

Far-right anti-immigration (white supremacist) rhetoric and theories becoming mainstream

Key terms and references

Remigration

The Great Replacement theory

The Alien Enemy Act See [here](#) or [there](#)

Due process

Charlottesville Unite the Right Rally

Christchurch shooting

Jacksonville shooting

Pittsburg shooting

El Paso shooting



Stephen Miller
@StephenM

THE TRUMP PLAN TO END THE INVASION OF SMALL TOWN AMERICA:
REMIGRATION!

[Traduire le post](#)



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

As President I will immediately end the migrant invasion of America. We will stop all migrant flights, end all illegal entries, terminate the Kamala phone app for smuggling illegals (CBP One App), revoke deportation immunity, suspend refugee resettlement, and return Kamala's illegal migrants to their home countries (also known as remigration). I will save our cities and towns in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and all across America. MAGA2024!

3:52 AM · 15 sept. 2024 · 216,7 k vues



Lee Anderson MP
@LeeAndersonMP_ · Follow

Another 600 yesterday.

It's an invasion.



Nigel Farage MP
@Nigel_Farage

No one is talking about this but another 600 young men came yesterday. Many of them will do us harm.



2:14 PM · Apr 13, 2025 from Annesley, England

Lee Anderson (born 6 January 1967) is a British Reform UK politician and television presenter who has served as Member of Parliament (MP) for Ashfield since 2019. He has served as Chief Whip of Reform UK since July 2024. He was elected in 2019 as a member of the Conservative Party, but defected to Reform UK in March 2024 after having the whip suspended. He became the party's first MP, and was subsequently elected for Reform UK at the 2024 general election.

Links and resources

• Video - White Power - Au coeur de l'extrême droite européenne

En Europe, l'extrême droite s'installe progressivement dans le paysage politique. Mais derrière une façade de plus en plus lisse se cache une idéologie demeurée fondamentalement raciste et violente. Une enquête implacable au sein d'un écosystème de la haine. Disponible jusqu'au 02/06/2025

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/117239-000-A/white-power-au-coeur-de-l-extreme-droite-europeenne/>

- Video - **Meet Britain's Far-Right Extremists | Britain's Ultra Nationalists (2019) | Full Film**

The Far Right is on the march. With an uncertain future before us, Britain's political landscape is unstable, and violence is on the rise. The combination of Brexit and Donald Trump's presidency has empowered the Ultra Nationalist cause, leaving communities more divided than ever. Journalist Aran Tori is on a mission to track down these Far-Right Extremists and get to the bottom of what drives their hatred.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2xeFVYsyw8&ab_channel=JourneymanPictures

ON THE GREAT REPLACEMENT THEORY (AND WHITE SUPREMACY) BECOMING MAINSTREAM

- **Nearly Half of Americans agree with the great replacement theory – The Washington Post, May 9**

2022<https://wapo.st/4iUTVQP>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/washington-post-live/wplive/eric-holder-discusses-great-replacement-theory/2022/06/06/59cad03c-81fd-4d60-bef9-42e710173915_video.html

- **Video - How 'Great Replacement' Theory is Becoming Entrenched in the U.S**

Experts explain how political figures circulating conspiracies like the 'great replacement' theory are inspiring violent acts during a judiciary committee hearing.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtv74QgJibE&ab_channel=ETNOW

- **Fox News TV Host was instrumental in spreading The Great Replacement Theory (among other conspiracy theories). See extracts here**

<https://cdn.jwplayer.com/previews/SuEkwnR4> or here

<https://cdn.jwplayer.com/previews/SSs2Fy2P>

- **Huffington Post Video - How White Nationalists Are Made And Radicalized**

Peter Simi, a sociology professor and expert on far-right extremism, explains the factors that compel a person to become a white supremacist.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-white-nationalists-are-made-and-radicalized_n_59319ecae4b0c242ca239b16

Trump's migration policies so far

- **To get a good overview of Donald Trump's immigration policies**

<https://www.npr.org/2025/04/30/g-s1-63415/top-5-immigration-changes-trump-first-100-days>

- **HERE** Fact Check by The New York Times

Trump's Claims That Blame Migrants: False or Misleading

The Trump campaign has consistently pointed to unauthorized immigration as the cause of a series of problems it says plagues the country. That is rarely actually the case.

- **The Self Deporters** – The Morning Newsletter, *The New York Times*, March 28, 2025

How White Supremacy Returned to Mainstream Politics

American Progress, 1 July 2020

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/white-supremacy-returned-mainstream-politics/>

This report provides a guide to identifying and calling out the white nationalist ideas that are infiltrating U.S. political discourse.

Introduction and summary

The United States is living through a moment of profound and positive change in attitudes toward race, with a large majority of citizens¹ coming to grips with the deeply embedded historical legacy of racist structures and ideas. The recent protests and public reaction to George Floyd's murder are a testament to many individuals' deep commitment to renewing the founding ideals of the republic. But there is another, more dangerous, side to this debate—one that seeks

to rehabilitate toxic political notions of racial superiority, stokes fear of immigrants and minorities to inflame grievances for political ends, and attempts to build a notion of an embattled white majority which has to defend its power by any means necessary. These notions, once the preserve of fringe white nationalist groups, have increasingly infiltrated the mainstream of American political and cultural discussion, with poisonous results. For a starting point, one must look no further than President Donald Trump's senior adviser for policy and chief speechwriter, Stephen Miller.

In December 2019, the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hatewatch published a cache of more than 900 emails² Miller wrote to his contacts at Breitbart News before the 2016 presidential election. Miller, who began his role in the Trump administration in 2017, is widely considered the president's most ideologically extreme and bureaucratically effective adviser. Miller has been careful not to talk openly about his political views, so this correspondence proved to be revealing.

In the emails, Miller, an adviser to the Trump campaign at the time, advocated many of the most extreme white supremacist concepts. These included the "great replacement" theory, fears of white genocide through immigration, race science, and eugenics; he also linked immigrants with crime, glorified the Confederacy, and promoted the genocidal book, *The Camp of the Saints*, as a roadmap for U.S. policy. Anti-Semitism was the only missing white nationalist trope in the emails—perhaps unsurprisingly, as Miller himself is Jewish.

In many ways, this is a return of an old American political tradition rather than a wholly new phenomenon, but it has taken on a new form and uses a language that must be properly understood if it is to be successfully challenged. Concepts of white supremacy were at the heart of the defense of slavery and central to the Lost Cause myth that justified segregation after the fall of the Confederacy.

The fear of immigrants of different religious traditions also has a long history in the United States; it fueled nativist political party the Know Nothings of the 1850s and the racist rules of the 1924 Immigration Act, which among its many outrages prevented immigration from Asia and remained in effect until 1965. The renowned U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. was one of the most distinguished proponents of eugenics, and the idea that immigrants bring crime and disorder dates back to the anti-Irish panics that occurred throughout the 19th century. Anti-Semitism, meanwhile, had been an ugly feature of American political discourse well before the 1913 lynching of Leo Frank prompted the founding of the Anti-Defamation League.³

Yet public attitudes thankfully have changed for the better. Recent polling shows that American attitudes toward racial integration and immigration have become more open among liberals and conservatives alike,⁴ with two-thirds of Americans in a recent Pew Research Center survey saying that "openness to people from all over the world is essential to who America is as a nation." Intriguingly, the divide on this question is as much a factor of age as of political inclination. Pew's research finds that

[t]he share of Americans holding the view that newcomers strengthen American society is 11 percentage points higher than it was in the spring of 2016: 57% now say this, up from 53% from March 2018 and 46% in May 2016. Both Democrats and Republicans are now more likely to view newcomers as strengthening the country than they were three years ago. Older Republicans are the least likely to see immigrants as strengthening the U.S. While roughly half of Republicans ages 18 to 34 (49%) say newcomers strengthen American society, just a third of Republicans ages 35 to 49 (33%) and 22% of those 50 and older say the same.⁵

In such a changing landscape, old-fashioned racist and xenophobic appeals are unlikely to be politically successful beyond a small fringe, so the propagandists of racism have had to develop subtler approaches to stoking fear and hatred for political ends. To do so, they have repackaged racist traditions in language and forms that could more easily enter mainstream political discourse.

This report explores the background of these poisonous concepts—reviewing their origins, development, and diffusion—and explores how white supremacist ideas have seeped into America's mainstream political discourse, with some examples of politicians who traffic in this language. It then discusses ways to combat the spread of white nationalism in U.S. politics. This report is meant to help readers recognize and call out attempts to smuggle white supremacy into everyday politics and to support civic leaders of all political persuasions who stand up to this poison.

How Trump calling immigration an ‘invasion’ could help him stretch the law

By Tierney Sneed, CNN, Fri January 31, 2025

No longer just campaign trail rhetoric, President Donald Trump’s insistence that immigration to the United States amounts to an “invasion” may be critical to unlocking extraordinary powers as the administration carries out his deportation agenda.

Multiple executive orders and agency memos use the word “invasion” to describe why Trump is taking actions that tighten the US border, empower state and local officials to carry out immigration enforcement, and take a more aggressive approach to detaining and deporting migrants. Some orders signed by Trump last week use “Invasion” in their titles, and one proclamation is built specifically around a constitutional provision that says the federal government is obligated to protect the states “against invasion.” In another early action, Trump issued a national emergency declaration the described an “invasion” at the border that “has caused widespread chaos and suffering in our country over the last 4 years.”

The word choice is intentional.

Legal experts believe the administration could try to rely on the invasion rationale to justify possible future actions that would go beyond the limits of immigration law and that would ignore the procedures in place for border-crossers.

“The invasion point comes in here, because the most basic and longstanding purpose to having a military is to stop people from invading your country. And that’s what’s happening at the southern border,” said Ken Cuccinelli, who served as the acting deputy secretary of Homeland Security in the first Trump administration. “The president doesn’t need anything beyond his commander in chief authority to block people from crossing the border illegally.”

It also previews how the Justice Department will defend his immigration agenda in court, hoping to capitalize on how courts have historically deferred to a president’s actions in instances of a national emergency.

“He is trying to invoke a fiction in order to increase the power of the president in ways that are completely inapplicable to this situation,” said Lucas Guttentag, a Stanford Law professor who founded the American Civil Liberties Union’s Immigrants’ Rights Project and who served in top roles in Democratic administration.

The language harkens to constitutional provisions that give federal government and states special powers in times of invasion. The possible invocation of the 1798 Alien Enemies Act is also hanging over how Trump’s anti-immigration agenda is being framed so far. That law, which Trump touted on the campaign trail, allows the

federal government to depart from the usual procedures for detentions and deportations in a time of “Invasion or predatory incursion.”

“We are not there yet,” said Steve Vladeck, a CNN Supreme Court analyst and Georgetown University Law Center professor, but, “we may well be in for a very, very big, pitched legal battle over whether there really is an invasion along the southern border and what the legal consequences are of that are.”

In a statement, White House spokesperson Kush Desai said that “tens of millions of unvetted illegal migrants and literal tons of illicit drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamine poured over the southern border into American communities over the last four years.”

“That is an invasion, and the American people recognize that this the reality – that’s why they delivered a resounding mandate to President Trump to secure our border and communities,” Desai said.

A bigger role for states

The embrace of the invasion idea picks up on claims that states like Texas were making in legal disputes with the Biden administration over what role they could play in policing the border.

In addition to the Constitution’s guarantee that the federal government shall protect states from invasion, another provision allows states to engage in war when they are “actually invaded.”

“When you put those two things together, what do you get?” said Joshua Blackman, a professor at South Texas College of Law. “If a president declares an invasion, a state can engage in war.”

The argument could allow states to take actions that federal law would normally foreclose, Blackman said, but the proposition will have to be tested in court.

“It’s significant constitutional power that hasn’t really been discussed at all,” Blackman said.

Trump to prepare Guantanamo Bay to hold 30,000 migrants

02:25

The administration has emphasized it’s looking for help from the states in its efforts to arrest and detain undocumented immigrants. Last week, then-acting Homeland Security Secretary released a memo, pivoting off of Trump’s invasion-oriented executive orders, that made a finding of a “mass influx” of migrants to trigger new state authorities for immigration enforcement.

According to Vladeck, the administration’s use of such language gives “cover” to state officials like Texas Gov. Greg Abbott who have sought for their states to take a more direct role in immigration enforcement.

Texas, for instance, has used the “invasion” rationale in court to defend a state law, challenged by the Biden administration, that allows state officials to arrest and detain people suspected of entering the country illegally.

Sidestepping immigration law

Legal experts see the invasion motif as a signal for powers that Trump administration may seek to exercise to take his anti-immigration agenda even further and to potentially try to overcome laws imposed by Congress that traditionally dictate border policy.

Ilya Somin, a professor of law at George Mason University, pointed to past instances where courts struck down attempts to end all asylum procedures at the border, concluding such moves as violations of the Refugee Act.

“Part of the purpose of the invasion argument is they say, ‘Well, that overrides statutory constraints that Congress might otherwise put in place,’” Somin said.

The invasion language could also be “setting the stage” for invocation of the Alien Enemies Act, Vladeck said, referring to the 1798 statute last used during World War II that would let the government eschew the due process protections afforded to immigrants before they can be deported.

The law was referenced in a Trump executive order last week that designated cartels as foreign terrorist organizations.

Already, Trump is repeating a playbook he used in his first administration to get around the congressional appropriations process. With another measure signed last week, Trump declared a national emergency at the border, in effort to direct military resources towards border security. Trump faced lawsuits when he used a similar maneuver during his first term to funnel Defense Department funding towards building a border wall.

Courts may be more willing to defer to this kind of gambit than other Trump efforts to get around federal law, said Matthew Lindsay, a University of Baltimore School of Law professor. He noted, however, that the immigration crisis is not what it was 2023 in, as the numbers of border crossing have dropped considerably since that highpoint.

“Lurking behind this, there is a real separation of powers question about what extent courts are going to be keeping

Congress involved in the types of appropriations decisions Congress passes,” he said.

Will courts see the invasions play as a ‘political question’?

A key question underlying Trump’s strategy will be whether courts believe they can review a president’s determination that an influx of migrants can qualify as an “invasion” or if they see that as the type of “political question” they have no power to decide.

If they chose the latter course, “that would give the president a blank check to declare an invasion pretty much anytime he wants, and then use that to suspend everyone’s civil liberties,” Somin said.

One prominent judge has recently floated the idea. In a 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruling last summer siding with Texas in a dispute with the Biden administration over buoys the state placed in the Rio Grande, Judge James Ho wrote a partial dissent that seemed to embrace an invasion justification being put forward by the state, while describing the invasion determination as a political question that was not up courts to decide.

“Ho is the only federal judge, of the ones who have considered the issue, to have to some extent, at least, endorsed the invasion argument,” Somin said. “Everyone else has rejected it.”

Ho, seen as on the shortlist for possible Supreme Court nominees if Trump is given an opening on the high court, also recently floated the invasion idea as a possible exception to the principle of birthright citizenship, which Trump is trying to end for children born to undocumented immigrants or temporary visa holders.

Supporters of Trump’s agenda are confident courts will defer to his determination that an invasion is occurring at the southern border. Other legal experts who are more skeptical say the context in which he is making the argument will likely matter a great deal.

“It may just depend on their appetite for just standing by and allowing the administration to accumulate these instances of unchecked authority,” Lindsay said.

Trump Officials Consider Suspending Habeas Corpus for Detained Migrants

Stephen Miller, a top aide, repeated a justification used in the immigration crackdown: that the country is fighting an invasion. But it is unclear if the president has the power to take such a step.

By Karoun Demirjian, Reporting from Washington, **The New York Times**, May 9, 2025

Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff who orchestrated President Trump’s crackdown on immigration, said on Friday that the administration was considering suspending immigrants’ right to challenge their detention in court before being deported.

“The Constitution is clear,” he told reporters outside the White House, arguing that the right, known as a writ of habeas corpus, “could be suspended in time of invasion.”

“That’s an option we’re actively looking at,” he said, adding, “A lot of it depends on whether the courts do the right thing or not.” Such a move would represent a dramatic escalation in the Trump administration’s battles with the courts over his efforts to carry out mass deportations. And it would be yet another sweeping assertion of executive authority, one in tension with a right generally guaranteed in the Constitution.

As with many of Mr. Trump’s assertions of power, it was unclear whether he could lawfully do it.

Article I of the Constitution says writs of habeas corpus are a privilege that “shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.” That direction “is almost universally understood to authorize only Congress to suspend habeas corpus,” said Stephen I. Vladeck, a law professor at Georgetown University.

“The only reason why they would do this is because they’re losing” in court, he added.

Habeas corpus has been suspended four times in the history of the United States, most recently in Hawaii after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Each time, authorities cited specific congressional statutes to justify the move, with the exception of one president: Abraham Lincoln, who suspended habeas corpus during the Civil War, while Congress was not in session. His move was challenged, and in 1863, Congress passed a law giving him the explicit right to suspend habeas corpus for the duration of the hostilities.

Mr. Trump and his deputies have repeatedly tried to liken their crackdown on illegal immigration to a war or repelling an invasion. He has referred in speeches to waves of migrants entering the United States as invasions, and in March invoked the Alien Enemies Act — another wartime authority — to accelerate the deportations of Venezuelans accused of being members of the gang Tren de Aragua.

But deportations carried out under that law have been challenged in court, and the Supreme Court has blocked any further deportations under that law for now. In addition, three federal judges have in recent weeks issued rulings rejecting the argument that the wave of immigration constitutes an invasion, as Mr. Miller maintained.

Still, the administration has insisted that the courts cannot overrule the president’s decisions regarding how, where and when immigrants are deported.

Mr. Miller echoed that sentiment in his comments to reporters outside the White House on Friday, arguing that because Congress put the immigration courts under the executive branch, and not the judicial branch, Mr. Trump’s decisions could not be blocked by the courts.

Can Trump Deport Immigrants Without Due Process? What To Know After President And Stephen Miller Suggest They Can

By Alison Durkee, *Forbes*, May 6, 2025

President Donald Trump and top adviser Stephen Miller have suggested in recent days immigrants may not be entitled to “due process” in the courts before they’re deported—which clashes with decades of legal precedent granting due process protections to immigrants and comes as the Trump administration has often deported people without hearings or allegedly in violation of court orders.

Key Facts

In an [interview](#) that aired Sunday, Trump told “Meet the Press” he “[didn’t] know” whether he had to uphold the Constitution when it came to deportations.

Host Kristen Welker pointed to the Fifth Amendment, which [says](#) “no person” may be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law”—meaning people must have their cases heard in court, with the right to make their case and defend themselves. Trump responded that while the Constitution “might say that,” that would mean “we’d have to have a million, or 2 million, or 3 million trials.”

Miller, an architect of Trump’s hardline immigration policies, [claimed](#) on X on Monday that due process does not extend to undocumented immigrants, alleging, “The

right of ‘due process’ is to protect citizens from their government, not to protect foreign trespassers from removal” and “due process guarantees the rights of a criminal defendant facing prosecution, not an illegal alien facing deportation.”

Those comments conflict with longstanding legal precedent dictating immigrants do have due process rights granting them legal protections from being automatically deported, with conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia [writing](#) for the court in 1993, “It is well established that the Fifth Amendment entitles aliens to due process of law in deportation proceedings.”

Immigrants who have entered the U.S., “even illegally, may be expelled only after proceedings conforming to traditional standards of fairness encompassed in due process of law,” the Supreme Court similarly [ruled](#) in 1953.

Crucial Quote

Trump claimed on “Meet the Press” he doesn’t know whether or not he has to follow due process regarding deportations, saying he’s “not involved in the legality or the illegality, I have lawyers for that.” The president

lamented not being able to immediately deport “thousands” of immigrants whom he claimed are “some of the worst, most dangerous people on Earth,” however, adding, “I was elected to get them the hell out of here, and the courts are holding me from doing it.”

Contra

Trump and Miller’s comments contrast with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who told “Meet the Press” in April that “of course” all people in the U.S. are entitled to due process.

What Due Process Rights Do Immigrants Facing Deportation Have?

Past court rulings have found migrants facing deportation do have the right to due process and a “full and fair” hearing in which they can make their case for being allowed to stay in the U.S., though judges have noted they do not have “the same bundle of constitutional rights afforded defendants in criminal proceedings.” “Immigration proceedings are impartial proceedings where petitioners may make their case, but are not entitled to the [immigration judge’s] legal assistance in doing so,” like having the judge advise them about the possibility of being granted asylum, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals noted in 2021. “Where an alien is given a full and fair opportunity to be represented by counsel, to prepare an application for ... relief, and to present testimony and other evidence in support of the application, he or she has been provided with due process,” the same court ruled in 2007.

What To Watch For

The Trump administration is embroiled in controversies over its mass deportation plans—and whether specific deportations were unlawful—that are playing out in court. The Trump administration has still not returned Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Maryland man whom the government has conceded was accidentally deported to El Salvador, despite the Supreme Court ruling the administration must “facilitate” the man’s return. The Trump administration has claimed it can’t return Garcia because he’s under El Salvador’s control now, but said it’s complying with the Supreme Court because authorities would send a plane if El Salvador was willing to release him. Trump told “Meet the Press” he would consider going back to the Supreme Court and asking it to clarify its ruling, and he is deferring to the Justice Department on how to handle the case. Lawyers are also pushing at a hearing Tuesday for the Trump administration to release another man, identified as Daniel Lozano-Camargo, who was deported to El

Salvador despite a previous legal settlement forbidding it. The deportations of migrants to El Salvador has been a major point of contention, as many people were deported and imprisoned in the country despite both an apparent lack of due process and evidence suggesting many of those deported did not have ties to criminal group Tren de Aragua, as the government claimed. Judge James Boasberg ruled it’s likely the Trump administration committed criminal contempt by deporting the migrants despite a court order forbidding it, and a federal judge ruled last week the government cannot deport any more people under the law Trump used to justify those deportations.

Chief Critic

Immigration lawyers have strongly decried the Trump administration’s comments opposing due process for migrant deportations, as well as the government’s deportations of migrants like Garcia, whom immigration attorney Kate Lincoln-Goldfinch told “Forbes Newsroom” had “no due process. Zero, whatsoever.” “And I think what’s scary about that, is if they can pick him up off the street and deport him into a lifelong prison sentence in another country without due process, who’s next?” Lincoln-Goldfinch added. “And really, nobody should feel safe if this is allowed to go on.”

Key Background

Mass deportations have long been a cornerstone of Trump’s agenda, with the president promising before taking office to carry out the largest mass deportation effort in U.S. history. The president has aggressively tried to oust immigrants from the country since his inauguration—including through such methods as imprisoning migrants in El Salvador, trying to cancel student visas and luring immigrants with \$1,000 payments if they self-deport. The efforts have run up against numerous legal challenges, however, and cases like Garcia’s and Boasberg’s accusations of contempt come amid broader fears of the Trump administration defying the rule of law. Trump officials like Vice President JD Vance have suggested judges should not be “allowed” to constrain Trump’s executive actions, and the president and his allies have lashed out against judges who have ruled against him and suggested they should be impeached. The administration has insisted it has never intentionally violated a court order, however, and Trump has repeatedly said he would not defy an order from the Supreme Court.



Greg Nash

White House senior advisor Stephen Miller speaks during the Conservative Political Action Conference at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Md., on Feb. 22, 2025.

Stephen Miller has solidified himself as one of the most influential figures in Trump World, and is increasingly being seen in front of the camera in addition to his work behind the scenes.

Miller, who was instrumental in the first Trump administration as a speechwriter and policy adviser on immigration, has elevated his profile during the first 60 days of President Trump's second term.

He is at the forefront of efforts to limit immigration pathways and deport individuals who entered the country illegally. He is arguably the face of [the administration's clash](#) with a federal judge over deportation flights carrying alleged Venezuelan gang members. And he is a frequent presence on television, a shift from the first administration that underscores his growing influence. (...)

Miller, who previously worked as a staffer for then-Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), was a top adviser in Trump's first term and became one of the president's most trusted aides. He built on that trust during their four years out of the White House.

Miller launched America First Legal, which pursued legal action against Biden administration initiatives and so-called woke policies that Trump campaigned against in 2024, such as transgender rights and diversity initiatives.

As Trump campaigned for the White House, Miller got to work crafting policy blueprints for a second term.

While polling indicated that the economy helped Trump secure victory in last November's election, he has said he believes immigration was a bigger factor. That makes Miller, who is the deputy chief of staff and homeland security adviser, a particularly influential person in Trump's circle of trusted aides.

Proposals to [use the Alien Enemies Act](#) — a law passed in 1798 — to deport alleged gang members, efforts to pause refugee and other visa programs and plans for an expanded travel ban are largely the work of Miller and border czar Tom Homan, sources told The Hill. "A lot of this work is emanating from Stephen Miller," said one source in Trump's orbit. (...)

Stephen Miller is no outlier. White supremacy rules the Republican party

[Cas Mudde](#), The Observer, Sat 16 Nov 2019

This week, the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC) published a [bombshell article](#) revealing troubling emails that White House senior policy advisor Stephen Miller sent to editors at Breitbart News, the far-right media outlet previously led by Steve Bannon.

The emails, which were leaked by former Breitbart editor Katie McHugh and predate Miller's period in the White House, show Miller's obsession with immigration and his seemingly successful attempts to get Breitbart editors to write anti-immigration stories, some of which were based on openly white nationalist sources like American Renaissance and V-Dare. (...)

But would Miller's resignation change anything? While Miller might be behind the concrete policies that harm immigrants, he is not the main white supremacist in the White House. And Trump can easily find someone else to do Miller's work, particularly now that almost the whole Republican party has fallen in line with *their* president.

It also externalizes white supremacy, as if it lives in the margins. But it has been hiding in plain sight within the Republican Party for decades. (...)

But white supremacy in the Republican party is not limited to just these individual congressmen and women. It runs much deeper than them. White supremacy was at the core of the “Southern Strategy”, dating back to the unsuccessful 1964 presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater, which was formative for the future conservative movement. Perfected by President Richard Nixon, with the help of speechwriter Pat Buchanan, dog whistles to white supremacy have been at the heart of virtually every Republican campaign since the 1970s.

Talking of Buchanan, more than 25 years ago he gave his now famous “culture war” speech at the 1992 Republican convention. While the term has become mainly linked to the religious right, Buchanan is at least as much a white supremacist as a Christian fundamentalist. In many ways, he is the intellectual father of the Trump administration, personifying Mike Pence and Donald Trump in one.

This is why calling for Stephen Miller’s resignation wouldn’t change much. Neither Miller nor Bannon “made” Trump the white-supremacist-in-chief. And Trump is not the only problem either, as Joe Biden seems to believe. He won the Republican primaries, and presidential elections, not *despite* white supremacy but *because* of it.

Trump shut out refugees but is making White South Africans an exception

Federal and Virginia state officials are preparing to receive about 60 White South Africans at Dulles International Airport next week, government documents and emails show.

The Washington Post, May 9, 2025 <https://wapo.st/4k71lBq>

The perception of CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS (Census 2020)

Présidentielle américaine 2024 : « Trump joue de cette peur ancienne de l’altérité raciale dont le suprémacisme blanc est le débouché »

Tribune Paul Schor, Historien, maître de conférences en histoire des Etats-Unis à l’Université Paris Cité

La question de l’immigration occupe une place importante dans les élections du 5 novembre, fortement polarisées. Les migrants latinos ont remplacé ceux d’Europe de l’Est ou du Sud des années 1920, analyse l’historien Paul Schor dans une tribune au « Monde ».

Le Monde, 3 novembre 2024

Lorsque le sénateur John F. Kennedy a déclaré, en 1958, que les Etats-Unis étaient une nation d’immigrants, c’était paradoxalement après des décennies de restriction qui avaient vu la part des habitants nés à l’étranger, les immigrés donc, décliner, pour atteindre un plus-bas historique en 1970, à 4,7 % de la population.

Ce discours accueillant a trouvé sa traduction législative dans la loi de 1965 qui a mis fin aux quotas discriminatoires et à l’interdiction des immigrations asiatiques et africaines. La proportion d’immigrés a remonté au point d’approcher ses records du début du XX^e siècle (14,8 % en 1910, 14,3 % en 2023), et on peut se demander si le pic actuel ne débouchera pas sur une restriction d’ampleur similaire aux lois qui ont instauré des quotas en 1921 et 1924.

Depuis la fin du XX^e siècle, les candidats des deux grands partis ont promis à la fois de limiter les entrées irrégulières et de régulariser une partie de ceux qui sont présents depuis longtemps, c’est-à-dire de réguler les flux d’immigration.

Vieille angoisse eugéniste

Donald Trump et ses alliés proposent une rupture majeure avec cette politique en ajoutant à une restriction drastique des entrées, des rafles et expulsions massives, inédites aux Etats-Unis, et des mesures qui affecteraient les immigrés déjà présents. Il promet d’expulser, s’il est élu, des millions d’immigrés irréguliers et de rendre expulsables des immigrés légaux, et même des citoyens américains qui seraient dénaturalisés, comme les enfants nés aux Etats-Unis de parents sans visa.

La candidate démocrate, Kamala Harris, s’est tardivement ralliée à des positions de fermeté sur les flux, le contrôle des frontières et le sujet des demandeurs d’asile à la frontière sud. Les démocrates restent partisans d’ouvrir des voies de régularisation aux immigrés irréguliers présents de longue date. L’immigration n’a pas toujours été une question aussi clivante, le républicain Ronald Reagan avait procédé à une régularisation en 1986.

A côté des considérations économiques, sociales ou sécuritaires particulièrement sensibles dans les régions frontalières, les conservateurs réactivent une vieille angoisse eugéniste sur le futur de la population, celle qui, il y a exactement cent ans, a inspiré les quotas pour protéger le peuple américain des indésirables et inassimilables. Comme en 1924, une population blanche vieillissante craint que les minorités ne deviennent la majorité.

Les indésirables étaient alors les Européens de l'Est et du Sud depuis intégrés, ils sont aujourd'hui les migrants originaires d'Amérique latine. Il est vrai que la moitié des immigrés entrés depuis 1965 sont venus d'Amérique latine, mais cela recouvre une grande diversité ; et il ne faut pas oublier que le début de [la présence de Mexicains aux Etats-Unis résulte de l'annexion d'une large partie du Mexique](#) en 1848, ce qu'exprime la formule militante « Nous n'avons pas traversé la frontière, c'est la frontière qui nous a traversés ».

Les clichés racistes repris par Donald Trump [à propos d'Haïtiens illégaux qui mangeraient les chats et les chiens des habitants de la ville de Springfield](#), en Ohio, prolongent eux aussi une longue tradition de dénigrement de la première république noire dont l'indépendance avait suscité une grande crainte chez les esclavagistes américains au début du XIX^e siècle.

Lire aussi | Article réservé à nos abonnés [Comment « Le Monde » a couvert la question raciale aux Etats-Unis](#)

Lire plus tard

Les facteurs expliquant la migration d'Haïtiens aux Etats-Unis, comme les multiples occupations de l'île par l'armée américaine au XX^e siècle ou la proximité géographique, ont été balayés au profit de fantasmes qui révèlent chez Donald Trump et d'autres commentateurs la permanence de représentations profondément ancrées dans une partie de l'opinion. Qu'il s'agisse d'immigrés légaux et que le chef de la police locale ait démenti la rumeur n'a en rien altéré la rhétorique du candidat républicain, la vérité pesant moins que la mobilisation électoraliste de craintes séculaires. Il agit ainsi comme un révélateur d'une culture raciste refoulée dans l'espace public depuis les années 1960 mais toujours vive.

Comme en 1924, les conservateurs opposent une Amérique rurale et des petites villes aux grandes métropoles cosmopolites qui se sont proclamées *sanctuary cities*, des villes à majorité démocrate où les municipalités ont affirmé qu'elles protégeraient leurs résidents sans papiers. Ce clivage entre deux Amériques entretenu par les

discours politiques est ancien, mais aujourd'hui les immigrés sont présents dans tous les États.

Moins de solidarité avec les immigrés

La fracture sur la question de l'immigration traverse les régions, les villes et même les familles. Une partie des descendants de migrants d'Amérique latine implantés depuis plusieurs générations ne se sentent plus aussi solidaires des immigrés récents et votent davantage en fonction de préoccupations comme la sécurité, les impôts ou des positions conservatrices sur les sujets de société, ce qui explique le grignotage du vote latino par les Républicains malgré leur discours anti-Latinos.

Si de nombreux Américains continuent à considérer que l'immigration est une chance pour leur pays et une source irremplaçable de croissance économique, toutes les histoires d'immigration ne sont pas lues avec les mêmes filtres. Le grand-père de Donald Trump était immigré et Elon Musk a commencé sa carrière aux Etats-Unis comme étudiant travaillant illégalement sans permis.

Plus que l'origine immigrée, c'est la racialisation des origines extra-européennes qui alimente les crispations et explique que les enfants d'immigrés légaux Barack Obama ou Kamala Harris soient dépeints comme porteurs d'une différence irréductible. Au-delà de la question du contrôle des frontières, Donald Trump joue de cette peur ancienne de l'altérité raciale dont le suprémacisme blanc est le débouché.

S'il est une leçon à retenir des restrictions de 1924, c'est que la démographie déjoue les objectifs politiques qui relèvent davantage de la démagogie que de l'analyse. Si Donald Trump est élu, des millions de familles payeront le prix de ses outrances électoralistes. Si Kamala Harris l'emporte, les Républicains continueront à instrumentaliser l'immigration. Dans tous les cas, l'immigration restera un problème politique, faute de consensus sur des solutions réalistes.

Paul Schor est historien, maître de conférences en histoire des Etats-Unis à l'université Paris-Cité. Il est l'auteur de « Compter et classer. Histoire des recensements américains » (Editions de l'EHESS, 2009).

The 2020 census shows America is changing. We're looking at how.

The Morning, August 13, 2021

A changing country

The United States population is getting more diverse, according to new data from the 2020 census that offers a once-in-a-decade look at the makeup of America.

Over the past 10 years, people who identified as Hispanic, Asian or more than one race accounted for larger shares of the population, the data shows. Diversity is rising in almost every county. The overall U.S. population, though, grew at the slowest rate in nearly a century.

William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution, described the data as “a pivotal moment for the country.”

“We have people of color who are younger and growing more rapidly,” he told The Times’s [Sabrina Tavernise](#) and [Robert Gebeloff](#). “They are helping to propel us further into a century where diversity is going to be the signature of our demography.”

Here are some takeaways from the new data.

New demographics

The share of people who identify as white has been declining since the 1960s, when the U.S. opened up more widely to immigrants from outside Europe. But over the past decade, the total number of white people fell for the first time.

The total population has grown at a drastically slower rate over the past decade. As David Leonhardt [has explained](#) in this newsletter, slower population growth can expand economic opportunities for women. But it also reflects American society’s failure to support families.

The growth that did occur since 2010 — an increase of about 23 million people — was made up entirely of people who identified as Hispanic, Asian, Black or more than one race.

The multiracial category, added to the census only 20 years ago, is the fastest-growing group in the U.S. That could account for some of the decline of the white population, social scientists say; people of more than one race who previously chose white on the census form can now answer more accurately.

Fast-growing cities

The fastest-growing big city in the country is Phoenix, which surpassed Philadelphia as the fifth largest. Immigration, a tech boom and middle-class Californians seeking affordable housing all contributed to Phoenix’s growth, The Times’s [Jack Healy](#) explains.

The change in Phoenix reflects a trend: All 10 of the largest U.S. cities saw their populations rise in the past decade. Three big cities in Texas — Houston, San Antonio and Dallas — outpaced the national average.

[New York City](#) also grew by nearly 8 percent, defying predictions that its population was on the decline. The city now accounts for nearly 44 percent of the state’s total population.

The metro area that grew fastest since the last census, though, was not a major city; it was [The Villages](#), America’s largest retirement community, located outside Orlando, Fla.

Political consequences

The new census data will launch [an intense scramble](#) to redraw districts for the House of Representatives, which states do once per decade. Legislatures control redistricting in most states and can draw gerrymandered congressional maps that advantage their party, which will help determine who will win control of the House in next year’s midterm elections.

The data was less favorable to Republicans than some experts expected, The Times’s [Nate Cohn](#) writes. Rural areas and white people’s share of the population shrank, while traditionally Democratic cities and increasingly Democratic suburbs grew.

But Republican-controlled legislatures will still get to redraw 187 maps, compared to Democrats’ 84. “The parties do not compete on a level playing field,” our colleague Nick Corasaniti, who covers politics, told us. “While it is still very early to fully grasp the impact” of the new data, “it is perhaps most important to remember who will be drawing the maps.”

Survey: Elite-Imposed Migration Is Transforming National Politics

[NEIL MUNRO](#), [Breitbart News](#), 1 Nov 2021 (Extracts)

Many Democrats want to see American society transformed by migration and diversity, according to a survey by the left-leaning Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI)▲.

“More than six in ten Democrats (64%), mostly agree that they prefer the U.S. to be made up of people from all over the world” — instead of from American families and communities, said the survey, titled “Competing Visions of America: An Evolving Identity or a Culture Under Attack? Findings from the 2021 American Values Survey.”

The late-September survey asked 2,508 Americans about various aspects of immigration and diversity. The results showed that Democrats are becoming increasingly radical but also that more Republicans are openly opposing their planned demographic replacement — and that Latinos increasingly dislike imposed diversity.

For example, more Republicans are resisting the nation's open-door policy, according to the poll:

Republicans (28%) are less likely to have positive views of immigrants today than they were in 2018 (34%) and in 2011 (39%), and have grown more likely to believe that immigrants threaten American values (71% today, 65% in 2018, and 55% in 2011).

‘Two-thirds of Republicans (65%) say instead that immigrants are a burden because they take jobs, housing, and health care,’ the report said.

But the survey also reported that “more than eight in ten Democrats (82%) say that immigrants strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents.”

PRRI president Robert Jones spotlighted the huge shift in American politics since the 1950s-era.

Back then, domestic politics were dominated by left vs. rights arguments over how to distribute the huge profits generated by the nation's huge manufacturing economy.

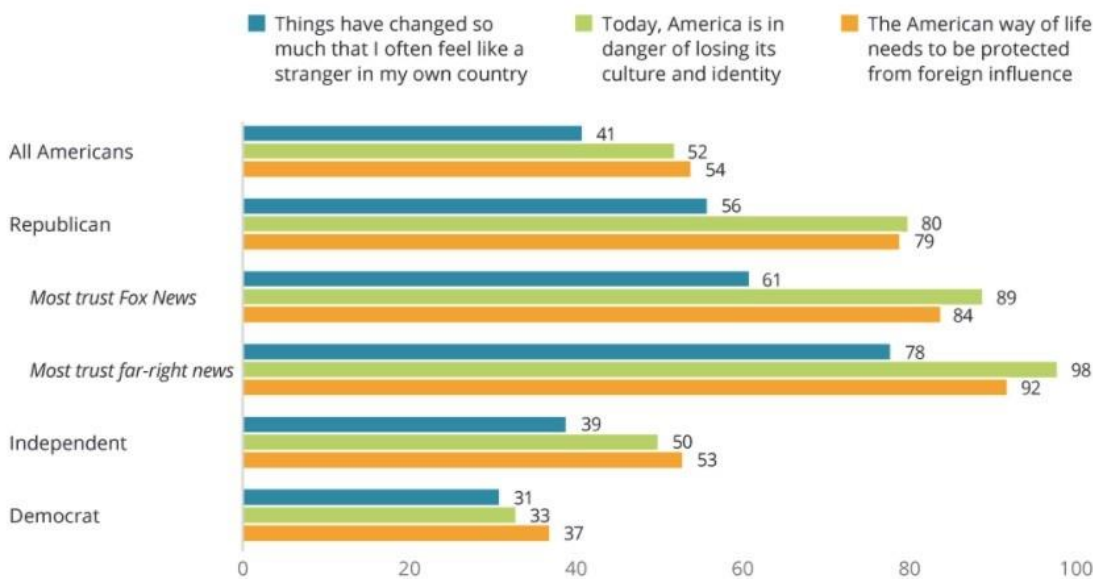
Those class-and-wages politics continue, but they get little attention from the establishment media since the bipartisan establishment doubled immigration in 1990. That doubling helped to stagnate wages, supercharge the stock market, and also shifted media coverage onto the “diversity” disputes that are used to break up the social norms developed by Americans to help share civic and economic wealth.

“Increasingly, this what American elections have been about — less about particular policies and more about who we are ..., [and] ‘Are we kind of an evolving identity or are we a culture that’s been under attack?’” Jones said in a press briefing on November 1: “What we’re struggling over, I think in the bigger debates in the country, is “What is America about? Was there a golden age right for America?” and we’re seeing this very different vision among Democrats and Republicans.

Democrats have moved left on immigration and diversity since 2012, largely because they followed their Democratic leaders, who have increasingly championed the claim that the United States is a diversifying “Nation of Immigrants,” not of Americans. This stance has also prompted Democrats to revive racial demands so they can argue that Americans’ culture must be transformed by migrants and diversity. (...)

FIGURE 1.7 Perceptions of Cultural Change in the U.S. as a Threat, by Party Affiliation

Percent who agree:



Source: PRRI 2021 American Values Survey.

But the survey shows that Latino voters are increasingly skeptical about additional immigration, in part, because their wages are cut and their housing costs are increased: “Hispanic Americans are less likely to believe that newcomers strengthen American society today (62%) than they were in 2018 (72%) but remain similar to 2011 levels (64%).”

Breitbart News Network is an American far-right syndicated news, opinion, and commentary website founded in mid-2007 by American conservative commentator Andrew Breitbart. Its content has been described as misogynistic, xenophobic, and racist by various academics and journalists. The site has published a number of conspiracy theories and intentionally misleading stories.

Initially conceived as "the *Huffington Post* of the right", *Breitbart News* later aligned with the alt-right, the European populist right, and the pan-European nationalist identitarian movement under the management of former executive chairman **Steve Bannon**, who declared the website "the platform for the alt-right" in 2016. *Breitbart News* became a virtual rallying spot for supporters of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. The company's management, together with former staff member Milo Yiannopoulos, solicited ideas for stories from, and worked to advance and market ideas of neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups and individuals.

EXPLAINER

How the "great replacement" theory went from Charlottesville to the GOP mainstream

The racist delusion that whites are being "replaced" has gone from the far-right fringe to the halls of Congress

By [JON SKOLNIK](#), SALON, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021



Several hundred white nationalists and white supremacists carrying torches marched in a parade through the University of Virginia campus, chanting "White lives matter! You will not replace us! and Jews will not replace us!" (Evelyn Hockstein/For The Washington Post via Getty Images)

A growing number of Republican pundits and politicians are entertaining or outright embracing the "great replacement" theory — a once-fringe white nationalist worldview that in recent years has crept into mainstream political discourse.

This theory, apparently first popularized in 2012 in a self-published book by the eccentric French novelist and diarist [Renaud Camus](#), proposes that a cabal of liberals or global elites is attempting to "replace" the white European populace with nonwhite or non-European minorities. This idea had very little traction in America until recently, at least outside the fringes of the far right. But over the past few years, some prominent conservatives who are not overtly white supremacist have begun to embrace this notion publicly, claiming that their political opponents are enacting pro-immigration policies in order to diminish the electoral power of white voters.

In 2017, the term and the idea were abruptly thrust into the national spotlight when hundreds of neo-Nazis, white supremacists and far-right activists gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia, to protest their perceived disenfranchisement, chanting slogans like "Jews will not replace us." That "Unite the Right" rally, which erupted into violence that led to the death of one leftist counter-protester as well as many injuries, made clear that racialized white grievance was now a feature of the political landscape.

In the years following, various Republicans have supported various versions of the "great replacement" theory, including Florida state Sen. [Dennis Baxley](#), former U.S. Rep. [Steve King](#) of Iowa and Maine Republican vice chair [Nick Isgro](#), all of whom suggested that supporters of legal abortion were deliberately causing a decline in the birth rate among white Americans.

At least three mass shootings have apparently been inspired by the "great replacement" idea: The Tree of Life synagogue killings in Pittsburgh in 2018, the mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, and the El Paso Walmart massacre in August 2019.

After those atrocities, the theory appeared to recede from the national discourse — but not forever. Fox News primetime star Tucker Carlson brought it back with a vengeance, saying on the air [this April](#) that the Democratic Party was "trying to replace the current electorate" with "new people, more obedient voters from the Third World." There have been calls ever since from progressive and antiracist groups for Carlson's firing — but his fans and followers loved it.

Over the past few months, several prominent Republicans have begun to deploy "great replacement" rhetoric, invoking vague fears about whites being supplanted by ethnic minorities, or even by naming the theory openly.

Last week, Rep. Matt Gaetz, the embattled Florida Republican who has reportedly been under federal investigation for months, [tweeted](#) that Carlson was "CORRECT about Replacement Theory as he explains what is happening to America," even taking a moment to describe the Anti-Defamation League as "a racist organization." Rep. Brian Babin, R-Texas, [made nearly the same claims](#) in a Newsmax interview, saying that Democrats "want to replace the American electorate with a Third World electorate that will be on welfare."

Some Republicans have been at least a bit subtler, alluding to concerns around an influx of minorities changing the cultural fabric of the nation.

Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., who recently replaced Rep. Liz Cheney as chair of the House Republican Conference, [warned](#) her voters in an ad blitz two weeks ago that Democrats were planning "a PERMANENT ELECTION INSURRECTION" by expanding pathways to citizenship.

In early September, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick [reiterated](#) these concerns to Fox News host Laura Ingraham, warning of a "silent revolution by the Democrat Party and Joe Biden to take over the country." Citing Biden's alleged plan to loosen borders and admit more immigrants, Patrick said that if "every one of them has two or three children, you're talking about millions and millions and millions of new voters." (...)

It also seems possible, and perhaps likely, that belief in the possibility of a "great replacement" theory is widespread among Donald Trump's supporters and the Republican base. According to a survey conducted by political scientist Robert Pape, a majority of those who participated in the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, as the New York Times [reports](#), were "awash in fears that the rights of minorities and immigrants were crowding out the rights of white people in American politics and culture."

It Was a Terrifying Census for White Nationalists

The New York Times, Aug. 15, 2021

By **Charles M. Blow** Opinion Columnist

For some of us, the census data released on Thursday was fascinating. For others, it was, I would presume, downright frightening.

Much of what we have seen in recent years — the rise of Donald Trump, xenophobia and racist efforts to enshrine or at least extend white power by packing the courts and suppressing minority votes — has been rooted in a fear of political, cultural and economic displacement.

The white power acolytes saw this train approaching from a distance — the browning of America, the shrinking of the white population and the explosion of the nonwhite — and they did everything they could to head it off.

They tried to clamp down on immigration, both unlawful and lawful. They waged a propaganda war

against abortion, and they lobbied for "traditional family values" in the hopes of persuading more white women to have more babies. They orchestrated a system of mass incarceration that siphoned millions of young, marriage-age men, disproportionately Black and Hispanic, out of the free population.

They refused to pass gun control laws as gun violence disproportionately ravaged Black communities.

Republican governors, mostly in Southern states, even [refused](#) to expand Medicaid under Obamacare. As the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) points out, "Medicaid is the largest source of insurance coverage for people with H.I.V., estimated to cover 42 percent" of the adult population with H.I.V., "compared to just 13 percent of the adult population overall." It adds that Medicaid beneficiaries with H.I.V. are more likely to be male, Black and dually eligible for Medicare. So H.I.V. continues to rage in the South, even though we now

have treatments that prevent the transmission of the virus.

On every level, in every way, these forces, whether wittingly or not, worked to prevent the nonwhite population from growing. And yet it did.

As The New York Times reported:

Hispanics accounted for about half the country's growth over the past decade, up by about 23 percent. The Asian population grew faster than expected — up by about 36 percent, a rise that made up nearly a fifth of the country's total. Nearly one in four Americans now identifies as either Hispanic or Asian. The Black population grew by 6 percent, an increase that represented about a tenth of the country's growth. Americans who identified as non-Hispanic and more than one race rose the fastest, jumping to 13.5 million from 6 million.

Meanwhile, the white population, in absolute numbers, declined for the first time in the history of the country.

This data is dreadful for white supremacists. As Kathleen Belew, an assistant professor of U.S. history at the University of Chicago, told me by phone, "These people experience this kind of shift as an apocalyptic threat."

Population size determines, to some degree, the power you wield. The only option left to white supremacists at this point is to find ways to help white people maintain their grip on power even as they become a minority in the population, and the best way to do that is to deny as many minorities as possible access to that power.

We are now seeing a shocking, blatant attempt at voter suppression across the country. I believe that this is just the start of something, not the end — that efforts to disenfranchise minority voters will grow only more brazen as the white power movement becomes more desperate.

We are likely to see this trend in full swing as the redistricting process gets underway. As Nate Cohn wrote in The Times, the fact that much of the population growth over the past 10 years occurred in the Sun Belt, where the G.O.P. controls redistricting, gives Republicans, who are overwhelmingly white, "yet another chance to preserve their political power in the face of unfavorable demographic trends."

It's particularly important to note that the changes in the nonwhite population will be not uniform but concentrated in particular states. Black people are continuing a reverse migration to the South and threatening to alter the political landscape there. Hispanics account for more and more of the voting-age population in key swing states across the Southwest.

As the nonwhite population grows in these states, so does their political power. In response, many of these are the states now trying to suppress nonwhite votes. This is why the Democratic-controlled Senate's inability and unwillingness to alter the filibuster to pass voter protection is so maddening. Republicans' voter suppression is an all-out attempt to shore up white power and diminish nonwhite power, and the Senate has been letting them do it.

The passage of power is not a polite and gentle affair like passing the salt at a dinner table. People with power fight — sometimes to the end — to maintain it. There's going to be a shift, but not without strife.

Economic impact of populist immigration policies

• Video Sky News

<https://news.sky.com/story/why-farage-getting-his-dream-of-net-zero-migration-would-probably-not-be-a-good-sign-for-the-uk-economy-13147745>

The vicious cycle of populism and migration: How far-right ideologies undermine human capital

IZA (Institute of Labor Economics), December 17, 2024

[Frédéric Docquier](#), [Chrysovalantis Vasilakis](#)

Our [recent study](#) highlights the significant and concerning impact of far-right voting and populist ideologies on migration trends. Using data from 55 countries and 628 elections spanning the period 1960–2018, our findings reveal that far-right voting disproportionately deters highly skilled immigrants. For instance, a 10-percentage-point increase in the far-right vote share leads to a 27% decline in high-skilled immigration and a 16% drop in low-skilled immigration. These patterns demonstrate how nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiments create a hostile environment, particularly deterring highly skilled workers who prioritize institutional stability and cultural openness. On the emigration side, our analysis reveals a clear “brain drain” effect. Rising populism accelerates the outflow of highly skilled natives, while having little to no impact on low-skilled emigration. Specifically, right-wing populism leads to a rise in high-skilled emigration, as educated and globally connected individuals reject nationalist ideologies and seek opportunities abroad. This exodus deprives countries of critical talent needed for innovation, governance, and democracy, further depleting the domestic stock of human capital. Importantly, these effects are not just the result of stricter immigration policies implemented by far-right governments. While such policies play a role, their impact is secondary to the broader political climate shaped by populist rhetoric. Anti-immigrant narratives and identity-based nationalism foster a hostile atmosphere, which discourages highly skilled migrants and causes educated natives to leave. To better understand these patterns, we explored the historical roots of populism and how they interact with current economic crises. By examining past voting patterns for far-right parties (from 1900 to 1950) and the effects of economic downturns, we identified how long-standing cultural and political legacies, combined with modern challenges, sustain populist movements and shape migration trends. **Our findings reveal a vicious cycle. Far-right populism reduces the inflow of highly skilled immigrants essential for economic and social progress while driving out educated natives, further depleting a country’s talent pool. This loss of skills exacerbates economic stagnation, which in turn reinforces populist fears and anti-immigrant rhetoric. The result is a migration pattern that favors low-skilled workers over high-skilled ones, further validating populist claims, perpetuating xenophobia, and undermining economic growth.**

This cycle poses a significant threat to liberal democracies. Politically, it entrenches exclusionary ideologies and weakens the foundations of open, inclusive institutions. Economically, it stifles innovation and long-term growth by diminishing the quality of governance and the labor force. Breaking this cycle requires policies that restore confidence in globalization, challenge nationalist narratives, and create a welcoming environment for both skilled migrants and native talent.

Frédéric Docquier is Research Program Leader (on Crossing Borders) at the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), Professor of Economics at the Université Catholique de Louvain, and IZA Research Fellow. Chrysovalantis Vasilakis is Associate Professor at Bangor University, Department of Business, and IZA Research Fellow.

See also

• <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2024-11-01/why-trump-s-mass-deportations-won-t-be-good-for-economy>

• [What a Crackdown on Immigration Could Mean for Cheap Milk](#) – by Marcela Valdes, The New York Times Magazine, October 17, 2024 (there is an audio version, read by the journalist herself)

Undocumented labor quietly props up the entire American economy — but nowhere more dramatically than on dairy farms.

This article repeats many points we have already discussed but I think it's a good synthesis on the topic

The instrumentalisation of migration in the populist era

Mixed Migration Center, 2 May 2025 | By Ayhan Kaya

The following essay was originally compiled for the Mixed Migration Review 2024 "Migration Politics, Migration Narratives and Public Opinions" and has been reproduced here for wider access through this website's readership.

The essay's author, Ayhan Kaya is Professor of Politics and Jean Monnet Chair of European Politics of Interculturalism at the Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University, Director of the European Institute and Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, and Member of the British Academy and Science Academy Türkiye. Additional contributions to this essay were made by Chris Horwood (Ravenstone Consult) and Bram Frouws (Mixed Migration Centre).

Anti-migration, populist political parties are a rising force around the world. In 2024, elections and election campaigning illustrated their ability to attract – and maintain – voter support as independent polls repeatedly showed mixed migration as one of the hottest issues. **Is it inevitable, though, that populist parties are anti-migration? Are they posturing opportunistically to capitalise on people's genuine concerns, and do they therefore represent a response to a groundswell of public feeling against migration? Or, instead, do they help create anti-migrant narratives which also maintain a sense of crisis around migration – a crisis which is never really solved, but works to attract more voters to the right-wing populist cause?** This essay will focus on right-wing anti-migration populism, how it instrumentalises migration within a broader analysis of populism, how it can be explained, how it operates, why it is currently so popular and what its likely direction going forward is.

Three explanations of populism

A typical modern explanation of populism links it to socio-economic factors, suggesting that populist sentiments arise from the destabilising effects of neoliberal globalisation, leading to precarity and marginalisation among the working and lower-middle classes. These groups reject mainstream politics, generate narratives of ethnic competition and national division, and appeal to a polarising narrative that divides the nation into "aversive insiders" and "invading outsiders".

Another explanation views right-wing populism as a reaction against cosmopolitan elites, emphasising a return to 'traditional values' and an anti-establishment stance. Accordingly, a growing number of people in the EU believe that elites have pushed forward liberal rights such as gender equality, gay rights, mobility, inter-faith dialogue, ethnic diversity, multiculturalism, environmental protection and so on, against the will of ordinary people.⁴ Here, populism instrumentalises the politics of nostalgia to win the hearts and minds of those constituents who are subject to a rapid societal, structural, spatial, demographic and cultural transformation in the age of globalisation. Populist slogans in the US – such as Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" or the Tea Party's "Take America Back" – and in the UK – with UKIP's "We Want Our Country Back" and the Brexit campaign promising to "Take Back Control" – strongly resonated among significant numbers of the electorate.

A third approach focuses on the strategic methods populist leaders use to connect with constituents, leveraging ethnicity, culture, religion and myths to mobilise those alienated by globalisation and inequality. Populist leaders often engage in performative acts to highlight both their ordinariness and extraordinary qualities, such as displaying virility. Examples include Silvio Berlusconi's notorious and much-publicised escapades with women, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's nickname *Uzun Adam* (tall man) and Vladimir Putin's tabloid photos showcasing his naked torso while hunting. These figures also 'battle' perceived enemies on behalf of the people, with a recurring theme of paranoia and martyrdom. Another good example is Trump's immediate words just after being shot at in 2024: "Fight, fight, fight!" while raising a fist as security personnel carried him away. Many of his supporters have attributed the failure of the assassination attempt to an act of God, using the phrase: "Because he was touched by God." Occasionally, in fact, these acts of extraordinariness have religious connotations. Hugo Chávez presented himself as the reincarnation of Simon Bolivar, Silvio Berlusconi once declared himself the Jesus Christ of politics, and Marine Le Pen's associations with Joan of Arc's sacrifice and martyrdom reportedly increased her

party's followers' admiration for her 'saint-like' female courage.

A rising phenomenon

Populism is a complex concept with varying definitions among scholars. It has been described as a 'thin-centred ideology' (meaning it addresses only part of the wider political agenda), a political style, a political strategy, a discourse to connect with 'the people' or a political logic that mobilises marginalised groups. It has also been suggested that populism is not confined to any region or ideology but is an aspect of various political cultures. Populist leaders typically maintain popular support by dramatising and scandalising existing or fabricated problems, crises, breakdowns or threats.¹⁶ Populist politicians often exploit and reframe events and situations for their benefit to keep the public on high alert. This tactic makes it easier for them to engage with their supporters through these radically simplified issues and political debates. In Latin America, for instance, some populist politicians invoke imperialist conspiracies; in Africa, they leverage neo-colonialism; in the Netherlands Geert Wilders frequently exploits the perceived increasing Islamisation of the country as a threat to the nation's social, economic and political well-being. In particular, the issue of mixed migration and its framing as a 'crisis' is politically very convenient, offering common ground to unite most right-wing populist parties. Arguably, the populist cause has an unholy alliance and dependency on this 'crisis' never being adequately managed or solved, as it provides a certain level of guaranteed support.

Populist parties have become common in many Western countries in recent years. A selection of these right-wing populist parties – always also promoting anti-migrant or migrant-restrictive positions – include the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, (also the Forum for Democracy (FVD) and JA21), the Danish People's Party in Denmark, the Swedish Democrats in Sweden, the Front National (now National Rally) and Bloc Identitaire in France, Vlaams Belang in Belgium, the Finns Party in Finland, Brothers of Italy, Lega, CasaPound and the Five Star Movement in Italy, Vox in Spain, Chega! In Portugal, the Freedom Party in Austria, Alternative for Germany in Germany, Victor Orban's Fidesz and Jobbik Party in Hungary, the English Defence League, the British National Party, the UK Independence Party and the Reform Party in the UK, the Golden Dawn (previously) and Greek Solution in Greece, Law and Justice Party in Poland, Pierre Poilievre's Conservative Party in Canada, and the Justice and Development Party in Türkiye. Some have had periods of success followed by demise and oblivion,

but most are active and, in many cases, have gained strength in recent years. In 2024, in particular, many populist right-wing, anti-migration parties did well in elections. These parties, however, represent just a limited selection of the extent of populism, both in terms of its geographic and political spread.

Contemporary right-wing populism

Populism is not new, but at the very heart of the rise of contemporary right-wing populism lies a significant disconnection between centrist and moderate politicians and their electorates. Over the last decade, right-wing populist parties have gained increasing public support, particularly in the wake of two global crises: the financial crisis (2007-2008) and the so-called (European) refugee crisis (2015-2016). The financial crisis, coupled with neoliberal governance, has led to a degree of socio-economic deprivation for some Europeans. Meanwhile, the refugee crisis has been leveraged by opportunistic political groups to evoke nostalgic feelings about identity, nation, culture, tradition and collective memory. This populist moment has not only bolstered many former far-right-wing parties, but has also given rise to new ones.

In the EU, despite national variations, populist parties are characterised by their opposition to immigration, a concern for the protection of national culture and European civilisation, and adamant criticisms of globalisation, multiculturalism, the EU, representative democracy and mainstream political parties. They exploit a discourse of essentialised cultural differences, often conflated with religious and national differences. Right-wing populist parties and movements frequently exploit the issue of migration and asylum, depicting it as a threat to the welfare as well as to the social, cultural and even ethnic characteristics of a nation. Populist leaders often attribute major societal problems – such as unemployment, housing shortages, violence, crime, insecurity, drug trafficking and human trafficking – to lenient migration policies. This narrative is bolstered by racist, xenophobic and demeaning rhetoric, with terms like 'influx,' 'invasion,' 'flood' and 'intrusion' commonly used. Public figures such as Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria have spoken of the "foreign infiltration" of immigrants, particularly Muslims, in their countries. Similarly, the AfD (Alternative for Germany) leader, Alexander Gauland, depicts immigrants as threats to the *Heimat* (homeland), a concept cherished by sedentary 'ordinary people'. In practice, the AfD's primary focus is not so much on combatting the 'new cosmopolitan class' but addressing the issue of

‘irregular mass migration’, a concern it shares with many populist parties throughout Europe today.

In Europe, some populist political party leaders, such as Éric Zemmour, Marine Le Pen, Thierry Baudet, Alexander Gauland and Viktor Orbán promoted the ‘Great Replacement’ conspiracy, framing the immigration of Muslims as a calculated strategy of Islamification. Additionally, they openly criticise Islam by aligning themselves with liberal and civilisational stances on issues like the emancipation of women and LGBTQI+, using them to further their anti-Islam rhetoric. For many right-wing populists, Islam, introduced by immigrants and refugees, is the primary adversary. They will, therefore, strategically adopt liberal principles such as free speech and gender equality if it aids in their efforts against Islam and Muslim immigrants and refugees in Northern and Western Europe.

Populism unbound

Populism manifests differently across the world, with leaders and parties holding diverse ideologies including communism, socialism, Islamism, nationalism, fascism or environmentalism, yet all employing populist rhetoric and strategies. Left-wing populism, for example, focuses on class as a unifying force, while right-wing populism emphasises culture and heritage, often coded as race. Left-wing populism supports intellectualism and a vanguard party, whereas right-wing populism is antielitist, anti-intellectual and anti-establishment, celebrating religion, myths and nationalistic ideologies. Populism can also be eclectic: Germany’s Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance – Reason and Justice (BSW), for instance, is a left-wing nationalist, populist, Eurosceptic and socially conservative German political party with clear nationalist positions for controlling immigration more robustly. Formed in early 2024, it already enjoys high support and popularity in parts of Germany – particularly among anti-establishment and right-leaning voters – and threatens to compete with the country’s other rising populist party, the right-wing AfD.

Outside Europe, some analysts are alarmed at what they see as the crisis of democratic political legitimacy and emerging nationalist populism in Africa. As examples, they cite the recent former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari, Pastor Evan Mawarire’s This Flag movement in Zimbabwe and Senegal’s populist opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, whom the new president has recently promoted to prime minister. In South Africa, two populist parties have dented the ANC electoral majority (arguably, a populist party itself): Jacob Zuma’s uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) and Julius

Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) – who both did well in the 2024 elections. The level of anti-migrant xenophobia (more correctly, *afrophobia*) displayed across all parties in South Africa this year has been of concern to rights organisations. Some cite popular nationalist movements manifesting themselves in successful or attempted coups across the Sahel (West Africa’s ‘coup belt’) pointing to an increasingly populist civil society.

Populism has also been a significant force in Latin America, but often manifesting on the political left with promises of extensive socialist changes – as seen in Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, in Bolivia under Evo Morales, in Mexico under Andrés Manuel López Obrador and, previously, in Brazil under Lula da Silva. Far-right former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is regarded as also having had populist tendencies. Javier Milei, who was elected president of Argentina in late 2023, has been described as a right-wing, ultraconservative populist. Nayib Bukele in El Salvador is the much-supported populist enjoying at least 85 percent of the national vote.

Elsewhere, Narendra Modi, prime minister of India since 2014, is the longest-serving prime minister outside the (establishment) Indian National Congress Party with top populist appeal. He has membership in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu nationalist paramilitary volunteer organisation.

Arguably, voters in the Philippines have chosen populist leaders for decades, voting repeatedly for candidates like Ferdinand Marcos Sr, Rodrigo Duterte and now (since 2022) Bongbong Marcos, despite – or because of – their promise of ‘strongman rule’. There are many more examples of populist leaders globally, not least the US former president Donald Trump, whose past and present political campaigning is a jumbled collection of archetypal right-wing populist themes. Populist experts even describe China as a populist authoritarian regime.

Populism: rising from the ashes of the failure of multiculturalism?

In Europe, a significant portion of the public increasingly views diversity as a threat to social, cultural, religious and economic security. This sentiment has led to growing resentment against multiculturalism, which was initially seen as promoting conciliation, tolerance and universalism to create an ‘intercultural community’. Over time, however, multiculturalism has been perceived as institutionalising differences, and its supposed failure has been criticised not only by extreme, right-wing populist parties but also by centrist ones. In 2010 and

2011, leaders like German chancellor Angela Merkel, UK prime minister David Cameron and French president Nicolas Sarkozy all criticised multiculturalism. Contemporary populism has popularised nativism, which favours indigenous inhabitants over immigrants and refugees. Nativism is arguably a thin-centred ideology that protects the interests of locals against those of newcomers. The term 'nativism' has gained traction among Brexiteers, Trumpists, Le Penists and other right-wing populists who want to distance themselves from accusations of racism and xenophobia. Nativist European populism pits 'ordinary' people against cosmopolitan elites and immigrants. It instrumentalises anxieties and fear, accusing the political system of betraying ethnocultural and territorial identities.

Migration: populism's convenient scapegoat

In this age of migration, and as the salience of this issue is so evident in political discourse and the media, a few key questions arise. Is the public seduced by vote-seeking political rhetoric supported by the media in a context where they would normally not prioritise the subject? What is the line of causality in the relationship between populism and the anti-migration agenda? Does a rise in the number of refugees or immigrants in destination countries inevitably trigger right-wing populist reactions? The answers to these questions are far from clear-cut. After all, migration and periods of high international mobility have existed for centuries, and the current brand of migrant-focused populism is a relatively recent phenomenon. Furthermore, countries like Ireland, Canada and even so-called 'overwhelmed' Malta or Cyprus have not seen the rise of right-wing populism witnessed in many other refugee- and migrant-receiving countries.

It is likely, therefore, that populism emerges in situations that have particular preconditions that enable or nurture populist political options. The visibly high proportion of foreigners in any society at the same time as economic and societal problems turns migrants into scapegoats for a raft of other failings. However, once immigration is put high on the media agenda and framed in a way that advances populists' interests, it becomes difficult to promote a different framing. Immigration becomes the scapegoat for many of the preexisting or independently occurring conditions. Part of populism's mass appeal, especially among the economically disadvantaged or those harbouring a sense of being marginalised, is its promotion of simplistic and scapegoating narratives to explain complex socioeconomic conditions and deficits. Not only are migrants used as scapegoats, but it may be entirely in

the interests of populist parties – when in government or close to power – to actively obstruct reforms or instigate new policies which exacerbate a sense of crisis around immigration and asylum. In this context and with these dynamics, it is hardly surprising, therefore, that the salience of migration in Europe after the 2015-2016 mass movements of migrants and refugees into the bloc also coincided with the rise in anti-migrant populist parties.

In a similar vein, countries that had previously been welcoming of those looking for a better life after fleeing disaster and/or persecution have cooled their welcome and, to different degrees, have recently introduced more restrictive policies against migrants and refugees, often catalysed by political groups. This has been the case, for example, in Lebanon with its Syrian population, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador with Venezuelans, and South Africa with Zimbabweans, Somalis and those from Mozambique. Even the current reactions in Sweden and Denmark, the protests and incidents in Germany, France and Italy, and the August 2024 protests in the UK illustrate a higher level of public discontent.

A clear example from elections around the world this year, and particularly in Europe, is that highlighting immigration and problematising it as a central issue of political choice pays off. Even when the economic realities suggest increased migration is a significant opportunity, if not a necessity, the scapegoating argument requiring reduced migration normally wins. The results of the EU parliamentary election in June epitomised what was occurring in many individual nation-states. European Union parliamentary elections saw far-right parties make gains at the expense of centrists, but their victories were not enough to win a command of the parliament. However, in some countries, populists' electoral gains successfully overshadowed the centrists and either placed them in leadership roles or close to them as kingmakers in coalitions or powerful players difficult to ignore going forward.

The widespread instrumentalisation of migration

The rise of the anti-migrant populist phenomenon that continues to this day, arguably with greater support than earlier, represents a highly effective instrumentalisation of immigration issues in politics by those who stand to benefit from it – which is then echoed and copied by other political players fearful of missing out. This instrumentalization of mixed migration concerns in politics is gathering pace around the world, not only because of the political engineering that drives it but also because of the high numbers of people moving

internationally and their increased presence and visibility in the media.

Even if the global proportion of international migration has remained relatively stable (around or below 3 percent of the global population) in recent decades, the absolute number has risen significantly and, when added to past migration, the level of multiculturalism in many countries has become more visible. This was even more the case during a period of perceived polycrisis with rapid cultural and social changes afoot, the impact of a global pandemic, economic precarity and inequality, as well as the uncertainties of both AI technology and climate change. Additionally, the relatively limited number of those moving irregularly (except at the US-Mexico border, where numbers are exceptionally high) repeatedly attract headline news creating a sense of crisis and absence of control which plays directly into the populist political playbook.

Populist right-wing parties and political parties of other persuasions are not alone in instrumentalising migration for their own interests. In their own way, migration-focused international agencies including UNHCR and IOM as well as various NGOs benefit from keeping mobility in the news and the rising level of needs of migrants and refugees high on the international agenda – and, thereby, as a funding priority. Other advocates, seeking more urgent action to mitigate climate change also raise the threat and impending crisis of mass climate migration to focus the minds of policymakers. Inadvertently, their contributions to the migration crisis narrative not only assist right-wing populist parties but also allow any governing authority to make harsher policies against migrants and refugees more palatable – when not necessary.

Arguably, the media has been part of the radicalization of the ‘growing aversion to immigration worldwide’. All media, including the so-called liberal press, has played a critical role in the instrumentalisation of migration as ‘news’ and ‘crisis’, and increasingly continues to do so, particularly through social media platforms where fierce battle lines are drawn. On these channels, especially, sensational stories that grab attention, trigger readers’ emotions and maintain a febrile discourse around migration act as powerful news selling clickbait.

Elsewhere, commercial companies and security interests have instrumentalized immigration, and especially the relatively small levels of irregular migration, as security threats. Analysts have documented the emergence of border security (personnel, infrastructure and equipment) as a fast-

rising, lucrative sector catalysed by well-positioned professional lobbyists from the defence sector. In recent years, many countries have significantly beefed up their border security systems, massively increasing their budget allocations and militarising their external borders as if protecting them from an armed invasion. States engaged in increased spending on wall building and/or border security are wide-ranging, including countries such as the US, Australia, the UK, Finland, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, Greece, Türkiye and the European Union itself, where Frontex is experiencing a major expansion.

A final example of the instrumentalisation of immigration is in cases of so-called migration diplomacy and inter-state disputes. Far from being a monopoly of populist politics, the weaponising of migrant movement can be used by any government for international diplomacy: exacting payment from one state or bloc to another state (Türkiye from the EU), score-settling (Belarus against Poland/ the EU), irritating an enemy (Nicaragua against the US), twisting arms (Libya against Italy), punishing (Morocco against Spain) and offering conditional aid (the US with Central American states and the EU with North Africa and others).

Future direction

In 2023 and 2024, the dynamics illustrated in this essay have continued to influence elections worldwide, with populist parties gaining traction as they address grievances related to mixed migration and socio-economic inequalities.

Arguably, right-wing populism has risen due to long-standing structural inequalities and the failure of mainstream political parties to address these issues during the neoliberal era. Populist parties have increasingly attacked multiculturalism, diversity, migration and Islam, contributing to polarizing governance discourses. In Europe, liberal democracies are being challenged by illiberal populist parties that capitalise on the resulting alienation.

Research and polls from 2024 indicate that European youth are increasingly voting for far-right populists, such as in countries like France, Germany and in the EU parliamentary elections as a whole. Even if there is also strong evidence of polarisation among young voters, a new generation of voters appears to be drawn towards more extreme parties as they deem traditional ones unable to solve problems. As mentioned, the popularity of populist parties outside Europe is on the rise too and the importance of youth support remains high. Unless the values of this portion of the electorate change, or they become disillusioned and disappointed in populist

politics, they might continue to represent a sustaining force that keeps populist – and, within the context of this analysis, anti-migrant – positions dominant. At a minimum, nativist anti-migrant populist parties of all political sides are creating a normalization around exclusion, restriction, deterrence, detention and deportation that is a far cry from earlier international expressions of solidarity, inclusion, more open borders, burden sharing and mobile labour.

Populist parties emphasise direct democracy and exploit emotions like fear, anger and frustration, which stem from perceived democratic deficits and disillusionment with representative democracy and can be harnessed by populist messaging. Clearly, as a direction of travel, the global populist trends are troubling as they offer a counterfactual to both representative democracy as well as some of the values and normative expectations of international relations.

And finally, an interesting analysis comparing the US and European social models in relation to immigration

The U.S. is devolving into authoritarianism perhaps because of what it lacks

Ethnic diversity is testing Europe's political stability in ways trade never did.

Opinion, Eduardo Porter, *The Washington Post*, April 22, 2025

It's too narrow to claim that the demise of America's Trade Adjustment Assistance program three years ago is responsible for the second Trump administration. But the argument points in the right direction.

The Kennedy-era program to protect workers displaced by foreign competition was always too miserly to make much of a difference to millions of Americans who over the decades had to find another job because whatever they used to make was now made better and/or cheaper in some other country or by a machine.

But its very stinginess supports a broader narrative about the fragile equilibrium holding the world's liberal architecture together: America's flagrant indifference toward those walloped by half a century of globalization and automation helped build a wave of resentment that compelled tens of millions of Americans to vote for the guy who promised to shut down not just trade and immigration, but also the underpinnings of liberal market democracy altogether.

Beacon of the postwar order — self-appointed policeman of a rules-based international order built upon markets and democratic rules — the United States suddenly devolved into despotic authoritarianism perhaps because it lacked what other Western liberal democracies were careful to knit together: a robust safety net to protect their societies from wrenching economic change.

This is a story often heard on the other side of the pond: Though Europe trades more than the United States, and though manufacturing jobs in Europe are also declining as a share of total employment, Europeans are pretty relaxed — optimistic even — about trade and globalization. They

do not share MAGA America's belief that their trading partners are playing them for suckers.

The reason? Over most of the past half-century, European governments devoted a much larger share of their resources to building a social safety net that could protect not only workers but also the poor, the sick, the elderly, families, the homeless and citizens otherwise on the vulnerable end of society from economic dislocation. This protected social cohesion at a time when economic forces were turning the United States into a winner-take-all society that leaves its vulnerable behind.

This theory of the case is not unreasonable. Inequality breeds social segmentation, building pockets of privilege and resentment. Cushioning the blow from wrenching change limits the hostility that would otherwise build against a fast-changing world.

But this story is incomplete. The United States may be the first of the rich liberal democracies to backslide toward an undemocratic equilibrium, but illiberal leanings are spreading across the industrialized world, including among some of the nations with the most robust welfare states protecting their people from harm.

In the past few years, Austria, Greece, Portugal and the United Kingdom have dropped out of the group classified as full liberal democracies by Sweden's V-Dem Institute. V-Dem has also expressed worries about democratic slippage in Italy and the Netherlands. It noted that France — perhaps the most lavish spender on social programs in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) — is suffering the same kind of noxious political polarization as the United States.

The reason, it appears, is that while a social safety net might mitigate the political fallout from trade and

automation, it has failed to stem the revolt against increased immigration.

Only 9.9 percent of people living in the European Union were born outside the bloc, a considerably smaller share than the 14.3 percent foreign-born share of the U.S. population.

But Europe's migrant population has been growing fast over the past several years, too fast for political systems that built welfare states when their countries were much more homogeneous.

Nearly 25 years ago, the Harvard economists Alberto Alesina and Edward Glaeser, with Bruce Sacerdote from Dartmouth College, published persuasive research arguing that the United States never built a robust safety net like that deployed in Europe because of its racial diversity. Solidarity didn't flow across ethnic barriers: It was an uphill struggle to convince White taxpayers in the United States to fund a welfare system that would benefit non-Whites. Social spending in Germany, France or Scandinavia — where most everybody was White and Christian — didn't face this obstacle.

But when immigrants — non-Christian, non-White — started showing up in large numbers in Europe, this fell apart. A popular revolt against migration metastasized into a revolt against a state seen to coddle the foreign-born — empowering a populist right that, unlike conventional right-wing parties opposed to welfare altogether, decided to fight for a robust safety net that limited its bounty to the “deserving.”

Across history, democracy tends to bring about more social spending as it compels governments to respond to voters' needs. Ethnic diversity, however, pushes in the opposite direction. Today, Europe is discovering that when the social safety net is in place, ethnic animosity can undermine the democratic state itself.

Will Europe's social democracy survive this moment? Italy is governed by Giorgia Meloni, a political heir to Benito Mussolini, and who is Trump's only true friend in Western Europe. The National Rally still seems poised to win the next presidential election in France. If the government of center-right chancellor Friedrich Merz fails, Germany might be ruled by the neo-Nazi AfD in the not-too-distant future.

An argument is taking shape that Europe's democracies must cut immigrants off state support if they are to prevent the destruction of the liberal order. There is an even starker view that they must close the door on immigrants altogether.

This, in my view, amounts to a depressing take on humanity. The open question is whether there is a path to overcome mistrust and build solidarity across ethnic and cultural boundaries, to bolster Europe's more enlightened social policies, and prevent it from following America down the dark road we are taking. Figuring out what that path might look like is perhaps our most urgent task.

[Explainer](#)

Why Labour is tightening UK immigration rules – and what it means for migrants and employers

No 10 says overhaul will combine control and compassion to rebuild public trust – but the politics are fraught

Aletha Adu *Political correspondent, The Guardian*, Sun 11 May 2025

After months of mounting pressure in the UK amid record net migration figures and anxiety over the rise of Nigel Farage's Reform party, the Labour government is setting out its plan to overhaul Britain's immigration system.

The long-anticipated draft policy package lays the groundwork for a significant shift: not only curbing irregular migration but tightening legal routes into the UK too.

Framed as a “clean break” from a system seen as over-reliant on low-paid overseas labour, the plan includes longer settlement timelines, higher English-language thresholds, and a direct challenge to employers who depend on migration to fill lower-paid jobs.

There are no high-drama stunts like the previous Conservative government's Rwanda scheme – but the proposals mark a departure from the more open migration model some Labour MPs still defend as fair and economically necessary.

The prime minister, Keir Starmer, has called the package a move towards a “controlled, selective and fair” system. But with Reform UK ascendant, the Conservatives struggling to reassert themselves in opposition, and Labour MPs divided, the question remains: will it work – and for whom?

What exactly is Labour doing and why now?

The message from Downing Street is that immigration must “reward contribution” – economically, through work and skills, and socially, through integration and language.

Key measures include:

- A new 10-year settlement route, replacing the five-year norm – with fast-track options for workers in sectors like health, AI, and engineering.
- A contributions-based model rewarding economic value and civic participation.
- Stricter English requirements, extended to all adult dependants – including spouses.
- Cuts to legal migration routes, including visas for overseas care workers, student dependants and lower-paid roles not deemed “strategic”.
- A digital immigration status system to monitor overstaying and support enforcement.

Officials say the changes will reduce migration “further and faster” than past efforts, though internal forecasts suggest annual falls of 50,000-70,000.

A new migration model – or just a new message?

Labour says it is ending the “free-market migration model” that let employers drive overseas recruitment. Visas will be tied to domestic workforce plans, and firms must show investment in UK workers before hiring abroad.

Deportation of foreign offenders has already increased, with ministers now seeking to remove those convicted of any offence, not just serious crimes.

The English-language rules go further than expected. For the first time, adult dependants – including spouses – must meet basic language standards before arrival, which ministers say will support integration and reduce exploitation.

But the government’s policy paper includes no plans for new safe routes or refugee protections. Ministers argue the UK already offers multiple legal pathways and that further routes are not needed. That position has drawn criticism from refugee advocates and some Labour MPs concerned about fairness and international obligations.

Inside Labour: divided over tone, not just policy

The strategy has sharpened Labour’s longstanding divide between control and compassion. Starmer and the home secretary, Yvette Cooper, have taken a data-led, enforcement-focused approach. But some MPs – particularly in diverse urban seats – are uneasy about the political and social costs.

There are concerns that reducing family and student visas may alienate core Labour voters and strain sectors like care – with the trade union Unison and charity Care England warning that cutting off overseas recruitment risks deepening the staffing crisis.

Meanwhile, MPs in marginal and post-industrial seats have urged the leadership to go further. With Reform UK rising in the polls, some believe Labour must deliver results – not just rhetoric – to hold public confidence.

The Tory counter-strategy and Farage’s triumph

Labour’s plan comes days after the Conservatives launched their own immigration bill. The proposals include powers to disapply the Human Rights Act in asylum cases, impose an annual visa cap and introduce scientific age testing for claimants. They have been met with scepticism – even from Tory-aligned voices. One former adviser called the bill “a grab-bag of recycled slogans”. Another said: “It makes no difference if you can’t deport anyone.”

Despite its tone, the Conservative package lacks a workable solution for removals or asylum backlogs – problems that damaged the party in government and persist today.

Nigel Farage, whose Reform UK party now outpolls the Conservatives, was quick to take credit. Speaking to the Guardian, he said: “We’ve seen the Home Office admit they think net migration will still be running at over half a million by 2028. This Tory announcement merely tinkers around the edges. It’s not just about what numbers come in, but who comes in and whether they can assimilate.”

A reset or a political risk?

Labour is betting this plan will rebuild public trust – not through theatrics, but results. Ministers hope to show that immigration can be controlled fairly, and that high-skilled migration can be welcomed without depressing wages or undermining cohesion.

But the risks are real. Public services still rely on migration. The shift to a 10-year settlement model could unsettle families already in the UK. And the refusal to expand refugee pathways may test Labour’s promise to match control with compassion. After years of failed pledges and political spectacle, Starmer is offering something slower and more serious. But with Reform rising, the Tories regrouping, and public expectations high, the real test of Labour’s immigration agenda starts now.