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Abstract

A theoretically and socially important element of the public discourse framing the 1994 Proposition 187 campaign in California is identified, by analyzing the metaphors used by and reported by the print media.[1] An on-going exhaustive cataloguing of metaphors from over 200 *Los Angeles Times* articles (presently 2000 in 200,000 words) displayed the political discourse that informed California public opinion. The *Times* maintained high professional journalistic standards. It repudiated Prop. 187 in its editorial pages. Yet the predominating metaphors used by the newspaper were anti-immigrant. In so far as the print media actually influence public opinion (van Dijk 1989), this newspaper contributed to a biased public construction of reality. After laying out the basics of metaphor theory, I describe one of a set of predominant metaphors, IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS, which are consistent with the more encompassing, structuring metaphors used in the *Times*, NATION AS HOUSE. I end with examples of contestation of anti-immigrant metaphors, and the means by which these metaphors can be systematically contested.

1. Introduction

My team of students and I started a new research project last year in which we identified metaphoric representations used by the print media that frame public discourse about immigration and immigrants in California (Santa Ana *et al.* (ms.)).[2] The issue was the 1994 California referendum, Proposition 187. We chose to study the metaphors used by the *Los Angeles Times*, the politically quite moderate newspaper of record of the West Coast, in all its pertinent published articles during the 187 campaign. Our examination of the metaphoric structures used by the press provided us with a way of looking at the political discourse that reflected and informed public opinion during the campaign. In brief, we find that the *Times* maintained professional journalistic standards (Sigma Delta Chi 1987). It also repeatedly repudiated Proposition 187 in its editorial pages eight times in the final four months of the campaign. Nevertheless the predominating metaphoric discourse used by the *Times* was anti-immigrant, rather than a more neutral used by the *Times* was anti-immigrant, rather than a more neutral discourse. Since metaphor theory claims that metaphor organizes the experience of everyday life and structures our experience of reality (Lakoff 1993, Gibbs 1994), we have a principled way to state that this newspaper contributed to the public construction of reality, with an inadvertent bias.

The following sections I will briefly describe how metaphor works, and how metaphor works in political domains. The analysis follows. Lastly I offer a systematic way to begin to contest the dominant metaphors, whether intentional or not, that dominate America's present way of thinking about immigration.

2. How Metaphors Work

A metaphor is a mapping of ways of thinking about some source semantic domain to another target semantic domain. As you can see in the following examples:

	SOURCE → TARGET
She is the flower of my garden.	flower → woman
She is the thorn in my side.	thorn → woman

The source domains are those things we as humans can easily think about, the parts of our physical world which are handy and familiar.

The target domains are most frequently abstract ones, hidden from our senses or otherwise unknown to us. People borrow the conceptual structure of the familiar to 'get a handle on' the target domains. Then we use the borrowed structure when talking about the target without having to think about the nature of the target domain. For example as illustrated below, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) cite a set of the conventionalized metaphors in English used to talk about the target domain of LOVE. They are grouped in this example into three basic metaphors:

Metaphors of Love (Lakoff & Johnson 1980)
LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE: I could feel the electricity between us; There were sparks; The atmosphere was charged, etc.
LOVE IS MADNESS: I'm crazy about her; He drives me out of my mind; He constantly raves about her, etc.
LOVE IS WAR: She fought him off, then she fled from his advances; He is besieged by admirers, he has to fend them off, etc.

Once we accept a metaphor, so goes Lakoff's theory, all the entailments that hold for the source metaphor are automatically transferred to the target (Lakoff 1993). One entailment of insanity, namely to be insane is to have no control of one's own action, thus potentially becomes part of our understanding of what it is to be in love. This happens when people make use of the entailment, as in a statement *'I can't control myself when you're around'*.

   Metaphoric relations are certainly not 'natural'. They are part of the cultural knowledge that speakers of a language tend to use unthinkingly. Moreover, as far as the theory is true, prose metaphors are used to conceptualize our world view (Gibbs 1994, Lakoff 1996). We act as if they were the only way to conceptualize the target. In the case of LOVE metaphors that I have provided just now, Navaho speakers and Korean speakers do not use LOVE IS INSANITY as a metaphor. They are very surprised at our use of these expressions.

   Metaphors draw their strength from their frequency of use and commonality, the fact that people of a culture share them, that they are transparent, that is to say we do not reflect on them when we use them, and especially because metaphors from different target domains have to be consistent with a coherent way of thinking about the world. Finally, LOVE metaphors are very tightly conventionalized in our society. Changing them would require serious restructuring of the cognitive mapping of our society. Political metaphors are not as rigidly fixed.

3. Metaphors in Political Discourse

Metaphors of political domains operate in the same way that they do in matters of LOVE. They allow the public to grasp a shared, familiar structure and explanation of society. For example Churchill coined the term *The Iron Curtain* to characterize international relations. This metaphor was so powerful that for 50 years this way of thinking was the *only* way to think about the target, with immense social implications. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall politicians have sought new ways to metaphorically capture their point of view, and to thus conceptualize global politics for the American electorate (Chilton & Ilyin 1993).

   Since the political issues of our lives are subject to debate and discussion, the metaphors that we use to discuss them are more open to change. Thus for issues such as Proposition 187, our ways of metaphorically discussing IMMIGRATION are subject to negotiation.

   We began our study dismayed by California's voting public support for a divisive, anti-constitutional referendum. In spite of the vigorous campaign against Proposition 187, the vote was overwhelming. Moreover it was clear that from the beginning of the campaign, the public discourse was anti-immigrant, rather than neutral. All the major California newspapers reflected and reinforced this anti-immigrant discourse in terms of their dominant metaphor usage, irrespective of whether they editorialized in favor or against the referendum (Santa Ana 1996). In part due to this metaphoric representation of immigrants and immigration, the opponents of Proposition 187 were not able to effectively contest the way the public viewed and talked about the issues. From my point of view, these opponents of Proposition 187 were not able to present an alternative way of seeing immigration. We now turn to an analysis of contemporary American immigration metaphor as instantiated in the *Los Angeles Times*.

4. IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS

While immigrants as individuals are metaphorically characterized as animals (Santa Ana *et al.* (ms.)), the process of migration is characterized in terms of water metaphors. This may seem quite natural to people who are American English speakers, but it should be emphasized that such a construction of movement of people is *not* the only possible metaphor. Moreover, the negative connotation associated with immigration in particular has very clear social implications, and political consequences. The major metaphor for the process of the movement of substantial numbers of human beings from one country to the U.S. is characterized as IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS. And within this metaphor there are very clear subcategories of volume, movement and control:

1. awash under a brown tide [73][3]
2. the crush of illegal immigrants in Los Angeles is like overloading the lifeboats of a sinking ship [658]
3. the human surge [809]
4. a sea of brown faces [145]
5. compared the United States to a lifeboat that could only accommodate 10 people at one time. ... "If you put 40 people on a lifeboat it will sink and no one will be saved" [61]
6. Like waves on a beach, these human flows are literally remaking the face of America [10]

Within this metaphor there are very clear subcategories. The first subcategory of the dangerous waters is volume, which emphasizes the relative numbers of immigrants. Individuals are lost in the mass sense of these volume terms. The negative connotation is highlighted in the examples with strong adjectives such as *relentless* and *overwhelming*.

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[3]Bracketed numerals are serial numbers of metaphor tokens linked to a 17 column database with full reference information.

7. foreigners who have flooded into the country [697]
8. the wave of immigration has transformed the city's population [868]
9. the relentless flow of immigrants [610]
10. an overwhelming flood of asylum-seekers have put the country in an angry funk [749]

The second subcategory of dangerous waters is movement, which emphasizes the direction of waters, primarily northward as from Mexico to the United States. Note that immigration waters are seen to be streaming inward, by terms such as *influx*.

11. Residents of the San Fernando Valley are increasingly outraged about illegal immigration—if not immigration generally—in the face of economic hard times, growing congestion, widespread crime and a dramatic influx of Latinos [507]
12. stem the tide and flow of illegal immigration [192]
13. The influx has strained states and localities—including hard-pressed Los Angeles County [524]
14. the ribbon of rust-colored steel apparently has not impeded the flow north [811]

The third subcategory is the control of dangerous waters. Here the efforts to reduce the immigration of undocumented workers pursues a correspondence of the dangerous waters metaphor by describing means by which the waters can be held back or stemmed.

15. an attempt to stem illegal immigration [272] (*to stem* = make headway against an adverse tide)
16. the opportunistic criminal element that exploits our porous borders [686]
17. hard-line measures intended to stem the flow of undocumented immigrants [508]
18. the nation's porous immigration laws [513]

The connotations of this metaphor are extensive. By treating immigration as dangerous waters, the individuality of the

immigrants and their humanity are backgrounded. In its place a frightening scenario of uncontrolled movements of water can be played out, with devastating floods, and inundating surges of brown faces. The issue of what is being washed away is very important, but cannot be fully addressed in this working paper. In short, the brown flood that is feared will inundate Anglo American cultural dominance. Since little evidence of an inundation has to be demonstrated to invoke alarm, floods are a perfect metaphor to inspire dread and fear. The hard-working, family-oriented immigrant who believes in the American dream is hidden with the use of this metaphor. His or her human quality is diminished as volume and movement are emphasized.

Following Lakoff (1993), the metaphor can be presented as both an informal description and a more formal ontological mapping. The informal scenario, i.e., the entailed inferences that are labeled "IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS," follows:

> A flood of immigrants is flowing into America. It threatens to inundate Anglo America. By sheer volume and with a different nature the flood will cover the territory of America with a sea of people that do not look, act or speak like Anglo Americans. Waters are fundamentally different than the land. In small quantities the land can absorb an influx unchanged. In volume, however this flow threatens to change the contours of the land. The territory will not be able to absorb or control the flow. It will be eroded. The territory will be destroyed.

The metaphor labeled "IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS" is tightly structured to map the ontology of floods and tides onto the domain of immigration. The mapping is as follows:

- Immigration corresponds to moving waters.
- The US corresponds to a land subject to change from floods.
- Increased immigration corresponds to an increase in the threat to the land.

- The vulnerability of land to flooding corresponds to the US's vulnerability to fundamental change.

IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS is only one element of a larger schema of metaphors (which have been compiled in this text-empirical way). Other metaphors which I cannot discuss in this paper include IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS, WEEDS and A DISEASE. These are metaphorical entailments of larger non-Latino metaphors which characterize aspects of the public and the electorate are: PUBLIC SENTIMENT IS MOVING WATER, SEVERE WEATHER and FIRE.

5.   U.S. IS A HOME

If we find a way to connect these metaphors into a larger framework, then we can understand how they reinforce one another and the structure to which they belong. A structuring metaphor can make this happen. It gives an analysis strength because it links the metaphors into a more coherent, encompassing structure. Looking for the bigger picture in our case, we found one of the structuring metaphors for our study to be: NATION IS HOME.[4] Example 20 tells us this home has a frame. Examples 21–24 give us the structure of this home complete with doors, corridors, and bedrooms.

20.   the strikers are trying to frame their arguments in peaceful 'family-oriented' terms. [790]
21.   There are extremists—those who would build an alligator-filled moat, and those who would swing the door open. [819]
22.   the urban corridor below San Diego. [813]
23.   "This is kind of a bedroom community," explained an auto salesman [813]
24.   "close our borders tight to illegal aliens and drug-runners" [527]

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[4]Alternative analyses are of course possible, e.g. proposals for a more generalized HUMANITY IS OCEAN and NATION AS LIFERAFT schema, as suggested by an anonymous PWPL reviewer.

We're very protective of our homes. We fear anything that threatens the stability and general welfare of our home, according to these examples of metaphors. The US as a home is only one example of territoriality that we noticed in the dominant metaphors. Note that this kind of metaphor, as noted by an anonymous *PWPL* reviewer, also keeps the discourse of Anglo-American citizens at a personal human level, in contrast to the non-human, abstract or mass noun metaphors for immigrants and immigration. Whether cultural, linguistic, or material territories, we normally will resort to any means necessary to protect them. We feel we own these territories because they partly define who we are. I will not be able to expand in this paper on the matter of an associated metaphor, POLITICS IS WAR, which is consistent with the IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor and illustrates the proposition that people are prepared to go to extremes to 'guard their homes'.[5]

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[5] A sampling of the POLITICS IS WAR metaphor tokens follows. These can be classified as metaphors which refer to the sounds of violence, the actions involving fighting, strategies and tactics of war, and outcomes:

a. Ninety percent of the 'thump' (abuse) cases come from agents who are fired [408]
b. Proposition 187 subtly attacks the dignity and humanity of a defenseless people [266]
c. "invasion" of illegal immigrants is causing economic hardship and eroding lifestyles [215]
d. the greater effectiveness of the border control program in preventing illegals from penetrating the first line of defense. [725]
e. Saying that up to 1,000 illegal immigrants were among those arrested during the Los Angeles riots, Buchanan repeated his previous calls to fortify key sections of the border with ditches and concrete-buttressed fences and to deploy U.S. military forces there if necessary. [855]
f. Third World take over [248]

6. Contesting the Dominant Metaphors

It is not enough to catalog the deleterious representations of immigrants and immigration in public discourse. While the great majority of the 2000+ metaphor tokens were consistent with the dominant anti-immigrant metaphoric mappings, a few tokens were striking refutations of these metaphors. These direct contestations turn the dominant metaphor on its ear.

A common metaphor states that immigrants are a burden on society. One refutation of this metaphor is shown in example 25, as it tweaks the dominant metaphor by respecifying the target. Likewise, the most common target of Prop. 187 was the innocent children. In example 26, the ultimate political implications of the proposition is outlined sharply.

25. "These people are carrying more than their own weight," Hayes-Bautista said. [719]
26. [Proposition 187] is like target practice against the Constitution. [230]

There are specific ways to systematically contest the dominant metaphoric structures, as Chilton & Ilyin (1993) point out. In the final section of this paper I will turn to the second means, which is to reject the dominant metaphor and supply another.

IMMIGRATION IS BENEFICIAL WATER

In order to seek consistency with the world view of the American voting public, we rework with the dominant metaphoric mappings provided by the *Times*. The first set of alternative mappings retain the source metaphor of water, but give it a positive spin:

IMMIGRATION IS BENEFICIAL WATERS, or
IMMIGRATION IS IRRIGATION FOR A DESERT, or
IMMIGRATION IS A WELL-SPRING OF AMERICAN WEALTH.

These metaphors are linked to frequently-used metaphoric characterizations of the US economy and culture. Thus the worldviews of the electorate do not have to be radically revamped

for the positive waters metaphor to be promulgated. A whole series of particular metaphors now can be developed that are based on the mappings presented.

BLOOD OF THE BODY

A second set of alternative metaphor mappings uses a different source domain, NATION AS BODY. Examples 27 and 28 are a couple of example of this recurrent metaphor from the *Times:*

27.   trend-setting state or the ice-hearted domain where the people had put dollar concerns ahead of humanitarian will [1496]
28.   a big country with a very small heart [1502]

ECONOMY AS BODY is not at all a novel metaphor. We found tokens of the metaphor in the *Times* database. There are tokens in the *Times* database that actually use the IMMIGRATION AS BLOOD metaphor, with a negative connotation, as in examples 29 and 30:

29.   only improved economies can stanch the northward flow of illegal immigrants. [386]
30.   those...who would pollute the cultural bloodstream [1447]

A novelist, Carlos Fuentes, is well aware of the larger, body metaphor. In example 31 he extends it with the idea that the political boundaries separating nations are artificial, and that the US/Mexican boundary is an injury to a body larger than the political nation:

31.   This border is the most exciting border in the world. It is crossed by 200 million people a year. ...I have always said it is a scar, not a border. But we don't want the scar to bleed again. We want the scar to heal. [52]

Thus in our work, we use entailments of the body metaphor, such as *blood flow* and *pulse*, to create a new metaphor for immigration. The new metaphor maps the source domain, the blood of the body, to a target domain, which is the vital nature of immigration for the

American economy. Thus the metaphor is: IMMIGRATION IS BLOOD. The ontological mapping of the metaphors can be characterized in a single sentence:

• Immigration flow corresponds to the body's blood flow.

A whole series of particular metaphors now can be developed that are based on the mappings presented, of which I present only three:

32.   Prop. 187 will be economic suicide for California
33.   stopping immigration will cut California's jugular
34.   Prop. 187 will sever the artery that nourishes California's industries

These and other instances of the new metaphor can be used to provide an alternative, affirmative way of talking about immigration. A creative mind can expand on this metaphor, contest the dominant metaphor, and regularly repeat instances of the alternative, *insurgent* metaphor in order to begin to constructively restructure the way the general public unthinkingly frames its world view of immigration.

7.   Conclusion

Contemporary metaphor theory makes very strong claims that the prosaic metaphors which we commonly and unblinkingly use reveal the underpinnings of our common sense world view and expose the structuring principles of our experience. However compelling, these claims have primarily been made on the basis of introspection and deduction (Lakoff 1993, 1996), with secondary experimental studies in cognitive psychology (Gibbs 1994). Here I offer a language use based analysis that brings gritty empiricism to bear on the claims—and hopefully a new way to analyze language variation, which has focused almost exclusively on phonological and morphological domains.

As for matters of metaphor theory, this language use based method can clarify deductive analyses of metaphor, such as Lakoff's *Moral Politics* (1996), in which he provides a deductive analysis of the presumed representations of immigrants based on

his interpretation of the basic contrast of liberal versus conservative political stances in our country (Santa Ana *et al.* (ms.)).

Lastly, in recent years qualitative sociolinguistics has developed a direction of research which has been termed 'language ideology' (Woolard 1992). It draws on many sources of social theory and can encompass a wide range of sociolinguistic studies (e.g., attitudes, common sense, norms, prestige, hegemony). From the field of discourse analysis, van Dijk (1993) has called for socially-engaged research that addresses focuses on the role of discourse in the reproduction of social dominance. The language use based analysis of prose metaphors presented here is offered as an empirical means to reveal and evaluate the ideological structure of political discourse. With it the nature of metaphor in political argumentation can be documented and analyzed. As the insidious dominant metaphors used to frame common sense thinking about our society are brought out in bold relief, these may be more effectively contested.

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Cesar Chavez Center for Chicana & Chicano Studies
University of California Los Angeles
Box 951559
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1559

otto@ucla.edu