

# Framing the Border as a National Security Threat: Fox News Immigration Coverage in the 2016 and 2024 Election Cycles

Jenny Xu

*Rye Country Day School, United States of America, USA*

## Abstract

While previous scholarship has established the existence of U.S. right-wing ideological media framing and its evolution over time, there is limited research on how influential outlets such as Fox News have framed immigration across two critical election cycles: 2016 and 2024. These years represent key moments in recent American history: extreme-right-wing media narratives and how they shape public perception of emotionally charged topics, such as that of “illegal immigration” in the United States. This research paper examines how Fox News has framed the U.S.–Mexico border and immigration policy during election cycles, particularly in 2016 and 2024. It argues that Fox News strategically frames immigration as a national security threat during the 2016 and 2024 election cycles. I conduct a content analysis of the language, guests, and visuals used on Fox News programming, such as Hannity and Fox and Friends, to highlight how Fox News deliberately intensified its framing of the U.S.–Mexico border as a national security threat to influence public perception and invoke fear. This paper contributes to the fields of media studies and political communication by providing a multi-year analysis of threat-based storytelling employed by Fox News to shape public opinion. It deepens our understanding of the interplay between media bias, national security threats, and commercial incentives.

**Keywords:** border politics; content analysis; national security discourse; partisan broadcasting; threat construction