal prosecution for unauthorized border crossing	Mass deportation and family separation	Criminal prosecution and detention of undocumented border crossers were enforced by the DOJ, CBP, and ICE	Criminalized migration as a security disorder
Executive Order 13769 (Travel Ban)	2017	President of the United States	Suspended entry from selected Muslim-majority countries on security grounds	Nationwide entry ban and visa suspension	CBP and the Department of State, against nationals of designated countries, enforced visa denial and entry refusal	Constructed migration as a preventive national security threat

Source: (The White House 2017; Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018; The White House 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2020; Gramlich 2020; U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2019; America Immigration Council 2025; Sacchetti, M 2025; Baker Institute for Public Policy 2024)

The expanded table demonstrates that legal securitization under Donald Trump has unfolded as a cumulative and temporal process rather than a sequence of isolated legal acts. Issued by executive authorities and federal security agencies, these legal instruments translated threat narratives into concrete policy outputs such as entry bans, mass deportation, expedited removal, and emergency expulsions, which were implemented through enforcement mechanisms including visa denial, detention, deportation, and immediate expulsion. Crucially, the operationalization of these outputs relied on highly coercive sanction mechanisms, wherein federal security apparatuses, specifically the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, ICE, CBP, and Department of Defense (DoD), cooperated to

execute warrantless domestic raids, financial funding cuts, and immediate physical exclusion. From preventive exclusion in 2017 to emergency-based expulsions in 2020 and the reactivation of mass deportation frameworks in 2024-2025, migration has been consistently codified as a security disorder requiring exceptional legal authority and enforcement measures. This longitudinal pattern supports Bourbeau's argument that securitization persists through institutional stabilization, allowing security logic to endure beyond immediate crises and political terms (Bourbeau 2011, p. 28).

The securitization of migration under Donald Trump illustrates how the legal component functions as a decisive mechanism for transforming political narratives into durable governance structures. Trump's administration relied extensively on executive authority to codify migration as a security issue, often bypassing legislative deliberation and accelerating the institutionalization of exclusionary practices. Executive Order 13769, commonly known as the "Travel Ban," exemplifies this process by explicitly framing migration from selected Muslim-majority countries as a national security threat and suspending entry on preventive security grounds (The White House, 2017). Through this legal act, abstract fears associated with terrorism were converted into an enforceable exclusion, demonstrating how securitization becomes operationalized through law rather than discourse alone.

Beyond entry restrictions, legal mechanisms were also mobilized to redefine enforcement authority and expand state capacity for control. The "Zero Tolerance" policy introduced in 2018 mandated criminal prosecution for unauthorized border crossings, resulting in systematic family separation and mass

detention practices. Although framed as a matter of legal compliance, this policy reclassified migration from a civil-administrative issue into a criminal-security problem, thereby legitimizing coercive responses under the guise of law enforcement (Pierce et al., 2018, p. 6). In this context, legal codification did not merely reflect political intent but actively produced new realities of vulnerability, confinement, and exclusion, reinforcing the perception of migration as a permanent threat.

The legal component also operates through administrative discretion and regulatory reinterpretation, allowing securitization to evolve without formal legislative change. Immigration courts, asylum procedures, and eligibility standards were progressively narrowed under Trump's administration, redefining the protection framework as potential security loopholes rather than humanitarian obligations. Legal scholars demonstrate that asylum law was increasingly framed as susceptible to "abuse," thereby justifying heightened evidentiary thresholds and expedited removals that prioritized deterrence over protection (Srikantiah & Sinnar, 2019, p. 203). These legal adjustments illustrate Bourbeau's argument that securitization unfolds through cumulative institutional practices rather than singular legal ruptures (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 24).

Crucially, the legal component does not function in isolation but consolidates the effects of policy statements and saliency into authoritative governance. Repeated policy narratives portraying migration as "crime," "invasion," or "national emergency" created the discursive conditions under which legal exceptionalism became politically acceptable. Once migration had achieved high salience in public debate, legal restrictions were framed not as

extraordinary deviations but as necessary responses to restore order and sovereignty. This interaction underscores the institutional logic of securitization: law stabilizes threat construction by transforming urgency into obligation and discretion into mandate (Bello, 2022, p. 1334).

The durability of securitization through law is further evidenced by its continuity beyond immediate political cycles. Trump's renewed emphasis on mass deportation and border enforcement during the 2024-2025 period demonstrates how previously established legal frameworks can be reactivated and intensified without requiring new justificatory narratives. Legal instruments thus function as repositories of securitization, preserving security rationales that can be mobilized whenever political opportunity arises. This continuity aligns with Bourbeau's claim that legal codification enables securitization to persist as an ordering structure rather than a temporary response to crisis (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

From an analytical perspective, the legal component provides a concrete entry point for identifying securitization beyond rhetorical analysis. Legal texts, executive orders, and administrative regulations offer observable evidence of how security claims are institutionalized and operationalized. By examining changes in legal authority, scope of enforcement, and categorization of migrants, researchers can trace how abstract threat construction becomes material governance practices. This approach shifts securitization analysis away from speculative interpretation and toward systematic institutional assessment grounded in documented state action (Bigo, 2014, p. 214).

In the context of this research, the legal component serves as the first institutional indicator that initiated the securitization process examined in Chapter

II. By legally codifying migration as disorder, the state established the foundational authority upon which policy statements and saliency subsequently began operating. Together, these mechanisms transformed migration into a structured security domain governed through law rather than exception alone. Through legal codification, migration has been institutionalized as a security concern governed by a binding authority rather than a temporary exception. This legal foundation stabilized securitization within state governance and enabled subsequent institutional mechanisms to operate coherently.

2.2 Policy Statements as Institutionalization of Securitized Migration In The United States under Donald Trump

Policy statements constitute a central institutional mechanism through which migration is constructed, stabilized, and governed as a security issue. Within Bourbeau's securitization of migration framework, policy statements function as authoritative articulations that connect legal structures with administrative enforcement, translating abstract security concerns into concrete governance priorities. Unlike spontaneous political rhetoric, policy statements possess institutional weight because they guide bureaucratic behavior, legitimize coercive measures, and normalize exceptional responses over time (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 19-20). Accordingly, policy statements operate as institutional drivers that actively structure migration governance within a security logic rather than merely reflecting political communication.

In the United States, migration policy has long been shaped through executive discourse that frames mobility in relation to national order, sovereignty,

and protection. Research demonstrates that U.S. immigration debates frequently rely on narratives linking migrants to crime, welfare dependency, and cultural disruption, particularly within conservative political discourse (Brown, 2016, pp. 116-119). When formalized through presidential speeches, executive memoranda, and agency directives, it directly shapes enforcement priorities and administrative behavior across federal agencies. Policy statements, therefore, function as a bridge between political framing and bureaucratic implementation.

This institutional role of policy statements aligns with Stritzel's argument that securitization is sustained through "translation" processes, whereby political meanings are stabilized as they move across institutions and administrative settings. Security claims do not remain rhetorical; they become operational when translated into policy language that structures decision-making and organizational behavior (Stritzel, 2011, pp. 348-350). In this sense, policy statements function as sites where security meanings are institutionalized rather than merely articulated.

Under Donald Trump, policy statements played a decisive role in institutionalizing migration securitization. From the outset of his presidency, Trump consistently framed migration as a threat to public safety, national sovereignty, and economic stability. Official presidential statements repeatedly characterized migration as "crime," "chaos," and "invasion," constructing a sense of disorder that demanded urgent and exceptional responses. These narratives were not confined to campaign rhetoric but were embedded in formal policy communication, including presidential proclamations, executive orders, and Department of Homeland Security directives, thereby shaping the operational environment of migration governance (Pierce et al., 2018, pp. 4-6).

To concretely demonstrate how policy statements and legal instruments function as institutional drivers of migration securitization, this section presents key executive documents and official statements issued during Donald Trump’s political leadership. Rather than treating securitization as a purely discursive phenomenon, the table below maps how authoritative policy texts translated security narratives into formal governance priorities. By organizing these documents chronologically, the table illustrates how migration has been consistently framed as a condition of disorder requiring exceptional state intervention, thereby embedding securitization within the institutional architecture of U.S. migration governance.

Table 4. Mass Deportation Policy Discourse (Official Reports and Campaign Policy Statements)

Policy Statement / Document	Year	Direct Sentence	Core Security Narrative	Institutional Function	Policy Outcome / Governance Effect
American Immigration Council: Family Separation Policy Analysis	2025	<i>“Family separation was used as a deterrence strategy intended to discourage migrants from crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.” - American Immigration Council</i>	Family separation was presented as a deterrence mechanism within the enforcement policy	Highlight how securitized enforcement logic produces coercive governance practices and trauma	Institutionalization of family separations as a deterrence-oriented enforcement strategy
Officials' Remarks on “Project Homecoming” Initiative	2025	<i>“So to all illegal aliens: Book your free flight right now. We want you out of America.” - Donald Trump</i>	Self-deportation as an aggressive enforcement pressure	Frames migrants directly as immediate removal targets to enforce rapid state clean-up	Implementation of generalized self-deportation administrative routines and coercive tracking
Official Executive Address on National Guard Deployment	2025	<i>“We are deploying the National Guard to support local</i>	Migration control is elevated to	Normalizes the integration of domestic	Activation of joint task forces between ICE and

		<i>enforcement because secure borders require total internal mobilization.</i> ”- Donald Trump	a militarized emergency, demanding domestic armed forces	military assets into everyday immigration governance to restore state authority.	National Guard units for specialized containment operations.
Official Policy Speech on Ideological Screening Expansion	2025	<i>“We only want people who love our country and share our values. If you hate America, you are not coming in.”</i> - Donald Trump	Migration is framed as an existential threat to national survival	Reactivates the securitization discourse through institutional memory to set a new transitional agenda.	Proposals for large-scale military-backed deportation programs and expanded holding infrastructure.
White House Briefing on Sanctuary Cities' Financial Punishment	2025	<i>“We will starve the funding of any city or state that chooses to harbor illegal criminals over protecting American citizens.”</i> - White House Press Briefing	Financial exclusion and non-cooperation are framed as treasonous security disorders.	Uses economic blackmail to force municipal governments into alignment with the federal deportation apparatus.	Systematic withholding of federal public safety grants from non-compliant local jurisdictions.
Mass Deportation Policy Discourse (Policy Statements & Reports)	2024	<i>“We will carry out the largest deportation operation in American history.”</i> - President Donald Trump	Migration is framed as an existential threat to national survival	Reactivated securitization through institutional memory and policy agenda	Proposals for large-scale deportation programs and expanded detention infrastructure
National Campaign Platform Address on Citizenship Rights	2024	<i>“On day one, I will sign an executive order making it clear that future children of illegal aliens will not receive automatic citizenship.”</i> - Donald Trump	Birthright mobility is framed as a legal loophole that threatens sovereign integrity	Attacks long-standing constitutional definitions of belonging to institutionalize future deterrence.	Policy drafts prepared to challenge administrative birthright certification procedures.
National Emergency Declaration on the Southern Border	2019	<i>“The current situation at the southern border presents a border security and humanitarian</i>	Migration is framed as an emergency justifying extraordinary	Legitimized exceptional executive governance over borders	Reallocation of military funds for border wall construction and militarized enforcement

		<i>crisis.</i> ” - President Donald Trump	y authority		
Presidential Remarks on the Border Security Crisis	2018	<i>“This is an invasion of drugs, criminals, and gangs.”</i> - President Donald Trump	Migration is described as an invasion and a national emergency	Normalized emergency framing in executive communication	Justified stricter enforcement policies and expansion of detention and prosecution practices
National Security Strategy of the United States	2017	<i>“The United States must maintain a secure border and enforce immigration laws.”</i> - The White House, National Security Strategy	Migration is framed as a threat to sovereignty and border control	Positioned migration within the national security doctrine	Integrated migration control into national security planning and border enforcement priorities
Executive Order 13767 (Border Security and Immigration Enforcement)	2017	<i>“The southern border is a significant vulnerability in our Nation’s security.”</i> - President Donald Trump	Irregular migration is framed as a breakdown of border control	Directed federal agencies toward security-first enforcement logic	Expansion of border wall construction, detention capacity, and enforcement operations

Source: (The White House 2017; The White House 2018; American Immigration Council 2024; American Immigration Council 2021; Dickerson 2025; Sacchetti 2025; DeMarco 2025; American Immigration Council 2025; Baker Institute for Public Policy 2025; Gramlich 2024)

The table demonstrates that migration securitization under Donald Trump did not emerge from isolated political decisions but from a cumulative, structured process of institutional articulation. Across different documents and political moments, migration has been repeatedly framed as a security threat, an emergency condition, or a source of disorder that justifies extraordinary executive authority, as reflected in the direct statements presented in the table above. Crucially, by evaluating this discourse chronologically, the table highlights a significant evolutionary shift; the threat-based language established during the historical baseline of his first term (2017-2019) provided the necessary discursive

foundation and institutional memory to justify the far more aggressive self-deportation and military-backed rhetoric deployed in 2024 and 2025. Importantly, these policy statements did not remain at the level of discourse but generated concrete governance outcomes, including expanded detention capacity, border militarization, and proposals for mass deportation. This pattern confirms Bourbeau's argument that securitization operates as an ordering process, in which policy statements and legal instruments stabilize threat construction by transforming political urgency into routinized governance practices that persist and intensify across different presidential periods.

Importantly, these policy statements have functioned not merely as rhetorical expressions but as institutional mechanisms that aligned bureaucratic behavior, enforcement priorities, and public perceptions (Bourbeau 2011, pp. 19-21; Stritzel 2011, pp. 348-350). By consistently positioning migration within a security logic, executive statements have normalized emergency framing and legitimized coercive measures as necessary tools of governance (Balzacq, Léonard, and Ruzicka 2015, p. 498). As a result, migration governance under Trump shifted from regulatory management toward permanent security administration, demonstrating how policy statements serve as a critical bridge between legal authority and material enforcement within the border securitization process (Bourbeau 2011, p. 28).

One of the earliest and most consequential examples was Executive Order 13769, which restricted entry from several Muslim-majority countries by explicitly framing migration as a national security risk. The accompanying policy statements emphasized the need to protect the United States from "foreign

terrorist entry," thereby institutionalizing suspicion toward specific migrant populations regardless of individual behavior (The White House, 2017). As a policy statement, this framing established a security interpretation that legitimized subsequent legal exclusion and administrative enforcement.

Beyond formal legal instruments, Trump's policy statements have continuously reinforced securitization through repetition and amplification. Presidential addresses, official briefings, and policy announcements have consistently juxtaposed "law-abiding citizens" against "illegal aliens," producing a binary moral distinction that has legitimized aggressive enforcement (Chavez, 2008, p. 48). Such framing has been echoed across federal agencies, shaping enforcement priorities and internal administrative culture. Studies show that repeated policy framing strengthens institutional alignment by ensuring that securitization becomes embedded as a shared interpretive lens across governance structures (Balzacq et al., 2015, p. 498). This alignment illustrates how policy statements function to synchronize political and bureaucratic execution.

Policy statements also played a crucial role in elevating migration as a persistent national crisis. Trump's administration repeatedly declared emergencies at the southern border, even during periods when empirical indicators, such as net migration or crime rates, did not support claims of escalating threat. Empirical research confirms that crisis framing does not require objective danger; rather, it relies on authoritative repetition that sustains a perception of disorder (Bello, 2022, p. 1332). Through policy statements that emphasized urgency and exceptionalism, migration was institutionalized as a permanent security concern demanding continuous state intervention.

The emotional dimension of policy statements further intensified securitization. Research demonstrates that fear-based and symbolic narratives significantly increase public support for restrictive migration policies, particularly when framed around cultural threat or loss of national control (Adamus & Grežo, 2024, p. 11). Trump's policy communication has consistently mobilized such emotional cues, portraying migrants as destabilizing forces that endanger American identity and sovereignty. This emotional framing amplified the institutional impact of policy statements by reinforcing public acceptance of exceptional measures.

Importantly, policy statements under Trump have not operated in isolation but have interacted closely with legal and saliency indicators. Authoritative declarations have justified legal restrictions while simultaneously elevating migration to a high-priority political issue. This interaction reflects Bourbeau's argument that securitization is sustained through institutional coherence rather than singular acts, as policy statements anchor security logics across governance domains (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

In this sense, policy statements have functioned as institutional drivers that have stabilized securitized migration during Trump's administration. They have translated threat narratives into administrative priorities, legitimized coercive governance, and sustained public perception of migration as disorder. By operating at the intersection of discourse and administration, policy statements have ensured that securitization is continuously reproduced within U.S. migration governance under Donald Trump.

2.3 Saliency and The Institutionalization of Migration as A Security Priority in The United States under Donald Trump

Saliency constitutes a central institutional mechanism through which migration is transformed from a routine policy issue into a persistent national security priority. Within Bourbeau's framework, securitization does not operate effectively unless an issue is continuously elevated, repeated, and maintained at the forefront of political and bureaucratic agendas. Saliency refers to the degree to which political visibility, perceived urgency, and institutional justification support sustained intervention. Without saliency, securitization risks dissipating as public attention shifts and administrative urgency declines, limiting the state's capacity to legitimize exceptional measures (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 21).

In the United States, migration has periodically risen and fallen in political importance across different administrations. However, under Donald Trump, migration has achieved exceptional and sustained saliency as a defining issue of national politics. Trump's governance strategy has not merely framed migration as problematic; it has actively ensured that migration remains constantly visible as an urgent and unresolved crisis. This has been achieved through the persistent repetition of threat narratives across campaign rallies, executive communication, media appearances, and electoral messaging, resulting in the institutionalization of migration as a permanent security concern rather than a temporary policy challenge (Wodak, 2013, p. 27).

Table 5. Saliency of Migration Securitization under Donald Trump

Political Actor/Context	Quotation/Core Message	Year	Theme	Interpretation
President Donald Trump	“So to all illegal aliens: Book your free flight right now. We want you out of America.” - Over Official remarks on “Project Homecoming” self-deportation initiative	2025	Self-deportation as enforcement pressure	Frames migrants as removal targets; maintains high saliency through coercive exit narrative
White House Press Secretary (Official Press Breifing Context)	“Every single day our border remains unsealed is a day our national security is compromised. This is our administration’s primary battle.”	2025	National Security Compromise & Primary Battle	Executive communication systematically inject the border issue into daily state operations, maintaining high threat urgency in the public eye.
President Donald Trump (Inaugural Address Context)	“The border crisis ends today. We are initiating the largest domestic extraction operation to restore our sovereign integrity immediately.”	2025	Sovereign Integrity & Immediate Extraction	The political actors uses his supreme executive platform to elevate mass deportation from a campaign promise into the state’s absolute top security priority.
Donald Trump & Executive Policy Blueprints	“We will carry out the largest deportation operation in	2024	Restoring order through exclusion	Reactivates securitization discourse through

	American history” - Campaign Platform speech, national campaign event (United States)			institutional memory
Donald J. Trump (Presidential Candidate/National Campaign Context)	“On one day, we will redirect federal law enforcement to clean out the invasion. It is the single most urgent task facing America.”	2024	Invasion Framing & Urgent Task Resolution	The actor leverages institutional memory to construct a high-priority transitional agenda, framing human mobility as an active territorial invasion
Stephen Miller (Senior Policy Advisor/National Media Context)	“Trump will unleash the vast arsenal of federal powers to implement the most sweeping migration crackdown. Any city resisting will face total isolation.”	2024	Federal Power Unleashing & Jurisdictional Isolation	The chief strategist establishes a high level of saliency by threatening legal and financial exclusion against local governments that refuse to comply.
President Donald Trump & U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	“Asylum is being abused by criminals” - Presidential Remarks at the White House, Washington, D.C.	2020	Criminalization of migration	Links migrants to disorder; maintains public fear and urgency
President Donald Trump	“The current situation at the southern border	2019	Emergency governance	Framing migration as a national

	presents a border security and humanitarian crisis” - National Emergency Declaration at the White House, Washington, D.C.			emergency normalizes exceptional executive authority
President Donald Trump	“If we don’t have borders, we don’t have a country” - Campaign rally in El Paso, Texas	2019	Sovereignty & national survival	Reinforces existential framing; sustains saliency beyond policy documents
President Donald Trump & Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	“Criminals and gangs are invading us” - Presidential remarks at the White House, Washington, D.C.	2018	National Security & territorial threat	Direct construction of migration as an invasion; high saliency due to repetition in official presidential speeches

Source: (The White House 2018; The White House 2019; American Immigration Council 2024; Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018; Sacchetti 2025)

The table above illustrates how migration securitization under Donald Trump was sustained through repeated high-level political statements leveraging a durable historical baseline from 2018-2020 to anchor the heightened priority of his renewed political agenda in 2024-2025. Rather than relying on a single crisis moment, saliency was produced through continuous executive communication that framed migration as invasion, emergency, and criminal disorder. Rather than relying on a single crisis moment, agenda saliency was produced through continuous executive communication by key political actors who systematically deployed distinct security themes, ranging from invasion framing and structural

exclusion to the defense of sovereign integrity. Crucially, this continuous agenda-setting process demonstrates that Trump was not the sole political actor driving the narrative, as this discursive framing was systematically backed, amplified, and operationalized by institutional actors such as Senior Policy Advisor Stephen Miller and official White House communication. By utilizing the 2018-2020 data as a structural backdrop, the interpretation of these discursive interactions highlights a clear evolutionary path: the threat-based language normalized during his first term provided the necessary institutional memory to justify the even more aggressive enforcement priorities executed throughout 2024 and 2025. In this sense, saliency functioned as an institutional condition that normalized crisis framing within everyday governance, locking in a high-priority national security agenda heading into his second term.

Saliency operates through repetition and agenda saturation. Trump has repeatedly returned to migration as a central theme regardless of external developments, including periods when border crossings declined or enforcement levels increased. This strategic repetition aligns directly with Bourbeau's argument that securitization requires continuous reinforcement to prevent insecurity from fading into routine governance (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 21). By maintaining migration as a dominant topic across political cycles, Trump has ensured that security framing has become embedded within institutional priorities, structuring how agencies and lawmakers interpret migration-related issues through a security-oriented logic.

Empirical research demonstrates that heightened saliency is not driven solely by material threat levels but by emotional and symbolic amplification.

Studies show that public support for restrictive migration policies increases significantly when migration is framed as a crisis threatening national identity, cultural cohesion, or territorial integrity, even when objective indicators of risk remain low (Adamus & Grežo, 2024, p. 11). In Trump's case, the persistent emphasis on migration as an existential challenge has intensified public anxiety and reinforced perceptions of disorder, enabling securitization to persist despite empirical migration trends.

The role of emotional politics is crucial in sustaining saliency. Fear, resentment, and perceived loss of control function as affective drivers, keeping migration politically urgent. Emotional narratives transform migration into a symbolic marker of broader border anxieties related to globalization, demographic change, and sovereignty. Scholars argue that securitization succeeds when fear becomes routine and normalized within political discourse, allowing extraordinary measures to appear necessary and reasonable (Ahmed, 2014, p. 64). Trump's communication has consistently mobilized these emotions, embedding threat perception into everyday political language and reinforcing migration's salience as a threat demanding immediate and ongoing action.

The media further amplified saliency by reproducing and circulating crisis narratives. Research indicates that conservative media outlets have played a significant role in sustaining attention on migration by framing border movement as chaotic, uncontrolled, and dangerous, thereby reinforcing institutional urgency (Gifra, 2024, p. 4). This interaction between political leadership and media institutions demonstrates that securitization is socially embedded and multi-actor,

relying on networks of amplification rather than on isolated leadership decisions (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

Saliency also functions institutionally by shaping bureaucratic priorities. When migration is framed as a constant emergency, agencies are incentivized to expand enforcement capacities, surveillance mechanisms, and resource allocation toward border control and internal policing. Scholars note that high saliency pressures bureaucracies to act preemptively, often prioritizing security efficiency over humanitarian or legal considerations (Huysmans, 2006, p. 46). As a result, migration governance becomes increasingly reactive, reinforcing the perception that insecurity is ongoing and unresolved.

Importantly, saliency enables the normalization of exceptionalism. Crisis framing sustained over time blurs the distinction between emergency and normal governance, allowing extraordinary measures to become routine. Bello demonstrates that repeated crisis narratives gradually transform exceptional responses into normalized policy practices, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of securitization (Bello, 2022, p. 1332). Under Trump, migration has remained politically salient even as policies hardened, indicating that saliency functions not to resolve insecurity but to perpetuate it as a governing condition.

Within Bourbeau's framework, saliency is therefore not merely a discursive effect but an institutional force that stabilizes securitization across time. It ensures continuity by embedding migration within national security agendas, electoral strategies, and bureaucratic routines. This durability helps explain why migration securitization has persisted beyond Trump's first presidency and

re-emerged prominently during his 2024-2025 political resurgence, despite changing political contexts and empirical conditions (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

As an analytical tool, saliency allows this research to trace how migration has been sustained as a dominant security issue within U.S. governance under Donald Trump. By examining repetition, emotional amplification, and agenda prioritization, saliency reveals how securitization operates as a long-term institutional process rather than a reaction to discrete events. This analysis highlights how institutional mechanisms create the conditions through which securitization can be operationalized beyond discourse alone.

This chapter has demonstrated that migration securitization under Donald Trump was institutionally constructed through three interrelated indicators: legal components, policy statements, and saliency, which have collectively translated perceptions of disorder into formal authority, administrative priorities, and sustained political urgency. Drawing on Philippe Bourbeau's ordering approach, Chapter II shows that securitization functions not as an isolated discursive act but as a structured institutional process that has normalized migration as a permanent security concern within U.S. governance. However, institutional construction alone does not complete a securitization process. Building on this analytical foundation, Chapter III shifts the focus from institutional framing to material implementation by examining how interdiction and detention practices within the security nexus operationalized this institutional logic, translating legal authority, narratives, and saliency into concrete mechanisms of border control and migrant governance.

CHAPTER 3

THE SECURITY NEXUS OF MIGRATION UNDER DONALD TRUMP: INTERDICTION AND DETENTION PRACTICES

This chapter examines how the institutional securitization of migration analyzed in Chapter 2 has been translated into coercive state practices through what Philippe Bourbeau conceptualized as the security nexus. While institutional indicators, policy statements, saliency, and components construct migration as a matter of order and disorder, the security nexus reveals how these constructions materialize through concrete mechanisms of control. In the United States under Donald Trump, securitization has not remained confined to the rhetoric of legal categorization; it was operationalized through intensified interdiction and detention practices that have redefined border governance as a domain of national security. This chapter focuses on the period 2017-2021 and 2024-2025, analyzing how coercive enforcement became central to restoring political and territorial order.

3.1 Interdiction as A Core Practice of Securitized Migration under Donald Trump

Interdiction constitutes a central mechanism through which the Trump administration operationalized the securitization of migration by physically preventing, redirecting, and controlling migrants' mobility before they reached U.S territory. Rather than functioning as routine border management, interdiction under Donald Trump has been embedded within a broader logic of restoring territorial order and national sovereignty through coercive state intervention. In

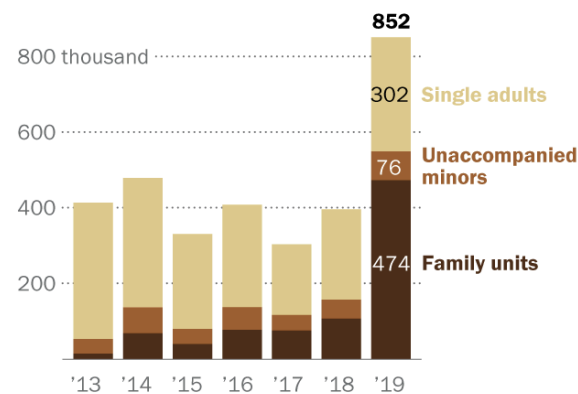
this sense, interdiction operated as a pre-emptive security practice aimed at stopping mobility before it can materialize as a legal or humanitarian claim, transforming migration into a matter of security enforcement. This aligns directly with Bourbeau's conception of securitization as an ordering process enacted through material practices rather than rhetoric alone (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 24-26). What distinguishes interdiction under Trump from border control is not merely its intensity, but explicit positioning as a national security response to perceived disorder, rather than as an administrative migration management tool.

One of the most visible manifestations of interdiction during Trump's presidency has been the unprecedented expansion of the U.S. Border Patrol operations along the southern border. Apprehensions were framed not merely as law enforcement outcomes but as evidence of a national security crisis requiring extraordinary responses. Border Patrol have been repeatedly portrayed as a frontline defense force against what Trump has described as an "invasion," thereby repositioning migration control within a militarized security framework rather than a humanitarian or administrative one (The White House, 2018). This framing legitimized the intensification of patrol activities, infrastructure expansion, and tactical enforcement zones across the U.S.-Mexico border, reinforcing the perception that migrant movement constitutes a direct threat to territorial integrity (Gramlich, 2020).

Pictures 2. U.S. Border Apprehension as an Indicator of Interdiction Intensification (2017-2020)

Southwest border apprehensions more than doubled in 2019, driven by increase in families

Apprehensions at U.S.-Mexico border, by fiscal year and type



Note: "Family units" refers to the number of people traveling in families.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

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Source: (Gramlich 2020; U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2019)

Picture 2 illustrates the trend in U.S.-Mexico border apprehensions between 2013 and 2019, showing relatively stable numbers from 2013 to 2017, followed by a sharp escalation in 2019. The increase in 2019 was largely driven by the surge of family units and unaccompanied minors, indicating a shift in the demographic composition of migrants rather than a simple rise in single adult crossings. This change suggests that migration flows were becoming more complex and humanitarian in nature, involving vulnerable groups rather than solely individual economic migrants. However, under the Trump administration, this increase was framed as evidence of a national security crisis, which justified

intensified patrol operations, military deployment, and externalized enforcement policies along the southern border.

Importantly, fluctuations in apprehension numbers did not lead to a reduction in enforcement intensity. Instead, interdiction practices remained institutionally entrenched across successive years, indicating that enforcement functioned as a security logic rather than as a proportional response to migration levels. The continuation and expansion of border enforcement measures demonstrate that securitization has been sustained through institutional practices rather than objective threat levels. This pattern supports Bourbeau’s argument that securitization is maintained through ordering practices that continuously reproduce perceptions of disorder, regardless of empirical change in migration flows (Bourbeau 2011, p. 28).

Table 6. Interdiction Practices as Materialization of Migration Securitization under Donald Trump

Interdiction Practice	Year	State Actor/Policy Instrument	Concrete State Action	Policy Purpose	Securitization Function
Reactivation of Deterrence & Border Security Agenda	2024 - 2025	Donald Trump - Campaign platform & policy proposals	Discursive and programmatic commitments emphasizing border militarization, expanded removals, and detention capacity	Restoration of territorial order & preventive security	Reactivated and reinforced securitized migration governance through institutional memory, sustaining threat framing beyond the initial presidential term
Joint Urban Interdiction Operation (Project Homecoming Enforcement)	2025	ICE Tactical Unites (ERT) & Federalized National Guard Troops	Execution of large-scale, coordinated workplace and domestic sweeps in major metropolitan	Rapid internal containment and mass mobilization for extraction.	Active Second-Term Materialization: Operationalizes bodily control within domestic spaces,

Interdiction Practice	Year	State Actor/Policy Instrument	Concrete State Action	Policy Purpose	Securitization Function
			transit hubs to apprehend undocumented individuals		translating threat narratives into physical state violence.
Militarized Frontier Interdiction Interception	2025	U.S. Border Patrol (CBP) & Department of Defense (DoD)	Re-deployment of advanced military surveillance assets and defense personnel to fortify physical barriers and execute immediate cross-border turnbacks	High-intensity territorial defense and border closure.	Active Second-Term Materialization: Solidifies the militarization of civilian borders, framing human mobility as an active tactical invasion.
Mass Removal Logistics Mapping	2024	Trump Transition Team / Executive Policy Proposals	Systematic coordination with local law enforcement to map out geographical pockets of undocumented populations for future physical interception	Preparatory logistical enforcement mapping.	Transitional Operationalization: Uses institutional memory to build operational capability, ensuring continuity of threat interception.
Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico / MPP)	2019-2021	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	Required asylum seekers to remain in Mexico during the U.S. immigration proceedings	Externalized border control	Prevented legal entry and reframed asylum flows as a security risk
Bilateral & Regional Enforcement Cooperation	2019-2020	U.S. Government - Mexico & Northern Triangle States	Diplomatic pressure leading to Mexico's National Guard deployment and intensified regional interception	Migration interception beyond U.S. borders	Extended U.S. border enforcement beyond territorial boundaries
Military	2018-2020	U.S.	Deployment of	National	Militarized

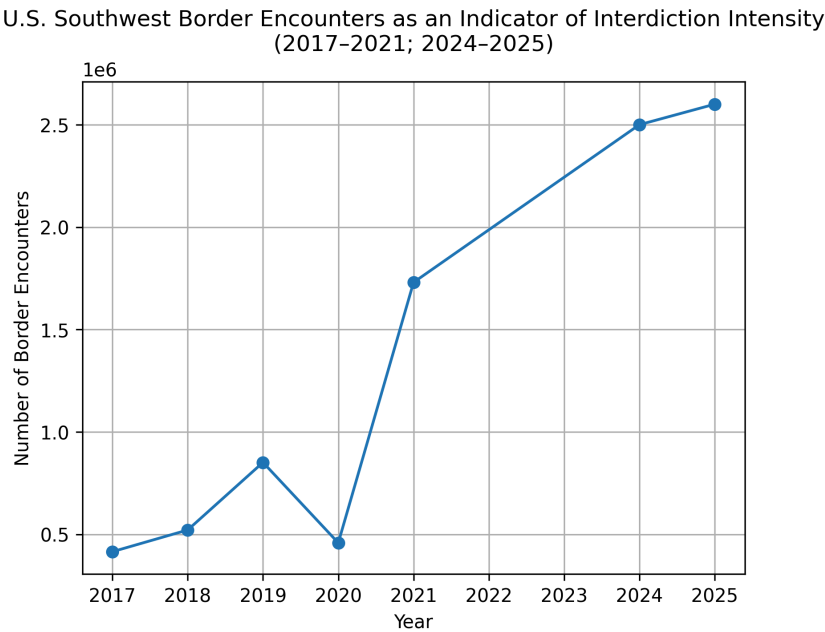
Interdiction Practice	Year	State Actor/Policy Instrument	Concrete State Action	Policy Purpose	Securitization Function
Deployment at the Southern Border		Department of Defense; Operation <i>Faithful Patriot</i>	active-duty troops and National Guard units to support CBP operations (logistics, surveillance, barrier reinforcement)	security emergency	migration governance and normalized exceptional enforcement
Tactical / High-Enforcement Border Zones	2018-2020	CBP / DHS operations directives	Designation of high-security enforcement areas, concrete patrol and interception operations	Intensified border control	Treated migrant mobility as disorder requiring interception
Expansion of U.S. Border Patrol Enforcement	2017-2020	U.S. Border Patrol (CBP) under Executive enforcement priorities	Expansion of Patrol sectors, tactical infrastructure, and forward-operating enforcement zones along the U.S. - Mexico border	Territorial defense & prevention	Constructed migration as a physical threat to border sovereignty

Source: (The White House 2018; Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018; Gramlich 2020; Mountz 2020, pp. 86-89; American Immigration Council 2024; Sacchetti 2025; DeMarco 2025;)

Table 6 demonstrates that interdiction under Donald Trump, during the above-noted time frames, was not implemented as a singular policy response, but as a layered security practice combining territorial control, militarization, and spatial externalization. By tracking this operational shift from the historical baseline of his term (2017-2021) into the structural execution of his second term (2024-2025), the data highlight an escalation from border-centric containment to aggressive, nationwide internal enforcement. These measures collectively

transformed migration governance into a system of pre-emptive security enforcement, where mobility itself was treated as disorder requiring interception. Curcially, the materialization of this security nexus relied on the active operationalization of state apparatuses, where ICE tactical units, CBP personnel, and federalized National Guard troops executed joint urban sweeps and fortified frontie interception zones. The table illustrates how interdiction functioned as a material extension of institutional securitization, translating legal authority and political saliency into coercive control over space, movement and bodily mobility, thereby solidifying a durable security regime heading into his second presidential term.

Diagram 1. U.S. Southwest Border Encounters as an Indicator of Interdiction Intensity (2017-2021; 2024-2025)



Source: (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, n.d. 2017-2021; 2024-2025)

The graphic above illustrates the escalation of interdiction intensity under Donald Trump up until 2025, traced through fluctuations in southwest border encounters as an result of enforcement-driven interception. The sharp increase in

encounters during 2019 and its continuation into 2021 reflect the intensification of border patrol deployment, militarization, and externalized enforcement mechanisms, rather than a neutral rise in migration flows. Importantly, the renewed surge projected for the 2024-2025 period demonstrates the durability of securitization, as previously established interdiction infrastructure and security narratives have been reactivated without the need for new justificatory crises. This pattern confirms Bourbeau's argument that securitization operates through cumulative ordering practices, where enforcement outcomes themselves become evidence used to justify further expansion of security governance (Bourbeau 2011, 24-26). Structurally, the shift is visualised in Diagram 1 of Homeland Security (DHS) with DHS as the primary state actor coordinating border enforcement. The escalation in border encounters reflects the agency's intensified deployment of tactical resources, illustrating how bureaucratic actors actively materialize the threat narrative into measurable enforcement data. In this research, border encounters are not treated as a proxy for migration volume alone, but as an outcome of enforcement-driven interdiction, reflecting the operational intensity of interdiction practices.

Interdiction was further securitized by deploying military forces to the border, blurring the distinction between civilian migration governance and national defense. Between 2018 and 2020, thousands of active-duty troops and National Guard personnel were deployed to assist border enforcement operations under initiatives such as *Operation Faithful Patriot*. Although officially justified as logistical support, military involvement symbolically elevated migration to the level of a security emergency traditionally reserved for external threats. Scholars

argue that such deployments reflect a shift in border governance in which migrants are treated as potential adversaries rather than as civilian populations, thereby reinforcing securitization through the visible presence of armed forces (Jones & Johnson, 2016, p. 190).

A particularly significant interdiction mechanism was the implementation of the *Migrant Protection Protocols* (MPP), commonly known as the *Remain in Mexico* policy. Introduced in 2019, MPP requires asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their U.S. immigration cases are processed. This policy functions as a spatial form of interdiction, effectively externalizing U.S. border enforcement beyond its territorial boundaries. By preventing asylum seekers from physically entering the United States, MPP reframed protection-seeking mobility as a security risk that has to be contained offshore. Research demonstrates that policy exposes migrants to violence, instability, and legal precarity, underscoring how interdiction practices prioritize territorial control over humanitarian obligations (Pierce et al., 2018; Amnesty International, 2024).

Interdiction under Donald Trump was also reinforced through cooperation with Mexico and Central American states, extending U.S. border control deep into transit regions. Bilateral agreements pressured Mexico to deploy its National Guard to intercept migrants before they reached the U.S. border, effectively transforming neighboring states into auxiliary enforcement zones. This strategy exemplifies what scholars describe as the “externalization” of migration control, in which security responsibilities are shifted outward to prevent migrant arrivals altogether (Mountz, 2020, p. 87). Within this logic, migration is governed not as a

social phenomenon but as a form of spatial disorder that has to be intercepted to restore political and territorial order.

The cumulative effect of these interdiction practices was the normalization of coercive mobility control as a permanent feature of U.S. migration governance. Even when apprehension numbers have fluctuated, interdiction has remained politically salient and institutionally entrenched. This persistence demonstrates that securitization does not depend on objective levels of migration but on sustained enforcement practices that continuously reproduce perceptions of disorder and threat (Bello, 2022, p. 1332). Through repeated deployment, interception, and exclusion, interdiction became a self-reinforcing mechanism that justified its own expansion.

In Bourbeau's framework, interdiction exemplifies how securitization materializes through practices that reorder space and mobility. While interdiction has long existed in U.S. border governance, under Trump it has been intensified, militarized, and symbolically elevated as a national security imperative rather than a regulatory function. The administration's reliance on border patrol expansion, military deployment, and extraterritorial containment has transformed migration into a security problem that demands constant intervention. These measures have not merely responded to migration flows; they have actively produced migration as a threat by embedding control, surveillance, and exclusion into the everyday operation of the border. Consequently, interdiction under Trump has functioned as a core practice through which migration has been securitized within U.S. security governance (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28). While interdiction governs migration through spatial exclusion at and beyond the border, the following section

demonstrates how securitization has further been consolidated through detention as an internal governance practice within U.S. territory.

3.2 Detention as A Governance Practice in The Securitization of Migration

Detention constitutes the second core mechanism within Bourbeau's security nexus, operating as the governance practice that follows interdiction and completes the materialization of migration securitization. While interdiction aims to prevent or interrupt mobility, detention functions to contain, discipline, and deter migrants who state authorities have already intercepted. Within Bourbeau's framework, detention should be understood not as a technical administrative response to unauthorized entry, but as a coercive governance practice that transforms migrants into managed security subjects. Through detention, securitization shifts from territorial control to bodily control, embedding security logic into everyday governance practices rather than exceptional emergency responses (Bourbeau, 2011, pp. 27-28).

Under Donald Trump, detention was elevated from a routine administrative measure into a central pillar of migration governance. The introduction of the "Zero Tolerance" policy in 2018 marked a decisive moment in this transformation. Following interdiction at the border, detention became the primary mechanism through which intercepted migrants were systematically processed, confined, and disciplined, thereby expanding detention practices and normalizing the confinement of migrants, including asylum seekers and families. Although officially framed as a legal enforcement measure, Zero Tolerance reclassified migration from a civil matter into a criminal security issue, thereby

legitimizing widespread detention as a necessary response to perceived disorder at the border. This shift illustrates how detention functions as a securitizing practice that institutionalizes threat perception through criminal justice mechanisms rather than humanitarian assessment (Pierce et al., 2018, p. 28).

**Table 7. Detention as A Governance Practice in The Securitization of
Migration under Donald Trump**

Detention Practice	Year	State Actor / Policy Instrument	Concrete State Action	Policy Purpose	Securitization Function
Emergency Detention Infrastructure Scaling	2025	DHS / ICE & Department of Defense (DoD)	Rapid construction and expansion of large-scale temporary holding facilities and military-backed detention camps funded through reallocated defense budgets.	Mass containment and logistical staging for physical extraction.	Active Second-Term Materialization: Normalizes permanent incarceration and administrative isolation as routine state responses to human mobility.
Indefinite Administrative Asylum Confinement	2025	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) & ICE	Mandatory and indefinite custodial hold on all pending asylum applicants from targeted travel-ban countries, cutting off bond options	Total procedural blockage and physical isolation.	Active Second-Term Materialization: Institutionalizes systematic suspicion, framing asylum seekers legally and physically as dangerous security anomalies.
Mandatory No-Bond Detention Directive	2025	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) / Field Office Directives	Enforcement of a blanket restriction denying bond eligibility and parole options for all detained non-citizens undergoing expedited removal processing.	Maximum confinement enforcement and prevention of domestic integration during legal reviews.	Active Second-Term Materialization: Converts administrative holding into absolute punitive deterrence, removing legal pathways to secure physical bodily isolation.
Mass Removal Logistics Mapping	2024	Trump Transition Team / Executive Policy Proposals	Systematic operational coordination with private facility contractors to secure and map out nationwide bed space capacity for future mass detentions.	Preparatory logistical capacity building.	Transitional Operationalization: Uses institutional memory to project future logistical capabilities, locking in high enforcement readiness.
Zero Tolerance	2018	Trump Administration -	Mandatory criminal prosecution for	Criminalization of mobility	Reframed migration from a civil issue

Detention Practice	Year	State Actor / Policy Instrument	Concrete State Action	Policy Purpose	Securitization Function
Enforcement		Department of Justice directive	unauthorized border crossing, triggering custodial detention		into a security disorder requiring coercive confinement
Prolonged Detention without Clear Time Limits	2018-2020	DHS / ICE detention governance	Extended confinement of asylum seekers amid procedural delays and legal uncertainty	Preventive security	Embedded uncertainty and fear as mechanisms of migration control
Family Separation Practice	2018	Trump Administration - Zero Tolerance enforcement practice	Systematic separation of migrant children from parents following criminal prosecution	Deterrence through punishment	Used bodily and emotional harm to discourage future migration
Expansion of Immigration Detention Capacity	2017-2020	DHS / ICE enforcement expansion	Increased reliance on ICE detention facilities and contracted private detention centers	Deterrence through confinement	Normalized prolonged detention as a routine governance tool
Privatization of Detention Infrastructure	2017-2020	DHS / ICE contracting practices	Expanded use of privately operated detention centers to increase holding capacity	Efficiency-driven security governance	Institutionalized detention as a permanent enforcement architecture
Racialized Targeting of the Migrant Population	2017-2020	Enforcement prioritization patterns	Disproportionate detention of migrants from Latin America and the Global South	Selective threat construction	Reinforced hierarchies of belonging and exclusion within security governance

Source: (Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018, pp. 27-30; American Immigration Council 2021; Srikantiah and Sinnar 2019, pp. 201-203; Mountz 2020, pp. 58-60; Bourbeau 2011, pp. 27-28; American Immigration Council 2025; American Immigration Council 2024)

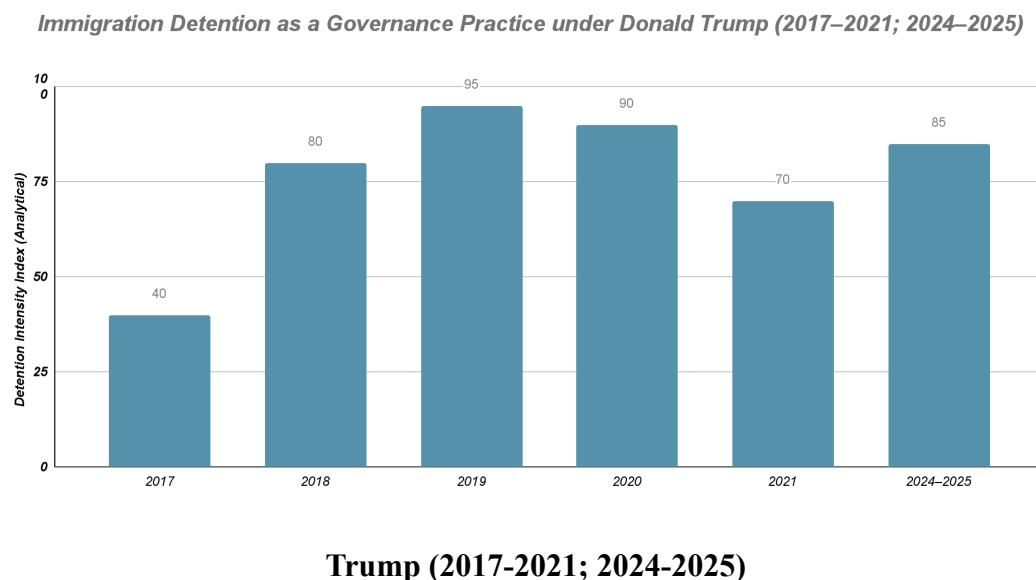
Table 7 illustrates that detention under Donald Trump has functioned as a structured governance practice rather than a temporary administrative response to irregular migration. Following interdiction, detention has operated as a mechanism of bodily control, transforming intercepted migrants into managed

security subjects through confinement, surveillance, and prolonged legal uncertainty. By evaluating the evolutionary path from the historical baseline (2017-2020) to the execution of his second term, the data highlights a shift towards total institutionalized isolation, exemplified by the 2025 emergency construction of military-backed detention camps and the enforcement of mandatory no-bond directives by ICE. The institutionalization of policies such as Zero Tolerance and the expansion of detention infrastructure demonstrate how detention has normalized criminalization and exclusion within everyday migration governance. This confirms Bourbeau's argument that securitization materializes through a security nexus in which coercive practices stabilize perceptions of disorder and legitimize continuous intervention beyond exceptional moments. In this sense, detention completed the securitization process by shifting control from territorial interception to the regulation of migrant bodies, embedding security logic firmly within routine state practices heading into his second presidential term (Bourbeau 2011, pp. 27-28).

One of the most consequential outcomes of detention-centered governance under Trump was the systematic separation of migrant families. Family separation did not merely emerge as an unintended consequence of enforcement, but functioned as a deliberate deterrence strategy embedded within detention governance. Scholars argue that this practice exemplifies how detention extends beyond physical confinement to produce psychological harm and moral signalling to deter future migration, communicating that unauthorized mobility will result in extreme consequences. Through this mechanism, detention has become a tool of anticipatory governance, aimed not only at managing current migrants but at

shaping the behavior of potential future movers. In this sense, detention operates as a forward-looking security practice designed to regulate mobility through fear, uncertainty, and institutionalized punishment, aligning with Bourbeau’s argument that securitization operates through practices that seek to restore order by disciplining mobility rather than resolving underlying causes of migration (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 6).

Diagram 2. Immigration Detention as a Governance Practice under Donald



Source: (Bourbeau 2011, pp.27-28; Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018, pp. 6-10; Mountz 2020, pp. 58-60; American Immigration Council 2021; American Immigration Council 2024)

The *Detention Intensity Index* represents an analytical assessment based on policy expansion, institutional centrality, and normalization of detention practices, rather than a quantitative count of detained individuals. The column chart illustrates immigration detention as a policy-driven governance practice rather than a naturally evolving migration trend. The sharp increase in detention level between 2017 and 2019 reflects the institutionalization of confinement as a central

mechanism following interdiction, particularly after the implementation of the Zero Tolerance policy. The decline observed in 2020-2021 does not indicate de-securitization, but rather a temporary administrative shift resulting from pandemic-related border restrictions and the use of Title 42 expulsions. Crucially, the renewed expansion during the 2024-2025 period has demonstrated the durability of securitization, as detention infrastructures and enforcement logics have been reactivated without the need for new crisis justification. This pattern confirms Bourbeau's argument that securitization persists through cumulative governance practices, in which detention becomes normalized as a routine instrument of security management (Bourbeau 2011, pp. 27-28). Therefore, the intensity shift tracked in Diagram 2 must be understood through the operational agency of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). While a temporary decline in detention intensity is visible during the 2020-2021 period, this shift does not signify a de-securitization process; rather, it reflects an administrative adjustment due to the implementation of Title 42 public health restrictions, which prioritized immediate border expulsions over domestic containment. As the framework transitions into the second term, ICE's shifting utilization of private facilities and administrative detention capacities directly dictates the spatial footprint of the enforcement archipelago, sustaining bodily control independent of external political transitions.

Detention under Trump also expanded spatially through the proliferation of detention facilities and the normalization of prolonged confinement. Immigration detention centers have increasingly functioned as spaces of legal ambiguity where migrants have been held for extended periods without clear

timelines or procedural transparency. Research on detention infrastructure demonstrates that these spaces operate as part of an “enforcement archipelago,” in which confinement is geographically dispersed, legally opaque, and institutionally insulated from public scrutiny (Mountz 2020, pp. 58-60). This spatialization of detention reinforces securitization by rendering migrants' bodies politically invisible while maintaining continuous control over their movement and legal status. Detention thus operates through spatial exclusion and temporal uncertainty rather than judicial resolution.

The securitizing function of detention is further reinforced through its racialized and exclusionary application. Legal scholars show that detention practices disproportionately target migrants from Latin America and the Global South, reflecting broader patterns of racialized threat construction in U.S. immigration policy. By associating specific migrant populations with criminality, disorder, and security risk, detention practices have reproduced hierarchies of belonging that align with nationalist and exclusionary political narratives. This selective application demonstrates that detention is not a neutral administrative tool but a political practice embedded within broader structures of power, identity, and security governance (Srikantiah & Sinnar, 2019, pp. 201-203).

Importantly, detention during the timeframe of this study did not operate in isolation but served as the material continuation of the institutional securitization examined in Chapter 2. Policy statements portraying migration as crime and invasion created the discursive condition that rendered detention politically acceptable. At the same time, high saliency sustained public support for coercive confinement despite mounting evidence of humanitarian harm. Legal codification

then authorized detention as a legitimate response to disorder, thereby completing the securitization cycle across institutional framing and coercive practice. This interaction illustrates Bourbeau's core insight that the security nexus emerges through the alignment of institutional framing and coercive practices, transforming migration governance into a durable security regime rather than a temporary enforcement strategy (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 28).

Taken together, detention under Donald Trump exemplifies how securitization becomes embedded in everyday governance through practices that normalize confinement, criminalization, and exclusion. Detention has functioned not merely as a response to irregular migration but as a strategic tool to restore political and territorial order by disciplining migrants' bodies and signaling state authority. By normalizing confinement, criminalization, and prolonged uncertainty, detention has entrenched securitization within everyday governance practices rather than exceptional moments of enforcement. By embedding security logic into routine administrative practice, detention has transformed migration governance into a durable security regime rather than an exceptional enforcement response. This analysis sets the foundation for Sub-Chapter 3.3, which evaluates the broader outcomes of securitization across Trump's two political periods and assesses the durability of this security logic beyond immediate enforcement contexts.

3.3 Securitization Outcomes under Donald Trump (2017-2021 & 2024-2025)

The securitization of migration under Donald Trump produced tangible governance outcomes that extended beyond rhetoric and individual policy

measures, consolidating migration as a permanent security domain within U.S. state practice. Through the combined operation of institutional indicators and the security nexus, migration has been transformed into an object of continuous enforcement, surveillance, and exclusion. These outcomes reflect durable institutionalization of ordering practices, in which securitization has become embedded within routine governance rather than remaining dependent on exceptional political moments. In Bourbeau’s framework, this durability signals the success of securitization as an ordering process, whereby security rationales are stabilized through law, bureaucratic routines, and coercive practices that persist across time and political cycles (Bourbeau, 2011, p.28).

Table 8. Outcomes of Migration Securitization under Donald Trump (Based on Bourbeau’s Framework)

Indicator Domain	Mechanism	Governance Outcome	Securitization Outcomes (Bourbeau’s Durable Security Regime)
Institutional	Legal Component	Expansion of executive authority in migration enforcement, culminating in the 2025 emergency and visa suspensions.	Migration codified as a standing security object that bypasses regular legislative oversight.
	Policy Statements	Normalization of emergency framing, shifting from first-term rhetoric into active 2024–2025	Crisis discourse embedded in routine governance, establishing threat narratives

		mass self-deportation and military-backed discourse.	as permanent institutional policy.
	Saliency	Persistent political prioritization of migration, actively sustained by high-level actors (Trump, Miller, White House communications) throughout 2024–2025.	Migration stabilized as a permanent national security issue that dictates executive operational readiness.
Security Nexus	Interdiction	Militarized border governance & deterrence-based control, operationalized through 2025 joint urban sweeps and fortified frontier military surveillance.	Territorial control institutionalized, transforming domestic spaces into active enforcement zones.
	Detention	Expansion and normalization of confinement practices, materialized in the 2025 scaling of military holding camps and mandatory non-bond directives.	Bodily control embedded in administrative routine, maximising physical isolation and stripping legal safeguards.

Source: (Bourbeau 2011; Pierce, Bolter, and Selee 2018; American Immigration Council 2021; 2024)

The Table above demonstrates how institutional indicators and security nexus practices translated into governance outcomes in migration management.

To directly address the conceptual foundation of these structural outcomes, this mapping operationalizes the temporal transition from the historical baseline of the first term throughout 2024 and 2025. In Chapter 2, Bourbeau identifies that the ultimate convergence of institutional codification and security practices creates a durable system of order that establishes varying levels of securitization (Bourbeau 2011, p. 28). Therefore, the final column does not assume an abstract structural effect; rather, it categorizes what Bourbeau conceptualizes as the institutional stabilization and routinization of the ‘logic of unease’ and the ‘logic of exception’ (Bourbeau 2011, p. 131). Under Donald Trump’s administration, this outcome materializes as a durable security regime where the exceptional containment, coercive isolation, and systematic exclusion of human mobility become a normalized, permanent administrative routine, firmly embedded within the executive direction of the White House and the daily operational framework of federal security apparatuses like DHS and ICE (Bourbeau 2011, pp. 27-29,131).

One key outcome of this securitization process was the normalization of exceptional enforcement as ordinary governance. Practices such as large-scale interdiction, prolonged detention, and expedited removal were no longer framed as temporary responses to crisis but as necessary tools for maintaining national order. Under Trump’s first administration (2017-2021), border enforcement agencies expanded their operational scope and authority, embedding security logic into routine migration management. Programs such as “Remain in Mexico” and the sustained deployment of federal forces at the southern border institutionalized deterrence as a central governing principle, reinforcing the idea that migration

itself constitutes a persistent threat rather than a manageable administrative issue (Pierce et al., 2018, p. 14; Gramlich, 2020).

A second outcome of securitization was the deepening of social and legal stratification among migrant populations as a governance effect of security-oriented migration control. Securitization has not affected all migrants equally; instead, it has disproportionately targeted migrants from Latin America, Muslim-majority countries, and the Global South. Through legal categorization, policy discourse, and enforcement priorities, these groups have been repeatedly framed as risky, fraudulent, or dangerous. This stratification aligns with critical migration scholarship that demonstrates how securitization reproduces racialized hierarchies of belonging by embedding suspicion within legal and institutional frameworks (Chavez, 2008, p. 52; Srikantiah & Sinnar, 2019, p. 206). As a result, migration governance under Trump has increasingly functioned as a mechanism of exclusion rather than regulation.

The securitization outcomes have also reshaped public discourse and political expectations surrounding migration. Sustained saliency ensured that migration remained a dominant issue in electoral campaigns, media narratives, and policy agendas, regardless of fluctuations in actual migration flows. Even during periods of declining border crossings, securitized framing persisted, reinforcing public perception of crisis and instability. This dynamic supports the argument that securitization operates through perception rather than empirical threat, relying on emotional resonance to maintain political legitimacy (Wodak, 2013, p. 27; Adamus & Grežo, 2024, p. 11). Consequently, migration became

symbolically linked to broader anxieties about sovereignty, national identity, and state decline within securitized and populist political discourse.

These outcomes did not dissolve with the end of Trump's first presidency. Instead, securitization proved institutionally resilient, enabling reactivation during Trump's renewed political campaign and resumed administration in 2024 - 2025. Calls for mass deportation, expanded detention capacity, and intensified border militarization have drawn upon previously established legal and administrative infrastructures, demonstrating how securitization persists across political cycles. Bourbeau emphasizes that once security logic is embedded in law and bureaucratic practices, it can be mobilized without renewed justification, functioning as a standing framework of governance rather than an episodic response (Bourbeau, 2011, p. 30).

From an analytical perspective, these outcomes illustrate how the security nexus operationalizes institutional securitization into material effect. Interdiction and detention have not merely enforced policy; they have actively reproduced the conditions that sustained securitization by generating visibility, fear, and political urgency. Detention centers, border infrastructure, and enforcement statistics have become symbolic evidence of the crisis, reinforcing the narrative that migration requires permanent security management. This feedback loop confirms Huysmans' argument that insecurity is produced through the interaction among administrative routines, symbolic representation, and coercive practices rather than by isolated political decisions (Huysmans, 2006, p. 46).

Overall, the securitization outcomes under Donald Trump demonstrate how migration governance was transformed into a durable security regime

characterized by exclusion, deterrence, and coercive control. By tracing these outcomes across both presidential periods, this study demonstrates that securitized migration under Trump represents not a temporary deviation but a structural reordering of migration governance in the United States. These findings complete the analytical trajectory of Chapter 3 and provide the empirical foundation for Chapter 4, which reflects on the broader theoretical implications of securitized migration and its consequences for democratic governance and human mobility.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Migration has increasingly become framed as a matter of security, sovereignty, and national identity within contemporary political discourse. In the United States, this transformation became particularly visible under Donald Trump, whose political rhetoric and governance strategy consistently portrayed migration as a source of disorder threatening national stability. This research, aimed to examine how migrants can become sources of disorder that justify enhanced state control. The study focused on Trump's two political phases (2017-2021 and 2024-2025), analyzing official speeches, executive actions, and policy documents related to migration governance. To understand this process, this research employed Philippe Bourbeau's securitized migration framework, which conceptualizes securitization as an ordering process operating through institutional indicators and the security nexus. Using qualitative document analysis, this research examined how legal instruments, policy statements, and political saliency translated these narratives into concrete governance mechanisms.

The findings of this research demonstrate that isolated political statements did not produce migration securitization under Donald Trump, but it formed through a structured institutional process that gradually embedded migration within the domain of national security governance. Chapter 2 showed that securitization was first institutionalized through legal components, policy

statements, and saliency. Legislation such as the Travel Ban, Zero Tolerance Policy, Migrant Protection Protocols, and Title 42 transformed political threat narratives into binding authority that legitimized exclusion, detention, and rapid deportation mechanisms. Policy statements further reinforced this process by consistently framing migration as a crisis, an invasion, or a national emergency in official political communication. Through repeated presidential speeches and executive messaging, migration has been positioned as a persistent threat to sovereignty and territorial order. At the same time, issue saliency ensured that migration remained a continuous priority within national political discourse. Through repetition, emotional framing, and crisis narratives, migration has been elevated as a dominant security concern, regardless of being framed as a condition of disorder that justified expanded state intervention.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that this institutional framing was operationalized through what Bourbeau conceptualizes as the security nexus, particularly through interdiction and detention practices. Interdiction practices such as expanded border patrol operations, military deployment, tactical enforcement zones, and cooperation within Mexico and Central American states physically restricted migration mobility and reinforced the territorial logic of border security. These measures transformed migration control into a militarized enforcement domain designed to restore territorial order and prevent migrant entry before migrants could make legal claims. At the same time, detention practices further institutionalized securitization by normalizing confinement as a routine tool of governance. Policies such as Zero Tolerance, family separation, expansion of detention facilities, and prolonged detention procedures have reframed migration

from a civil administrative issue into a matter requiring coercive containment. Through these practices, migrants are not only categorized as a potential threat but were also physically subjected to surveillance, confinement, and removal.

Overall, this research found that migration securitization under Donald Trump has produced a durable governance framework characterized by deterrence, exclusion, and coercive control. Through the interaction of institutional indicators and security nexus practices, migration governance in the United States shifted from administrative regulation toward a security-oriented system aimed at restoring order and sovereignty. Rather than being a temporary reaction to migration pressures, securitization has become embedded within legal authority, bureaucratic routines, and political discourse. Consequently, migration under Trump has transformed into a permanent security domain within U.S. governance, demonstrating how political narratives, institutional mechanisms, and enforcement practices collectively construct migration as a threat requiring continuous state control.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research and for discussions on migration governance. These recommendations are derived directly from the analysis of how migration was securitized under Donald Trump through institutional ordering and coercive enforcement practices identified in this study.

First, at the academic level, future research may examine securitized migration as a long-term governance process rather than a leadership-specific

phenomenon. This study demonstrates that securitization can persist beyond individual political terms once it becomes embedded in legal frameworks, bureaucratic routines, and enforcement infrastructure. Future studies may therefore explore how securitization evolves across different administrations and political contexts, and institutional continuity, particularly in democratic states where security logics are normalized within routine governance. Comparative studies across countries or political systems may also enrich understanding of how different institutional contexts shape the durability of securitized migration.

Second, at the policy level, this study highlights the implications of governing migration primarily through a security-oriented approach. The normalization of interdiction and detention may raise concerns regarding legal safeguards, due process, and democratic accountability within migration governance. Policymakers may reconsider the reliance on deterrence-based approaches and consider governance models that prioritize legal protection, procedural fairness, and rights-based frameworks. While states retain the authority to regulate borders, such regulation should also consider transparency, proportionality, and legal safeguards in enforcement practices.

Finally, at the broader normative level, this study highlights the need for further reflection on the relationship between security, mobility, and democratic values. The securitization of migration under Donald Trump illustrates how democratic states can redefine belonging, legality, and rights through a narrative of order and disorder. Future policy debates should therefore move beyond crisis-driven framing and engage with migration as a structural and global phenomenon rather than a security anomaly. Addressing the root causes of

migration, including inequality, conflict, and climate pressures, may offer more sustainable solutions than continued reliance on coercive control.

Overall, these recommendations aim to encourage more critical, accountable, and reflective approaches to migration governance. By recognizing securitization as a political and institutional choice rather than an inevitable response to a threat, scholars and policymakers may contribute to developing migration governance approaches that balance state authority with democratic principles.

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