



# Language and Power in Migration Discourse

## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Suella Braverman's Speech

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English Studies - Linguistics  
Bachelor Thesis  
15 credits  
Autumn 2024  
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### **Abstract**

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine Suella Braverman's speech on migration, investigating how language is used to construct and reinforce ideologies and power dynamics. By integrating Teun A. van Dijk's ideological square and Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, it examines both the micro-level textual features of the speech and the broader discursive (meso) and social (macro) practices shaping its interpretation. The analysis reveals rhetorical and linguistic strategies that create a stark 'Us vs. Them' narrative, casting migrants as cultural threats and economic burdens while bolstering conservative ideologies. Fairclough's framework at meso and macro levels illuminates how these representations become naturalised, legitimising exclusionary stances and restrictive policies. This study highlights the critical role of integrated CDA frameworks in analysing discourse and emphasises the need for balanced, informed migration debates.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Suella Braverman, immigration, uncontrolled migration, Fairclough, Van Dijk

## 1 Introduction

Migration has become a highly debated topic in the United Kingdom, with increasing attention on the rhetoric used by political figures. Particularly as nationalist sentiment and anti-immigrant rhetoric have grown in recent years (Maehler et al., 2019). Political figures frequently use language to influence public opinion on migration, presenting ideological stances that shape how migration is perceived and debated. Skilled politicians and policymakers strategically manipulate language to influence these outcomes. As van Dijk (1997) notes, 'Discourse plays an important role in the production and reproduction of prejudice and racism. From the socialisation talk of parents, children's books, and television programs to textbooks, news reports in the press, and other forms of public discourse' (p. 32). This observation underscores the power of discourse in framing immigration, thereby affecting public perception and policy.

A prominent figure in this landscape is Suella Braverman, a former Home Secretary of the UK Conservative government. Known for her strong stance on immigration, Braverman has often stirred controversy with her rhetoric (Synal, 2023), which some have described as 'inflammatory' and supportive of right-wing views (Adu et al., 2023; Townsend, 2023). Her keynote address on UK-US security priorities, delivered at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, DC, on September 26, 2023, is the focus of this study. In this speech, Braverman presents migration as a critical issue for national security, making it an ideal text for analysing how discourse on migration is constructed.

This study conducts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Braverman's speech on migration policy, focusing on the interplay of linguistic features and rhetorical strategies with discursive and social practices to unveil the underlying power dynamics and ideological frames shaping migration narratives. This analysis does not evaluate the direct impact of Braverman's rhetoric on public opinion or policy changes. Instead, it aims to dissect the discursive strategies that construct narratives around migration.

Integrating Teun A. van Dijk's ideological square (2006, 2011, 2012, 2013) and Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989, 1992, 1995, 2015), this study examines textual features at the micro level, as well as the production, distribution, and consumption processes at the meso level. This comprehensive approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used, along with the discursive and social practices that sustain the ideological narratives within Braverman's discourse on migration.

Understanding the rhetorical strategies employed by prominent political figures is crucial in today's climate of rising populism and political polarisation, where language plays a powerful role in influencing societal attitudes toward marginalised communities. The study contributes to the existing literature on discourse by providing a detailed analysis of how power and ideology are linguistically constructed in migration-related speeches, using an integrated approach that combines Fairclough's three-dimensional model with van Dijk's ideological square, to examine discourse dynamics comprehensively.

The study addresses the following questions:

- I. What linguistic features and rhetorical strategies does Braverman employ to frame immigration and immigrants, and how do these features and strategies serve her persuasive goals?
- II. How do her discursive and social practices reflect broader ideological and political stances on immigration?

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 Situational background**

There has been a lot of political discussion in the United Kingdom concerning immigration policy recently. The current Conservative government, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, has adopted a stringent stance on immigration, advocating for stricter border controls and more restrictive policies. Suella Braverman, a prominent Conservative Member of Parliament and former Home Secretary has been particularly influential in shaping these policies. The Conservative Party and Braverman emphasise the necessity of reviewing and reforming migration management. They advocate for secure borders and controlled migration, signalling a shift towards stricter immigration policies. Braverman argues that the current international conventions and agreements related to human rights and refugees are no longer sufficient to address the challenges of the 21st-century migration system (Morton, 2023). However, her stance has faced opposition and criticism from various sources, particularly from those who are concerned about the impact of stricter immigration policies on refugees and asylum seekers and how it may contribute to the global migration crisis.

Critics have accused the Conservative Party, including Braverman, of prioritising national security and sovereignty over humanitarian considerations and international obligations. As a public figure, Braverman has emphasised the significance of safe and legal immigration while also drawing attention to the issues related to uncontrolled migration. It is essential to recognise that public opinion, policy choices, and societal perspectives are crucial in shaping views on migration, security, and national identity. The ongoing debates and diverse reactions to various policy positions on immigration in the United Kingdom underscore the complexity and significance of this issue. This situational background sets the stage for a critical analysis of Braverman's discourse. By applying CDA, this study aims to uncover her speech's linguistic features, ideological strategies, and discursive and social practices.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1 Discourse and ideology**

Discourse in academic research is broadly defined as 'any connected language', either written or spoken, that extends beyond a single sentence (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998, p.189). However, discourse is more than a mere collection of sentences. Discourse is also a social and cognitive process through which individuals convey their perceptions, experiences, and emotions, effectively transforming these internal states into shared meanings (Strauss & Feiz, 2014). Norman Fairclough (2015) defines discourse as 'language viewed in a certain way, as a part of the social process' that is relational and dialectically interconnected with other elements like power, social relations, and material practices (p. 8). He emphasises that discourse is not only a tool for communication but also a means through which social realities are constructed and maintained. This view is crucial because it positions discourse as a dynamic element that both shapes and is shaped by societal forces, reflecting its role in perpetuating or challenging power dynamics (2015). Teun A. van Dijk, another prominent figure in CDA, provides a more focused lens on how ideologies are reproduced through discourse. In his book *Discourse and Power* (2008), he examines discourse as a form of power, noting that it is a crucial resource that is not equally accessible to everyone. He states, 'Discourse is similar to other valuable social resources that serve as the foundation of power and are not equally accessible to everyone' (p. 67). This suggests that discourse can both empower and marginalise different groups depending on their access to it. He further argues that ideologies, as belief systems, represent a group's shared evaluations according to

community norms and values, influencing what is considered ‘true’ or ‘false,’ ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ and ‘permitted’ or ‘prohibited’ (van Dijk, 2011, p. 388). He also notes that minority groups are frequently discussed in political discourse but often lack control over how they are portrayed (van Dijk, 1996). This limited access to media platforms means that minority voices are less likely to be heard compared to those of majority groups (van Dijk, 1991). However, the case of Suella Braverman, a political figure of ethnic minority origin, complicates this argument. While she holds a powerful position that enables her to shape public discourse, her representation and policies often reflect the dominant ideology rather than those typically associated with minority groups. This highlights how individuals from marginalised communities can gain access to powerful platforms but may still align with or reproduce the norms and values of the dominant group to maintain their position. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that discourse significantly influences society and can perpetuate or promote inequality. They define ideologies as ‘particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relation of domination and exploitation’ (p. 371). In simpler terms, language can be used to convey or participate in discriminatory, sexist, or deceptive discourse.

### **2.2.2 Definition of Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis is a multidisciplinary approach that examines the complex relationships between discourse, power, and ideology. It is beneficial in political discourse, where language plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception and policy-making. Baker et al. (2008) state that ‘CDA is informed by social theory’ (p. 280), highlighting its foundation in understanding how language both reflects and constructs social realities. Van Dijk (2001) further elaborates that CDA primarily investigates ‘the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (p. 352). This indicates that CDA not only reveals how language mirrors social power structures but also how it can be used to challenge them. Simpson and Mayr (2010) highlight the diversity within CDA, noting that there is no ‘single, homogeneous version of CDA’ (p. 64). This diversity makes CDA adaptable to different contexts and purposes, highlighting its methodological flexibility. Moreover, CDA is applicable to various forms of communication, such as news

articles and advertisements, which often expose ‘unequal encounters’ (Simpson et al., 2019, p. 93).

CDA analysis typically operates on three levels: micro, meso and macro levels. The micro level focuses on specific linguistic features such as adverbs, pronouns, verbs, metaphors, syntax, lexical choices, and rhetorical strategies, providing a detailed analysis of discourse (Strauss & Feiz, 2014). The macro level, on the other hand, examines broader social, political, and ideological contexts. It explores how discourses shape and are shaped by power relations, dominance, and inequality between social groups (van Dijk, 2001, p.354). This level considers how discourse maintains or challenges existing social structures and ideologies. Fairclough's three-dimensional model introduces a meso level, which effectively bridges the gap between micro and macro analyses. This meso level focuses on discursive practices, including text production, distribution, and consumption (Fairclough, 1995). By focusing on these processes, the model offers a comprehensive understanding of how language functions within society and contributes to broader social practices and power dynamics.

### **2.2.3 Van Dijk's Ideological Square**

Teun A. van Dijk's framework focuses on how ideologies are conveyed through discourse structures. He suggests that ideologies represent core beliefs shared by a group and are reflected in discourse through aspects like identity, goals, actions, norms, values and group dynamics (2011, p.386). Van Dijk's concept of the ideological square is particularly relevant to understanding how discourse constructs social identities and power relations. This concept involves highlighting the positive aspects of the in-group and the negative aspects of the out-group, thereby reinforcing the ideological polarisation between ‘us vs. them’ (van Dijk, 2011, pp. 396-397). The ideological square emphasises the polarisation between the in-group and the out-group. This polarisation is often represented by pronouns such as ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. According to van Dijk, ‘this ideological polarisation is so pervasive in discourse that we shall pay special attention to it below. Although relevant for most ideologies, this category is quite typical for racist, nationalist and political-economic ideologies’ (van Dijk, 2011, p.396). This framework helps us understand how we tend to showcase ourselves while speaking negatively about others, thus creating a dichotomy between the ‘good us’ and the ‘bad them’. The principles of the ideological square are as follows:



- Emphasise positive things about Us.
- De-emphasise negative things about Us.
- Emphasise negative things about Them.
- De-emphasise positive things about Them.

This framework helps uncover how ideologies are expressed or concealed in discourse and how they are reproduced in society. It offers insight into how communication shapes identities and relationships among different groups by encouraging favouritism towards one's own group and fostering negative views of others. (van Dijk, 2012).

#### **2.2.4 Categories of the Ideological Square**

Van Dijk's ideological square provides a framework for analysing how ideologies are expressed in discourse. Within this framework, van Dijk (2006, 2011, 2012, 2013) identifies various strategies and techniques for analysing ideological discourse. These categories help researchers understand how language constructs social identities and power relations.

While van Dijk's framework includes numerous categories, this study will focus on the following categories:

- **Polarisation:** is a rhetorical strategy that heightens distinctions between in-groups and out-groups. In discussions involving racism, for instance, polarisation often involves emphasising the positive traits of one's own group while downplaying its negative traits and, conversely, highlighting the negative traits of the opposing group while minimizing their positive traits. While the Ideological Square broadly covers various strategies to represent in-groups positively and out-groups negatively, Polarisation focuses explicitly on heightening these distinctions. This strategy creates a clear dichotomy between 'us' and 'them', reinforcing group identities and justifying exclusionary attitudes or policies (van Dijk, 2012).
- **Syntax|:** van Dijk (2013) explains that sentence structure significantly impacts how subjects and actions are presented. For instance, passive sentences can allow the agent of an action to be left implicit. On the other hand, using active sentences can serve an ideological purpose. This may involve minimizing the involvement of in-group

members in negative actions while emphasizing the active role played by out-group members in negative actions.

- **Lexicalisation:** van Dijk (2006) describes lexicalisation as the choice of words and phrases to express underlying concepts, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes. Lexical choices can express and reinforce the speaker's or writer's ideological stance. How we communicate is influenced by several factors, such as our objectives, perspectives, and positions. In conservative discussions that oppose immigration policies, derogatory terms are often used to refer to refugees and their actions.
- **Victimisation:** It refers to the rhetorical strategy where a dominant group portrays itself as being harmed or threatened by another group. This concept is used to justify discriminatory attitudes or policies by framing the dominant group as the victim. Typically, this involves depicting minority groups, such as immigrants or ethnic minorities, as threats or dangers. By positioning the in-group (the dominant group) as victims, this strategy aims to elicit sympathy and support for actions taken against the out-group (the perceived threat). In discourses, victimisation is frequently employed to establish an 'Us vs. Them' binary structure. This rhetorical device is frequently employed in political discourse to reinforce social divisions and justify restrictive policies. (van Dijk, 2006)
- **Evidentiality:** refers to citing authoritative figures or institutions that lend credibility and objectivity to a speaker's opinions and claims. Enhancing the perceived reliability of their argument. (van Dijk, 2006).
- **Openness and Honesty:** They are rhetorical strategies that claim transparency and integrity in discussions. They have become a theme in immigration debates. Using this strategy, speakers suggest that their arguments align with values such as honesty and openness while simultaneously avoiding portrayals of others (van Dijk, 2012).
- **Number Game:** The frequent use of numbers in discussions about immigration is a known technique for establishing credibility and objectivity. Since numbers and statistics are seen as evidence, speakers employ them to present their arguments as factual rather than mere opinions or impressions (van Dijk, 2006).

### **2.2.5 Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model of Discourse**

Norman Fairclough's method for Critical Discourse Analysis includes a three-dimensional model that combines analysing text, discourse practices, and social practices. This model

significantly impacts our understanding of how social practices and power dynamics influence discourse and how language contributes to the preservation or transformation of social structures (1989, 1992, 1995, 2015).

a) Text dimension (Micro Level)

The text dimension involves a detailed analysis of linguistic elements within texts, such as grammar, vocabulary, metaphors, and pronouns, alongside elements of coherence and cohesion to understand how meaning is constructed and conveyed. According to Fairclough, (1995) that texts are not only linguistic entities but also social practices that shape social relations and influence social structures. Thus, analysing texts is crucial for understanding their impact on existing social structures and how they contribute to shaping the world around them (Richardson, 2007). Fairclough (2015) highlights the role of grammar in constructing social relations by noting that choices in tense and modality can subtly influence perceptions of certainty or obligations in events, thereby framing interactions in ways that reflect specific power dynamics. Fairclough (1992) further argues that lexical choices in discourse are inherently non-neutral; they reflect and shape social identities and power relations, significantly influencing how information is perceived and understood. Additionally, Fairclough (1989) defines metaphors as tools for representing one aspect of experience in terms of another can reinforce particular viewpoints and ideologies. Similarly, the strategic use of pronouns and rhetorical devices, such as repetition, can subtly guide audience perception, creating in-group versus out-group dynamics and reinforcing social cohesion or deepening divisions. Cohesion and coherence are also vital elements within the text dimension, cohesion refers to the way sentences are connected through vocabulary repetition and related terms, while coherence ensures logical connections throughout the text, thereby forming a unified and understandable argument. Specific cohesive devices like anaphora, which refers back to something previously mentioned, and cataphora, which points forward to something mentioned later, are instrumental in maintaining the text's overall coherence. Collectively, these linguistic strategies not only enhance the textual structure but also amplify its ideological impact, shaping readers' interpretations and reinforcing specific social and ideological positions. (Fairclough, 1995)

b) Discursive Practices Dimension (Meso Level)

This dimension refers to the processes involved in producing, distributing, and consuming texts (Fairclough, 1992). This dimension is concerned with 'how text producers and

interpreters draw upon the socially available resources that constitute the order of discourse' (Fairclough, 1995, p.10). It includes analysing the roles of the producers and consumers of the text, the context in which it is produced and received, and how texts are circulated and disseminated. This dimension emphasises the interpretation of the text, considering the social and cultural factors that influence how texts are understood (Fairclough, 1989).

c) Social Practices Dimension (Macro Level)

This level examines the broader socio-political and cultural contexts in which the text and discursive practices are embedded. This dimension explains how discourse is involved in social practices and reinforces power dynamics. Exploring the ways in which language contributes to the maintenance or transformation of social structures. (Fairclough, 1989)

### **2.3 Specific Background**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been widely used to study how language shapes and reflects power and ideology, especially in political speeches. This section looks at previous studies on discourse and explains how the current study fits into this area of research.

Akbar and Abbas (2019) utilised van Dijk's Ideological Square and his discourse analysis methods in two of Donald Trump's speeches during his pre- and post-presidential periods. The study uncovers how Trump's language negatively portrays immigrants and Syrian refugees, framing them as security threats. This study demonstrates how language can reinforce divisive ideologies and justify discriminatory policies. This approach is relevant to the present study, which similarly seeks to understand how language in Braverman's speech perpetuates power structures within discourse.

Bilal et al. (2012) applied Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to analyse Barack Obama's speech announcing the death of Osama bin Laden. Their analysis illustrated how Obama's language choices reflected American dominance and reinforced existing power relations. The analysis focused on specific linguistic features of the speech, revealing how discourse is employed to sustain authority and shape public opinion. This research provides a relevant comparative perspective, as it similarly uses Fairclough's model to explore the strategic use of language in the context of UK migration.

Ali and Jassim (2022) analysed Ilhan Omar's victory speech by employing Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional approach. This approach examines textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice to uncover the underlying power and ideology in Omar's speech. The analysis reveals how Omar's use of language not only asserts her power but also aligns with her broader progressive agenda, aiming to influence societal views on discrimination and inclusivity. Her adept use of linguistic features like vocabulary and presuppositions communicates power dynamics and ideological beliefs, illustrating the potent role of language in political discourse. This highlights how political figures can leverage linguistic features to reinforce particular viewpoints and ideologies, which is closely related to the strategies used in Braverman's speech. Which is, unlike Omar's, works to maintain societal divides and justify restrictive immigration policies.

While substantial research has focused on migration discourse in American political speeches, less attention has been given to the UK perspective, especially in the post-Brexit climate. The current study addresses this gap by focusing on Braverman's speech, analysing how her language reflects and reinforces ideological stances in the context of UK migration policy.

### **3 Integration of Theoretical Approaches**

Combining Teun A. van Dijk's ideological square with Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model provides a comprehensive framework for analysing Suella Braverman's speech on migration. This integrated approach allows for a detailed examination of both the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies, as well as the broader discursive and social practices within her discourse. Van Dijk's ideological square is particularly effective in identifying how Braverman's language choices create a favourable image of the in-group (British citizens) while portraying the out-group (migrants) negatively. By employing strategies such as number game, victimization, evidentiality, and lexicalisation, Braverman reinforces ideological divisions and presents migrants as economic and social threats. Fairclough's three-dimensional model complements this by examining the text (vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, pronouns, cohesion and coherence), discursive practices (production, distribution, and consumption of the speech), and social practices (the broader socio-political context). The text dimension reveals how Braverman's linguistic

choices construct meaning and influence audience perception. The discursive practices dimension considers her role and the conservative setting of her speech, which shape how her message is interpreted. The social practices dimension places her speech within the post-Brexit context, highlighting how her language reinforces societal divides and legitimizes restrictive policies. By combining Fairclough's and Van Dijk's theories, we gain a clearer understanding of how language, power, and ideology interact within discourse.

## **4 Design of the Present Study**

This section outlines the design of the current study, focusing on the material selected for analysis and the method employed to critically examine Suella Braverman's speech on migration.

### **4.1 Material**

The selected research material for this study is the transcript of Suella Braverman's speech at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, DC, on September 26, 2023. The speech, lasting approximately 32 minutes and comprising 4,515 words, addresses migration and the global refugee crisis. It was presented in a live setting to an audience affiliated with the AEI, a prominent conservative think tank. The transcript was sourced from AEI's official website to ensure its accuracy and reliability. According to the Media-Fact Check website (2021), the AEI audience is predominantly inclined towards conservative causes. They are ranked on a scale from left to right based on their polls and studies. The speech was chosen for analysis due to its critical relevance to the immigration discourse in the United Kingdom. It directly addresses key themes such as migration, cultural identity, and national security, providing a rich context for exploring the intersection of language, ideology, and power. Delivered by Suella Braverman, the former Home Secretary, the speech was made during a period of intensified debates surrounding migration policies, heightened concerns about post-Brexit border security, and the rise of nationalist sentiments. Analysing this speech could offer valuable insights into Braverman's underlying ideologies and the linguistic and rhetorical strategies she employs to shape the discourse on migration.

## 4.2 Method of Analysis

This present research is conducted by following the principles of the qualitative research approach, which aims to get a deeper understanding of the findings (Streefkerk, 2020). The selected transcript of Suella Braverman's speech is not extensive in quantity but rich in content, necessitating a qualitative approach to fully explore its depth. The analysis examines linguistic features, discourse strategies, and ideological framing to understand how Braverman constructs her arguments on immigration.

The primary data for this study was carefully read multiple times to familiarise the researcher with its content and overall structure. This was achieved through a reading process, which helped identify linguistic patterns within the discourse, forming a basis for more detailed analysis. Each sentence and phrase of the speech was manually coded using both theoretical frameworks, facilitating a detailed exploration of language use. This meticulous analysis helps to unravel the complex interplay between language, ideology, and power in Braverman's discourse.

The analysis is guided by the theoretical frameworks established by Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) and Teun A. van Dijk (2006, 2011, 2012, 2013). These frameworks enable a comprehensive exploration of the micro, meso and macro levels of discourse. Fairclough's three-dimensional model offers a way to examine the textual analysis, discursive practices, and social practices embedded in the speech, while van Dijk's framework provides tools for analysing the rhetorical strategies and ideological constructs shaping the narrative.

The results section is divided into two parts. The first part applies both van Dijk's and Fairclough's frameworks to analyse the linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in Braverman's speech. These strategies effectively construct migration as a crisis and create a clear division between the in-group (British citizens) and the out-group (immigrants). In the second part, Fairclough's three-dimensional model is applied to delve into the discursive and social practices in Suella Braverman's speech. It explores how the speech was produced, delivered, and received within its broader socio-political context, analysing Braverman's role as the speaker, the choice of the American Enterprise Institute as the venue, the characteristics of the audience, and the timing of the speech amid ongoing immigration debates in the UK. This approach allows an understanding of how her

language reflects and reinforces existing power dynamics and ideological stances on immigration.

## 5 Results and discussion

This section presents the findings by applying both van Dijk's (2006, 2011, 2012, 2013) and Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995, 2015) frameworks.

### 5.1 Textual Analysis

This section employs van Dijk's ideological square, integrating various strategies and techniques for analysing ideological discourse, alongside Fairclough's text dimension framework.

- 1) The fact is that our countries are exceptionally attractive. Four percent of those polled by Gallup, approximately 14 million people, named Britain as their preferred destination. Eighteen percent, approximately 162 million people, named the USA. These numbers are respectively more than half of our current total populations. Now, those in favour of a more lib at this point, so what? Isn't it a good thing that people the world over want to come to the West and contribute?

In this extract (1), Braverman employs van Dijk's principle of positive self-presentation of the in-group by highlighting the UK and the USA as 'exceptionally attractive' and 'preferred destination' for millions, portraying the in-group as superior and globally sought after. This simplifies complex migration drivers, framing them as a testament to these countries' appeal. She also uses van Dijk's number game strategy by citing exact figures such as '14 million' and '162 million', enhancing her argument's credibility and objectivity and framing it as data-driven rather than opinion-based. By presenting such numbers, she emphasises the global demand for migration to the West, potentially evoking concern about the capacity to manage this influx. This supports her implicit call for stricter immigration policies to safeguard national interests. Fairclough's text dimension further reveals how inclusive pronouns like 'our' foster a sense of collective identity and imply ownership and responsibility, aligning the speaker and audience within the same in-group. This constructs social relations and frames immigration as a collective concern, naturalising ideologies that



present stricter policies as logical and necessary while subtly positioning migrants as an external out-group and potential threat to stability.

- 2) New York's Democratic Mayor, Eric Adams, exclaimed that the migrants crisis will destroy New York City.

In extract (2), Braverman employs van Dijk's strategy of evidentiality by quoting Mayor Eric Adams, an authoritative figure, who stated that the migrant crisis would 'destroy New York City'. By referencing Adams Braverman adds credibility to her argument and frames migration as a severe and pressing threat. This use of evidence helps construct a narrative that normalizes her ideological stance, presenting it as rational and essential for safeguarding societal stability. This aligns with van Dijk's emphasis on negative other-representation, portraying migrants as a danger to societal stability and positioning New York City and its residents as victims of this perceived threat. This narrative establishes a clear 'Us vs. Them' dichotomy, where the in-group (citizens) is portrayed as vulnerable and in need of protection from the out-group (migrants). By framing the in-group as under threat, Braverman amplifies the urgency for immediate action to safeguard societal stability. Norman Fairclough's concept of vocabulary selection is evident in this extract through the deliberate choice of emotionally charged terms such as 'crisis', and 'destroy', and 'exclaimed'. These words carry strong connotations, shaping public perception by framing migration as an immediate and catastrophic threat. Such language choices are not neutral but ideologically motivated, designed to elicit emotional responses and construct a specific narrative.

- 3) Illegal migration is not merely an event-driven or cyclical problem; it's a permanent and structural challenge for the developed nations in general and the West in particular. Unless we act, it will only worsen in the years to come. War, political instability, and climate change will of course, exacerbate migration flows.

The pronouns 'it' and 'we' play significant roles in shaping the narrative. The inclusive 'we' creates a sense of shared responsibility and urgency, positioning the audience as active participants in addressing the issue. This fosters solidarity and strengthens the call to action, aligning with Fairclough's concept of pronouns as tools for creating relationships (1989). The pronoun 'it' emphasizes migration as a worsening, inevitable crisis. In 'it's a permanent and structural challenge', it frames

migration as a universal, ongoing problem for developed nations. Later, 'it' connects migration to the risks of inaction, making the problem feel more urgent.

Additionally, Braverman employs modality to strengthen her ideological framing. The future tense in phrases like 'will worsen' and 'will exacerbate', conveys certainty about negative outcomes. This aligns with her broader ideological framing, which portrays migration as a threat to cultural identity and justifies restrictive policies as essential to maintaining stability and traditional values. The use of 'will' conveys a strong degree of certainty, which, according to Fairclough's analysis of modality (1992), helps to naturalise Braverman's ideological stance. By portraying these outcomes as inevitable, the use of modality positions her proposed policies as the only logical solution to an inevitable crisis.

According to van Dijk's concept of lexicalisation, terms such as 'illegal', 'challenge', 'worsen' and 'exacerbate' are deliberately chosen to amplify the perceived threat. These terms portray migrants as an out-group and migration as a force that disrupts society. The word 'illegal' criminalizes migrants, while 'challenge' suggests a problem requiring confrontation. Terms like 'worsen' and 'exacerbate' emphasize crisis and escalation, reinforcing the idea that migration inherently creates negative outcomes.

- 4) It has been too much too quick, with too little thought given to integration and the impact on social cohesion. And the fact that the optimal level is hard to define, and will vary across time and for different countries, doesn't change that fundamental fact.

In extract (4), Braverman continues to utilise van Dijk's lexicalisation strategy, this time through lexical repetition with phrases like 'too much', 'too quick', and 'too little'. These repeated terms intensify her framing of immigration as excessive and poorly managed, reinforcing the narrative of a crisis. Braverman amplifies the perception of chaos and lack of control by emphasizing these modifiers, portraying the out-group (migrants) negatively. This repetition embeds implicit ideological judgments in her language and making her stance appear both urgent and rational. It serves to naturalise her argument for stricter immigration policies by presenting the situation as both overwhelming and unsustainable.

- 5) Nor should it blind us from the simple truth. If cultural change is too rapid and too big, then what was already there is diluted. Eventually it will disappear.

In extract (5), Braverman employs van Dijk's strategy of polarisation to create a stark division between the in-group (British citizens and their cultural identity) and the out-group (migrants driving cultural change). By framing cultural change as 'too rapid' and 'too big', she positions migration as a direct threat to the preservation of the in-group's cultural values and traditions. This aligns with Van Dijk's ideological square of emphasizing negative aspects of the out-group to heighten the sense of their disruptiveness. Moreover, Braverman's use of language reflects Norman Fairclough's analysis of grammar, particularly by using future tense with strong modality, as seen in the phrase 'Eventually it will disappear'. The modal verb 'will' conveys a high degree of certainty, presenting the loss of cultural identity as an inevitable consequence of unchecked immigration. This choice of language transforms the claim into an undeniable truth rather than a subjective opinion, enhancing its persuasive power. By framing the future consequences with certainty, Braverman positions restrictive policies as urgent and unavoidable, minimising room for alternative perspectives or debate.

- 6) Multiculturalism makes no demands of the incomer to integrate. It has failed, because it allowed people to come to our society, and live parallel lives in it. They could be in the society, but not of the society. And in extreme cases, they could pursue lives aimed at undermining the stability and threatening the security of our society.

In extract (6), Braverman employs van Dijk's strategy of polarisation, particularly focusing on emphasising negative aspects of the outgroup (immigrants) to reinforce an in-group vs. out-group dynamic. She portrays multiculturalism as a flawed concept that led to the segregation of society and the creation of parallel societies. By stating that immigrants could be 'in the society' but not 'of the society', she underscores their physical presence without genuine assimilation, framing them as detached outsiders who fail to integrate into the cultural and social fabric. This distinction between 'in' and 'of' highlights their alienation and reinforces social division. Furthermore, her language reinforces this divide through charged terms like 'failed', 'undermining', and 'threatening', which reflect van Dijk's concept of lexicalisation, embedding negative connotations into the portrayal of the out-group. Her statement, 'in extreme cases, they could pursue lives aimed at undermining the stability and threatening the security of our society' amplifies this narrative, by employing a victimisation strategy. This rhetoric positions the in-group (existing citizens) as vulnerable and under threat from the out-group (immigrants).

Suggesting that some immigrants actively endanger the host society by instilling fear.

7) Who we allow to come into our country and become one of us is a fundamental issue.

In extract (7), Braverman utilises syntax and pronouns to emphasise a binary division between the in-group and out-group, creating a sense of exclusivity regarding societal identity. Using van Dijk's strategy of syntax, she constructs an active sentence where the in-group, represented by 'we', is positioned as the subject controlling the action of 'allowing' others to join the nation. This syntax assigns agency and authority to the in-group, portraying them as gatekeepers of national identity and societal inclusion while implicitly framing the out-group as passive and less entitled. This aligns with van Dijk's view that syntax can carry ideological significance, highlighting the active dominance of the in-group over the out-group. Braverman's deliberate use of pronouns such as 'we', 'our', and 'us' further aligns closely with Fairclough's insights on pronoun usage. These pronouns foster a sense of relational solidarity within the in-group while excluding the out-group. These linguistic choices construct social identities and relationships, creating a sense of shared authority and unity among the audience. This strategy not only reinforces the in-group's perceived control over societal inclusion but also enhances the persuasive power of her discourse by fostering a strong connection between the speaker and her audience.

8) But we must be honest. The fundamental drivers of this epoch defining challenge are economics and demography. In January, the World Economic Forum said that migration will become one of the top five global risks in the next decade, ahead of national resource crisis, 20 geoeconomic confrontation, and environmental disasters. It's a fallacy that as countries get richer, emigration from them declines. As the American economist Michael Clemens has found, emigration from a country tends to rise until it reaches a level of income of about \$10,000 per person, before declining.

In extract (8), Braverman effectively employs openness and honesty and evidentiality to construct a persuasive and credible argument about migration. By stating, 'But we must be honest', she positions herself as transparent and trustworthy, thereby framing her subsequent

claims as objective and grounded in factual evidence. She further strengthens her argument by citing authoritative sources such as the World Economic Forum and economist Michael Clemens, presenting her perspective as well-informed and supported by expert analysis. This use of authority lends weight to her argument and positions it within a broader, supposedly objective discourse on global risks. Together, these strategies portray migration as an inevitable global challenge rooted in economic and demographic factors rather than individual human motivations, subtly legitimizing stricter migration policies as logical and necessary.

- 9) The unprecedented rise in illegal migration to the UK via small boat crossings from France has put unsustainable pressure on the UK asylum system and the British taxpayer. Approximately, 109,000 people have illegally crossed the channel via small boats since 2018, including 45,000 alone last year. Consequently, the cost of the UK asylum system has roughly doubled in the last year, and now stands at nearly £4 billion. A decade ago, the total cost to the taxpayer was around £500 million. The UK is now spending £8 million a day on accommodating migrants in hotels.

In extract (9), Braverman effectively employs van Dijk's concept of the "number game", By strategically using exact statistics, '109,000', '45,000', '£4 billion', '£500 million', and '£8 million a day'. These figures underscore the economic burdens imposed by immigration on the UK's asylum system and taxpayers. By presenting these specific numbers, Braverman enhances her credibility, appearing evidence-based and informed. By emphasising substantial costs to taxpayers, she frames immigration as economic issue, presenting migrants as a financial burden rather than individuals with humanitarian needs. Drawing on van Dijk's concept of victimization, she positions the UK asylum system and taxpayers as overwhelmed by unsustainable demands, shifting the focus from humanitarian considerations to economic strain and national preservation. This reframing presents tighter immigration controls as both logical and necessary. Furthermore, the speech constructs a polarization between 'the British taxpayer' and 'migrants', reinforcing van Dijk's theory of ideological discourse that creates an In-group (Us) and an out-group (Them). This division perpetuates the perception of migrants as external threats to national cohesion.

- 10) A 2014 study by University College London concluded that almost no illegal migrants end up paying in taxes what they gained from the state in benefits.

In extract (10), Braverman continues to use van Dijk's concept of evidentiality, this time referencing a study from University College London to support her claim that illegal migrants pose a financial burden. This appeal to academic authority adds weight and credibility to her argument, making it appear factual and data-driven rather than opinion-based, subtly guiding the audience to perceive immigration as a verified financial burden on the UK. Her lexical choices, like 'paying in taxes' and 'gained from the state', frame migrants as passive beneficiaries who fail to contribute economically. Aligning to van Dijk's lexicalisation, where word choices subtly serve ideological purposes. Such language fosters an 'Us vs. Them' dichotomy, portraying migrants as an economic threat to the in-group, reinforcing divisions within society. These strategies together frame immigration as an unsustainable cost, subtly validating calls for stricter controls to protect public resources.

- 11) Within 48 hours, illegal arrivals outnumbered the local population. And a state of emergency had been declared. By the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, at least 11,000 had landed, with migrants sleeping in the street, stealing food, and clashing with the police.

In extract (11) Braverman continues to employ vocabulary selection to reinforce her narrative and elicit particular from the audience. She utilises this technique to depict immigration as a crisis and to provoke feelings of fear or concern among her audience. This time, her language frames immigration as a crisis, evoking fear and concern. Charged phrases such as 'clashing with the police,' 'stealing food', 'heightened levels of criminality', 'contempt for our laws', and 'state of emergency'. Depicting migrants as threats to societal stability and security. This strategy effectively builds support for tougher border controls and immigration measures by appealing to fears of disorder and loss of control. Braverman's vocabulary selection implies that all refugees represent a potential danger without recognising that many of them are fleeing their homes due to dangerous situations. These linguistic choices reinforce the portrayal of migrants as security risks,

thereby validating stricter immigration policies as essential to protecting societal order.

- 12) illegal migration also poses obvious threats to public safety and national security. UK police chiefs have warned me of heightened levels of criminality connected to some small boat arrivals, particularly in relation to drug crime, exploitation, and prostitution. People who choose to come across the channel illegally from another safe country have already shown contempt for our laws.

In this extract (12), Braverman enhances her claims' credibility by citing warnings from 'UK police chiefs', leveraging her authority as Home Secretary to align her stance with expert opinions. This strategy portrays her as a leader acting on informed advice, reinforcing the validity of her stance. Braverman leverages this evidentiality to highlight the negative attributes of the out-group, associating illegal migrants with serious crimes such as 'drug crime, exploitation, and prostitution'. This strategy aligns with van Dijk's observation on emphasizing the out-group's negative traits to shape public perception. The deliberate mention of these specific crimes magnifies fear and evokes strong emotional reactions, and reinforces the narrative of migrants as a disruptive and criminal threat. Such selective framing risks stereotyping all migrants, criminalizing entire communities while justifying restrictive policies. The use of the present tense in 'poses obvious threats' conveys immediacy and urgency, presenting migration as an ongoing escalating crisis. This aligns with Fairclough's concept of tense as a tool to shape perceptions and naturalise certain ideologies, making the issue appear pressing and unavoidable.

- 13) Uncontrolled immigration, inadequate integration, and a misguided dogma of multiculturalism have proven a toxic combination for Europe over the last few decades.

In extract (13) Braverman utilises metaphor aligning with Norman Fairclough text dimension. She states, 'a toxic combination' to describe 'unregulated immigration', 'inadequate integration', and 'multiculturalism'. By likening these elements to a

toxin or poison, she suggests that their interaction is not just problematic but dangerously harmful to society. According to Fairclough's textual analysis, metaphors are powerful rhetorical tools that shape how audiences perceive complex issues by creating vivid and emotionally charged images (Fairclough, 1992). The metaphor 'a toxic combination' evokes feelings of contamination and danger, implying that these factors threaten the health and stability of European society. This figurative language enhances the persuasiveness of her argument by creating a sense of urgency and alarm, making the issues appear immediate and severe. By portraying immigration, integration, and multiculturalism as a 'toxic mix', Braverman simplifies multifaceted social issues into a stark image of danger, making her argument more impactful. This language not only conveys her stance on immigration but also seeks to rally support for policy changes by highlighting perceived threats to society.

- 14) Political systems which cannot control their borders will not maintain the consent of the people, and thus not long endure.

In this extract (14), Braverman utilises grammar by employing strong modality along with the future tense to underscore the critical importance of border control for the stability and longevity of political systems. By stating that political systems 'will not long endure', she conveys a sense of certainty and inevitability regarding the severe consequences of failing to manage immigration effectively. Moreover, the use of modal language serves to naturalize the ideology that border control is essential for political stability. The use of modal verbs like 'will' expresses strong certainty, making the outcomes appear unavoidable and serious., framing immigration as an immediate and pressing threat that requires decisive action. Additionally, the choice of words like 'maintain', 'consent', and 'endure' are loaded with deep implications. The verb 'maintain' suggests a continuous need for effort to uphold stability, while 'consent' ties effective border control to democratic legitimacy and public approval, framing it as essential for maintaining political legitimacy. 'Endure' further underscores the necessity of border control for the long-term survival and resilience of political systems. These terms reinforce the idea that border control is not just a policy matter but a fundamental requirement



for the survival of political systems. By suggesting that lack of border control leads to loss of public consent and political endurance, Braverman constructs the in-group as victims of the out-group's actions. This victimisation legitimises defensive measures and reinforces the necessity of maintaining strict border controls to protect societal interests (van Dijk, 2006).

Additionally, Braverman employs cohesion and coherence in her discourse. According to Fairclough, Cohesion 'can involve vocabulary links between sentences -repetition of words, or use of related words' (2015, p.145). Braverman uses linguistic techniques such as lexical cohesion, conjunctions, connectives, and references to connect sentences and different parts of the text. She strategically repeats critical phrases such as 'illegal migration', 'nation-state', 'public consent', and 'asylum system' to establish lexical coherence, thereby tying the discourse together and maintaining the reader's focus on the central issue. Additionally, she incorporates conjunctions like 'and', 'but', and 'so' to structure her arguments, along with connective terms such as 'firstly', 'secondly', and 'thirdly', aiding readers in navigating the progression of ideas and understanding the connections between them. To ensure cohesion, she employs referents like 'this' and 'it' to allude to previous points (anaphora) or foreshadow forthcoming topics (cataphora). Furthermore, Fairclough asserts that 'coherence plays a pivotal role in the ideological formation and reformation of subjects in discourse' (1995, p.74). He explains that 'coherent text is one in which its component parts... are meaningfully interconnected' (Fairclough, 1992, p.83). Braverman's speech establishes coherence through thematic progression and logical argumentation. Throughout the speech, she consistently expands on the theme of uncontrolled immigration as a fundamental challenge and connects it to economic, cultural, and security issues. Each structured argument builds upon the previous one, leading to a well-organized and compelling presentation. She begins by setting the context, delves into detailing the challenges, and then presents arguments opposing uncontrolled immigration in a logical order that aids the listener's comprehension.

## **5.2 Discursive and Social Practices**

Suella Braverman and her team most likely wrote the speech. As a politician, her political affiliations, ideologies, and office objectives would have influenced her speech. The speech aims to convey significant viewpoints or policies about

immigration and its impact on the UK and the West. It may have been created to reflect the government's policy agenda and persuade both the British public and international counterparts and conservative viewpoints on immigration. The speech's content and presentation were shaped by audience expectations and the persuasive needs of the context. The goal was to use language and discourse to frame immigration in a way that supports their political objectives and resonates with their constituents. The choice of the American Enterprise Institute as the venue for this speech is significant. As a conservative think tank, it suggests a strategic choice of venue to reach an audience that is likely to be sympathetic to her views. The speech was distributed through formal channels, possibly accompanied by media coverage and publication on official websites, to reach a broader audience and influence the public discourse on immigration. The speech was delivered to the institute's live audience and was distributed widely through media and internet channels. The speech's interpretation and understanding depend on the listener's political beliefs and personal experiences with immigration. Some may view it as a strong and necessary stance on immigration control, while others may view it as alarmist or even xenophobic.

Braverman's speech was delivered during a period of heightened global migration and intense debate over immigration control in the UK, amplified by post-Brexit border concerns and nationalist sentiment. According to Fairclough's framework, discourse in the social practices dimension shapes and reinforces societal norms and power structures rather than merely reflecting them (Fairclough, 1992). As Home Secretary, Braverman's position gave her the authority to frame immigration as a matter of national security and economic stability, reflecting the UK government's official stance. This authoritative positioning makes her speech influential in defining public perceptions of immigration, shaping it as an issue requiring urgent control. Braverman's language supports what Fairclough describes as naturalization, where certain ideas become 'common sense' through repeated discourse. By focusing on the economic 'strain' migrants place on resources like healthcare and housing, she frames restrictive immigration policies as logical and necessary, encouraging the public to accept them as practical responses to protect resources (Fairclough, 1995). In positioning immigration control as common sense, her language subtly legitimizes exclusionary policies as essential for safeguarding the nation's stability.

Fairclough's concept of hegemony is also evident in Braverman's speech, as her discourse aligns the UK's immigration stance with global conservative trends, reinforcing an ideology that prioritizes national security and resource protection. Her framing resonates with nationalist ideas by positioning migrants as economic and cultural challenges, justifying tighter border control and emphasizing the need to limit migration as a form of self-preservation (Fairclough, 1995). In framing migration as a threat, Braverman's speech risks deepening social divides between the in-group (UK citizens) and the out-group (migrants), reinforcing Fairclough's notion of discourse as a tool that can maintain social hierarchies. By highlighting the 'cost' of immigration, her language positions migrants as burdens, fostering exclusionary attitudes that may hinder social cohesion. Through Fairclough's lens, this discourse upholds power structures by privileging the interests of citizens and legitimizing policies that marginalize migrant communities as threats to national stability. In summary, Braverman's speech uses her authority to shape immigration as a matter of control, aligning with nationalist ideologies that legitimize restrictive policies. Through Fairclough's social practices dimension, her discourse exemplifies how language can reinforce societal structures, naturalizing exclusionary views on migration and making control appear necessary for protecting national resources.

## **6 Limitations of the research**

This research study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it focuses on a single speech by Suella Braverman, which may not fully represent the broader discourse on migration within the UK government or the Conservative Party. Analysing only one speech limits the ability to generalise findings to other political figures or contexts.

Second, the study relies on qualitative methodology, which involves interpreting the text. Different researchers might interpret the same speech differently based on their perspectives. This means the findings are somewhat subjective, which can affect the reliability and consistency of the conclusions. To address these limitations in studies, researchers might consider examining a broader range of speeches delivered by various political figures. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods could strengthen the analysis by offering both detailed interpretations and general patterns across a wider set of data. For example, corpus linguistics involves scrutinising collections of texts (corpora) to detect language usage

patterns and frequencies (Baker, 2006), providing a data-driven approach that complements the interpretive aspect of CDA. This combination would allow for a more comprehensive exploration of how language is used across a wider set of data, enhancing the applicability and depth of the study's findings.

## 7 Conclusion

This study employed an integrated Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, combining Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Teun A. van Dijk's ideological square, to examine Suella Braverman's speech on immigration. The analysis revealed that Braverman strategically language to frame migration as a multifaceted threat to social stability, national identity, and economic well-being.

At the micro-level, both van Dijk's approach and Fairclough's text dimension highlighted linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed by Braverman. Van Dijk's framework uncovered specific strategies such as lexicalization, victimization, polarization, evidentiality, syntax, and the number game. These strategies emphasize negative aspects of the out-group (migrants) while promoting positive self-presentation of the in-group (citizens), thereby constructing a clear 'Us vs. Them' narrative. Simultaneously, Fairclough's textual analysis dimension showed how Braverman's use of grammar, vocabulary, pronouns, metaphors, coherence and cohesion contributed to constructing and conveying meaning.

At the meso-macro-level, Fairclough's analysis of discursive and social practices provided insight into how the speech fits within the broader socio-political context. The speech was delivered at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, which suggests a strategic choice to reach an audience likely to support her views. This setting reinforces dominant conservative ideologies about migration. Her speech aligns with rising nationalist sentiments and ongoing debates over immigration in the UK, especially in the post-Brexit era. By integrating van Dijk's and Fairclough's frameworks, this study demonstrated how Braverman's speech not only reflects existing ideologies but also potentially influences public perceptions of migration. The language choices contribute to maintaining power dynamics and societal norms that support restrictive immigration policies. By framing migration as an existential threat requiring urgent action, the speech presents strict policies as necessary measures. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the role of political discourse in shaping public opinion and reinforcing power

structures (Akbar & Abbas, 2019; Ali & Jassim, 2022; Bilal et al., 2012). This study emphasizes the importance of critically examining political speeches to understand how language can influence societal attitudes and policy decisions. In conclusion, Braverman's speech serves as a clear example of how political figures can use language to construct narratives that frame migration negatively, influencing public perception and legitimizing certain policies. Understanding these linguistic and rhetorical strategies is crucial for fostering a more balanced and informed debate on migration.

Future research could expand on this study by analysing other political speeches on migration, perhaps using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Incorporating approaches like corpus linguistics could provide a broader analysis of language patterns in migration discourse. Additionally, exploring how the media represents such speeches and how the public responds to them could offer valuable insights into the relationship between discourse, public perception, and policy development

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## Appendix

**September 26, 2023**

Suella Braverman: Thank you very much for the welcome. It is always a great pleasure to be here in America. And it's a particular privilege to be speaking at the American Enterprise Institute, an organization that has contributed so much to the intellectual foundations of the conservative movement in the US and the UK, and to our public life more broadly. Some of those affiliated with AEI have had a significant impact on my own thinking. Thomas Sowell, James Q. Wilson, Justice Scalia, and Britain's Sir Roger Scruton, who was a visiting scholar here for several years. Now I'm here in America to talk about a critical and shared global challenge, uncontrolled and illegal migration. It's an existential challenge for the political and cultural institutions of the West. Just as it's a basic rule of history, that nations which cannot defend their borders will not long survive. It is a basic rule of politics, that political systems which cannot control their borders will not maintain the consent of the people, and thus not long endure. You do not have to be a clairvoyant to see how might this all unfold. To understand the future, cast your mind back a couple of weeks, and a few thousand miles southeast of here, to the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa, population then 6,000. Lampedusa, where in a 24-hour period, beginning on the 12th of September, over 120 boats, over 120, 100 boats, carrying more than 5,000 illegal migrants, made the 100-mile crossing from Tunisia in Africa to Italy. Within 48 hours, illegal arrivals outnumbered the local population. And a state of emergency had been declared. By the 20th of September, at least 11,000 had landed, with migrants sleeping in the street, stealing food, and clashing with the police. These 11,000 are part of the estimated 133,000 people who've already come to Italy illegally by sea

in the first six months of this year. That number is almost double the number of arrivals at the same point in 2022. And in 2022, a total of 330,000 illegal border crossings into the EU were detected, an increase of 66 percent compared to 2021. Of course, it's worth noting that most numbers relating to illegal migration are approximations. Nobody knows the true number of illegal arrivals, and estimates in this area very rarely turn out to be lower. America faces similar challenges. Thousands of people illegally cross the border on a daily basis. Illegal migration to the US has in recent years gone from just under 2 million in 2021, to more than 2.8 million this year. Illegal migration is not merely an event driven or cyclical problem, it's a permanent and structural challenge for the developed nations in general and the West in particular. Unless we act, it will only worsen in the years to come. War, political instability, and climate change will of course, exacerbate migration flows. According to the UN, at the end of 2022, there were over 108 million forcibly displaced people globally, with 29 million considered to be refugees by the UNHCR. But we must be honest. The fundamental drivers of this epoch defining challenge are economics and demography. In January, the World Economic Forum said that migration will become one of the top five global risks in the next decade, ahead of national resource crisis, geoeconomic confrontation, and environmental disasters. It's a fallacy that as countries get richer, emigration from them declines. As the American economist Michael Clemens has found, emigration from a country tends to rise until it reaches a level of income of about \$10,000 per person, before declining. World Bank data show that more than 3 billion people live in countries where the average income is below this threshold. The potential for migration to increase yet further is truly colossal. The raw numbers show how demand for migration, legal or otherwise, is likely to surge in the coming years. So, too, does personal testimony. A 2021 Gallup Poll found that 16 percent of adults worldwide, around 900 million people, would like permanently to leave their own country. And those numbers are not evenly distributed around the world. Thirty seven percent of

people living in sub-Saharan Africa, some 481 million people, and 27 percent of those living in the Middle East and North Africa, around 156 million, say they'd like to migrate. The ease with which some of them might reach Europe poses a unique and deepening challenge. The fact is that our countries are exceptionally attractive. Four percent of those polled by Gallup, approximately 14 million people, named Britain as their preferred destination. Eighteen percent, approximately 162 million people, named the USA. These numbers are respectively more than half of our current total populations. Now, those in favor of a more liberal approach when it comes to legal migration tend to say at this point, so what? Isn't it a good thing that people the world over want to come to the West and contribute? And why can't we absorb and welcome them? And wouldn't the problem of illegal migration be significantly reduced if we made it easier for people to come to our countries legally? Well, there are four core arguments in opposition to uncontrolled and illegal migration, the civic argument, the practical argument, the security argument, and the democratic argument. Firstly, the civic argument against uncontrolled and illegal migration. I believe that the nation state is one of humanity's great civilizing forces. It creates a shared identity and a shared purpose. And that does not need to have a racial component. Typically, it binds people of different racial backgrounds together. Far from being an ugly emotion, patriotism stirs people to heroism, and to kindness. It is the belief that we have specific obligations to others, precisely because they are our fellow countrymen. And in order for nationality to be sustainable, economically, culturally, and in terms of public support, it needs to encompass everyone. That, in turn, means that the country cannot grow exponentially, and still maintain the harmony needed for everyone to feel that we are all in this together. And let's remember something that is all too often forgotten, integration inevitably takes time. If immigration is uncontrolled, it makes it harder for society to adapt and accommodate new cultures and customs, and for communities to meld together. Uncontrolled immigration, inadequate integration, and a misguided dogma

of multiculturalism have proven a toxic combination for Europe over the last few decades. I'm not the first to point this out. In 2010, Angela Merkel gave a speech in which she acknowledged that multiculturalism had utterly failed. And then French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and British Prime Minister David Cameron, echoed similar sentiments shortly thereafter. Multiculturalism makes no demands of the incomer to integrate. It has failed, because it allowed people to come to our society, and live parallel lives in it. They could be in the society, but not of the society. And in extreme cases, they could pursue lives aimed at undermining the stability and threatening the security of our society. We are living with the consequences of that failure today, you can see it play out in the streets all over Europe. From Malmo, to Paris, Brussels to Leicester. It is 13 years since Merkel gave her speech. And I'm not sure that very much has changed since. If people are not able to settle in our countries, and start to think of themselves as British, American, French, or German, then something is going badly wrong. National identity is not something invented in an ivory tower, or by advertising executives. The nation state has endured because it means something real to almost all of us. And that is true the world over. Given how much it matters, it must be protected. Saying so does not make one anti-immigrant, nor does it mean you're anti-immigration. I am the child of immigrants. And it's no betrayal of my parents' story to say that immigration must be controlled. There is an optimal level of immigration. It is not zero. But there has been more migration to the UK and Europe in the last 25 years than in all the time that went before. It has been too much too quick, with too little thought given to integration and the impact on social cohesion. And the fact that the optimal level is hard to define, and will vary across time and for different countries, doesn't change that fundamental fact. Nor should it blind us from the simple truth. If cultural change is too rapid and too big, then what was already there is diluted. Eventually it will disappear. Secondly, the practical argument against uncontrolled and illegal migration. The unprecedented rise in illegal

migration to the UK via small boat crossings from France has put unsustainable pressure on the UK asylum system and the British taxpayer. Approximately, 109,000 people have illegally crossed the channel via small boats since 2018, including 45,000 alone last year. Consequently, the cost of the UK asylum system has roughly doubled in the last year, and now stands at nearly £4 billion. A decade ago, the total cost to the taxpayer was around £500 million. The UK is now spending £8 million a day on accommodating migrants in hotels. And we are not unique in these challenges, of course. In March, roughly one third of all hotel rooms in Ireland were being used to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees. And New York City is accommodating some 40,000 migrants in hotels. Earlier this month, New York's Democratic Mayor, Eric Adams, exclaimed that the migrants crisis will destroy New York City. Recent analysis suggests that it will cost New York approximately \$10 billion annually to support the roughly 110,000 asylum seekers, who have arrived there after crossing the southern border this year. Unless countries can prevent or rapidly remove illegal migrants, pressures on the state will compound over time. Accommodation cannot be magicked out of thin air. Nor can new schools, improved roads, extra police officers, additional health care, or any of the other public services upon which people rely. Immigration is behind at least 45 percent of demand for new housing in England. More than one in five births are to foreign born mothers. Due to immigration and high birth rates among foreign born mothers, English secondary schools will need to find an extra 213,000 places by 2026 compared to 2020. And then of course, there are the direct financial costs. A 2014 study by University College London concluded that almost no illegal migrants end up paying in taxes what they gained from the state in benefits. Thirdly, the national security case against uncontrolled and illegal migration. Illegal migration also poses obvious threats to public safety and national security. UK police chiefs have warned me of heightened levels of criminality connected to some small boat arrivals, particularly in relation to drug crime, exploitation, and prostitution.

People who choose to come across the channel illegally from another safe country have already shown contempt for our laws. President Macron claimed that illegal migrants or those waiting for a residence permit accounted for more than half of crime in Paris. Illegal migration is increasingly a tool exploited by hostile states and those acting on their behalf. Vladimir Putin weaponized migration in 2021, sending thousands of asylum seekers via Belarus to try to cross into Poland and Lithuania. In March, Italy's defense minister said the exponential increase in the migratory phenomenon departing from African shores is also to a not insignificant extent, part of a clear strategy of hybrid warfare that the Wagner division is implementing, using its considerable weight in some African countries. And fourthly, and perhaps most critically, the democratic case against uncontrolled and illegal migration. Opinion polls and successive national votes could not be clearer. People the world over want their governments to control their borders. The British public backed the UK-Rwanda partnership and the government's recent Illegal Migration Act by margins of about two to one. Six in 10 in red wall seats support stopping migrants' small boats from illegally entering the UK by using any means necessary. Seventy-two percent of EU citizens are in favor of reinforcing EU external borders. And more than half of Americans said there was an invasion at the southern border when polled in August 2022. Who we allow to come into our country and become one of us is a fundamental issue. Without public consent, immigration is illegitimate. Dismissing as idiots or bigots, those members of the public who express legitimate concerns, is not merely unfair, it is dangerous. Europe is at a critical juncture. The EU must find a way to meet the challenge of illegal migration. Ursula von der Leyen's recent visit to Lampedusa demonstrates the Commission's recognition of the severity of the situation. Because failure to do so will, I fear, undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions and create the conditions for more extreme politics. The UK is working closely with our European allies, both on the continent and in joint efforts upstream, to combat the

smuggling gangs and better secure Europe's borders. And we will always look for ways to deepen our cooperation on security. The most recent example is our new working arrangement with Frontex. To address where the solution to all of this might lie, I must first broach a taboo. One of the most significant, but underappreciated factors contributing to the global migration crisis is the global asylum framework. By this, I mean the various well intentioned legal conventions and treaties that say in effect, if you are fleeing persecution somewhere, you are entitled to make a claim for asylum anywhere. And irrespective of whether you arrived illegally, or passed through multiple safe countries along the way, a country must consider it. According to the UN, an estimated 50,000 people have died attempting dangerous and illegal migration since 2014. Although the actual figure is almost certainly higher. About half of these deaths occurred while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. A thousand people died last year, trying to cross from Mexico to the US. And some 150 people have died attempting to cross the channel by small boat, lorry, or other clandestine means in the last five years. All of these people were no doubt seeking a better life. Some, perhaps many, were genuine refugees. But not all of them were. Seeking asylum and seeking better economic prospects are not the same thing. Seeking refuge in the first safe country you reach, or shopping around for your preferred destination, are not the same thing. Being trafficked, i.e., transported against your will, perhaps to be sold into sex slavery, and being smuggled, i.e., asking someone to sneak you into a country, are not the same thing. The extent to which the global asylum framework enables the obscuring of these categories creates huge incentives for illegal migration. This legal framework is rooted in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. It was created to help resettle people fleeing persecution following the horrors of World War Two and the Holocaust, and was initially, at least, centered around Europe. It was an incredible achievement of its age. But more than 70 years on, we now live in a completely different time. Jet travel has transformed the cost and comparative ease of



moving around the world. The internet has made people acutely aware of how different life is and how much higher wages are in other parts of the world. Smartphones enable smugglers to facilitate operations with great ease and smooth communication between those who have undertaken a journey and others who might like to. When the Refugee Convention was signed, it conferred protection on some 2 million people in Europe. According to analysis by Nick Timothy and Karl Williams for the Center for Policy Studies, it now confers the notional right to move to another country upon at least 780 million people. It is therefore incumbent upon politicians and thought leaders to ask whether the Refugee Convention and the way it has come to be interpreted through our courts, is fit for our modern age or in need of reform. Article One of the Convention defines the term refugee as applying to those who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, cannot safely reside in the country of their nationality. Elsewhere, the Convention speaks of life or freedom being threatened. I think most members of the public would recognize those fleeing a real risk of death, torture, oppression, or violence as being in need of protection. However, as case law has developed, what we have seen in practice is an interpretive shift away from persecution, in favor of something more akin to a definition of discrimination. And there has been a similar shift away from a well-founded fear towards a credible or plausible fear. The practical consequence of which has been to expand the number of those who may qualify for asylum, and to lower the threshold for doing so. Let me be clear, there are vast swathes of the world where it is extremely difficult to be gay, or to be a woman. Where individuals are being persecuted, it is right that we offer sanctuary. But we will not be able to sustain an asylum system if in effect, simply being gay, or a woman, or fearful of discrimination in your country of origin, is sufficient to qualify for protection. Article 31 of the Refugee Convention makes clear that it is intended to apply to individuals coming directly from a territory where their

life was threatened. It also states, where people are crossing borders without permission, they should present themselves without delay to the authorities, and must show good cause for any illegal entry. The UK, along with many others, including America, interpret this to mean that people should seek refuge and claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach. But NGOs and others, including the UN Refugee Agency, contest this. The status quo where people are able to travel through multiple safe countries, and even reside in safe countries for years, while they pick and choose their preferred destination to claim asylum is absurd and unsustainable. Nobody entering the UK by boat from France is fleeing imminent peril. None of them have good cause for illegal entry. The vast majority have passed through multiple other safe countries, and in some instances, have resided in safe countries for several years. There is a strong argument that they should cease to be treated as refugees during their onward movement. There are also many whose journeys originate from countries that the public would consider to be manifestly safe like Turkey, or Albania, or India. In these instances, most are simply economic migrants, gaming the asylum system to their advantage. In Europe, we've added, through the European Convention on Human Rights, additional human rights laws. The global asylum framework is a promissory note that the West cannot fulfill. We have created a system of almost infinite supply, incentivizing millions of people to try their luck, knowing full well that we have no capacity to meet more than a fraction of the demand. Tragically, the ease with which this system can be gamed by those that don't really need it means it is the most vulnerable, women, children, those without the money to pay people smugglers, and those not fit enough to make arduous journeys, that lose out. In the UK, roughly 70 percent of those arriving illegally on small boats are men aged under 40. This is a hypocritical position for the West to maintain. And by creating a market for people smuggling, it is leading to considerable human suffering. So why has the international community so far, collectively failed to explore any serious reform of the global asylum

framework? I think there are two main reasons. The first is simply that it's very hard to renegotiate these instruments. If you think getting 27 EU member states to agree is difficult, try getting agreement at the United Nations. The second is much more cynical. The fear of being branded a racist or illiberal. Any attempt to reform the Refugee Convention will see you smeared as anti-refugee. Similar epithets are hurled at anyone who suggests reform of the ECHR or it's court in Strasburg. I reject the notion that a country cannot be expected to respect human rights if it is not signed up to an international human rights organization. As if the UK doesn't have a proud history of human rights dating back to Magna Carta, and the ECHR is all that is holding us back from becoming Russia. America, Canada, New Zealand, and Japan seem to manage just fine. None of this is particularly novel, nor should it be particularly controversial. As Home Secretary, Theresa May called for Britain to leave the ECHR, and it was Conservative Party policy under Michael Howard to leave the Refugee Convention. I'm merely advocating for reform. Now, while the underlying framework is both a contributing factor to the problem and a barrier to certain fixes, some countries have been more successful in tackling illegal migration than others. Australia had to cope with two major waves of illegal maritime migration across the Pacific in the last two decades. In the last wave, before they stopped the crossings, more than 52,000 unauthorized maritime arrivals and around 1100 deaths at sea, were recorded between 2008 and 2014. Operation Sovereign Borders saw migrant boats intercepted, and then those on board were either returned whence they had traveled, or taken to immigration detention centers in third countries. There were some 400 illegal boat crossings in 2013, the year the operation was enacted. Within a year, the problem was eliminated. Denmark, between 2015 and 2016, announced a range of measures intended to make their asylum system significantly less attractive as a destination for illegal migration. The result was a reduction in claims from 21,000 in 2015, to 6000 in 2016, and 1500 in 2020. For every one asylum seeker that arrived

in Denmark in 2021, three arrived in Sweden on a per capita basis. So unilateral and bilateral solutions and policies of deterrence can and do work. This is the route the UK has chosen to go down. In 2022, some 12,000 Albanians entered the UK illegally via small boat. In response, we strengthened how we worked with Albania, including improved data sharing, closer operational working, new expedited returns arrangements, and financial support. These measures have seen the number of Albanian small boat arrivals fall by 90 percent so far during 2023. We also work closely with France. Last year, the prime minister signed a historic bilateral agreement to deepen our cooperation in combating illegal migration. That included significant investment to increase frontline staffing and policing levels in northern France, better real time intelligence and data sharing, supported by embedded UK officers, and improved intelligence cooperation to increase disruptions, arrests, and prosecutions. This sort of cooperation is necessary, but not sufficient in terms of results. Overall crossings are down more than 20 percent so far this year, compared with 2022. The system that we are working to deliver through our Illegal Migration Act is one that, within the limitations of the broader rights-based framework, says the only route to asylum in the UK must be a safe and legal route. Anyone who enters the UK illegally will be deemed inadmissible to our asylum system, and following assessment, will be detained and swiftly removed to their home country if that's safe, or to a safe third country if not. In 2021, we signed our groundbreaking Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. Under this agreement, Rwanda will accept physical and legal responsibility for illegal migrants relocated from the UK, and look after all their needs while their claims are considered, with a full package to support their integration into Rwandan society. We always knew that our partnership would be challenged in court, and we remain confident that the UK Supreme Court will uphold the legality of the scheme later this year, enabling us to start putting it into operation. While our political opponents, NGOs, and others dismissed the partnership as an immoral gimmick

when it was first announced, it is striking how many countries run by governments of varying political hues have now expressed, in public and in private conversations, their support for this model. Many are now pursuing variations of their own. The UK will continue to prioritize policies of deterrence and border hardening, alongside the maintenance of safe and legal routes. At the same time, we will look to build consensus for more fundamental reform of the asylum framework at the international level. The goal for reform must be to embed certain principles in the global asylum framework. Deterring illegal migration must be an aim. Countries must have a say in what volume of refugees they are capable of resettling each year. Support and protection should, to the fullest extent possible, be rendered in neighboring safe countries where it is most efficient to deliver, and able to reach those that need it most. The only route to resettlement should be via safe and legal routes. People must claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. The definition of who qualifies for protection must be tightened. And policies of externalization, such as our partnership with Rwanda, must be recognized as appropriate. I don't accept the false choice between acting unilaterally or even bilaterally to protect one's border and solving this problem through multilateral cooperation. International cooperation is essential if we are to find enduring solutions to the challenges of global migration, and deliver an asylum framework fit for the modern age. But nations cannot simply sit on their hands while a reform of process plays out. It is right that they act in their national interest. I have, in recent weeks, been meeting with fellow interior ministers in Europe. I will continue doing so in the coming months, and hope to bring together partners to a forum where we can begin discussing some of the matters that I've touched on today. Is the Refugee Convention in need of reform? Would a revised global asylum framework work? And how would it look? How can we better balance national rights and human rights, so that the latter do not undermine national sovereignty? Could the ECHR be more transparent and accountable in how it interprets human rights, and give greater power to nation states to make

arguments and present evidence? What are the appropriate criteria for being labeled a refugee these days in the 21st century? How can we stop human rights laws being gamed by smugglers? Are we delivering safe and legal routes in an efficient and effective manner? And while we may have different views as to the solutions, I hope we can at least agree on one thing, that we are living in a new world, bound by outdated legal models. It's time that we acknowledge that. Thank you.