Journal of the Academy
Asociación de Universidades del Perú, Lima, Perú.
ISSN 2707-0301
Núm. 13 Julio-Diciembre 2025
http://journalacademy.net/

DONALD TRUMP'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN X: A FRAMING AND NARRATIVES ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Miros Haime MEDELLÍN-RENTERÍA [1]
Rodolfo BARRIENTOS [2]
Oswaldo LEYVA CORDERO[3]

Received	:	26/06/2025
Approved	:	21/06/2025
Published	:	25/12/2025

ABSTRACT: This article examines the digital discourse of President Donald Trump as a tool of public diplomacy and a projection of symbolic power, through a framing analysis of 73 posts published on X between January and April 2025. The study combines quantitative content analysis with statistical techniques such as cluster analysis, Chi-square tests, and correlation analysis—an approach rarely applied in the field of digital public diplomacy. The results identify three predominant discursive profiles: **(1) presidential legitimacy, (2) external threat and sovereign defense, and (3) structural crisis and national refoundation,** each associated with distinct themes and actors. This approach demonstrates how framing operates as a symbolic technology of power capable of simultaneously influencing national and international perceptions, providing empirical evidence of the role of presidential discourse on social media as a contemporary form of public diplomacy with populist traits.

Keywords: Public diplomacy, Donald Trump, frames, narratives, social media.

[1] PhD candidate in International Relations, Business, and Diplomacy. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, mirosmedellin.re@uanl.edu.mx ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1077-8647
[2] Doctor of Political Science. Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, rodolfo.barrientos@uadec.edu.mx ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0460-5974
[3] Doctor of Political Science. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, oswaldo.leyvacr@uanl.edu.mx ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9837-020X

INTRODUCTION

Public diplomacy is the set of strategies and actions carried out by a state to influence foreign public opinion, to improve its image, promote its values, interests, and policies, and strengthen its international power and influence. This type of diplomacy involves the use of tools such as digital media, social networks, cultural exchanges, educational programs, international events, and other forms of communication to shape external perceptions of a country.

Thus, it is important to study how the president of the United States uses a social media platform such as *X* to communicate not only with Americans but also with foreign audiences, and to identify how, through language and the strategic construction of discursive frameworks, he projects his country's image in terms of global power and influence.

The level of impact the United States has on the world is based on the way it disseminates information in order to project a positive image to foreign audiences. According to the State Department, through the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (2008), this country suffers from an image problem. This Commission argues that it is through public diplomacy that the United States can redefine its reputation by using communication strategies to influence foreign audiences and change perceptions about the country. This statement led to the adaptation of US diplomacy to current communication tools such as social media, so that the government manages the information that foreign audiences consume through its official channels (p. 12). In this sense, this type of diplomacy requires a communication strategy consistent with foreign policy so that the audience is aware of the objectives and promotion of US policies, generating the image that it wishes to project and at the same time influencing the decisions and opinions of the public, which is the key to public diplomacy (Nieto and Peña, 2008).

After a thorough review of research related to the study of public diplomacy (Entman, 2008; Florez, 2010; Azpíroz, 2011; Méndez-Coto, 2016; Iacobelli and Camino, 2018; López-Aranguren, 2021), it should be noted that, although researchers focused on understanding a country's public diplomacy strategy, not all of them analyzed it from the perspective of the media, which does not allow for an understanding of the nature of the messages and ideas of

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

the states interested in influencing the target foreign audience. Furthermore, studies related to the media only analyze it from the perspective of traditional media and not from the digital media used directly by a nation's representative. Therefore, these analyses are based on messages that underwent a second framing process by a third party (the press). Secondly, researchers start from a particular event to identify public diplomacy and do not identify the issues being mentioned, the actors involved, the roles assigned to those actors, the moral evaluation of the issue (for or against), the benefits or risks of addressing the issue, and the position to remedy it (Entman, 1993; Matthes and Kohring, 2008).

That said, this study seeks to analyze Donald Trump's messages on the *X* platform to determine the presence of public diplomacy discursive frames that reinforce the power and global influence of the United States. Therefore, the question arises: to what extent do Donald Trump's messages on the *X* social digital network manifest public diplomacy discursive frames that reinforce the power and global influence of the United States?

DEVELOPMENT

Diplomacy

In general terms, diplomacy is usually associated with a series of concepts such as negotiation, conflict resolution, interests, and relations between states. For theoretical purposes, highlighting this connection between elements is essential to affirm that diplomacy is indispensable in human relations, both at the individual and global levels. To support what has been stated above regarding the unification of concepts to designate a precise definition of diplomacy, it should be noted that, for Satow (2011), “Diplomacy is the conduct of business between states by peaceful means. It is also the application of intelligence and tact in the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states.” According to Valdés and Loaeza (1993), diplomacy is the “method of establishing, maintaining, and strengthening relations between states through negotiations conducted by heads of state, heads of government, foreign ministers, and diplomatic agents.” Similarly, for Lachs (1962), it is “the ability to reach agreements on issues of all kinds through the recognition of mutual

interests." Likewise, one of the most widely used definitions of diplomacy is that given in the Oxford Dictionary, which states that "Diplomacy is the management of international relations through negotiation; the method by which such relations are adjusted and managed through ambassadors and envoys; the office or art of the diplomat."

Broadly speaking, diplomacy seeks to establish and maintain relations with other international actors in order to achieve its interests, where the main objective of such interaction is to reach agreements through peaceful means. However, it is extremely important to emphasize that diplomacy is used in different ways depending on the nature of the benefit sought. Examples of these types of diplomacy are bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, where the former takes place between two actors with common interests and the latter between three or more actors; direct diplomacy, that is, that which is used between heads of state; and indirect diplomacy, when it takes place between ambassadors, consuls, diplomats, etc.; traditional diplomacy, which refers to the relationship between government representatives; parliamentary diplomacy, carried out by legislators; paradiplomacy, which is used when a local government creates links with international actors; citizen diplomacy, which emanates from civil society and looks after issues of community interest by forming alliances with the federal government, international organizations, or companies; and public diplomacy, in which a government is directly related to the foreign public (Velázquez and Laguna, 2018).

Public diplomacy

This type of diplomacy has specific characteristics that enable it to have an impact on its main target audience, civil society. Public diplomacy clearly shares elements with traditional diplomacy and its various types, but the difference lies in the audience it targets and the way it executes its strategies to generate the desired effect. In other words, the series of concepts that make up the definition of diplomacy and that it uses as its course of action (negotiation, conflict resolution, interests, and relations between states) are also linked to the term public diplomacy. However, these arise after applying the tools of public diplomacy, such as persuasion, manipulation, influence, information, public opinion, cultural exchange, the

projection of a positive image, etc. In this way, these strategies first make known what an actor wants others to know about them and, consequently, they relate, negotiate, resolve, and fulfill their interests as the case may be. Likewise, Cull (2009) argues that the components of public diplomacy are: a) listening, which is an essential action for the actor to be able to approach the needs and requests of the public, obtaining the necessary information to achieve the power of manipulation in the international environment by designing new policies that benefit them and that will obviously be accepted by society. b) advocacy, which refers to the way in which the actor promotes public policies, cultivating them in the minds of the foreign public through international communication. c) cultural diplomacy; associated with the exchange of elements (historical, scientific, cultural, etc.) that identify the interested party with the actor that suits them. d) exchange; linked to students staying abroad to establish a positive image of the host country. e) international broadcasting; which is the practice of public diplomacy and is when the aim is to manage the international environment through information technologies by means of news, the use of social networks, etc. and f) psychological warfare; which can be seen as the dark side of public diplomacy, as its use is mainly to misinform the public in times of war to bring about the surrender of the enemy.

According to Manfredi-Sánchez (2011), "public diplomacy aims to exert influence by an entity on a foreign audience through the development of communication strategies that include educational, informational, and entertainment programs" (p. 211). Similarly, Pigman (2010) argues that public diplomacy refers to communication by governments and other diplomatic actors to the general public (p. 121). In addition, the author states that public diplomacy has been used to support the foreign policy of governments, the objectives and operations of multilateral organizations, and global policies. On the other hand, for Otero (2008), "public diplomacy has something of propaganda about it, which is typical of wartime, and it also has something of marketing or public relations about it, as it aims to sell the image of a country and make it likable in other countries to achieve certain objectives" (p. 114).

According to García (2009), public diplomacy "refers to the work done by governments to generate information aimed at explaining their policies to citizens of other nations" (p. 222). Similarly, Cull (2009), from a historical perspective, argues that public diplomacy has been

designated as a way of establishing a relationship between the government and the foreign population in order to manage the international environment (p. 57). Complementing this idea is the opinion of Snow and Taylor (2009) that public diplomacy "is exercised among all actors in foreign affairs by professionals not exclusively linked to public activity." In other words, the audience plays an active role in exchanging ideas with others, thereby achieving a change in public attitude.

On the other hand, according to Gullion (as cited in Cull, 2008), public diplomacy:

> Seeks to influence public attitudes in the formation and execution of foreign policy. It includes dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy, such as caring for foreign public opinion, interacting with private groups and interests in a third country, reporting on foreign affairs and their impact on politics, communication between diplomats and correspondents, and the development of intercultural communication processes (p.1).

US public diplomacy

The United States has employed different public diplomacy strategies over time and has increasingly made efforts to communicate directly with foreign audiences through speeches and public appearances, as well as through information and citizen exchange programs (Goldsmith and Horiuchi, 2009). In fact, the United States has projected a positive image since the ideological struggle between fascism and liberal democracy, when it made its presence felt by promoting an international information campaign on its position on World War II. In addition, it began to show solidarity with Latin American countries by cooperating culturally, economically, and scientifically with the aim of getting them to join it in distancing themselves from Germany, Italy, and Japan (the Axis powers) (Delgado, 2014).

Likewise, before the mid-1990s, US public diplomacy toward the Middle East was centered on the United States Information Agency (USIA). The USIA broadcast an Arabic-language radio station called "Voice of America," followed by Radio Hurriya during the 1991 Gulf War and the production and distribution of an Arabic magazine, al-Majal. In this way,

dependence on the media continued until the late 1990s, when the USIA became part of the State Department. However, the credibility of the United States among users was at stake, and Arabs' perception of Americans even worsened (Khatib et al., 2012).

It was then that US public diplomacy began to weaken, and the country focused less on activities of this nature, as communication deteriorated and it was unable to continue with the objectives of the former USIA, since traditional diplomats did not have the necessary experience to handle the media (La Porte, 2007). However, when the Al Qaeda attacks occurred, “they showed the US that it was facing a conflict of a different nature than the ideological confrontation of the Cold War: it was not political values that were in conflict, but cultural values” (La Porte, 2007, p. 40).

Consequently, the United States began to focus on “winning hearts and minds” and committed itself to gaining the trust and moral and political support of Muslims for its decisions after the September 2001 attacks. After this event, the Bush administration launched a series of initiatives aimed at clearing the name of the United States so that it would be seen as a compassionate hegemon rather than a global killer (Van Ham, 2003).

The images and messages that began to be transmitted as a strategy to soften the Muslim population had an emulation effect and brought American society closer. This strategy had more social impact than the official channels of communication (Delgado, 2014).

It is worth mentioning that not only has the Muslim population been the target of the United States in employing this public diplomacy strategy, but, according to Quezada (2021), the United States is actively promoting its image in Mexico with a public diplomacy strategy, which has succeeded in creating the perception that both American society and culture are beneficial to Mexican society.

Currently, US public diplomacy is carried out through the US Department of State. The Department of State is responsible for publishing relevant information about the Department's activities through social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, which also allow citizens to interact directly with the government and vice versa. This is an example

of the importance of digital media today as a diplomatic tool for promoting official information and shaping public opinion (Rodríguez, 2013).

Public diplomacy strategies

5.1 *Soft Power*, *Hard Power*, and *Smart Power*

Two key concepts can be highlighted from the term public diplomacy: influence and communication. First, the background of the relationship between influence and public diplomacy will be explained from the term "soft power."

According to Nye (2004), this consists of the ability to influence others through persuasion, shaping their preferences and decisions to obtain what is desired. Therefore, considering the definition and characteristics of soft power, it could be said that public diplomacy also constitutes soft power, as it is a key instrument for manipulating individuals' thinking and, therefore, their behavior and public opinion, thereby influencing decisions made at the international level.

It is worth mentioning that public diplomacy, for some authors (Cull, 2009; Armitage and Nye, 2007), is not entirely a practice of soft power, as they claim that it employs some tactics related to "hard power," which refers to the power of coercion, i.e., the actor influences and conditions the behavior of the individual to prevent them from taking an action that is not in their interest or to make them do what is in their interest. In short, the difference between soft power and hard power lies in the fact that in the application of the former, what is desired is obtained through persuasion, influence, attraction, or exchange of elements belonging to the interested party; and in the case of the latter, pressure is imposed, influenced, and exerted on the other party.

However, Armitage and Nye (2007) argue that there is another type of power in the diplomatic sphere called "smart power," which can be defined as the ability of an actor, entity, or nation to effectively combine elements of hard and soft power in a way that reinforces or complements each other to effectively achieve the desired goal.

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

Secondly, regarding the relationship between communication and public diplomacy, Gilboa (2001) defines it in three ways:

> Public diplomacy, in which international actors use the media and other channels to influence public opinion; media diplomacy, in which officials use the media to promote their own interests; and media-mediated diplomacy, which gives prominence to journalists who take on the roles of diplomats and negotiators (p. 209).

In this sense, the way in which communication is handled in the development of public diplomacy is of vital importance in achieving the actors' objectives. According to the communication strategy outlined by Manfredi-Sánchez (2011), there are two key elements to consider in this process. The first is the country's positioning, that is, how it seeks to be perceived by others. and secondly, the consistency of decisions, that is, being consistent with what is expressed and what is executed, since, as Cull (2009) argues, excellent public diplomacy is not synonymous with good foreign policy. Having explained this, it should be noted that public diplomacy has been managed through the media. These are considered one of the most effective tools of public diplomacy for influencing society's thinking, since they are responsible for conveying a specific image of the nation with its elements, principles, traditions, etc. At the same time, they are responsible for covering everything that happens on the international stage and, based on that, the effect that such coverage has on decision-making by governments.

However, there are other strategies besides print, audiovisual, and digital information that serve the same purpose, which, according to Pigman (2010), are: cultural diplomacy and country branding. the first, according to Rodríguez Barba (2015), aims to achieve a prestigious image in the eyes of the world and gain influence through persuasion. It is used by states to achieve their interests through soft power, which includes cultural promotion and international cooperation.

Activities that form part of cultural diplomacy include academic and scientific exchanges, language teaching, the creation of institutes, the promotion of national art, the sharing of customs, etc. The second refers to the set of elements that define a state, which, in combination with design strategies, colors, shapes, among others, remain in people's minds

and allow them to associate the country with the brand. The objective of the country brand is to improve the image and positioning of the state in the international system by generating trust and disseminating all its attributes in order to attract the interest of other states.

Global power and influence

In the contemporary context, power is no longer exercised solely through military force or coercion, but through the ability to influence the perceptions of other actors through narratives, values, and interpretive frameworks. This type of power, known as soft power, refers to the ability to shape the preferences of others through symbolic, cultural, or ideological attraction (Nye, 2004). In the case of global powers, the struggle for hegemony is not only waged in the economic and diplomatic arenas, but also in the field of communication, where language plays key roles in legitimization, persuasion, and symbolic confrontation (Van Dijk, 1997).

The digital political discourse of leaders such as former President Donald Trump is part of this logic of global competition, in which the strategic use of framing contributes to positioning the United States as a victim, leader, or restorer of world order, as suits the narrative objective. Thus, the analysis of discursive frames allows us to identify not only the dominant themes but also the mechanisms of power and influence construction at the international level, from a discursive perspective (Entman, 2008; Fairclough, 2003).

In this context, the concept of framing is key, understood as the process by which communicators select certain aspects of reality and make them more salient in a message to promote a particular definition of the problem, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, and/or a recommendation for treatment (Entman, 1993). In a complementary sense, Matthes and Kohring (2008) describe it as the latent structure of meaning that organizes discourse, composed of interrelated elements—definition of the problem, causes, moral evaluation, and treatment—and which allows recipients to interpret events in a specific way. Through

framing, political leaders not only establish what is being discussed but also how it should be interpreted, thus guiding public perception and possible responses to an event or situation.

From a critical perspective, discursive power manifests itself in the selection of topics, actors, and rhetorical strategies that reinforce certain visions of the global order and the country's place in that framework. The repetition of narratives about decline, external threats, or national restoration responds to the need to maintain influence over public opinion, both internally and externally, and to reinforce a cohesive national identity in the face of the "other" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

In short, presidential discourse on digital services where social networks are generated can be understood as an instrument of geopolitical projection, where framing acts as a symbolic technology of power, capable of organizing public perception of the role of the United States in the world.

According to Van Dijk (1997, 2003), political discourse cannot be understood solely by its explicit content, but by the way it structures meanings, reproduces ideologies, and constructs power relations. In his Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, Van Dijk argues that language is a form of social action and that discourses actively contribute to the construction of "us" and "them," functioning as mechanisms of legitimization and domination.

In this sense, Donald Trump's digital discourse can be analyzed as a space of ideological reproduction in which actors position themselves, threats are hierarchized, and an exclusionary national identity is constructed. By constructing the United States as a victim of the global order, and external enemies—such as China, migrants, or international organizations—as threats, symbolic structures are reinforced that polarize and simplify the complexity of international politics (Van Dijk, 1997).

Furthermore, Van Dijk (2003) warns that ideologies manifest themselves discursively through strategies such as emphasizing the positive aspects of one's own group and emphasizing the negative aspects of the other, practices that are frequent in Trump's communication style. Through X, these strategies are intensified by rhetorical devices such

as hyperbole, repetition, personalized attacks, and the delegitimization of opponents or institutions.

Consequently, analyzing the framing of Trump's messages from this perspective allows us not only to identify issues or those responsible, but also to understand how an ideological worldview is configured, legitimized, and disseminated through digital platforms.

International communication

International communication as a field of study focuses on analyzing interactions between states, companies, institutions, and individuals in a globalized and integrated environment, where the media, especially the Internet, play a significant role (Caffarel and Rubira, 2017).

For Calduch (1991), international communication goes beyond being merely a means of transmitting information between social groups across borders. It is also essential to mention that it represents a genuine social relationship. In this process, societies interact and influence one another, shaping both their behaviors and structures. Thus, the relationship between public diplomacy and communication is indisputable, as this type of diplomacy leverages the rise of digital media, where public opinion is generated and diverse target audiences are reached.

Therefore, the connection between the media and the stability of international relations involves a variety of factors, ranging from economic to political interests. In recent decades, with the rapid advancement of information technology, the media has taken on an increasingly important role in society, influencing not only the recipients of news but also those who are the main actors in events. Today, the media no longer acts merely as an intermediary between reality and viewers, but plays a fundamental role in influencing and shaping global events (Valero, 2015).

Consequently, international communication has acquired a crucial strategic role for both states and international governmental organizations. It is therefore essential to recognize that

the communication process has become a fundamental tool in the field of international relations (Rodríguez and Poveda, 2017).

An effective presence on the international stage is impracticable without adequate communication, as it facilitates the transmission of messages to various target audiences beyond state borders. Diplomacy, the promotion of national interests, image management, and the facilitation of international cooperation are areas where international communication is crucial (Rodríguez and Poveda, 2017).

According to Noya (2007), the messages broadcast by the media are a form of image management that countries use to project an image to a foreign audience that helps them achieve their foreign policy interests. It is therefore vitally important to analyze how communicative messages affect the perceptions and behaviors of recipients and also how the media promote the issues they deal with.

METHODOLOGY

To carry out the content analysis, a tool called a code book was created to analyze the posts published on Donald Trump's official Twitter account during the first 100 days of his administration. This code book was divided into different sections, grouping the variables that allow the elements to be analyzed within the messages to be identified:

Table 1

Main categories of the code book

Coding block	Main categories	Examples or inclusion criteria
Thematic selection (TS)	Global leadership, Bilateral relations, National security, Global economy, Sovereignty and autonomy, Image of the US, Direct digital diplomacy, International conflicts, Migration policy, Internal crisis	Explicit mention of US primacy, bilateral agreements, military defense, international trade, national prestige, etc.
Dimensions of framing (DF)	Problem definition, Attribution of responsibility, Moral evaluation, Problem treatment	Global threat, blaming foreign adversaries, positive/negative judgment, proposal to break with the global order, etc.

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

Actors mentioned (AM)	Trump administration, US citizens, Foreign governments, Political opposition, International organizations, Migrants	Identification of actors in the message, either directly or indirectly.
Construction of identity and the other (CD)	The US as a global leader, moral power, or victim; External enemy, Delegitimized international organization, Criticism of domestic elites	Positive representation of one's own group and negative representation of the adversary.
Discursive strategies (DS)	War metaphors, Extreme emotional language, Hyperbole, Nicknames, Misinformation, Self-presentation as savior	Rhetorical devices to emphasize, polarize, or emotionally mobilize.

Note. Own elaboration based on Entman (1993), Matthes and Kohring (2008), Cull (2009), and Van Dijk (1997, 2003).

Data was collected from a content analysis of posts made by Donald Trump's official Twitter account during his first 100 days as president of the United States to identify the topics being discussed, the actors involved, the role assigned to those actors, the moral evaluation of the topic (for or against), what benefits or risks are associated with addressing the issue, and what the position is for remedying it. The aim was to determine the presence of public diplomacy discourse frameworks that reinforce the power and global influence of the United States.

A total of 73 posts from the US president's X account were analyzed between January 20, 2025 (corresponding to the start of Donald Trump's term) and April 29, 2025 (corresponding to 100 days into his presidential term). The population (73) and sample (73) are the same because all posts covering the above-mentioned dates were analyzed without distinction.

In terms of statistical treatment, cluster analysis was used to identify narrative profiles based on co-occurrences between variables, a technique rarely used in the study of digital public diplomacy but particularly suitable for detecting recurring discursive patterns. The Chi-square test was used to evaluate the statistically significant association between categorical variables such as topics, actors, and assessments. Finally, correlation analysis was applied to identify linear relationships between scale variables, providing a complementary view of the structure of the discourse.

RESULTS

The analysis of discursive frameworks (*framing*) in the context of public diplomacy allows us to identify not only the issues and actors that a political leader positions, but also the narrative logics with which they project power, manage national identity, and construct strategic adversaries (Entman, 2008; Nye, 2004).

With the aim of characterizing Donald Trump's strategic use of *framing* in his posts on social network X, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on a *corpus* comprising 73 messages posted between January and April 2025. Each post was coded according to a previously designed code book, considering key dimensions of framing: problem definition, attribution of responsibility, moral evaluation, and proposed treatment (Entman, 1993), as well as the identification of themes, actors, and discursive strategies.

This section presents the main findings obtained using descriptive and bivariate statistical techniques. First, the absolute frequencies of occurrence of each category are analyzed in order to identify the most recurrent elements in Trump's digital discourse. Subsequently, associations between thematic variables and interpretive frameworks are explored using hierarchical cluster analysis with Ward's method, with the aim of highlighting relevant narrative patterns. This approach allows us not only to quantify the presence of certain frames but also to understand the ideological articulation logics that structure the presidential message on digital platforms.

Next, we present the results of the descriptive analysis, which allowed us to observe the general distribution of the topics addressed and the actors invoked in the messages. This initial statistical approach provides an initial overview of the most frequent elements in Trump's digital communication during the period analyzed.

Table 2 shows that the most frequent category in the messages analyzed was Image of the United States (46.6%), followed by Internal Crisis (31.5%), suggesting a high presence of messages that represent the country as the central stage of the discourse. Bilateral Relations and Global Economy (both with 19.2%) also stand out, as do Global Leadership (17.8%) and International Conflicts (16.4%), indicating a significant interest in foreign policy issues.

Topics such as Immigration Policy and Southern Border (16.4%) and National Security (13.7%) also register a considerable share, while categories such as Sovereignty and Autonomy (9.6%), Direct Digital Diplomacy, and Personal Issues (both with 8.2%) have a lesser presence. On the other hand, Human Rights and Universal Values did not appear in any of the messages in the *corpus*.

Table 2

Thematic distribution of the posts analyzed

Topic	N	Percentage
Global Leadership	13	17.8
Bilateral Relations	14	19.2
National Security	10	13.7
Global Economy	14	19.2
Sovereignty and Autonomy	7	9.6
Image of the US	34	46.6
Direct Digital Diplomacy	6	8.2
International Conflicts	12	16.4
Criticism of Multilateralism	5	6.8
Human Rights and Universal Values	0	0
Immigration Policy and Southern Border	12	16.4
Internal Crisis	23	31.5
Personal Issues	6	8.2

Note. N= The analysis includes 73 posts by President Donald Trump on social media. *X*. Each message could be coded into more than one thematic category. The percentages indicate the proportion of posts in which each topic appears, relative to the total corpus.

On the other hand, the Trump administration was the most mentioned actor in the posts analyzed, with a presence of 79.5%, indicating a strong emphasis on self-promotion or the centrality of its own leadership. This is followed by U.S. citizens (35.6%) and the political opposition (31.5%), suggesting a discourse focused both on building internal allies and identifying adversaries.

Foreign governments appear in 26% of cases, while international organizations and transnational elites are mentioned to a lesser extent (12.3% each). Other actors with a low but significant presence include traditional media and migrants or specific foreign groups (both with 8.2%).

The mention of social media platforms, family/friends, and the armed forces was marginal, with percentages below 6%, reflecting a focus more on institutional and national politics than on personal or media issues.

Table 3

Frequency of actors mentioned in Donald Trump's posts

Actors	N	Percentage
Foreign governments	19	26
International organizations	9	12.3
The Trump administration	58	79.5
The U.S. political opposition	23	31.5
U.S. citizens	26	35.6
International leaders	5	6.8
Transnational elites	9	12.3
The U.S. military or armed forces	4	5.5
Migrants or specific foreign groups	6	8.2
Traditional media	6	8.2
Social media platforms	1	1.4
Friends and family	2	2.7

Note. N= The data corresponds to the frequency with which each actor is mentioned or referred to in the 73 messages analyzed. The coding allowed for multiple identifications per publication. The percentages represent the proportion of mentions relative to the total number of messages in the corpus.

CLUSTER ANALYSIS

After examining the general distribution of topics and actors present in the messages analyzed, a cluster analysis was performed to identify possible recurring discursive patterns. This technique allows publications to be grouped according to similarities in their coding structure, revealing frequent combinations of Problem Definitions, Causality or Responsibility, Moral Evaluation, Problem Treatment, Construction of Self-Identity and Adversaries, and Discursive Strategies. To this end, a hierarchical cluster analysis was applied using Ward's method and a Euclidean distance measure on the dichotomous variables of the corpus. This approach allows us to explore rhetorical configurations that could account for different profiles of enunciation within Donald Trump's digital discourse.

Based on the dendrogram generated using Ward's method, three main clusters were identified that group the posts according to shared patterns in their coding on the elements that make up a frame (Entman, 1993), the construction of identity, and the discursive strategies used. This solution was chosen for its interpretive coherence and for the optimal cut-off point in the rescaled distance, which allows for the observation of substantive divisions between messages. The main characteristics of each Discursive Framework are described below:

1. Presidential legitimacy: This group is characterized by a predominant use of positive judgments, the attribution of responsibility to the Trump administration, and the defense of the status quo. Appeals to the people as heroes and the use of facts and emphatic language as discursive strategies appear frequently. The overall tone is one of celebration, legitimization of leadership, and national pride. No external threats or intense criticism are detected. It represents an institutional or propagandistic narrative.

2. External threat and national defense: This group shows high values in the mention of global threats and strategic challenges, as well as a strong attribution of responsibility to adversaries and international organizations. Noteworthy is the use of negative judgments, a strong emphasis on nationalism, the use of metaphors, nicknames, and disinformation as rhetorical devices, and a strong presence of Trump's framing as a savior. It is the most aggressive and polarizing profile, with a strong emotional charge and oriented toward denouncing the international order or diffuse enemies.

3. Internal crisis and refoundation: This group is distinguished by high scores in the coding of power decline, internal problems, and attribution of responsibility to previous governments, globalist elites, and international organizations. A vision of the United States as a victim predominates, with heavy use of hyperbole, extreme emotions, and frames of rupture and demands on third parties. This profile constructs a frame of national emergency, in which the need for radical change and institutional restoration is justified.

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

Table 4

Predominant discursive frameworks by cluster and their characteristic elements

Discursive Framework	Elements (M)
Presidential legitimacy	Positive judgment (0.52), Trump administration (0.26), Status quo (0.26), Heroic people (0.37), Use of facts (0.41), Emphatic (0.04)
External threats and national defense	Negative judgment (0.48), Nationalism (0.64), Adversaries (0.48), Savior (1.00), Extreme emotion (0.72), Nicknames (1.00), External enemy (0.76)
Internal crisis and refoundation	Decline of power (0.71), Internal problem (1.00), Previous governments (0.62), Hyperbole (0.86), USA as victim (0.81), Extreme emotion (0.81)

Note. Table 4 presents the main rhetorical and framing elements identified in each cluster, based on the highest average values of relative presence per group. Only the variables with the greatest distinctive weight within each discursive profile are shown.

To verify whether the three clusters identified show significant differences in the interpretive frameworks used, Chi-square tests were performed on eight key framing variables. The results, presented in Table 5, show statistically significant differences ($p < .01$ in all cases) in variables such as negative judgment, nationalism, attribution to adversaries and previous governments, as well as in frameworks of rupture and national victimization.

These differences empirically support the validity of the proposed discursive profiles. In particular, cluster 3 is distinguished by a greater presence of negative judgment, denunciation of institutional decline, and representation of the United States as a victim, while cluster 1 tends to enunciate positive and self-affirming frames. Cluster 2 occupies an intermediate position, with a confrontational narrative focused on external threats and demands on third parties.

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

Table 5

Chi-square tests to contrast differences between identified discursive frameworks

Variables	χ^2	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level
Negative Judgment	23.83	2	.000
Positive Judgment	17.14	2	.000
Global Breakdown	10.25	2	.006
Nationalism	23.12	2	.000
Demands on Third Parties	19.01	2	.000
Adversaries	21.06	2	.000
Previous Governments	23.59	2	.000
The US as Victim	36.86	2	.000

Note. All tests show statistically significant differences between the three clusters.

Although the variables used for the chi-square test were also part of the coding process that led to the cluster analysis, their use at this stage is intended to describe and empirically support the differences observed between the discursive profiles, rather than to validate a predictive or supervised model. For future research, it is suggested that additional or external variables be incorporated into the clustering process to strengthen inferential validation.

Topics and actors associated with discursive frames

In order to further characterize the narrative profiles identified, the association between the three discursive frames and the predominant topics and actors in the messages was analyzed. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed distinct patterns that reinforce the internal coherence of each cluster and its ideological orientation.

In terms of themes, the *Presidential Legitimacy* frame showed a systematic absence of references to structural problems. Specifically, negative and significant correlations were observed with mentions of national security ($r = –.305$, $p < .01$), international conflicts ($r = –.340$, $p < .01$), immigration policy ($r = –.340$, $p < .01$), and internal crisis ($r = –.459$, $p < .01$). This suggests a discursive framework focused on stability, leadership, and the prestige of the presidential figure, avoiding references to threats or decline.

In contrast, the framing of *External Threat and National Defense* was significantly associated with issues related to international order and national defense. Positive correlations were

observed with bilateral relations ($r = .308$, $p < .01$), national security ($r = .300$, $p < .01$), sovereignty ($r = .353$, $p < .01$), international conflicts ($r = .615$, $p < .01$), and immigration policy ($r = .303$, $p < .01$). . This profile constructs a narrative of exogenous threat, in which the presidential figure assumes a protective role against external actors.

For its part, the *Internal crisis and refoundation* frame showed a strong correlation with the mention of internal crisis ($r = .807$, $p < .01$), as well as with criticism of multilateralism ($r = .307$, $p < .01$), confirming a discursive orientation focused on the deterioration of the institutional order and the need to break with international structures.

With regard to actors, the Presidential Legitimacy framing avoided pointing to specific culprits and showed negative correlations with the internal political opposition ($r = –.520$, $p < .01$), foreign governments ($r = –.260$, $p < .05$), and the Trump administration itself ($r = –.313$, $p < .01$), reflecting an institutional, celebratory, or continuity tone. In contrast, the *External Threat and National Defense* framing was associated with international actors and groups perceived as threats, highlighting the mention of foreign governments ($r = .493$, $p < .01$), international organizations ($r = –.271$, $p < .05$), and migrants ($r = .415$, $p < .01$).

The *Internal Crisis and Refoundation* framing, in line with its critical orientation, showed a highly significant correlation with the US opposition ($r = .807$, $p < .01$) and moderate links with traditional media ($r = .251$, $p < .05$), reflecting a strategy of endogenous confrontation and delegitimization of the political and media system.

Overall, the results show that the frames differ not only in the thematic frameworks used, but also in the actors to whom they assign responsibility, thus constructing differentiated narrative forms of representation of power, conflict, and the nation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This article aimed to characterize the strategic use of framing in President Donald Trump's digital communication as an instrument of power projection and public diplomacy. Based on the analysis of 73 posts published between January and April 2025, three dominant frames were identified: one focused on presidential legitimacy, another on external threats and

sovereign defense, and a third on structural crisis and national refoundation. These discursive profiles not only responded to different issues and actors, but also exhibited contrasting narrative and emotional logics, reinforcing the hypothesis that presidential discourse operates as a complex form of symbolic intervention in the global public sphere.

The findings show that the presidential legitimacy frame avoided references to crisis, confrontation, or blame, and instead constructed a narrative of institutional stability, leadership continuity, and economic achievements. The external threat frame, meanwhile, was articulated around the representation of foreign actors—governments, multilateral organizations, migrants—as sources of risk, reinforcing a discourse of closure, sovereignty, and national protection. Finally, the structural crisis framing reflected a critical view of the political and media system, with a narrative of deterioration, betrayal, and the need for a new foundation, aligned with populist rhetorical strategies.

These discursive configurations can be understood as symbolic forms of power production and exercise in contexts where political conflict is no longer waged solely in institutional spaces, but also in the dispute over meaning (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 1997). In this framework, framing acts as a discursive technology that organizes the perception of social and political reality, not only defining "what to think," but also "how to think about it" (Entman, 1993).

From the perspective of public diplomacy, these frames function as mechanisms for projecting national identity, creating legitimacy, and constructing adversaries. As Cull (2009) and La-Porte (2007) have pointed out, contemporary public diplomacy is not limited to informing, but seeks to influence, mobilize, and contest the global narrative about a nation's place in the world. In this sense, Trump's posts should not be analyzed solely as spontaneous or populist statements, but as discursive strategies that reconfigure the perception of the United States as a victim, a threatened power, or a moral leader, depending on what suits the narrative at the time.

Digital discourse thus becomes an extension of soft power (Nye, 2004), conveying symbolic frameworks that appeal to emotions, values, and ideological affiliations. Instead of acting through coercion or exchange, power is exercised by constructing a compelling narrative that

defines “others” and reinforces a common identity and legitimacy in certain forms of political action (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

Empirical results reinforce this reading. Chi-square tests showed significant differences between clusters in key dimensions of framing—moral evaluation, treatment of the problem, and responsible actors—while thematic and actor correlations revealed that each frame operates as a relatively coherent narrative structure, with consistent selections of themes and assignments of responsibility. These differences indicate not only a differentiated communicative logic but also a deliberate way of organizing political conflict and constructing legitimacy through discourse.

Furthermore, the frames studied activate different emotional and moral registers, which is particularly relevant considering that emotions—such as indignation, pride, or fear—play a central role in political persuasion in digital environments (Waisbord, 2018). In this context, the reiteration of certain frames not only positions issues or actors, but also constructs ideological atmospheres that naturalize certain political positions and delegitimize others.

Overall, the results show that Donald Trump's digital discourse constitutes a contemporary form of public diplomacy with marked populist features, in which framing operates as a central instrument of symbolic influence. Through repetitive, emotionally charged narratives structured around collective identities, threats, and demands, he seeks to simultaneously contest control of the national narrative and the international image of the United States. This strategy seems to be aimed both at consolidating his domestic electoral base and at influencing international audiences sympathetic to nationalist positions or critical of multilateralism, combining external projection and internal political cohesion in a single communicative effort.

As a future line of research, we propose to extend the analysis to other leaders with similar discursive strategies, incorporate the study of reception by national and international audiences, and examine how these frames change in contexts of real crisis, elections, or geopolitical conflict. It would also be valuable to explore the convergence between presidential framing and media coverage to understand how this form of narrative power is encoded, amplified, or resisted in the global public sphere. However, this study has

limitations due to the limited nature of the corpus (73 publications in 100 days) and the restriction in generalizing the findings to other contexts or political actors. These considerations do not invalidate the results, but they invite caution in their interpretation and further research.

How to cite: Medellín-Rentería, M., Barrientos, R., and Leyva, O. (2025). Donald Trump's Public Diplomacy in X: A Framing and Narratives Analysis on Social Media. *Journal of the Academy,* (13), 210-238.
https://doi.org/10.47058/joa13.10

REFERENCES

Armitage, R., and Nye, J. (2007). *CSIS Commission on Smart Power. A Smarter, More Secure America.* Center for Strategic & International Studies. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/csissmartpowerreport.pdf

Azpíroz, M. L. (2011). *La diplomacia pública estadounidense de la "guerra contra el terror": Análisis y evaluación de su influencia en la prensa española* [Doctoral thesis, Universidad de Navarra]. https://dadun.unav.edu/bitstream/10171/37305/1/Tesis_MLAzpiroz.pdf

Caffarel, C., and Rubira, R. (2017). Comunicación internacional, igualdad y desarrollo: un homenaje imprescindible. *index.comunicación, 7*(3), 13–19. https://indexcomunicacion.es/index.php/indexcomunicacion/article/view/343

Calduch, R. (1991). *Relaciones internacionales*. Ediciones de las Ciencias Sociales.

Chouliaraki, L., and Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh University Press.

Cull, N. J. (2008). Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase. In *Routledge handbook of public diplomacy* (pp. 39-43). Routledge.

Cull, N. J. (2009). *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past.* Figueroa Press.

Delgado, L. (2014). La diplomacia pública de Estados Unidos. Una perspectiva histórica. *Revista Complutense de Historia de América, 40,* 277-301. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_RCHA.2014.v40.46352

Entman, R. (2008). Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy: The U.S. Case. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 13*(2), 87-102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208314657

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.

Florez, J. (2010). La Diplomacia Pública en una perspectiva comparada: una estrategia de la política exterior y su implementación en la política colombiana. *Pensamiento jurídico,* (30), 263-293. https://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/peju/article/view/36719/38673

García, C. (2009). Diplomacia pública, propaganda y poder blando. *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, (85), 221-228. https://revistadigital.sre.gob.mx/index.php/rmpe/article/view/716

Gilboa, E. (2001). Diplomacy in the media age: Three models of uses and effects. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, *12(*2), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290108406201

Goldsmith, B., and Horiuchi, Y. (2009). Spinning the Globe? U.S. Public Diplomacy and Foreign Public Opinion. *The Journal of Politics, 71*(3), 863–875. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381609090768

Iacobelli, P., and Camino, N. (2018). Diplomacia pública japonesa en la prensa chilena durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. *Cuadernos de Historia,* (49), 73-97. http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0719-12432018000200073

Khatib, L., Dutton, W., and Thelwall, M. (2012). Public Diplomacy 2.0: A Case Study of the US Digital Outreach Team. *The Middle East Journal, 66*(3), 453-472. https://doi.org/10.3751/66.3.14

La-Porte, M. T. (2007). La diplomacia pública americana: lecciones para una comunicación internacional. *Communication & Society, 20*(2), 23-59. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.20.36294

Lachs, M. (1962). La mecánica de la diplomacia moderna. *Foro Internacional, 2*(4), 592–612. https://forointernacional.colmex.mx/index.php/fi/article/view/118

López-Aranguren, J. (2021). La diplomacia olímpica de Japón: De Tokio 1964 a Tokio 2021. *Mirai. Estudios Japoneses, 5,* 67-76. https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/mira.74697

Manfredi-Sánchez, J. L. (2011). Hacia una teoría comunicativa de la diplomacia pública. *Comunicación y Sociedad, XXIV*(2), 199-225. https://hdl.handle.net/10171/27282

Matthes, J., and Kohring, M. (2008). The Content Analysis of Media Frames: Toward Improving Reliability and Validity. *Journal of Communication, 58*(2), 258-279. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00384.x

Méndez-Coto, M. (2016). Diplomacia pública y marca-país en las Américas. Un acercamiento a las experiencias de Brasil, Chile, México y Perú. *Temas de nuestra América, 32*(59), 81-98. http://dx.doi.org/10.15359/tdna.32-59.6

Nieto, A., and Peña, M. (2008). La diplomacia pública: los medios informativos como instrumento de política exterior. *Estudios Políticos, 9*(13-14-15), 149-163. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/4264/426439539004.pdf

Noya, J. (2007). *Diplomacia pública para el siglo XXI: la gestión de la imagen exterior y la opinión pública internacional.* Ariel.

Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. PublicAffairs.

Otero, J., 2008. La imagen de España y lo español hoy en China: una aproximación a la diplomacia pública. Revista *Huarte de San Juan. Geografía e Historia*, (5), 113-119. https://hdl.handle.net/2454/9120

Pigman, G. A. (2010). *Contemporary diplomacy*. Polity Press.

Quezada, R. (2021). La diplomacia pública estadounidense en educación hacia indígenas mexicanos: actores políticos y construcciones sociales dobles. *Norteamérica, 16*(1), 35-54. http://dx.doi.org/10.22201/cisan.24487228e.2021.1.466

Rodríguez Barba, F. (2015). Diplomacia cultural ¿Qué es y qué no es? *Espacios Públicos, 18*(43), 33-49. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/676/67642415002.pdf

Rodríguez, A. (2013). La comunicación como instrumento de la diplomacia pública. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico, 19,* 953-961. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_ESMP.2013.v19.42179

Rodríguez, A., and Poveda, M. Á. (2017). La comunicación y los nuevos actores en las relaciones internacionales. In D. Caldevilla Domínguez (Coord.), *Congreso Universitario Internacional sobre la Comunicación en la Profesión y en la Universidad de Hoy*. *Contenidos, investigación, innovación y docencia* (pp. 1115). Fórum Internacional de Comunicación y Relaciones Públicas (Fórum XXI).

Satow, E. (2011). *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*. Cambridge University Press. (Original work published in 1917).

Snow, N., and Taylor, P. M. (Eds.). (2009). *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. Routledge.

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. (2008). *Getting the People Part Right: A Report on the Human Resources Dimension of U.S. Public Diplomacy*. https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf

Valdés, R., and Loaeza, E. (1993). *Terminología usual en las relaciones internacionales: Derecho diplomático y Tratados. 3*. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. https://portales.sre.gob.mx/acervo/images/libros/Terminologia/termiusual3.pdf

Valero, J. M. (2015). Tendencias de la innovación mediática en Estados Unidos. *Miguel Hernández Communication Journal,* (6), 161-193. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5281775

Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse as structure and process*. SAGE Publications.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2003). *Ideology and discourse: A multidisciplinary introduction*. Pompeu Fabra University.

Van Ham, P. (2003). War, Lies, and Videotape: Public Diplomacy and the USA's War on Terrorism. *Security Dialogue, 34*(4), 427–444. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010603344004

Velázquez, R., and Laguna, T. (2018). Diplomacia pública. En R. Velázquez Flores, S. González Cruz y D. García Waldman (Coord.), *Teoría y práctica de la diplomacia en México: Aspectos básicos* (pp. 145-165). Ediciones DeLaurel.

Waisbord, S. (2018). The elective affinity between post-truth communication and populist politics. *Communication Research and Practice, 4*(1), 17–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2018.1428928