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How Anti-Immigrant Narratives Fracture Asian American Communities

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tayo

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This report examines anti-immigrant narratives and disinformation targeting four of the largest Asian American ethnic groups in the United States.

This report is led by PiYaoBa, a Chinese-language fact-checking initiative of Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA). The Filipino analysis is produced by **Tayo**, a project of the Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO). The Indian analysis is authored by **the Savera Coalition**, an interfaith, multiracial, anti-caste coalition working to counter supremacist politics. The Vietnamese analysis is produced by **Viet Fact Check**, a project of the Progressive Vietnamese American Organization (PIVOT).

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Executive Summary

Across Asian American communities, disinformation on immigration is not occurring in isolation. It is being produced, amplified, and sustained through interconnected information ecosystems that leverage fear, identity, and cultural context to shape public opinion and political behavior. In 2025, these dynamics intensified significantly, contributing to growing polarization, internal community division, and the normalization of harmful narratives about immigrants.

This report examines how anti-immigration disinformation and narratives operate within four of the largest Asian American communities in the United States — Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese — drawing on original research and analysis from trusted community-based partners. While each community's experience is shaped by its own migration history, media environment, and sociopolitical context, several consistent patterns emerge.

First, right-wing and fear-based narratives increasingly dominate in-language and diaspora media ecosystems. These narratives frequently frame immigrants — particularly undocumented immigrants — as criminals, threats, or economic burdens, often reinforcing a binary "us versus them" worldview. In many cases, these messages are amplified through ethnic media platforms, social media influencers, and transnational networks that adapt and localize broader right-wing talking points.

Second, disinformation is contributing to growing internal divisions within Asian American communities. Rather than fostering solidarity, immigration narratives are being used to distinguish between "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrants, often rooted in differences in legal status, class, religion, or national origin. These divisions are further deepened by historical experiences including colonialism, war, refugee resettlement, and geopolitical tensions, which are frequently invoked or manipulated in disinformation campaigns.

Third, there are persistent gaps in access to trusted, culturally and linguistically relevant information. Many Asian American community members rely on non-English language media ecosystems that are fragmented, under-resourced, or dominated by misinformation. At the same time, limited spaces for open dialogue within communities make it difficult to challenge false narratives or engage across differences.

Finally, these dynamics are unfolding within a broader information environment that is increasingly shaped by algorithmic amplification, weakened content moderation, and emerging technologies such as generative AI. Together, these forces accelerate the spread of disinformation while making it more difficult for accurate, community-centered narratives to reach scale.

The implications are significant. Asian American communities are among the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the United States and represent an increasingly important and diverse electorate. As immigration continues to be a central political issue, the persistence of disinformation and internal division threatens not only the well-being of these communities, but also broader efforts to advance immigrant justice and multiracial democracy.

Addressing these challenges will require coordinated action across sectors, including philanthropy, public institutions, and media and technology companies. Identified priorities include strengthening standards and accountability for platforms, particularly in non-English and diaspora media ecosystems; expanding investment in ethnic media and in-language narrative infrastructure; supporting trusted messengers and influencer networks within communities; addressing internal divisions that shape how immigration is understood; and building the coordination and capacity needed for emerging fact-based and community-centered voices to reach scale.

Introduction

Across Asian immigrant communities, fear-based disinformation has been weaponized to divide communities, creating deep fractures at the very moment when unity is most needed. What makes this moment especially challenging is that the problem is no longer disinformation alone — it is a broader ecosystem designed to manipulate human behavior. A splintered community is not accidental, but rather the intended outcome of policies and rhetoric that dehumanize immigrants, reinforced by an information environment that amplifies fear, distorts reality, and shapes how people think and act.

These dynamics are unfolding amid a profound shift in how disinformation itself is defined and amplified by the federal government. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security now publishes so-called "fake news" roundups that position mainstream journalism as disinformation. This has coincided with efforts to rewrite the public narrative of January 6, as well as attempts to reframe incidents such as the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. These are but a few examples of the increasingly fertile ground for xenophobic and racialized narratives to spread unchecked.

While combating mis- and disinformation on immigration remains necessary, it is of course insufficient on its own. What is also needed is a proactive strategy to reshape the immigration narrative — to change the framework of public debate and elevate the voices, values, and lived experiences of a broad diversity of Asian Americans as well as others. Building collective narrative power through and within new information systems can enable communities not only to respond to harm, but to set the terms of the conversation and advance long-term systems change.

This report provides original analyses from community-based partners to examine the harmful anti-immigration narratives and disinformation circulating within Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese communities — the four largest Asian American ethnic groups in the United States. The Chinese analysis is led by PiYaoBa, a Chinese-language fact-checking initiative of Chinese for Affirmative Action. The Indian analysis is authored by the Savera coalition, an interfaith, multiracial, anti-caste coalition against supremacist politics. The Filipino analysis is produced by Tayo, a project of the Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO). And the Vietnamese analysis is by Viet Fact Check, a project of the Progressive Vietnamese American Organization (PIVOT).

These analyses were developed independently and retain the voice, methodology, and emphasis of their respective authors. As a result, they differ in structure, tone, and focus. Taken together, however, they offer a view of how broader disinformation ecosystems manifest across different diasporic contexts, and how shared patterns, such as fear-based narratives, internal division, and gaps in trusted information, play out in practice.

How Chinese Language Right-Wing Immigration Narratives Sow Division

Trump's 2025 anti-immigration policies have instilled fear, uncertainty, and pain across immigrant communities, including Chinese Americans, and have extended their impact to Chinese Americans regardless of immigration status. Mass deportations, student visa revocations, and restrictions on H-1B visas have directly affected community members. At the same time, escalating U.S.-China tensions have reinforced a broader message that Chinese immigrants are not welcome, regardless of legal status.

Rather than uniting the Chinese American community, these developments have deepened internal divisions. Chinese-language media ecosystems are shaped by right-wing narratives and disinformation that target undocumented immigrants and frame them as criminals or economic threats. Additional narratives portray Chinese students, scholars, and new immigrants as potential national security risks or "CCP agents" with such content often adapted from English-language right-wing media and amplified across platforms such as WeChat, X, and YouTube.

These dynamics have fragmented the information environment within Chinese American communities. Immigration debates are frequently framed through a binary distinction between "legal" and "illegal" immigrants. National security narratives blur the line between the Chinese government, the Chinese nation, and the Chinese diaspora. At the same time, a smaller but growing set of voices is beginning to challenge these narratives as policies increasingly harm Chinese immigrants directly.

Through its Chinese Digital Engagement program, including PiYaoBa, a Chinese-language fact-checking platform, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) has documented 475 major pieces of anti-immigration disinformation circulating on Chinese-language social media platforms that have amassed over 129 million views. In addition, over 190 right-wing Chinese-language accounts have been identified as actively spreading disinformation and political propaganda on immigration across WeChat, X (Twitter), YouTube, and Xiaohongshu (RedNote). Over 57% of Chinese-language immigration discourse actively promotes anti-immigration policies, while pro-immigration resistance is emerging but remains fragmented across platforms.

Methodology: From January 1 to December 2025, high-impact content on WeChat, X, YouTube, and Xiaohongshu was analyzed using keywords such as "deportation," "illegal/undocumented immigrants," "F-1 visa," "land ban," and "spy/infiltration." High-impact is defined as >2K views on WeChat, >20K views on X, >2K views on YouTube, and >100 comments on Xiaohongshu. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative thematic coding (e.g., Policing & Deportation, Legal Immigration Restrictions) and immigration-stance coding (e.g., Anti-, Pro-, Neutral) with quantitative analysis. Narrative proportions and engagement were calculated across platforms. Anti-immigration content accounts for 57.5% (273 posts) of the dataset. Among these, 219 posts (80%) focus specifically on undocumented immigration within the Policing & Deportation theme. Pro-immigration content represents 20.42%, and neutral content 22.15%.

Data sample limitation: As immigration-related discussions are most active on X, content from X is also the easiest to produce and collect. As a result, the sample is highly unbalanced, with most posts coming from X (316 posts, 66%). The remaining posts come from Xiaohongshu (66, 13.9%), WeChat (48, 10.1%), and YouTube (46, 9.7%).

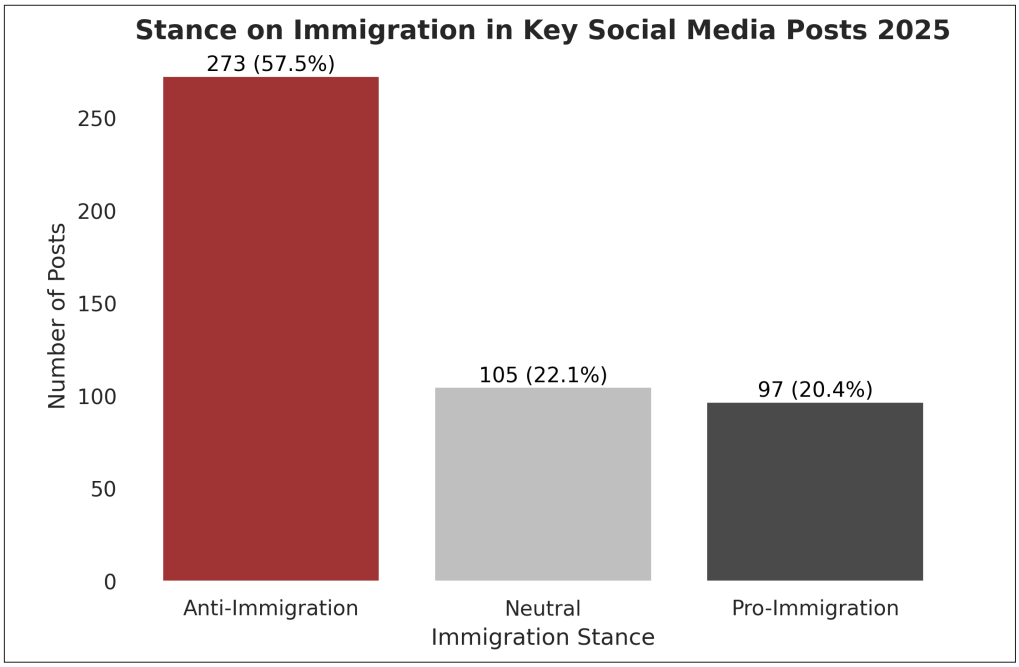


***Figure 1**: Stance on Immigration. This chart illustrates the overall proportion of 2025 Chinese-language immigration narratives based on 475 social media posts. Anti-immigration narratives dominate at 57.5% (273 posts), often framing immigrants as criminals, threats, or economic burdens. Pro-immigration voices, though a minority at 20% (97 posts), have grown in visibility — particularly around F-1 visa revocations and H-1B restrictions. Neutral/factual content accounts for 22% (105 posts).*

Findings

1. Platform design, media habits, and varying levels of English proficiency shape how Chinese communities consume and share information.

First-generation immigrants in the United States rely on Chinese-language content on platforms such as WeChat, X, and YouTube. Limited English proficiency, low civic literacy, and weak media-critical skills deepen dependence on right-wing platforms, reinforcing and amplifying anti-immigrant misinformation. Platforms with younger, more English-proficient users, such as Xiaohongshu, have significantly higher levels of progressive and pro-immigration content.

YouTube and X stand out for their high percentage of right-wing anti-immigration narratives and disinformation. Among high-impact content on immigration, 72% on YouTube and 70% on X were anti-immigration, mostly echoing right-wing narratives. X's removal of fact-checking, coupled with limited moderation of Chinese-language posts, allows disinformation to spread unchecked.

WeChat is very popular among first-generation immigrants and remains largely right-leaning, although more neutral and progressive voices are emerging on immigration. It is heavily influenced by Chinese censorship, and many immigration issues related to the U.S. and China are restricted or banned. Among posts about immigration, 35% are anti-immigration, especially against undocumented immigrants.

Xiaohongshu / 小红书 / RedNote began in 2013 as a shopping guide for Chinese tourists. Its 300 million monthly active users are mostly women (79%), younger (half were born after 1995), and tend to hold more progressive views (many were educated in the U.S.). Its interface features a dual-column algorithmic feed that targets users with relevant interests or nearby locations, making it particularly effective in fostering interest-based communities and mobilizing both online and offline civic engagement. The lowest percentage of anti-immigration narratives (only 6%) appears on this platform, while 60% are pro-immigration.

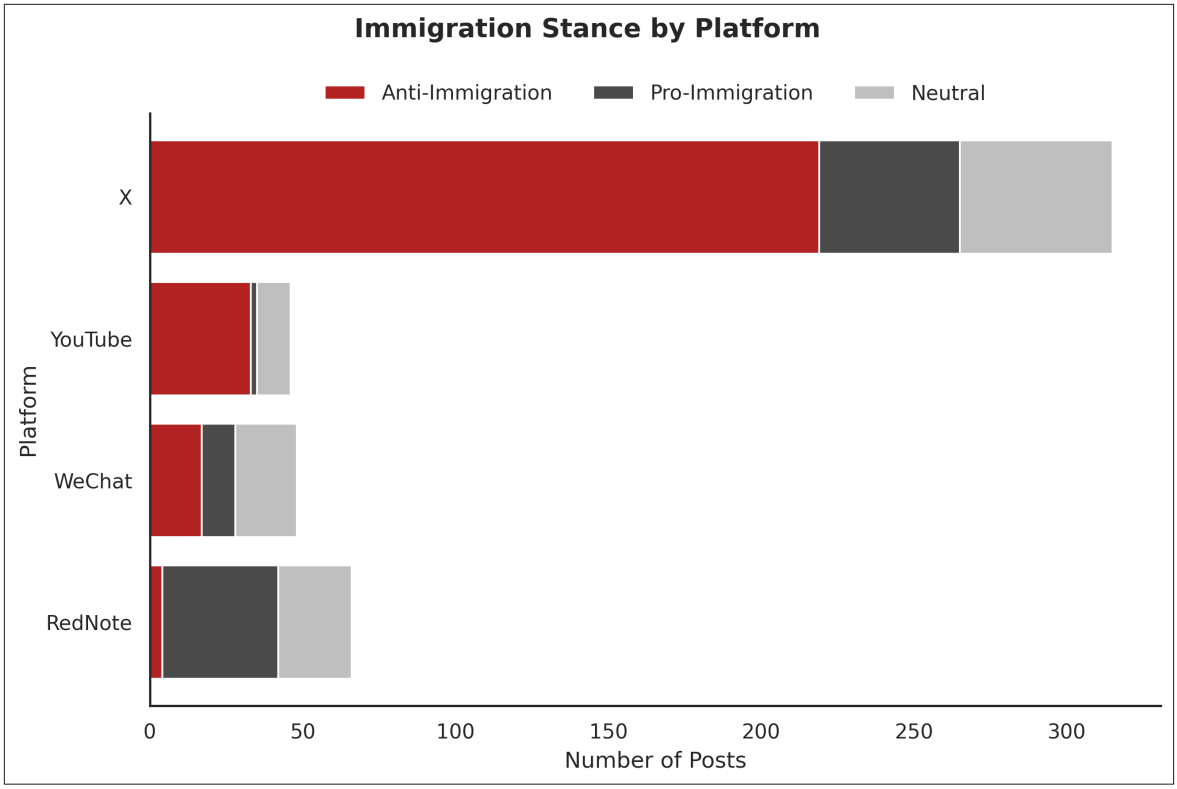


Figure 2: *Immigration Stance by Platform*

2. Rhetoric against undocumented immigrants is rising in Chinese communities.

In the lead-up to the 2024 election, and even more so after Donald Trump's victory, hostility toward undocumented immigrants became louder and more entrenched in Chinese-language spaces. Familiar narratives about "unfair exploitation" of public resources and "welfare abuse" circulated widely, hardening attitudes that had already taken root years earlier. Immigrants were increasingly sorted into "legal" versus "illegal" camps, and the "us vs. them" framework has since been used to rationalize the Trump administration's harsh anti-immigration agenda. What emerged was not just opposition to immigration, but a deep internal fracture within the community itself.

In 2025, 219 posts were identified across platforms such as WeChat, YouTube, and X that largely echoed the Trump administration's repressive and dehumanizing policies toward undocumented immigrants. These posts, which frame undocumented immigrants as criminals or threats and justify enforcement actions, dominate overall anti-immigration narratives, accounting for 80%.

These posts often use stigmatizing labels such as “resource theft” or “illegal” to fuel anti-immigrant sentiment. The zero-sum “us vs. them” mindset is largely rooted in past experiences of scarcity and economic insecurity, framing undocumented immigrants as competitors. This has led segments of the Chinese right-wing community to advocate for stricter U.S. immigration standards, oppose undocumented immigrants, and accuse them of using fraudulent documents to obtain asylum. Many recent undocumented Chinese immigrants entered the U.S. due to economic hardship; however, the right-wing community often perceives itself as having earned legal status through effort and skill, while viewing undocumented immigrants — including Chinese migrants — as abusing the U.S. asylum and welfare systems.

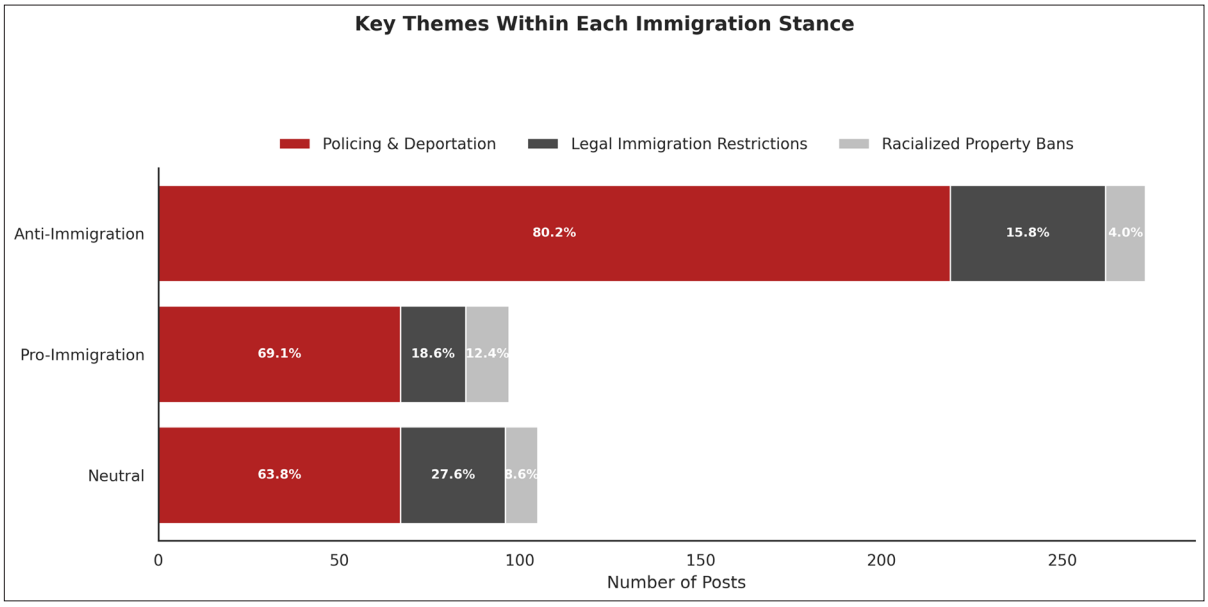


Figure 3: *Key Themes Within Each Immigration Stance. Posts categorized as Policing & Deportation frame undocumented immigrants as criminals or threats and justify enforcement actions such as ICE raids, detention, and deportation. Legal Immigration Restrictions include student visa bans and limitations on H-1B and green card visas. Racialized Property Bans appear only in the Chinese American community and refer to narratives around the Chinese land ban targeting Chinese immigrants.*

Anti-immigration narratives also legitimize ICE raids and procedural injustices in deportation policies, often sidelining basic principles of due process. For example, the YouTube channel Cheyenne's Forum (美国晓言论坛) on April 15, 2025 (2K views) described the Trump administration's mass deportations under the "Foreign Enemy Act" as "encouraging." The video highlighted the deportation of undocumented immigrants, including Kilmar Armando Ábrego García, to El Salvador despite court injunctions, labeling these immigrants as gang members, calling judges "extreme leftists abusing the law," urging impeachment, and dismissing mainstream media reports as "fake news."

Title: *The Trump administration disregarded the judge's order and stubbornly sent the gang members back to their hometowns!*
Source: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAl0DogmmGo*

3. A large portion of Chinese-language disinformation and anti-immigration narratives originates from translations or adaptations of English right-wing media.

About 60% of anti-immigration content can be traced back to sources such as Fox News, often localized to amplify impact within Chinese-speaking communities. These narratives frequently embrace the Great Replacement Theory, use racist language, and claim that U.S. diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies allow immigrants who "fail to assimilate" to threaten Christian and white cultural dominance.

This media network operates efficiently across multiple channels — X, YouTube, Telegram, and others — creating a high-frequency feedback loop in which content is cross-posted and amplified, while audience loyalty is reinforced through real-time engagement such as livestreams and chat groups. In contrast, progressive voices still lack comparable infrastructure, cross-platform coordination, and community cohesion, making it difficult for them to achieve scale or visibility.

Right-wing posts maintain extremely high engagement on X, while fact-checkers and dissenting voices often face harassment or false reports to U.S. authorities such as the State Department, including accusations of being Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agents. These dynamics suppress the emergence of factual or pluralistic discussions.

In contrast, some Chinese right-wing users praised Trump's acceptance of "white refugees" from South Africa, despite a lack of evidence that they are being persecuted. For instance, user @usa912152217 (May 12, 2025, 13.1K views) described white South Africans as "fleeing persecution," while claiming that under the Biden administration, "criminals are pretending to be refugees."

Summary: *"President Trump tweeted: If persecuted whites in South Africa flee, the U.S. will accept them... Some Chinese criticized why Chinese people are persecuted while the U.S. does not 'accept' them?... Many Chinese are fabricating facts, and lawyers help with fake asylum applications... The U.S. left-wing media remained silent."*
Source: *https://x.com/CaoChangqing/status/1898550441560154597*

4. Escalating U.S.-China tensions cast Chinese immigrants increasingly as spies.

In early 2025, escalating U.S.-China tensions continued to reshape the political climate for Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. A wave of aggressive policies — ranging from threats of 25–50% tariffs to accusations of "technology theft" and "economic infiltration" — furthered suspicions of those of Chinese descent. F-1 visa revocations and state-level bans on land purchases sent the message that immigrants are being targeted. Against this backdrop, programs resembling the defunct

China Initiative stigmatized Chinese students and tech workers as "spies" or "CCP agents," deepening divisions and sowing mistrust within the community.

Analysis shows that about 60% of right-wing content adapted English-language media (e.g., Fox News, Breitbart), linking Chinese immigrants to "national security threats." On X, right-wing narratives accounted for more than 60% of such content. Notably, these external anti-China and anti-CCP narratives have been amplified by internal community influencers and leaders. Often first-generation Chinese immigrants with 100K–500K followers, these influencers localize English-language content and leverage historical trauma to stoke fear and divide the community. They use emotive language, exaggerated rhetoric (e.g., "invasion," "parasites"), and visual elements such as Fox News clips to influence audiences with limited English proficiency. These influencers fall into three categories, united by anti-CCP stances:

- Post-1989 immigrants, shaped by the Tiananmen Square events, who lean conservative and view the CCP as a threat to identity.
- After 2010, members of the Falun Gong and supporters of billionaire Guo Wengui (e.g., Epoch Times affiliates), who frame Trump as "divinely chosen" while tying anti-immigration narratives to anti-communism.
- Since the 2024 U.S. presidential election cycle, cryptocurrency investors, who have become more politically active and support Trump's deregulation and restrictive immigration policies to "protect the economy."

Even when acknowledging economic pressures from tariffs, right-wing voices rationalize support for Trump's policies by framing tariffs as necessary to confront the CCP. For example, social media content creator 海阔天空 @wshngknshji1 (April 2025; 337.1K views) on X and YouTube justified short-term economic "pain" as a path to long-term prosperity, prompting over 50K interactions. 海阔天空 is a first-generation immigrant who identifies as a small business owner and a moderate right-winger, and is active on X (43.7K followers), YouTube (3.74K followers), and multiple WeChat groups.

Statistical analysis shows that right-wing posts averaged 48,000 views, with a 138% increase following X's July 2024 algorithm changes prioritizing such content. The lack of fact-checking on X further enabled misinformation, reinforcing echo chambers.

The result is that, within the Chinese-language community, disinformation and dominant right-wing narratives overwhelmingly favor Trump's revocation of F-1 student visas and state-level bans restricting citizens of China and other countries from purchasing or owning property in the U.S. These narratives often portray Chinese students, scholars, and new immigrants as "CCP agents" or "spies." About 32% of right-wing posts use the "spy" label, while roughly 38% contain anti-CCP rhetoric that blurs the lines between the political party, the nation, and the diaspora. This reinforces negative stereotypes of Chinese people and deepens internal divisions within the community.

5. A small but steady shift to more progressive immigration narratives is emerging.

In 2025, immigration narratives in Chinese-language social media spaces, though dominated by right-wing rhetoric, began to fracture. For years, these narratives racialized immigrants, labeled undocumented individuals as "criminals," and framed Chinese students and new arrivals as potential "CCP agents."

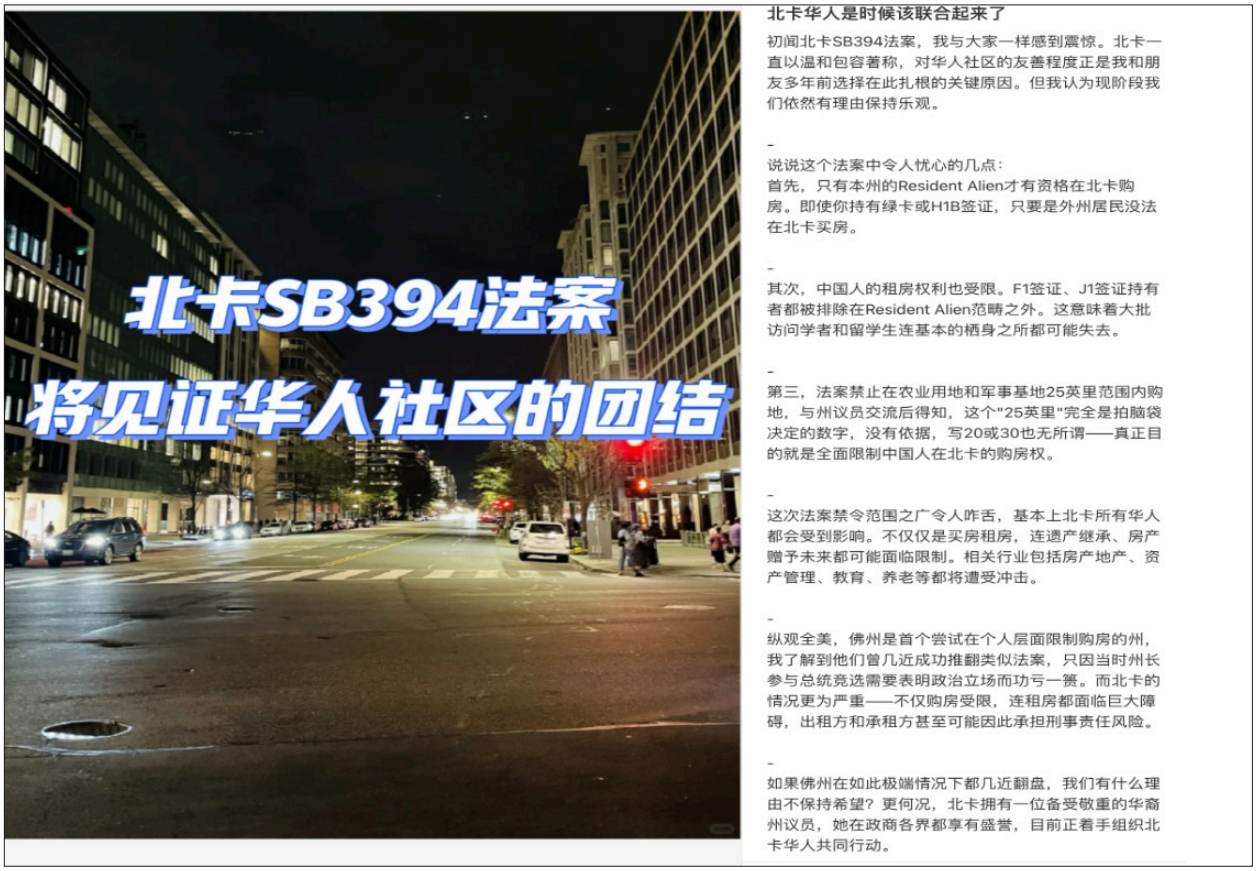
As policies began hitting closer to home — including F-1 visa revocations, state-level land bans targeting Chinese immigrants, and a potential revival of the China Initiative program — the gap between right-wing narratives and the lived realities of their impacts became increasingly difficult to ignore. In response, new progressive voices emerged across platforms such as Xiaohongshu and others, challenging prevailing narratives, while some right-wing influencers moderated their rhetoric.

From January to December 2025, seven to nine prominent right-wing Chinese-language bloggers shifted toward more neutral or moderate positions, calling for the protection of legal rights for Chinese and all immigrants, particularly in relation to F-1 and H-1B restrictions. While still marginal, these voices disrupted the near-total dominance of anti-immigration narratives and signaled a growing demand for more balanced discourse.

For example, the long-time pro-Trump WeChat public account 华人生活网 (Chinese Life Network) published an article in June 2025 stating that "Trump's F-1 policy goes too far — Chinese students with clean records deserve due process," with its curated comment section notably including criticism of the administration for the first time (~50K reads). These instances reflect a cautious but meaningful departure from unconditional support.

In debates over land bans targeting citizens of China and other countries, progressive voices were especially prominent. Across social media, advocates condemned these policies as discriminatory toward Chinese and other Asian communities, urging Chinese Americans to respond through legal challenges, protests, and public demonstrations.

Many of these same activists are also deeply involved in broader efforts to oppose Trump policies and to defend the rights of all immigrants. Chinese communities in Texas emerged as the most active, as the state's SB17 ban drew the greatest national attention. On platforms such as WeChat and Xiaohongshu, Texas-based users openly criticized the policy and helped organize collective opposition, turning online spaces into hubs of resistance.



Translation: *"It's time for Chinese Americans in North Carolina to unite. When I first heard about North Carolina's SB394 bill, I was as shocked as everyone else... What should be done? The first priority is to make legislators aware of the negative impact of this bill. Nearly half of the talent in the U.S. AI field is of Chinese descent. If the bill passes and top talent in North Carolina is forced to leave, who will be the biggest loser? What will happen to North Carolina's economic development, job market, and tax revenue?"*
Source: *https://www.xiaohongshu.com/discovery/item/68296696000000022004128*

Progressive voices were also visible and coordinated in opposing Trump's revocation of F-1 visas. Many affected students shared updates and mutual aid resources online.

About 28.4% (42 posts) of the pro-immigration content came from Xiaohongshu, where numerous Chinese students shared personal stories of visa cancellations. In New York and California, posts appeared recruiting others facing similar situations to initiate joint lawsuits. At the same time, several Chinese American lawyers used the platform to share legal updates and recruit potential plaintiffs, creating a sense of mutual support.

During Trump's mass deportations, both X and Xiaohongshu saw posts opposing excessive deportations and informing immigrants of their legal rights (around 15%). For instance, user @_vicwong (March 12, 2025, 38.6K views) reported on the deportation of a Palestinian green card holder, questioning the fairness of law enforcement. On Xiaohongshu, among 48 posts with more than 100 comments, three explicitly outlined immigrants' rights and encouraged international students and immigrants to protect themselves. In Chinese-dense areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York, users also used Xiaohongshu's geolocation feature to warn each other about ongoing ICE raids, allowing them to build local awareness while standing in solidarity with those most at risk.

Overall, progressive voices demonstrated bilingual fluency and cross-cultural awareness, often citing English-language primary sources and reputable media to clarify misinformation. Their tone tended to be calm and rational, appealing to moderate audiences. View counts for such posts on X (ranging from 65.4K to 221K) indicate that progressive narratives are beginning to resonate within the Chinese community, particularly during sensitive events related to Chinese immigrants or issues of community identity.

A noteworthy development is the emerging use of AI tools such as Gemini and Claude, with users beginning to fact-check viral Chinese-language posts. Some users now directly refute right-wing misinformation in comment sections with factual evidence, often receiving high engagement. Though still marginal, these developments have already disrupted the near-total dominance of right-wing discourse.

In sum, while the scale of progressive voices remains limited and is often overshadowed by more inflammatory right-wing content, their emergence signals that Chinese immigrants are seeking more balanced information sources, particularly on issues directly affecting their rights.

How Hindu Supremacists and MAGA Networks Use Fear Speech to Spread Panic and Disinformation in the Indian Diaspora

The Indian American community grapples with two primary sources of disinformation on the topic of immigration. The first is the transnational far-right Hindu supremacist movement, whose organized networks in the U.S. and in India have promoted massive amounts of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee rhetoric within the diaspora. The second is the MAGA movement itself, which has prominent Indian American participants in Vivek Ramaswamy, Kash Patel, and Harmeet Dhillon, alongside older Indian American conservatives like Dinesh D'Souza.

Hindu supremacists and MAGA networks engage primarily in "fear speech": the repetition of ideas that deploy existing stereotypes to spread panic around marginalized groups, spurring their audiences to take action.

In 2025, however, the more nativist and overtly racist sections of the MAGA movement began directing their hostility — and "fear speech" attacks — toward the Indian American community itself. This report will therefore also note the sharp rise in false narratives *about* the Indian American community, including data that shows that an incident involving a Sikh American driver has drawn a disproportionate amount of anti-Indian hate by these groups.

This development has generated confusion and dismay among Indian Americans who were misled into supporting the MAGA movement in the 2024 elections. Chief among these groups are MAGA's old partners in disinformation: the Hindu supremacists. Because Hindu supremacy shares with MAGA the hatred and demonization of Muslims, refugees, and poorer migrants, many Hindutva organizations and ideologues in the U.S. believed their alignment would shield them from MAGA's nativist and racist tendencies. Instead, as we will see below, they have become one of its latest targets.

This methodology relies on research into Hindu supremacist organizations and individuals in the U.S. conducted by the Savera coalition, an interfaith, multiracial, anti-caste coalition against supremacist politics.[1] It also draws on detailed studies by the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH).

What is Hindu supremacy?

Hindu supremacy, also known as Hindu nationalism or Hindutva, is a right-wing extremist political ideology whose adherents believe that all of the South Asian subcontinent should belong exclusively to Hindus, with everyone else either being driven out or living subservient to Hindus.

Background on Indian American Communities

Mainstream portrayals of the Indian American community depict it to be homogeneous: wealthy, highly educated, and composed primarily of white-collar professionals such as software engineers and doctors. This image is inaccurate and stems from the "model minority" myth — advanced by some Indian American elites nurturing the false hope that this will protect them from racism, and by others who use it to divide immigrant and racial minorities into "good" and "bad" immigrants.

The true picture is far more complex:

- 66% of Indian Americans are immigrants to the country (i.e., not born in the U.S.)[2]
- Indian Americans have the highest median income of any ethnic group. However, an emphasis on this statistic alone obscures large numbers of working class Indian Americans, as well as students and recent arrivals who often take on significant debt to get to the U.S.
- This includes those desperate to escape straitened economic circumstances in India. Contrary to the picture of the community exclusively pursuing "legal" immigration pathways, between 2019–2022 Indians made up the third largest group of undocumented people in the United States.[3]
- Indians make up the largest nationality of those on student visas in the U.S.

- Among documented Indian Americans, a large proportion are stuck in "Green Card limbo." Due to per-country caps in the employment-based Green Card process, many applicants from India face wait times that can stretch for decades. This prolonged wait creates multiple anxieties, especially concerning children who grow up in the U.S. but risk "aging out" of dependent status at 21, thereby losing their legal status.

While immigration to the U.S. has never been particularly easy for most Indian Americans, since the inauguration of Trump in 2025, as with other communities, there has been a significant rise in anxiety within the community.

- Both documented and undocumented Indian immigrants have been deported, with the latter being subjected to brutal treatment, such as being shackled on a U.S. military plane for hours.[4]
- The rate of visa denials has shot up, in particular of F-1 visas.[5] Many students have been affected by the weaponization of immigrant status to criminalize dissent,[6] as well as by large-scale cuts to and pauses of interviews for processing F-1 visas,[7] and by a growing sense of fear and intimidation.[8]
- Across visa categories — including business and leisure travelers — wait times for visas have increased, sometimes to over a year.[9]
- Elderly parents of Indian American citizens have been denied entry, and sometimes coerced into surrendering their green cards.[10]

Key Findings

1. Disinformation on immigration is spread by transnational Hindu supremacist networks across India and the diaspora.

Despite being immigrants themselves, **Hindu supremacists** divide people into "good" and "unwanted" immigrants based on religion, caste, and economic usefulness. **Their deep-rooted elitism and racism lead them to embrace Trump-style anti-immigrant policies that specifically target refugees, undocumented immigrants, and Muslims.**

Many of these ideas flow transnationally across the U.S. and India. In this section, we will first discuss the ideas that come from India into the diaspora.

While anti-immigrant sentiment — often combined with anti-Muslim sentiment — has long been an issue in India, the far-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its supporters have, in recent years, leaned heavily into such rhetoric in order to demonize Rohingya refugees, migrants from Bangladesh, and Indian Muslims who do not have access to documentation. Notably, during India's 2024 general elections, BJP leaders as well as far-right social media accounts frequently referred to Muslim refugees and immigrants as "infiltrators" who steal government benefits, land, and jobs from Hindus. They also regularly reference a common disinformation myth that claims Muslim migrants are committing "population jihad"[1] via deliberate and "explosive population growth" in order to dominate Hindus.

These and other anti-immigrant talking points have been circulated by Hindu supremacist figures, both in India and abroad, among diaspora audiences. Notably, the Jaipur Dialogues, a platform run by affiliates of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), has repeatedly promoted anti-Bangladeshi and anti-Rohingya messaging to its 481.1k followers on X. In August 2025, the account posted calls for the Modi government to "reverse demographic change" via "removal of illegals." That same month, the account tweeted that a "Child Born From A Foreign Women Womb Can Never Be Faithful To The Nation" (sic). Later, following a surge of stray dog attacks on humans in Delhi, the account posted AI-generated pictures of a Muslim man and a dog, asking its followers, "Who is more dangerous for India? A. Bangladeshi Infiltrator [or] B. Street Dog."

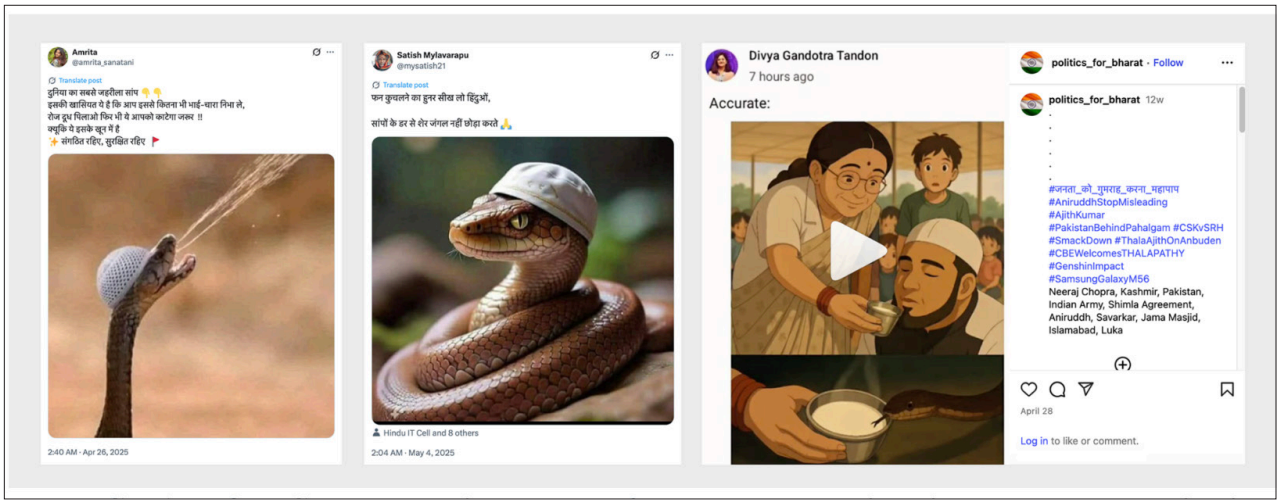
Other prominent accounts target diaspora audiences by combining commentary on both Indian and American immigration affairs. Indian journalist Abhijit Majumder, who has 593.4K followers on X, called the deportation of undocumented Indians from the United States a "good move," following up with a call for India to "deport millions

of Bangladeshi and Rohingya illegals, in which America supports us reciprocally." The post garnered nearly 6,000 likes.

Similarly, the X account @RealBababanaras, a Hindu supremacist influencer with 87.7k followers, has posted anti-immigrant disinformation — particularly targeting Muslim immigrants — relating to the U.S., U.K., France, and Italy. In April 2025, a U.K.-based account going by the name BharatKiBeti posted to 36.5k followers claiming that protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a discriminatory law that threatens Muslims' citizenship rights, provides "cover for illegal Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Rohingyas," while regurgitating disinformation across multiple other tweets claiming that Muslims in the U.K. are responsible for violence and disenfranchisement of other groups. In February 2025, the account @PoornimaNimo praised the notion that "no American Hindu, or American protested, rioted, blocked the roads of USA" over the inhumane deportation of "illegal" immigrants to India, claiming that by contrast, Indian Muslims had "rioted in Delhi" over the CAA for "accurately" identifying "illegal Bangladeshis [and] Rohingyas living illegally in India."

Attempt at falsely linking stabbing incident in April to Muslims through the term "Londonistan"

A recent report[2] by CSOH also found widespread **use of generative AI to create posts targeting Muslims, including posts featuring sexualization of Muslim women, exclusionary and dehumanizing rhetoric, conspiratorial narratives, and the aestheticization of violence.**



Source: Center for the Study of Organized Hate

2. Apart from Muslims, Hindu supremacists in the U.S. spread disinformation about other Indian American communities, including Sikhs and Dalits.

Hindu supremacist networks frequently try to divide Hindus from other Indian American communities by trafficking in demonization of other communities. During a prominent protest by farmers in India, U.S.-based Hindu supremacist organizations intensified efforts to slander Sikh Americans as "terrorists," "separatists," or agents of foreign powers.

This campaign came on the back of a foiled assassination attempt on U.S. soil of a Sikh separatist leader by an individual linked to India's intelligence agencies. Its target was a bill aimed at stopping transnational repression of U.S. citizens by foreign governments, including the government of India.

The key organization leading these efforts is the Hindu American Foundation (HAF). As reported in a Sacramento Bee article,[3] HAF petitioned local authorities in Fresno to surveil Sikh community leaders, alleging ties to organized crime and "Khalistani terrorism," and asked law enforcement to monitor their activities. As noted by the Sikh Coalition, which is a member of the Savera coalition authoring this report, HAF had cited an article to allege connections between Sikh/Gurdwara institutions

and criminal gangs — even though the original article offered no law enforcement evidence to support such links.

HAF's community outreach director, Ramya Ramakrishnan, was quoted in the article as saying, "Have you been doing any research on the Khalistan movement at all? … Some of their places of worship in Fremont or in other places have been, there is a lot of drugs, and, you know, weapons … so that's … you know, organized crime." This slander came despite members of the same Fremont Gurdwara assisting in the cleanup of a Hindu temple in Newark, California, after it was vandalized in 2023. HAF later issued a correction, claiming its spokesperson had been misquoted. Nevertheless, HAF kept up its campaign of disinformation against the renewed transnational repression bill SB509 in the California state legislature.

Another key axis of disinformation has been around the BAPS Swaminarayan case, involving the alleged trafficking and exploitation of oppressed caste workers in the construction of the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu temple in Edison, New Jersey. Workers have alleged horrific treatment, including confiscation of passports, verbal abuse and caste-based slurs, and being forced to work 87 hours a week at a rate of a mere $1.20 an hour, over 10 times below the minimum wage. Given a recent decision by the Department of Justice to close the criminal investigation into these charges, HAF has made statements claiming that the charges were "false" despite no such finding by the Department of Justice. Contrary to BAPS being exonerated in the matter, a federal class-action lawsuit alleging violations of U.S. labor laws, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is moving forward.

3. Indian Americans in the MAGA movement falsely claim that immigrants are criminals.

Indian Americans in the MAGA movement have often striven hard to present their anti-immigrant credentials by pushing for some of the harshest policies against immigrants. The most prominent Indian American face in the MAGA movement is the unsuccessful presidential candidate and the current frontrunner in the Republican primary for governor of Ohio, **Vivek Ramaswamy**. Since his rise to national prominence, he has repeatedly advanced extreme immigration positions that blur fact and rhetoric. He has called for universal deportation of undocumented immigrants and has defended Trump's mass-deportation agenda as "pragmatic," arguing that those who entered illegally — including U.S.-born children of such parents — should not be eligible for citizenship rights. Ramaswamy has also said that immigrants, whether

documented or undocumented, lie to get into the country, stating, "The #1 human attribute that our immigration system currently rewards … is your willingness to lie to the U.S. government."

Harmeet Dhillon, as a Republican legal and media figure, has also advanced narratives that cast immigrants, particularly undocumented ones, as criminal or burdensome. She has argued that illegal immigrants "take advantage" of the system, do not pay taxes, and contribute to social and public safety problems. She has defended stricter immigration controls and the use of biometric or DNA data on entrants as a security measure, framing such enforcement intrusions as necessary to "keep citizens safe," despite multiple studies[4] showing immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than those born in the U.S. As recently confirmed in her DOJ role, Dhillon has signaled greater enforcement against visa programs (e.g. H-1B) on the grounds that they disadvantage U.S. citizens — framing immigrant workers as threats to domestic employment, despite studies showing that firms that had their H-1B applications approved in the random lottery tended to increase employment of U.S.-born workers by the same firms, or that firms that were unsuccessful in securing an H-1B employee tended to have lower employment and wage growth for native-born workers in the same labor market.

Dinesh D'Souza has long trafficked in narratives that demonize immigrants, especially when folded into his broader conservative and nationalist narratives. His film "2,000 Mules" falsely claimed immigrant-driven electoral fraud and played into the trope of immigrant infiltration in American institutions. Later, he admitted the underlying data on which the film was based was false. He has also consistently portrayed immigrants (especially nonwhite ones) as vectors of cultural or social decay, or as political threats to a perceived "traditional" America. His commentary often frames immigration as a form of invasion or takeover, relying on fear-based tropes rather than nuanced policy critique.

Kash Patel, though less publicly expansive on immigration than the others, has participated in circles that amplify anti-immigrant or xenophobic narratives, especially in alignment with the MAGA base and election-denial messaging. He co-authored a children's book tied to D'Souza's "2,000 Mules" narrative, which advances false claims about massive fraud by immigrants in elections. During Senate hearings, Patel has also echoed strong law-and-order and border control themes, often conflating immigration with criminality, or otherwise undermining legal protections for migrants.

4. Hindu supremacists have supported the MAGA movement in perpetuating myths of immigrants as criminals and Muslims as threats.

Prominent Hindu supremacists have amplified many of these toxic narratives. Purnima Nath, who has ties to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHP-A) and who has attempted to recruit Indian Americans into the MAGA movement, has trafficked in fear speech around the trapping of White girls and women by Muslims under the fake concept of "Trap Jihad."

Shalabh Kumar, a businessman who founded the Republican Hindu Coalition, and who has tried to advance Hindu supremacist narratives of "Hindu genocides" by conceiving of a "Hindu Genocide Memorial" backed the first Trump administration's "Muslim Ban" and has repeatedly portrayed Muslims and Islam as threats, calling for the monitoring of mosques and profiling of Muslims.

Utsav Sanduja, a former COO of far-right social media site Gab, and the founder of Hindus for America First, has repeated lies about immigrants, linking them to false claims of "unprecedented crime rates" and "drug smuggling."

At times, the "model minority" myth peddled by Indian American elites comes in conflict with racism from MAGA's nativist faction. Rakesh Simha, whose X timeline is full of Hindu supremacist talking points, used the Bourbon Street attack in 2025 to perpetuate the good immigrant/bad immigrant myth by comparing his idealized general image of Hindu Americans to the attacker.

Hindu supremacist networks in India have also amplified Trump and his talking points. The Hindu Sena (which means "Hindu Army") lauded Trump's immigration-related attacks on Muslims, calling Trump the "lone protector of mankind" from the threat of "radical Islam." Meanwhile, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the organization that birthed and has continuously led the transnational Hindu supremacist movement, urged the government of India to toe Trump's line on immigration, styling undocumented immigration as posing "serious consequences on demography, law and order, indigenous culture and even the security of a nation."

5. Hindu supremacists joined far-right networks in promoting anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant hate towards Zohran Mamdani and Muslims in general.

Zohran Mamdani's successful primary campaign for mayor of New York City saw a significant surge in anti-Muslim bigotry online. A report[5] from CSOH noted a sharp flash spike in social media, in particular starting on election day on June 24, 2025. Over a 17-day window (June 13–30), researchers collected 6,669 public posts across platforms referencing Mamdani and tied themes, which accumulated 419.2 million engagements (views, likes, comments, shares), with posts on June 24–25 alone accumulating 249.4 million engagements. Of these, a full 64.6% of the posts were on X alone, indicating that that platform was particularly targeted to spread these narratives.

The report uses a smaller dataset of 1,933 high-engagement and likely harmful posts that it examined more closely to identify several interlocking narrative frames used in posts targeting Mamdani (see table below). Along the axis of religion-based delegitimization, posts spread fear speech around a "Sharia takeover" in New York City and accused Mamdani of being a "terrorist sympathizer." This was accompanied by ideological demonization, as Mamdani's democratic-socialist platform was recast as communism, Marxism, or subversion. Over half of the anti-Muslim posts also demonized the political ideology, and many ideological attacks incorporated anti-Muslim language (e.g., "Islamist socialism taking hold of NYC"). 14.3% of this dataset directly attacked Mamdani's status as an immigrant, demanding deportation or revocation of citizenship.

Both Hindu supremacists and broader far-right networks in the U.S. participated in this slander, which clearly attempted to sway the election. Two days before primary day, Hindu supremacists in the diaspora flew a plane carrying the message "Save NYC from global intifada. Reject Mamdani." Hindu supremacists in India, including elected leaders as well as officials of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), also targeted Mamdani during this time. The national spokesperson of the BJP, Sanju Verma, called Mamdani a "Hinduphobic bigot" and "rabid liar."

This extended offline to attacks on Mamdani, and Muslims in general.

Kajal Shingala's 38-day hate tour

Kajal Shingala, who styles herself Kajal Hindusthani, has been tracked by CSOH as providing the largest number of instances of hateful rhetoric in India in 2023. Shingala participated in a 38-day speaking tour across multiple cities of the U.S. In New Jersey, her speech contained several pieces of vile rhetoric. She referred to Mamdani as a "demon" and a "monster standing on the chests of Hindus."

She also referred to Muslims as "braindead zombies," "treacherous jihadis," or "living monsters" who were conspiring to make Hindus sexually impotent through Halal-certified food, and called for an economic boycott of Muslims by Hindus. Combining these two ideas, she said, "New York is the heart of America, and they want to prove, just as Sadiq Khan did in London, the conquest of the world. Their agenda is not just the conquest of India, it is the conquest of the world! They want to convert the whole world to Islam. So long as the last non-Muslim is on Earth, either they will convert him, or kill him. Death will come for everyone — earlier for some, a little later for others."

Shingala was publicly endorsed and hosted by all the major Hindu supremacist organizations in the U.S., including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHP-A), the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), and the Coalition of Hindu Organizations of North America (COHNA).

Disinformation and Hate Targeting Indian Americans

As noted above, recent weeks have seen a sharp surge in disinformation and hate targeting people of Indian origin in the U.S. Another report[6] by CSOH found that 680 high-engagement anti-Indian racism posts garnered 281.2 million views over a two-month period from July 1 to September 7, 2025. Narratives framed Indians as "invaders" and "job thieves" and called for their deportation as well as denaturalization.

Apart from attacking H-1B immigrants, a key locus of attack was around an August 12 truck crash in Florida involving a Sikh driver. Posts about this single incident garnered over 94.9 million views. The rhetoric was hateful, with one post calling immigrant drivers "foreign invaders" who are "literally destroying the industry" with their trucking companies, followed by the line "Let's be honest; they are destroying all of our industries."

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this report underscores a striking irony: the same Hindu supremacist networks that have actively participated in spreading anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim disinformation have now become targets of the very nativist hostility they once enabled. Their alliance with the MAGA movement — founded on shared narratives of fear and exclusion — illustrates how disinformation ecosystems ultimately turn against those who contribute to them. The attempt to weaponize identity-based grievance to secure proximity to political power has instead reinforced the vulnerability of all immigrant communities in the face of racialized nationalism. This development highlights the urgent need for community education, cross-group solidarity, and robust regulatory interventions to counter disinformation that exploits ethnic and religious divisions. Ultimately, the findings make clear that disinformation rooted in hatred and hierarchy cannot be controlled or selectively deployed; once normalized, it threatens the security and dignity of all.

How the Refugee Experiences of Vietnamese Americans Color Their Exclusionary Attitudes Towards Other Immigrants

Viet Fact Check is a volunteer-run project by PIVOT, the Progressive Vietnamese American Organization. Our mission is to empower Vietnamese Americans with fact-checked, source-verified analysis and rebuttals in English and Vietnamese to combat the onslaught of misinformation that is circulating widely in our Vietnamese American communities.

Since our inception, Viet Fact Check has focused on creating fact-checks, explanatory articles, and other Vietnamese-English resources on our website. We linguistically and culturally tailor our programming in order to meet the needs of our constituents, many of whom speak Vietnamese as a primary language and have faced the violent effects of war, migration, generational trauma, and socioeconomic adversity.

Figure 1: *Fact-check tools* offered *by VietFactCheck*

Within Vietnamese diasporic communities, problematic narratives on immigration are amplified by biased — mostly conservative — Vietnamese social media figures who promote misinformation and harmful stereotypes about migrants. Facebook and YouTube are the most common spaces used to spread this mis- and disinformation, with some creators covering their tracks by habitually deleting content shortly after posting.

Donald Trump's second administration has been marked by an intensified reliance on divisive and discriminatory rhetoric, particularly targeting immigrants and questions of citizenship. In response, right-wing Vietnamese diasporic media figures have developed their own narratives about the immigration process and its impact on Vietnamese Americans. This report analyzes how these controversial narratives take shape, the tactics used to spread them, and the ways they distort the realities of immigration policy, ultimately shaping public opinion in ways that undermine the well-being of Vietnamese diasporic communities.

We also pose the question: how can we address the seemingly never-ending onslaught of harmful narratives that weaponize our cultural traumas and bombard us with problematic information? After attempting to mitigate these issues since our founding in 2020, it has become clear that fact-checking and reliance on technological solutions are insufficient to address these deeply social and humanistic issues. Doing the same thing and expecting a new result is a fool's goal. Between Viet Fact Check and our partners in academia and traditional journalism, we sought a new, experimental, methodological approach that could help us address these gaps. (See recommendations at the end of this report.)

Background on Vietnamese American Communities

The various waves of migration following the Vietnam War, combined with the international community's differing responses, have reinforced deeply rooted anti-communist and pro-Republican sentiments that persist to this day.

According to a 2024 Pew Research Center study,[7] Vietnamese voters were the most likely among the six largest Asian American groups to lean conservative, with about half of registered voters identifying with the Republican Party. Therefore, Vietnamese Americans overall tend to support Trump and the Republicans on a range of policies, including immigration. This is closely tied to the history of migration following the Vietnam War.

After the Fall of Saigon in 1975, the communist-led North Vietnam took over the U.S.-backed South Vietnam to reunify the country under one government. Those who had ties to the U.S., the former South Vietnamese government, or were critical of the communist government fled the country to escape re-education camps or imprisonment. As a result, the first waves of Vietnamese migrants from 1975-1979 were mostly political refugees who were strongly anti-communist and South Vietnamese nationalists. They were also generally more educated and skilled, whereas the Vietnamese refugees who fled in the second wave of migration from 1980-1994 tended to be of a lower socioeconomic class, and the millions who escaped in wooden boats became known as the "boat people." In addition to political persecution, many in this group also fled because of economic hardship under the post-war economy and the new government.

U.S. immigration policies at the time — spearheaded by the Republican Party — initially favored the first and second wave of migrants, paving the way for a diaspora with strong anti-communist sentiments. President Gerald Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act of 1975, which allowed refugees special status to enter the country and established a domestic resettlement program. Alarmed by the high death tolls of those fleeing Southeast Asia, the United Nations convened the First Geneva Conference on Indochinese Refugees in July 1979 and created an Orderly Departure Program (ODP) to assist Vietnamese refugees in emigrating safely and legally, allowing 500,000 Vietnamese to come to the U.S. under ODP before it ended in 1994. Vietnamese American support for the Republican Party grew in the 1980s during the Reagan administration, whose strong anti-communist and pro-democracy stance during the Cold War continues to shape the diaspora's political alignment today. In turn, anti-war movements that had put pressure on the U.S. to pull out of Vietnam and limit its support for South Vietnam led Vietnamese Americans to associate the Democratic Party with anti-South Vietnamese sentiment.

From the late 1970s to the 1980s, Vietnamese American activists and journalists were attacked, censored, and killed[8] for voicing progressive opinions or being sympathetic to the communist victory in Vietnam. Right-wing Vietnamese Americans' strong anti-communist sentiments have persisted until today, due in part to President Donald Trump's

ongoing anti-China policies and China's support of the communist-led North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. These deep-seated perspectives reflect the politics of the time when the first waves of Vietnamese migrants came to the U.S. — during the height of the Cold War's policy of containment, aimed at stopping the spread of communism. As a result, some Vietnamese Americans today condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine while echoing Trump's claim that Russia's growing economic and military dependence on China poses a greater long-term threat. In this framework, they support his policies of working with Russia to shift it away from China's influence.

The third wave of Vietnamese that migrated between 1995-2008 consisted of former re-education camp detainees and their families under the Humanitarian Operation (HO) program, along with Amerasians, children of U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese women, and their families under the Amerasian Homecoming Act. Later arrivals included students, professionals, and family-sponsored immigrants who also sought economic opportunities. After programs like the HO ended, migrants faced more restrictive state and federal immigration policies from the Republican Party, such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA), which limited unauthorized immigrants from accessing public benefits, and Proposition 187, which had a similar aim in California. As Republican support eroded among poor refugees, Vietnamese Democrats began to emerge[9] as Vietnamese Americans shifted their focus from exclusively foreign policy and national security to domestic issues such as poverty, healthcare, and Social Security.

Vietnamese refugees fleeing the Vietnam War, often due to political persecution and economic instability, were granted extensive federal protection through programs such as the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act of 1975 and the Orderly Departure Program (ODP). As they resettled in the United States, many Vietnamese immigrants aligned with pro-Republican values of anti-communism, conservative foreign policy, and strong national security. These long-standing political orientations laid the foundation for support among segments of the Vietnamese American community that became more visible during the Trump era.

Differences in Language Among the Vietnamese Diaspora

Viet Fact Check's model of using culturally-informed translation is crucial to our ability to reach the wider Vietnamese American community. For a demographic that experienced a dramatic split between pre-1975 language used in Vietnam and post-1975 language used in the diaspora, "language access" requires temporal and geographic nuance, rather than a one-size-fits-all solution. The differences in vocabulary, syntax, and expression can impact whether information is determined trustworthy or untrustworthy by members of the Vietnamese diaspora. Even with the growing sophistication of artificial intelligence-powered translation tools, human translators and interpreters with knowledge of pre-/post-1975 Vietnamese language practices are still necessary for building trust with communities and ensuring accuracy.

Key Findings

1. Exclusionary attitudes about immigration are influenced by the refugee experiences of Vietnamese Americans. Having followed the procedures available at the time, many Vietnamese Americans view their own migration as having been done the "right way" and consequently believe that other groups should also migrate lawfully, even though today's migrants are denied the same protections they benefited from. This perspective aligns with support for Trump's policies for stricter immigration laws.

Although many older Vietnamese Americans naturalized following the Vietnam War, contemporary attitudes toward immigration and citizenship have changed, shaped in part by misinformation spread through Vietnamese-language social media. Popular Vietnamese diasporic influencers often promote biased narratives that fuel resentment towards undocumented immigrants by making false claims about the criminality of undocumented immigrants, distorting the immigration process, and misrepresenting the constitutionality of policies enacted under President Trump.

Influencers use fearmongering, such as portraying all undocumented immigrants as criminals. By citing isolated cases of violent crime, they reinforce the false narrative that undocumented immigrants are inherently dangerous. However, numerous studies have debunked this

claim, showing that immigrants are actually less likely than native-born citizens to commit violent crimes. Contrary to beliefs reinforced by conservative Vietnamese diasporic media figures, illegal entry or presence in the U.S. is typically charged as a civil offense or a misdemeanor, not a serious felony.

Figure 2: *Vietnamese Facebook post about early 2026's ICE activities towards immigrants in Minnesota*

Many Vietnamese social media figures in the diaspora also spread false claims about the constitutionality of President Trump's actions, often portraying him as a hero "saving America" from illegal immigration. In reality, several of his policies have raised serious constitutional concerns, including violations of due process guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment, the deportation of individuals with protected status — such as Abrego Garcia — and the Department of Homeland Security's misuse of funds beyond congressional budgeting. These issues are frequently overlooked or ignored by influencers, framing the Vietnamese American stance on immigration not only as a moral position but also as one with significant legal and constitutional backing.

Figure 3: *Vietnamese Facebook post of supporting Trump's anti-immigrant policy*

What is often missing from these narratives is a recognition of Vietnamese Americans' own migration history. The first major wave of U.S.-allied South Vietnamese refugees benefited from federally supported resettlement programs and gained pathways to citizenship through initiatives like the Resettlement Opportunity for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR), which were backed by bipartisan coalitions. A second wave of "boat people" in the late 1970s and 1980s endured significant hardship but ultimately secured refugee protections through the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 and the Refugee Act of 1980. Later arrivals, particularly "economic migrants" in the 1990s and 2000s, encountered a far more restrictive asylum system, with many struggling to qualify for refugee status or other forms of legal relief. This temporal and socioeconomic divide has shaped competing attitudes about who is considered a "deserving" immigrant, even though the challenges facing today's asylum seekers closely parallel the struggles that many Vietnamese Americans once endured.

As a result of these migration experiences, many older, first-wave Vietnamese Americans view their own arrival as legitimate and deserving, having benefited from various U.S. and international policies that supported refugees. **Having followed the procedures available at the time, they often regard their migration as having been done the "right way" and therefore believe other groups should migrate lawfully as well.** This perspective helps explain why many in this group lean right politically and support restrictive immigration policies, including those advanced by President Trump. However, his outlook ignores the fact that migrants today, many from Latin America, face even greater financial and legal burdens under the current administration. Increased visa and naturalization fees, some of which are redirected to fund enforcement agencies such as ICE, Border Patrol, or military initiatives, further restrict access to legal citizenship. These costs stand in sharp contrast to the relative protections and governmental support earlier Vietnamese migrants received, including the 2008 U.S.-Vietnam repatriation agreement, which effectively shielded pre-1995 arrivals from deportation. Although this safeguard has since been challenged[10] under the Trump administration, leading to the deportation of some pre-1995 arrivals, it remains emblematic of the exceptions once extended to Vietnamese refugees.

By overlooking these systemic differences, Vietnamese diasporic media figures create a double standard: having once benefited from empathy, government support, and unprecedented legal protections, they now endorse narratives that criminalize present-day migrants and force them to subsidize their own surveillance and deportation. **In doing so, Vietnamese diasporic influencers and content creators not only erase their community's own history of struggle and reliance on state support but also reinforce exclusionary narratives that deny today's undocumented immigrants the very protections once extended to Vietnamese refugees, rather than standing in solidarity with them.**

2. Global conflicts, such as those in Ukraine and Palestine, reinforce selective empathy and anti-migrant sentiment — for example, narratives portraying Palestinians as "terrorists" — and continue to bolster support for President Trump's crackdowns on asylum and refugee claims.

The Vietnam War ended in 1975 with the fall of Saigon, the final withdrawal of U.S. forces, and the reunification of Vietnam under communist rule, marking the end of direct colonization of Vietnam, but leaving behind deep pain and trauma. Vietnamese diaspora memory is shaped by the war, intergenerational trauma, and the refugee crisis that ensued. These experiences inform how many Vietnamese Americans view the events currently unfolding in Ukraine and Palestine, which parallel Vietnam's liberation movement through resistance against foreign occupation, large displacement of civilians, and humanitarian crises. However, some prominent and prolific Vietnamese American media figures perpetuate strong anti-communist and anti-authoritarian sentiments stemming from trauma they experienced with the post-1975 Vietnamese communist government, leading to a mix of sympathy, skepticism, and hostility towards migrants. They view Ukrainians as oppressed by Russia, an authoritarian power with a communist past, which aligns with their own historical experiences and generates sympathy for Ukrainian refugees. But in Palestine, influential Vietnamese-American media figures often emphasize fears of authoritarianism and terrorism, leading some to conflate Palestinians with extremist groups and dismiss civilian casualties as propaganda.

Vietnamese American conservative media tends to support Ukraine in its fight for independence and sovereignty against Russian expansionism. This parallels Vietnam's own struggle for independence against French colonization and later American influence. The common narrative is sympathy for the plight of Ukrainians and support for the right to seek asylum, **so long as it is done "right."** Amid growing restrictions on U.S. citizenship, including calls to end birthright citizenship, many Vietnamese Americans have echoed the sentiment that undocumented immigrants should simply "immigrate the right way." However, even under ideal conditions, the naturalization process can take upwards of 18.5 to 24 months, which is an unviable timeframe for those fleeing violence, starvation, or persecution in their home countries. For many, even a week's delay could mean the difference between life and death. Despite this, **conservative Vietnamese diasporic media figures continue to support President Trump's crackdowns on asylum and refugee claims, overlooking the fact that many older Vietnamese Americans were themselves granted refugee status after fleeing the Vietnam War.**

While there is no unified view of potential Palestinian migration due to the ongoing bombardment of Gaza, Vietnamese diasporic media tend to downplay the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and criticize how left-wing media reports on the conflict, stating that it is one-sided and inflates the number of civilian casualties. Similar to how Vietnam War-era protesters were referred to as unpatriotic "communist sympathizers," those now protesting against Israel's genocide of Palestinians are viewed by misinformation influencers as "antisemitic" or "supporting Hamas," a viewpoint stemming from the strong anti-authoritarian sentiment amongst the Vietnamese conservative community. After the Fall of Saigon, many people who were aligned with the former U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government were captured and subject to communist re-education camps where they faced torture, malnutrition, and death. This trauma with authoritarianism has allowed false narratives to take hold, such as broadly stereotyping all **Palestinians as "terrorists" and portraying Palestine as unfit for self-determination, rhetoric that could negatively impact Vietnamese diasporic feelings toward potential future Palestinian refugees and associated immigration policies.**

Sharing Stories, Sharing Trust

Viet Fact Check's Sharing Stories, Sharing Trust (SSST) — or Chia SẻChuyện, Chia SẻSẻTin Cậy — are workshops by and for the Vietnamese community that seek to: 1) Center community voices in relation to the issues of disinformation, problematic information, and misleading content; and 2) Reframe what is problematic information and disinformation.

Held in community spaces such as public libraries and senior associations in neighborhoods where there is a prevalent Vietnamese diaspora population, SSST workshops have been hosted in more than a dozen cities, across five states, and in two countries.

From participants, Viet Fack Check gains new information on the current landscape of Vietnamese diasporic media usage as well as more nuanced understandings of translational issues. The organization has also collaborated with partner organizations to adapt these workshops for other communities, including Spanish-speaking and Korean-speaking communities in the Houston area, demonstrating that the methodology is malleable and applicable for communities from diverse diasporic contexts and language backgrounds.

How a Legacy of Colonialism Influences the Complex Political Attitudes of Filipino Americans

Tayo, a project of the Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO), is an innovative data hub that empowers Filipinx/a/o communities by collecting data, fostering partnerships, publishing culturally relevant insights, and developing leaders to create an equitable and sustainable future. First emerging as a rapid response to the global pandemic, Tayo was launched by FYLPRO's COVID-19 Task Force in the fall of 2020 to help Filipino Americans access vital, trustworthy information about public health and social services. Currently, the project harnesses narrative change to foster information literacy skills on an intergenerational level through multimedia content creation, community-based participatory research, and in-person activations. To address online mis- and disinformation circulating in the Filipino diaspora, Tayo publishes explainers and fact checks on timely issues and monitors social media platforms for emerging narratives of concern. The platforms that Tayo regularly monitors include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Bluesky, and TikTok.

During the summer of 2025, Tayo's media research staff documented significant developments emerging from the Trump administration's ongoing crackdown on immigration, which has resulted in thousands of detentions by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As word spread about Filipinos[21] swept up[22] by the enforcement campaign,[23] grassroots community organizations mobilized to provide resources and advocate for the release of these detainees, especially after allegations of due process violations as well as medical neglect and lack of basic necessities at detention facilities began to surface.

Background on Filipino American Communities

Although constituting the third largest Asian ethnic group[24] in the United States, Filipinos have been a long invisibilized demographic despite almost five decades of American imperialism in the Philippines and subsequent labor export policies that have resulted in a 4.6 million

strong Filipino American diaspora driven by immigrants in traditionally gendered vocations like healthcare, domestic work, and education. The role of nursing has been a key facet of U.S.-Philippine relations since the United States first instituted an American-style schooling curriculum during the occupation — which also included sending educated elites to the mainland for advanced training as future administrators back home — thus setting the stage for massive recruitment of Filipino professionals to alleviate healthcare staffing shortages in the U.S. starting in the latter half of the 20th century and into the present day. According to research published by National Nurses United in March 2021, Filipinos accounted for approximately one quarter of COVID-19 related nursing deaths despite making up only 4% of registered nurses in the U.S. at the time, laying bare the outsized presence of Filipinos within the nation's critical healthcare infrastructure even as these same workers battled burnout and faced anti-Asian racism correlated with public discourse scapegoating China for the global spread of the novel coronavirus.

Military service is another significant, decades-long driver of Filipino migration to the United States. After independence, the Philippines signed an agreement in 1947 which established long-term U.S. leases on military installations in the country and allowed Philippine nationals to enlist in the American armed forces. In the first four decades of the agreement, for example, about 35,000 Filipinos entered the U.S. Navy, and statistics from 2023 pegged contemporary enlistment numbers at just over 15,000. Data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) covering fiscal years 2020 through 2024 consistently ranked the Philippines as the number one country of origin for U.S. service members who naturalize as American citizens. Over time Fil Ams have ascended to senior leadership positions across various branches despite having to push back against institutional discrimination and waging an ongoing battle to restore benefits that were promised by the U.S. government to Filipino veterans who served under American command in World War II and which were subsequently rescinded by Congress in 1946.

Cash remittances from overseas foreign workers (OFWs) have been an integral part of the Philippines' economic development strategy, a solution first advanced by the authoritarian presidency of President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr., which lasted from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. Hailed as "bagong bayani" ("new heroes"), OFWs toil abroad at great personal cost, oftentimes enduring unfair labor practices, social isolation, and family separation while at the same time facing intense pressure to provide for loved ones back home. For Filipino migrants who are undocumented,

living with the fear and stigma surrounding their legal status can exacerbate mental health challenges like anxiety and depression. In 2024, the Philippines received more than $38.3 billion in cash remittances, 40.6% of which originated from the United States, the top source by far. Overall, these payments accounted for 8.7% of GDP, the highest among major economies of the ASEAN region.

Filipino American voting patterns across recent U.S. elections reveal complex generational and ideological divides that distinguish this group from other Asian American communities. In the 2016 presidential election, Fil Ams demonstrated relatively high engagement, with 59% registered to vote and 50% casting ballots, ranking third among Asian American ethnicities, and with 65% of Filipino American voters supporting Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump according to post-election survey results. By 2020, approximately 48% of Fil Ams identified as Democrats or leaned Democratic,[25] while 28% identified as or leaned Republican, with 34% supporting Trump in that election. The midterm elections of 2018 and 2022 further emphasized this complexity, wherein historic numbers of Filipino candidates were elected to local and state offices even as voter turnout fluctuated from a low of 54% in 2020 to a record increase of 63% in 2024, which saw 68% of Fil Am voters indicate support for Kamala Harris compared to 33% for Trump. Political divergence has been a key differentiator across age and nativity, with younger Fil Ams tending to lean more Democratic[26] and progressive while older, first-generation immigrants demonstrating higher rates of conservatism and Republican affiliation, reflecting broader trends among Asian Americans in general.

While defined by a strong but diversifying Democratic core, Fil Am voters — along with Vietnamese Americans — are also among the most supportive of the Republican party compared to other Asian American communities. Subject matter experts attribute these political leanings to several interconnected factors, including the lasting psychological impact of Spanish and American imperialism. This "colonial mentality" often manifests as an internalized preference for Eurocentric ideals at the expense of one's Filipino cultural identity, a concept that is also closely related to the "model minority myth," a form of racial triangulation that portrays Asian Americans as more hardworking, financially successful, and submissive to authority in comparison to other non-white groups (particularly Black and Latino Americans), as well as the "good immigrant/bad immigrant" dichotomy, wherein some Asian Americans seek to distance themselves from stigmatized immigrant communities by prioritizing legal status and professional accomplishment over broader

racial solidarity in the face of systematic discrimination. Yet another cited factor is religiosity (according to data from 2015, 65% of Filipino Americans identify as Catholic), which can drive conservative positions on social issues[27] such as reproductive rights and marriage equality that align with Republican platforms. Furthermore, the high rates of military service among Filipino Americans may be correlated with stronger Republican identification patterns observed among veterans generally, though this effect varies significantly by generation and immigration status.

Finally, the Filipino diaspora also plays a meaningful role in Philippine electoral politics. In the 2016 presidential contest, for example, overseas voters supported the victor Rodrigo Duterte by a convincing margin. President Duterte's violent crackdown on the drug trade eventually led to his arrest by the International Criminal Court in 2025, almost three years after the end of the onetime mayor and prosecutor's tenure as head of state. Similarly, voters residing abroad overwhelmingly broke for the winning ticket in the 2022 presidential election, which was led by former senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr., son of deposed dictator Ferdinand Sr., and vice presidential running mate Sara Duterte, daughter of the outgoing president Rodrigo.

Key Findings

1. Tracking mis- and disinformation in the Filipino American community poses unique challenges related to invisibility and linguistic assimilation.

The social media ecosystem of the Philippines has undergone sustained international scrutiny due to its instrumental role in the political fortunes of populist authoritarians such as Duterte and its use as a laboratory for unsavory data harvesting practices like those exposed in the Cambridge Analytica scandal, but on the other hand, scant mainstream attention has been paid to the online media consumption of Filipino Americans, let alone the transnational connections between the two spheres. While Philippine netizens have consistently been cited as the world's top social media users[28] — and of Facebook in particular — such widely reported findings are of limited utility in understanding the situation experienced by Filipinos in the U.S., especially those from the second generation and later. Echoing larger concerns that a failure to disaggregate community data perpetuates inequity by obscuring socioeconomic gaps between

different Asian American groups, what little coverage exists on the harmful impacts of information disorder on Fil Ams remains either generalized, anecdotal, or subsumed within more expansive demographic categories. Notably however, researchers at the Center for Media Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin examined the information sharing practices of Filipino American families, noting the prevalent use of private messaging apps in the spread of false and misleading content as well as identifying the fraught personal dynamics that function to preserve group harmony by discouraging political confrontation between family members.

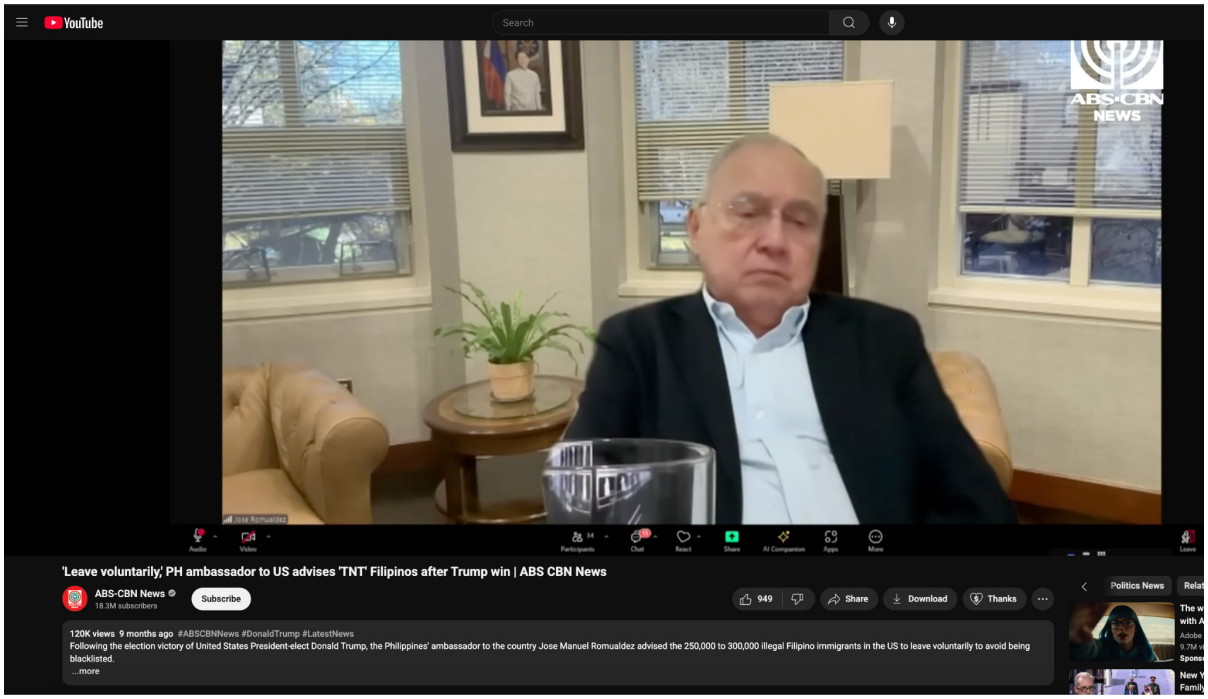
Factors contributing to this dearth of literature about the digital lives of Fil Ams became more apparent to Tayo's research team as it embarked on social media monitoring efforts for 2025. The most significant logistical challenge was the relative lack of high profile political influencers that purport to target Filipino Americans as a specific community, which contrasts with the presence of robust alternative media networks operating within the Chinese, Vietnamese, and South Asian diasporas in the United States. While this gap has yet to be definitively explained and remains even more confounding given the pronounced support for right wing ideology by Fil Ams, we offer up one potential area for inquiry, which is the legacy of U.S. colonialism. Owing to the American occupation of the Philippines, English was established as a co-official language in the country post-independence, and 71% of Filipino immigrants in the United States rate their English proficiency at a level of "very well" or better, according to data from last year. Relatedly, an often discussed experience in the Fil Am community is the reluctance of first generation immigrant parents to pass on Philippine languages to their children as a survival strategy in their newly adopted homelands.

Just as this cultural assimilation manifests itself not only linguistically but also geographically, it may be the case that because English language media is more accessible to Filipino Americans, there has been less of an urgency to develop a market for alternative media outlets catering directly to the community, at least with respect to interlocutors of U.S. political news. Accordingly, it has proven difficult for Tayo to identify on a large scale the prevalence of problematic messengers communicating to diasporic Filipinos in the United States, whether in English, Filipino, or any other major Philippine languages. This conundrum also means that searching for translated keywords during social listening sessions yields fewer relevant results than Tayo's counterparts working in other Asian immigrant communities, such being the case for tools like Sprout Social.

For example, while one can quickly find content about a hotly debated topic like "affirmative action" intended for Sinophone audiences by querying the phrase's Mandarin equivalent, Filipinos discussing the same subject online would simply use the original English term instead. These community conversations are thus more susceptible to remain hidden in plain sight.

2. Recent news stories about immigration have exposed fault lines in the Filipino diaspora's relationship with governmental institutions in the U.S. and the Philippines, while also opening up conversations about the community's proximity to whiteness.

Mere days after Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 U.S. presidential election — and with still more than two months remaining in Joe Biden's presidency — Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Manuel Romualdez provoked controversy by publicly advising that undocumented Filipino immigrants self-deport from the United States. During a forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines on November 8, 2024 he drew a distinction between voluntary departure and forced removal by telling the audience, "Some are not considered to be illegal, some already filed, but they are in limbo — meaning to say, they are waiting for their papers to pass through. My advice to many of our fellowmen who are actually still here but cannot get any kind of status, my advice is for them not to wait to be deported." Several weeks later, Romuladez would go on to invoke the good immigrant/bad immigrant narrative in an attempt to calm fears that Filipinos would be targeted by the incoming Trump administration: "Filipinos and the Filipino-Americans in the United States have a very good image (and are given) a very high regard. Most Americans appreciate the Filipino-American community here in the United States, that's why I'm very proud of them." For his own part, Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Undersecretary Eduardo de Vega wove conservative talking points into his televised remarks in December 2024 claiming that "law-abiding" Filipinos had nothing to fear as the real focus of Trump's scrutiny would be the millions of migrants



allegedly let in through the southern border by the Biden administration only to sign up for public benefits in the U.S.

The ABS-CBN News clip of the Romualdez interview received 120,000+ views on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fV4lo4UQFU

As community members inevitably found themselves caught up in the Trump administration's aggressive enforcement sweeps, reports began emerging about inhumane conditions in ICE detention facilities, alleged due process violations, and difficulties accessing support for affected Filipino nationals from the Philippine embassy and consulates general, sparking a vociferous grassroots response by human rights advocates. In reference to impending removals of Filipinos early in the year, Migrante USA recalled Ambassador Romualdez's post-election remarks and released a public statement on January 30 reading in part: "We call on the Philippine government to fulfill its mandate and respond. Romualdez and de Vega have issued irresponsible and dangerous advice to accept the current situation and remain silent … They call for Filipinos to self-deport, but they have no answer as to what they can do about the economic crisis that is the main reason for the departure of our countrymen."

Filipino American advocacy groups and the Philippine diplomatic corps would go on to exchange contentious statements regarding consular responses to pleas for assistance on behalf of detainees. This dynamic would play out in the case of photojournalist Ya'akub Ira Vijandre,

a Dallas-based DACA recipient with no criminal record who was detained in October 2025 the day after he recorded and participated in a suburban city council meeting wherein he gave vocal support for a local community leader who had been in ICE custody. Vijandre's case revolves around allegations of supporting terrorism, the basis of which his legal team argues consisted merely of "likes" on social media and other constitutionally protected activity related to advocacy for Palestinian rights and the religious observance of Islam. Filipino community organizations have called on the DFA to step up efforts to assist Vijandre as he asserts his rights under a federal habeas petition. The issue of medical neglect in immigration detention was central to advocacy on behalf of Greggy "Kuya G" Sorio, who became the focus of a viral campaign after suffering a toe amputation and untreated ulcerative colitis while in an ICE facility. Although ICE attempted to deport him in early December 2025, a judge's temporary restraining order halted the flight, and persistent community pressure finally forced ICE to allow him an external medical exam later that month.

This period also saw the launch of Families of Filipinos in Detention, a new organization grounded by the work of other AAPI groups that debuted with a livestream featuring formerly detained community members like Maximo "Kuya Max" Londonio and Ligaya Jensen. This launch follows the July 16, 2025 mobilization that freed Londonio after he was held for five days at an airport reportedly without consular assistance, as well as the November 25 release of Alma Bowman, whose eight-month detention was challenged by advocates based on her claims of U.S. citizenship.

While Fil Am activists sought to bring attention to reported abuses in the immigration system, other voices in the community responded with absolutist rhetoric reinforcing the good immigrant/bad immigrant divide. As Tayo's research team continued to monitor immigration related

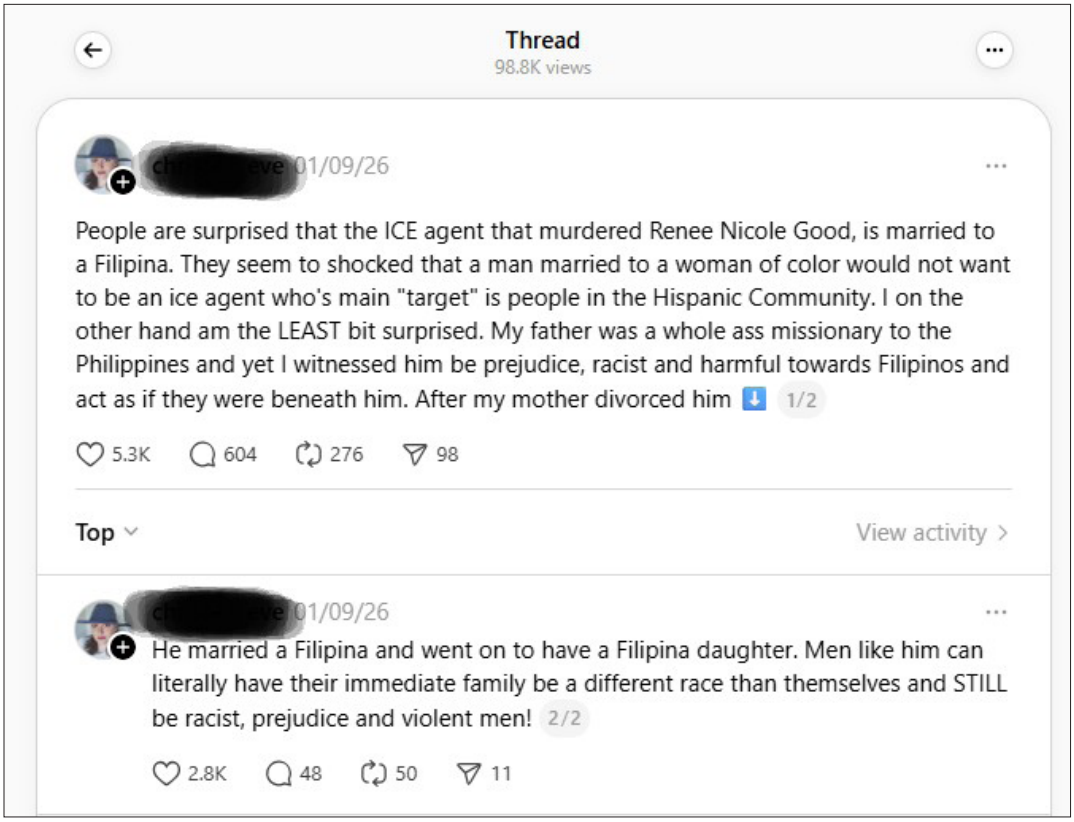
content in early 2026, they found a video posted to a Facebook group with over 86,000 members serving Filipino Americans in Southern California which proclaimed, "A message from me! Filipino immigrant now a US Citizen! Immigrante [sic] to U.S. LEGALLY! Then pursue U.S. Citizenship! So you are FREE to live your American dreams! I promise you no need to deal with ICE!" Nevertheless, the strict law and order positioning of the video ignores the chaotic reality of current federal immigration policy, wherein even legal pathways to entry have been severely curtailed on short notice over the past year.

Fearmongering was another element of the response to Trump's hardline stance on immigration. Amidst news that the U.S. would soon freeze visa processing for dozens of nations, the "Pilipinas Issues" Facebook page published a post discussing these breaking developments on January 10, 2026 which contained a graphic that warned, "NO MORE FILIPINOS IN THE U.S. IN 2026! POTENTIAL IMMIGRATION BAN THIS YEAR!" However, this page with 73,000 followers posted the announcement four days prior to the U.S. State Department releasing the actual list of affected countries. The Philippines was not among those countries hit with visa suspensions.

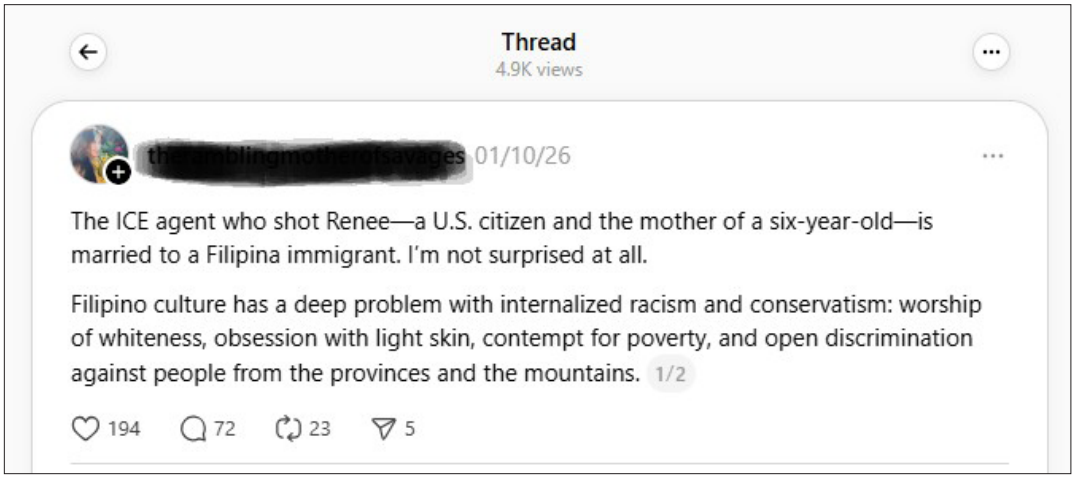
Finally, the fatal shooting of 37-year-old U.S. citizen Renee Good by an ICE agent in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026 — the first monumental immigration story of the new year — turned out to have unexpected ties to the Filipino diaspora. After government officials mentioned that the agent had been injured in a previous immigration enforcement action, reporters were able to identify him within a day of Good's killing as Jonathan Ross, a 10-year veteran of ICE who had served in the U.S. armed forces during the Iraq War. In an interview with the *Daily Mail*, Ross's father then revealed that his son was a vocal supporter of President Trump's MAGA movement and had been married to a Filipina immigrant since 2012, the news of which

was promptly picked up by[29] Philippine media outlets,[30] sparking renewed conversations online about "the deep and often complicated ties between the Philippines and the United States" and "how global migration can indirectly connect Filipinos to major political and social controversies in the United States." Memes based on characters from the popular 2025 science fiction film "Avatar: Fire and Ash" emerged as a particularly viral form of commentary about Filipino women marrying white conservative Americans, especially older men affiliated with the military. Below is one example sourced from Reddit.

Although these memes began circulating as a reaction to the federal incursion in Minnesota, the ensuing discourse revived ongoing critiques of the patriarchal, anti-feminist ideals that drive men from Western countries to seek companionship from Asian women, who are perceived to be more "traditional" and submissive partners. That line of critique also argues that these types of interracial relations only serve to further exotify Filipinas rather than diminish bigoted beliefs about people of color.



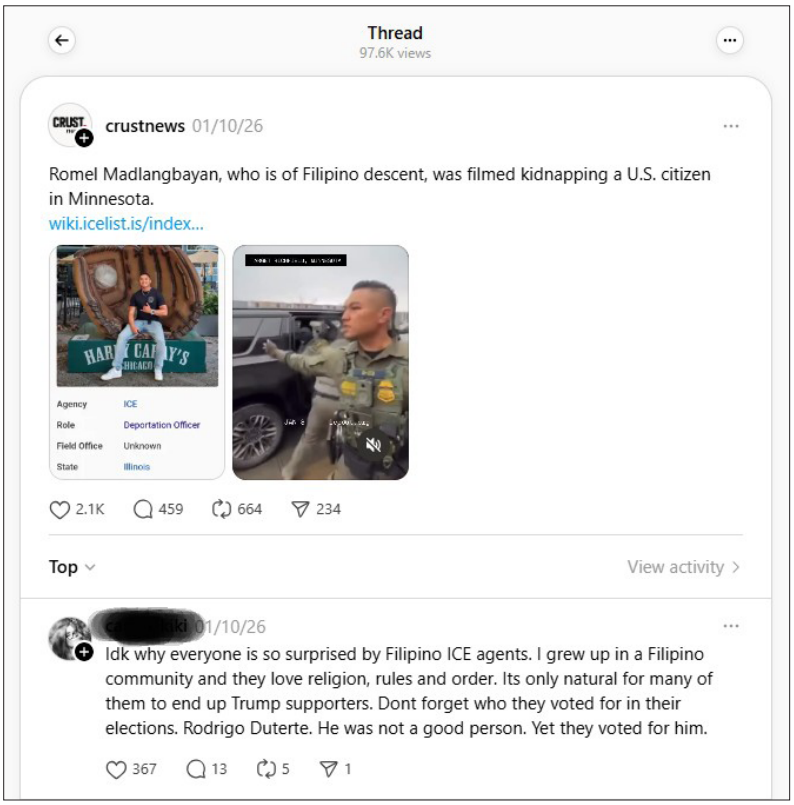
Other commentators ascribed the prevalence of such romantic pairings to various reactionary belief systems operating within Filipino culture, including colorism, classism, and conservatism in general.



While these provocations are not unfamiliar to researchers who have sought to explain how the complex political attitudes of the Filipino diaspora can be connected to the long history of colonial occupation in the Philippines, some observers cautioned against overly reductive rhetoric that only serves to subject community members to racist and misogynistic

stereotyping. For example, this following post calls out the dismissive portrayal of Ross's spouse as a "mail order bride," an unverified claim that is rooted in a term used to describe a type of domestic arrangement born of economic inequality, but which also tends to caricature impoverished Filipinas as "either willing, powerless victims of their controlling, Western husbands; or as conniving foreigners who are only trying to get a green card and money through marriage and immigration fraud, with their innocent husbands being the real victims."

Additionally, reports that a Filipino American ICE agent who had previously been identified to the public was now conducting operations in Minnesota also reopened discussions about why some Fil Ams would take on jobs that perpetuate harm on other immigrant communities. Tying these reasons back to sociocultural conditions in the Philippines has been a tempting proposition, as exemplified by the reply to the post below, which cites a love of "religion," "rules and order," and authoritarian leaders like Duterte without further acknowledging what deeper historical currents may be influencing those political trajectories.



Conclusion

To more fully comprehend the political attitudes and media consumption habits of immigrant diasporas requires familiarity with the specific contexts surrounding a community's migration experiences. While by no means a monolith, Filipinos have been shaped to varying degrees by legacies of colonial occupation, economic precarity, and autocratic misrule in the Philippines. Linguistic and cultural assimilation present additional layers of complexity for understanding how Filipino Americans participate in civic life in the United States, data on which reveal broad support for the Democratic party but also a level of right wing affiliation that ranks among the highest across Asian American subgroups. A transnational analysis is particularly useful in evaluating the spectrum of community responses to the current U.S. administration's militarized, restrictionist immigration policies, which have ranged from sustained, vociferous human rights organizing aimed at the governments of both the United States and the Philippines to dismissive, pro-Trump "law and order" rhetoric. Because mis- and disinformation campaigns often serve to erode empathy and solidarity among marginalized peoples, researchers and advocates who find themselves confronting uncomfortable narratives about the community should nevertheless refrain from assigning collective political blame or reinforcing harmful stereotypes, even if motivated by anti-authoritarian goals.

Conclusion

Across the four communities examined in this report, one pattern is consistent: immigration narratives are increasingly shaped within language-specific media ecosystems that adapt, translate, and amplify right-wing content. These narratives do not operate only at the level of national politics. They are localized within diaspora media environments and reinforced by trusted community messengers, making them more difficult to identify, challenge, and displace.

At the same time, these narratives are not simply anti-immigrant. They actively produce internal division by distinguishing between "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrants and by framing certain groups as threats. In Chinese-language spaces, this includes narratives that cast immigrants as "CCP agents" or national security risks. In other communities, different historical and political dynamics shape similar patterns of division. The result is a fragmented information environment in which communities are positioned in opposition to one another, even when they are affected by the same policies.

These dynamics are reinforced by platform design and infrastructure. Disinformation is amplified unevenly across platforms, with some environments enabling high-volume dissemination of right-wing narratives while others support more limited or emerging counter-narratives. Although more progressive and fact-based voices are beginning to emerge, they need additional scale, coordination, and infrastructure to compete effectively.

Addressing these challenges requires interventions that are directly responsive to how disinformation operates within these ecosystems.

First, technology platforms and policymakers must address the role of language-specific and diaspora media ecosystems in the spread of disinformation. Current approaches to content moderation and information integrity are largely English-centric and fail to account for how narratives are translated, adapted, and amplified across languages. Stronger standards are needed to ensure transparency, moderation, and accountability for non-English content at scale.

Second, philanthropy, public funders, and private sector actors should prioritize sustained socially responsible investment in ethnic media, diaspora media, and in-language narrative infrastructure. The findings

show that communities rely heavily on these ecosystems for information, yet they are under-resourced and uneven in quality. Investment should focus not only on content production, but also on building the capacity, professionalism, and reach of trusted in-language media institutions.

Third, there is a need to support alternative influencer and messenger ecosystems within communities. Disinformation spreads not only through platforms but through trusted voices who localize and interpret narratives. Building a network of credible, culturally competent messengers is critical to countering disinformation and reaching audiences that are otherwise inaccessible through mainstream channels.

Fourth, strategies to address disinformation must explicitly engage internal community divisions. Efforts that focus only on correcting false information are insufficient if underlying narratives continue to frame immigrants in opposition to one another. Community-based initiatives should create space to address issues of legal status, identity, and belonging directly, and to build a more inclusive narrative that does not rely on exclusionary distinctions.

Finally, emerging progressive and fact-based voices require greater coordination and support. The findings show that these voices are present and, in some cases, gaining traction, particularly when policies directly affect community members. However, without shared infrastructure, cross-platform coordination, and sustained investment, they will be slow to reach the scale needed to shift dominant narratives.

Taken together, these findings point to the need for a long-term strategy that builds upon responses to individual pieces of disinformation to reshape the ecosystems in which narratives are produced, circulated, and reinforced.

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CHINESE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

We advocate for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial and social injustice.

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