Awash under a Brown Tide:
Immigration Metaphors in
California Public and Print Media Discourse

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The passage of Proposition 187, the first anti-Latino referendum offered to California voters in the mid-1990s, sparked many policy, economic, sociological, and political analyses. We would like to offer a discourse analysis into how language participates in the political debate on immigration and partly establishes the basis for electoral decision-making. To do so, we analyze the prose metaphors about immigration that were published in a key California newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*. We additionally study the argumentation structure of the *Los Angeles Times* editorials on Proposition 187. Our goal is to support the often vague claim that language is central to political and social life by providing explicit analyses of the "material detail" (Chilton 1996) of the actual words, phrases, and texts used in public and political communication.

Several assumptions underlie Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1989; Hodge and Kress 1993; van Dijk 1993), which will guide our interpretation of the political discourse surrounding the Proposition 187 campaign. While talking is often dismissed as a fleeting activity separate from the construction of social reality, spoken (and written) words are key components of the structures of the social world. In short, categories, concepts, and relations are encoded in and expressed through language. Thus, to pass over the actual language that documents
communication is to ignore important signs pointing to the reality we constitute in interaction. What is being said about an event or entity is as important as other aspects of the event or entity. In the most explicit situation, language establishes things, as when a judge declares foreign nationals to be citizens of the United States. Such a linguistic act literally create the participants' new statuses and new social realities. By expanding on such speech events, the full scope of constitutive language can begin to be apprehended.

In particular, the actual wording of political discourse should not be overlooked, especially public communication on the issues of the day. First, in the case of Proposition 187, mass media texts are a primary source of public discourse, and reveal certain ways of thinking about immigration among the reading public. Second, because all reading is interactive, language in newsprint is a mode of social action that serves to articulate, affirm, and legitimate the social order. Newsprint participates in maintaining individual acquiescence and social consensus about issues of the day. (Although alternative interpretive frameworks have some access to the print media, such views are carefully bracketed as marginal and of minor significance.) Third, political discourse is a collective process. Newswriters (and the people whose voice they seek out) tend to conform to established ways of speaking and writing that their editors and reading public accept. If they do not, the institution and readers themselves will recast their accounts in accordance with communication norms. By using established language in specific ways, newspapers present the common viewpoint. In this way, news media formulate public opinion.

While linguistic meaning in American English or any language is not fixed, is composed in context, and is expressed with varying degrees of indeterminacy, the semantic domains that comprise everyday speech are in large part shared. Thus, inferences can be traced to words, phrases, and larger collocations used in the communicative process by native speakers. The process of understanding the newspaper text takes place in a context that allows only certain degrees of semantic variance. Since language is implicated in the constitution of social reality, specific elements of the linguistic system, in particular the semantic domains held in common among the community of readers, are engaged in its construction. One of these elements is metaphor. Through social-psychological clinical stud-
Immigration Metaphors in Public Discourse

ies and cognitive science research, metaphor researchers have demonstrated that prose metaphor reveals the worldview orientations in a range of texts and discourses (Gibbs 1994).

In this article we argue that newssprint media reinforces particular concepts in contemporary U.S. discourse on immigration. We do so by developing an empirical method to further cognitive semantic metaphor theory (Lakoff 1987, 1993) in a research framework compatible with other work on the material detail of political discourse (Chilton and Ilyin 1993). As a new technique that builds on an independently developed cognitive linguistic theory, this tool of Critical Discourse Analysis will be elaborated more fully in the body of this article. In the latter part of the article, we add a complementary study designed to illuminate news media ideological precepts, focusing on the argumentation structure of the Los Angeles Times editorials on Proposition 187. In this way, we offer explicit linguistic analyses of the actual words and texts of political discourse on immigration in California during the mid-1990s. The framing of immigration for California voters will be thus investigated in the light of critical discourse studies and from a cognitive linguistic perspective.¹

Proposition 187

Proposition 187 was overwhelmingly passed by the California electorate even though its provisions had been denounced throughout the campaign as unconstitutional. Indeed, it was enjoined by the courts within hours of its enactment. Proposition 187 was designed to challenge and supersede federal law, which already dictated sanctions against employers utilizing the labor of undocumented immigrant workers, and provided for a policing body, the Border Patrol, to apprehend and deport such immigrants. It would have denied a range of public benefits, including education and nonemergency health care, to undocumented immigrants. It also would have enlisted school administrators, health care workers, social service personnel, police, and other state employees to ascertain the residence status of any "apparently illegal alien" (to use the controversial phrasing of the referendum) among their clients and for notifying the Immigration and Nationalization Service of suspected undocumented immigrants for deportation.

This referendum was a decisive nativist response to two realities. First, radical demographic change is taking place in
the state. Latinos are becoming the numerical majority as they displace the white population, which has enjoyed numerical and economic predominance since statehood. Across the United States, the Latino population grew by more than 50 percent from 1980 to 1990. This dwarfs the 9 percent increase of the total U.S. population. California's nearly eight million Latinos in 1990 comprised 34 percent of the total population, an increase of 69 percent from 1980 (Chapa and Valencia 1993, 166, 170). Latinos are projected to become an absolute majority in California by 2040. In Los Angeles the trend is even more pronounced: Latinos are projected to be the majority by 2007 (Brownstein and Simon 1993). For both the state and the nation, the demographic change is augmented by undocumented immigrants. Their population has been particularly difficult to calculate, but one report estimates 1.7 million undocumented individuals reside and work in Southern California. For Californians who assume that Anglo-American culture is and should remain dominant and preeminent, these demographic changes have been unnerving, and the undocumented serve as a perfect target for reprisal. As such, Proposition 187 represents status politics, "a political movement in which a once-dominant social group, perceiving its cultural values as dishonored by social change and rejected by other groups, seeks to reaffirm symbolically its declining prestige" (Woolard 1989, 268-69).

Second, the referendum was triggered by the end of a forty-year economic boom propelled in large measure by the military industrial engine. With the end of the Cold War, California's economy contracted. Over 830,000 jobs were lost between 1990 and 1993, primarily in the defense sector. "As a result, poverty exploded. In the 18-month period following the closure of Lockheed [the largest employer in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles], for instance, 80,000 new welfare cases were added, mainly in the east Valley" (Davis 1995, 27). The economic recession also led to reductions in state and local governmental incomes and created budgetary problems. For this reason, Governor Wilson called for the federal repayment of state costs associated with undocumented immigration.

**Metaphor and Public Perception**

During this period, immigration was represented in the media in distinctive ways. In order to discuss what constituted
California’s public discourse on immigration during the Proposition 187 campaigns, we identify the metaphoric representation used in the print media to characterize immigration in California.

There is a vast literature extending back to Aristotle that argues that humans fashion their social world on the basis of metaphoric thinking. To cite a public policy theorist who held such a social constructivist perspective, Donald Schôn (1979) posited a particular use of metaphors in developing responses to social policy issues. He called it the “seeing as” process. He noted that there is always more than one way to conceptualize social policy issues. Schôn provides examples of this process by contrasting two policy responses to the issue of very low-income urban communities. The public commonly perceives such a community as an eyesore or an urban blight, as it grows it becomes a scourge or epidemic. Schôn argued that as soon as an issue is seen as a problem, a particular perception of it becomes fixed, and a language becomes established to talk about it. As that idea becomes fixed in perception and language, a solution in kind and manner unfailingly follows. For instance, the use of the disease metaphor leads to notions of source, associations that may not be appropriate to thinking about low-income neighborhoods. In this medical model, curing the so-called disease may include eradicating the slum. Mental rigidity sets in and the seeing-as process radically reduces access to alternative ways of conceptualizing the issue. Thus, fewer solutions are entertained.

Viewed differently, the very same policy issue might not be considered a problem. For example, rather than taking the view that very low-income urban communities are social problems to be extirpated, Schôn suggested that taking another look might lead to a wiser response. In certain economic situations, low-income urban communities tend to spring up as solutions. People in these communities demonstrate ingenuity in providing infrastructure for themselves without personal funds or government support. Thoughtful policymakers have viewed these as “natural” or “folk” communities, rather than infestations. Such alternative conceptualizing may inspire more effective policy responses.

Frequently, Schôn’s call to creatively reconceptualize policy issues through metaphor has not been heeded. The consequent futile recycling of old conceptions is evident in much public policy. Yet, commonly accepted solutions for
entrenched social problems regularly fail to effect change. In the face of such policy failures, we tend to redouble our commitment to the so-called solution, instead of reconceptualizing the issue. In many cases, what we do is redouble our commitment to the so-called problems.

Providing alternative views of policy issues requires flexibility of language as well. Schön characterized creative policy-making as utilizing the power of "generative metaphors" to discover new ways of conceptualizing the policy issue. In the best of circumstances, these metaphors occur at policy-formulation impasses to serve as new ways of identifying the situation. In the light of the frequent failure of common-sense solutions based on worn-out metaphors, Schön argues for the conscious use of metaphor as a guide; thus, the present article offers an explicit evaluation of the U.S. metaphoric discourse on immigration.

**Metaphor and Comprehension**

Metaphor has been a topic of study for over 2,000 years, primarily in rhetoric, literature, and philosophy. From this study comes the observation that figurative language gives structure to our worldview. For example, the seventeenth-century Neapolitan Giambattista Vico, in many eyes the first modern historian, replaced Descartes's *cogito* with his own *verum factum*; namely, we know the truth about matters as we ourselves shape them. That is, Vico came to see metaphoric concepts as crucial to how we understand our world.

Nearly three centuries later, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work signaled the advent of cognitive science in understanding how metaphors shape everyday thinking. For Lakoff and Johnson, a metaphor is the mapping from one semantic source domain to another semantic domain, the target domain. The source domain generally includes the parts of our physical world that are handy, familiar, and easy to think about. The target domain is conceptually more obscure. We borrow the conceptual structure of the familiar to get a handle on the recondite. Then we use the borrowed structure extensively or exclusively.

For example, consider the sentence: *She is the blossom of my garden.* Here, the word *blossom* is a metaphor that employs the source domain plant to structure how we conceive the target domain female.² Note that the target domain word, *she*, is a third-person singular pronoun marked for gender but
otherwise an unspecified placeholder. The metaphor creates a semantic association that is in no way natural or necessary, but contingent. Consider a contrasting sentence: *She is the thorn in my side.* Here the word *thorn* is a metaphor that employs the same source domain, plant, to establish the relations used to understand the unspecified target domain pronoun. The associations of this second sentence are altogether different and yet just as automatic. Cognitive linguistic research has noted that this kind of metaphoric linkage takes place in natural language via lexical metaphors, conventional phrases, and non-metaphoric expressions.

To expand on these examples, Lakoff and Johnson cite a set of conventionalized English expressions used to talk about love (1980, 49). They group them into three types of metaphors:  

**LOVE AS A PHYSICAL FORCE:** *I could feel the electricity between us; There were sparks; The atmosphere was charged,* and so on.  

**LOVE AS WAR:** *She fought him off; He fled from her advances; She is besieged by suitors; He has to fend them off,* and so on.  

**LOVE AS MADNESS:** *I'm crazy about you; She drives me out of my mind; He constantly raves about her,* and so on. These and many more expressions can be classified in a cognitive model of the target domain, love. Formally, metaphor is an ontological mapping of one semantic domain onto another. It should be kept in mind that such cognitive mappings of love are culturally and linguistically specific. In the Dené (Navaho) and Korean languages, for example, no madness mapping for love exists. Speakers of these languages are startled by the conventional use of such phrases in English.

Metaphors thus codify our world. Understanding the target domain is made easier by its association with the source domain. For twenty years, the metaphoric basis of human thinking across the most foundational aspects of daily life has been explored. These include semantic domains dealing with our sense of time, our orientation in space, our experience of what constitutes an event, our understanding of things, and our means of talking about ideas (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993; Lakoff and Turner 1989). Moreover, studies have indicated that metaphoric thinking takes place in everyday discussions, institutional settings, and social science and physical science discourse (Gibbs 1994).
Metaphor and Social Institutions

For Lakoff and Johnson, metaphoric mappings are a major form of human understanding.\(^5\) This ambitious cognitive science claim has important social implications. For instance, Steven Winter has argued that legal thinking is profoundly metaphorical (1989). While it is commonly assumed in the legal profession that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is a set of doctrinal rules that is deterministically applied to particular cases, Winter argues that the principles are not absolute but are historically contingent. Moreover, from municipal judges to the Supreme Court Justices, jurists make decisions according to the metaphor that characterizes the First Amendment, and although they may think they are applying a doctrinal mandate, they are interpreting it by means of a metaphor. Winter examines this process in the history of the concept of freedom of speech. The idea has changed over time, and with it the way the legal profession thinks about the body of the law has also shifted, with weighty social consequences.

In the seventeenth century, John Milton said: “Truth is compar’d in Scripture to a streaming fountain.” Early characterizations of the First Amendment likewise implemented the flowing water metaphor, and it was designed to insure the free flow of ideas, a conceptualization that emphasized progress toward essential Truth. During that period, such understandings focused on limiting possible governmental interference in new ideas. Once those ideas were expressed, however, if they were deemed outmoded or an obstacle to “the Truth,” they became open to governmental restriction. By the twentieth century, Oliver Wendell Holmes argued against the prevailing free-flowing stream model of the First Amendment and promoted the current marketplace of ideas metaphor. The entailments of this metaphor, including a different normative measure, transform the First Amendment. Whereas the flowing water metaphor emphasized the value of new ideas, the market metaphor accentuated the economic value of ideas. Furthermore, multiple truths were entailed, rather than the single Truth originally envisioned by the framers of the Bill of Rights. Corresponding legal consequences follow the change of metaphor from flowing water to marketplace. Differential taxation of print media would not have been tolerable in light of the earlier metaphor, but was acceptable under the current one. Its social consequences were far-reaching.
More to the point of our present study, Woolard (1989) analyzed the importance of metaphoric constructions in English-only legislation, a Latino issue in California politics. Woolard ascribes the 1984 success of anti-liberal forces in San Francisco on the bilingual ballot measure to the tactical use of a metaphor that reframed a civil rights issue. That is, a conservative political group denounced the bilingual ballot, a provision of the 1975 Voting Rights Act designed to ensure greater electoral participation in a multilingual electorate. They presented their Proposition O, which was designed to eliminate bilingual ballots, as a progressive measure, however, not a reactionary one. They successfully constructed an image of the non-English-speaking Latino and Asian population as being incarcerated by their home languages. By using a LANGUAGE AS PRISON metaphor, bilingual ballots were described as oppressive shackles that imprisoned non-English speaking voters, and Proposition O was characterized as a measure that would more effectively enfranchise these citizens. The LANGUAGE AS PRISON metaphor characterized bilingual ballots as an obstacle that voters should strike down as an act of liberation. In spite of the condemnation of Latino leaders, Proposition O passed. San Franciscans, who make up one of the most progressive electorates in the country, were brought around to the view that they would liberate fellow voters by giving them English-only ballots. This reframing of the political issue was made by way of metaphor.

In these ways, metaphor structuring takes place in social arenas. Such structuring has been attributed to such institutions as education (Miller and Fredricks 1990), law (Winters 1989), and a range of political activities (e.g. Voss et al. 1992, Pancake 1993, van Teeffelen 1994, Lakoff 1991, 1996, Chilton 1996).

**Metaphor Analysis**

Now we turn to the construction of the political representation of a demographic process, immigration, using a replicable method to sample the public discourse of the campaign. A sample of Los Angeles Times texts is illustrative of the range of use and type of metaphor:

To participants in such [public anti-immigrant] sessions, California's growing ethnic and racial diversity—**celebrated** by many as a source of strength—is
more of a call to arms. For FAIR [Federation for American Immigration Reform] strategists, who are enthusiastic proponents of assimilation, diversity is a suspect notion.

"I think people are mistaken in taking a rosy view of multiculturalism," said Garrett Hardin, a FAIR board member and noted ecologist. "If they want to know the ultimate result of multiculturalism, look at Yugoslavia. The more we encourage multiculturalism, the more we encourage conflict and social chaos. It leads to loss of freedom."

Hardin, a co-founder of Zero Population Growth, is an advocate of "lifeboat ethics." Fearing that the nation may soon exceed its "carrying capacity" (a term borrowed from fish and game management), Hardin calls famine relief counterproductive and backs incentives for sterilization. Some consider him a genius, but others call his views reprehensible.

"In the long haul," said Hardin, a professor emeritus at UC Santa Barbara, "every nation"..."must take responsibility for taking care of its own people."

His wife, Jane Hardin, sits on the board of Californians for Population Stabilization, a Sacramento group also seeking immigration restrictions.

Critics say Hardin and other FAIR advocates fan the flames of anti-immigrant backlash, but FAIR backers shift the blame elsewhere: to lawmakers who have failed to heed FAIR's urgings that the flow must be halted.

"I think anti-immigrant sentiment is rising in this country today, and I think it's rising because policymakers didn't do their job," said Roger Conner, a FAIR architect and longtime executive director.

Few people doubt that FAIR has been instrumental—both in the public relations and legislative spheres—in helping to elevate the once-obscure issue of immigration to national prominence.

"They've been successful in shaping the debate," concedes [Cecilia] Muñoz of the National Council of La Raza." (11/24/93, A-1)
This excerpt from the *Los Angeles Times* exemplifies the extensive use and distribution of metaphor in newspaper text. Beyond metaphor, this excerpt exhibits Hardin's use of deixis\(^7\) to put distance between American society and the immigrant Other, and depicts the reporter's use of other forms of discourse features to create a conceptually cohesive and esthetically attractive text. Metaphor enables the newswriter to present this account in an accessible manner. Much more than mere decorative embellishment, however, metaphor plays a powerful role as it constructs ways of seeing many aspects of social life.\(^8\)

The lexical instances of metaphors in this excerpt are set in boldface to draw attention to ways of speaking and thinking we often ignore when reading. Highlighting them makes their associations more apparent to the reader. It is important to recognize that their semantic associations are automatically reinvoked with each repetition, whether or not the reader is cognizant of the metaphor. The semantic force of the metaphoric linkages is no less potent when the metaphor brings no attention to itself. Indeed, perhaps an unobtrusive metaphor is more effective in its capacity to reinforce a worldview when the reader is unaware of the articulated linkage, its attendant entailments, and ultimate implications, since no conscious consideration is given to its association.

**Cataloguing Public Discourse Metaphors**

We examine the metaphoric structures promulgated by the *Los Angeles Times* to characterize the demographic process of immigration during the period of the Proposition 187 referendum, since they provide a measure of the collective way of seeing this political issue, as well as a measure of the discourse that informed public opinion before the day of the referendum vote. To establish empirically rigorous grounds, we catalogued the *Los Angeles Times* discourse on immigration in California during the Proposition 187 campaigns. We selected the *Los Angeles Times* because it is the newspaper with the greatest distribution in California, it is considered the state's newspaper of record, it is the local newspaper of California's most populous city, and it is home to the nation's largest Latino population. Furthermore, the *Los Angeles Times* is a highly regarded newspaper that has taken moderate positions in recent California politics and maintained a high professional standard in reporting on the political events surrounding the
campaign of Proposition 187. In its coverage, the reporters maintained a relatively careful balance of professional detachment and civic concern despite a rancorous debate on immigration that polarized California politics. In fact, a conventional content analysis (i.e., pre-theoretical and non-metaphorical) of a subset of six weeks of articles on Proposition 187 demonstrated that its reporters made concerted efforts to present political events and political adversaries in a balanced light. Given this professionalism, the present metaphor analysis should be taken as an accurate measure of the public discourse on immigration and as an evaluation of the Los Angeles Times as a mass media source.

While print media were not the sole source of public information and representation during the campaign, specific technological advances now permit systematic research on some print media sources, including the Los Angeles Times. The complete texts are now available in a format that facilitates computer-assisted analysis. An empirical method based on natural language research principles (Labov 1984) was employed to review the newstexts. In order to avoid a biased count of the metaphoric representations of immigration, the present sample included all the articles in the Los Angeles Times published on Proposition 187 from August 1993 (when the California governor called for federal repayment of state costs associated with immigration) until the measure was brought to a state-wide vote in November 1994. The total of 117 articles were examined for metaphor and other figurative language. Over 2,200 total instances of metaphor were catalogued in this body of newspaper texts. The present article reports on approximately 10 percent of the total database, focusing specifically on tokens for which the target domain is IMMIGRATION, the demographic process.

Immigration Metaphors

Two metaphoric mappings stand out in the public discourse on Proposition 187, in which metaphors are used to characterize people, the immigrants, or immigration as a demographic process. In the first metaphoric mapping, immigrants are overwhelmingly characterized as animals. Examples include: The electorate's appetite has been whet with the red meat of deportation as a viable policy option; Beaten-down agents, given only enough resources to catch a third of their quarry, sense the
objective in this campaign is something less than total victory; and Employers **hungering** for really cheap labor **hunt** out the foreign workers. Immigrant are debased and dehumanized by such imagery. No other people, not even notorious individuals whom one might expect to garner subhuman characterizations, are degraded in this manner. Beyond the **IMMIGRANT AS ANIMAL** metaphor, other metaphors of immigrants were revealed, such as **IMMIGRANT AS SOLDIER**, and **IMMIGRANT AS DISEASE** (Santa Ana 1999). In this article, we will present a second metaphoric mapping, targeting the demographic process: Immigration is most frequently characterized in terms of water metaphors.

Table 1 presents dominant, secondary, and occasional metaphors used for the demographic process. By dominant metaphor class we mean metaphors with a similar source that occur relatively frequently and appear in a great variety of forms. In the _Los Angeles Times_ data sampled, dominant metaphors comprise the greatest proportion of all tokens characterizing immigration. Secondary source domains appear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Source Domain</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>DANGEROUS WATERS,</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. floods, tide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>WAR, e.g. invasion</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANIMAL, e.g. runaway</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BODY, e.g. disease</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>others, e.g. WEATHER,</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMODITY, HISTORY, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>(various)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Grand Total   | 221               |

**Source:** 116 _Los Angeles Times_ articles published June 1992–December 1994. Percentages are rounded up. The table accounts for metaphors that target immigration, i.e. the demographic process. It excludes metaphors that target immigrants as people. Secondary metaphors occur in multiple tokens, but far fewer than the dominant metaphor. Occasional metaphors are single instances of a domain.

Table 1. Immigration metaphors published during Proposition 187 campaign.
much less frequently and with less variety of expression. One such metaphor for immigrants is *immigration as war*:

1. Some believe that [Governor Pete] Wilson, by filing a lawsuit against the federal government and arguing that illegal immigration is tantamount to a *foreign invasion*, has made a whipping boy of migrants. (9/27/94, A-3)

2. “People are saying, ‘I don’t like this Third World *takeover,*’ said Guy Weddington McCreary, a North Hollywood Chamber of Commerce member favoring the initiative. “It is literally an *invasion* and very upsetting.” (9/17/94, B-3)

By occasional metaphors, we mean those expressed only once or a few times and that do not seem to be associated with more prevalent source domains. All the occasional metaphors in this sample are single instance tokens of a source domain.

**Immigration as Dangerous Waters**

The greatest number of tokens are water metaphors. To characterize the movement of people as moving water might seem quite natural, even appropriate, but it must be emphasized that such a conceptual construction of people’s movement is not the only possible metaphor. The major metaphor for the process of the movement of substantial numbers of human beings to the United States is *immigration as dangerous waters*:

3. *awash* under a *brown tide* (10/2/94, A-3)

4. Like *waves on a beach*, these *human flows* are literally remaking the face of America (10/14/93, A-1)

5. *a sea of brown faces* marching through Downtown would only antagonize many voters (10/17/94, A-1)

6. In April, Gov. Pete Wilson sued the federal government to recover costs associated with illegal immigrants, claiming that they are sapping the state budget, taking jobs from legal residents and *swamping* hospital emergency rooms. (6/12/94, A-3)

7. the human *surge* (7/5/92, A-3)
8. Councilwoman Joyce C. Nicholson said illegal immigration is a serious problem and "the state of California is drowning in it." (9/17/94, B-2)

9. The inexorable flow (9/22/93, A-1)

The dangerous waters of immigration come in many forms: rough seas, treacherous tides, surges. These metaphors rarely include anthropomorphic terms, except to imply ethnicity and race, for example, changes to the complexion of the United States. On another note, the use of the term literally in Example 2 demonstrates a tacit recognition of the inferential force of the metaphor of invasion. Again in Example 4, the expression face of the nation is a metaphor, there is nothing literal about the term literally. In such cases the adverb is hyperbole, heightening the supposed severity of the cultural change caused by non-European immigration. Note that immigration waters are seen as dangerous, presented with adjectives such as inexorable (10/2/93, A-1).

Within the immigration as dangerous waters category of metaphors there are very clear subcategories. The first subcategory of the dangerous waters category is volume, which emphasizes the number of immigrants. With these volume terms, individuals are lost and the mass is presented negatively with strong adjectives such as relentless and overwhelming:

10. the foreigners who have flooded into the country (11/10/92, A-1)

11. [California Governor] Wilson said: "What we ought to be doing is focusing on the fact that federal failure continues to provide this massive flow of illegal immigrants into my state and the other states." (7/23/94, A-3)

12. the relentless flow of immigrants (5/30/93, A-5)

13. an overwhelming flood of asylum-seekers have put the country in an angry funk (10/1/92, A-1)

The second subcategory of dangerous waters is movement, which emphasizes the direction of migration, primarily northward from Mexico to the United States. As for destination, the nation is metaphorically conceived as a container (Lakoff 1987; Chilton 1996) and the migration as inward-flowing stream:
14. 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 (8/1/93, A-1)

15. the tide and flow of illegal immigration (10/26/94, A-27)

16. Glenn Spencer . . . says his interest in the subject was sparked about two years ago when he began noticing that an influx of minorities had flooded the city. He compiled research and launched a newsletter that he circulated among his neighbors. Ultimately, he formed Valley Citizens Together, but the group changed its name after residents from other parts of Los Angeles wanted to get involved. ...When asked what motivates him, Spencer points to the photos of his two blond, blue-eyed grandchildren on the mantel in his orderly living room. “What I’d like to achieve is a little better world for my grandchildren,” he said. “I don’t want my grandchildren to live in chaos. Isn’t that enough?” (11/15/94, A-1)

17. the flood of legal and illegal immigrants streaming into the country (9/7/93, A-3)

The third subcategory of dangerous waters is control, which emphasizes the efforts to reduce the immigration of undocumented workers. This is because dangerous flows of immigrants are understood to lead to social chaos, as documented in Example 16 and the extended Los Angeles Times excerpt above. Such metaphors characterize immigration as waters to be, for example, stemmed:

18. an attempt to stem illegal immigration (12/22/94, B-1)

19. the opportunistic criminal element that exploits our porous borders (11/27/92, A-3)

20. On the other hand, [President Bill Clinton] warned, if the government is unable to “show some more discipline” in its control of illegal immigration, “I’m afraid the genie out of the bottle will be passion to shut off legal immigration.” (8/13/93, A-1)
21. executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform . . . said Clinton's approach is akin to "trying to dam the Mississippi with toothpicks." (9/7/93, A-1)

The connotations of the dangerous waters metaphor are extensive. By treating immigration as dangerous waters, the individuality of the immigrants' lives and their humanity are backgrounded. Instead of seeing individuals, we imagine a frightening scenario of deadly water played out with devastating floods and inundating surges of brown faces.

What is being washed away? Anglo-American cultural dominance is threatened by the sea of brown faces. Since only a trickle of evidence has to be demonstrated to invoke alarm, floods are a perfect metaphor to inspire dread and fear. The dangerous waters metaphor obscures the real contribution of the hard-working, family-oriented immigrant who believes in the American dream. Emphasis on volume, movement, and control of these dangerous waters diminishes his or her humanity.

Following the conventions of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff 1993), we now present the dangerous waters metaphor in terms of an informal description and a formal ontological mapping. First, by means of an informal narrative, Narrative 1, we suggest the principle that governs the patterns of inference labeled as immigration as dangerous waters in the Los Angeles Times:

This narrative is based on an ontological mapping, in cognitive semantic terms, established between the semantic domains of water and immigration. The metaphor labeled immigration as dangerous waters is tightly structured to map the ontology

A flood of immigrants is flowing into America. It threatens to drown Anglo America. By its sheer volume, the flood will cover the land of America with a sea of people who do not look, act, or speak like Anglo Americans. The people already on the land will be washed away. For those who remain the land will be different. The land can absorb an influx in small quantities, but this flow is so large that it threatens to change the contours of the land. The land will be eroded. The land will be irreversibly changed, which means destroyed.

Narrative 1. Dangerous Waters as Immigration.
of floods and tides onto the domain of immigration. The mapping is as follows:

a. Immigration corresponds to moving waters.

b. The United States corresponds to a bounded land subject to change from floods.

c. Greater immigration corresponds to an increased threat to the land.

d. The land's vulnerability to flooding corresponds to U.S. susceptibility to cultural change.

**Nation as Ship at Sea**

Such ontological mappings do not stand alone, but are linked to other mappings in hierarchies of concepts. Thus the *immigration as dangerous waters* metaphor is linked to the *nation as house* metaphor, which is instantiated in Examples 4, 8, 10, 11, and 13, among others. Paul Chilton (1996) notes that the *nation as house* metaphor is used in international relations, as well as domestic relations. Another metaphor with which it is invoked is the *nation as ship* metaphor. In this latter metaphor, the ship is not strictly the government, but the country as culture, economy, and society. The ship can also be California or Los Angeles. Here, in the context of Proposition 187, immigration is portrayed as a menacing ocean on which the nation as ship navigates. The ship in the *Los Angeles Times* texts is always imperiled by rough seas. At times there is an interesting double view, with immigrants as the ocean as well as passengers on the ship. In these examples, the safety of the lifeboats is lost when they become crowded with illegal immigrants:

22. the crush of illegal immigrants in Los Angeles is like overloading the lifeboats of a *sinking ship* (12/14/92, B-1)

23. 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” (10/28/94, B-3)

The tempestuous seas are caused by the immigrant waves and the economic storms that rock the nation. Again, the metaphor attributes the danger to immigrants and implies that the native-
born are threatened by their presence. The same entailments are used in Garrett Hardin’s identification of an ecology metaphor; namely, that the United States is a lifeboat with a carrying capacity strained by overpopulation brought on by immigration.

Proposition 187 advocates exploited the ship of state metaphor by naming their major organization SOS (Save Our State), since with each mention of the organization the metaphoric entailments of danger were reinvoked. The organization’s name alludes to the nautical expression “Save Our Ship,” which is the Morse code distress signal for ships at sea.12 As an acronym that was routinely spelled out in newspaper writing conventions, the metaphoric entailments were reproduced, and hence reinforced, at least forty times in the 1994 Los Angeles Times texts alone.

Peter Brimelow, in his best-selling book Alien Nation: Common Sense about America’s Immigration Disaster, also used these metaphors in a powerful manner, characteristically at the expense of immigrants:

24. The 1965 Immigration Act did not open the immigration floodgates: it opened the immigration scuttles—the influx is very substantial, but it spurts lopsidedly from a remarkably small number of countries, just as when some of the scuttles are opened in one side of a ship. Which is why the United States is now developing an ethnic list—and may eventually capsize. (1995, 18)

In this example, Brimelow crafts an image that presents immigrants as a faceless mass, while focusing on the nation’s peril of taking on an ethnic list. He again builds on the entailments of immigration as dangerous waters to separate people of color (who equal dangerous waters) from “real Americans” (who equal passengers) (280).13 Brimelow reiterates this stance at many points in his book:

25. As late as 1950, somewhere up to nine out of ten Americans looked like me. That is, they were of European stock. And in those days, they had another name for this thing dismissed so contemptuously as “the racial hegemony of white Americans.” They called it “America.” (59)

26. America at the time of the Revolution was biracial, not multiracial, containing both whites and
blacks. But the political nation—the collectivity that took political decisions—was wholly white. (18)

While he thinks that the United States should put an end to immigration, except for people like himself, Brimelow’s insolent message was effective in persuading noted liberal and progressive commentators to his point of view, as the book jacket of Alien Nation advertises. He is able to present his views in powerful and compelling ways by means of straightforward prose and metaphors that resonate with “common sense”; which is to say, the nativist view packaged as the commonly held values of American society.

Alternative Immigration Metaphors

In metaphoric terms, the advocates for Proposition 187 were successful in shaping the debate. Few metaphors refuted or reinterpreted the DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor in our comprehensive cataloguing of the Los Angeles Times articles on immigration. As summarized earlier, language has long been seen as shaping worldview. Metaphor is privileged over most other linguistic elements in this process, because it is a central means of conceptualizing the social world, as well as our basic physical orientation, social scientific and physical scientific thinking (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987, Gibbs 1994). Thus, it is important to recognize its power in public discourse.

The Los Angeles Times news writers did not provide alternative metaphoric representations when they compared the contending positions on Proposition 187. Thus, while by current standards of journalistic professionalism the Los Angeles Times writers’ presented a balanced account of the issues, they certainly did not present a balanced account of the immigration debate in terms of metaphor. The news writers unmindfully promulgated only the metaphoric worldview of the advocates for Proposition 187. Hence, contrasting worldviews, or differing visions of the country in terms of metaphors, were not provided for the electorate.

The proponents of Proposition 187 appealed to the naturalized, but not necessarily natural view of immigration as flowing waters. With the DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor, they inspired dread by speaking about inundating floods and surging tides. With the exception of the clergy, in particular then-Archbishop Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles, all parties employed the
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DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor. As Los Angeles Times columnist George Ramos reported, on a debate between adversaries (10/10/93, B-3), while backers of Proposition 187 called for immediate drastic reductions in immigration and punitive actions against the undocumented and their children, pro-immigrant advocates did not "say what they would propose to curb illegal immigration, if, as they say, 187 is not the answer." Opponents of Proposition 187 eventually admitted that there was "an illegal-immigration problem" but were "reluctant" to propose alternatives to Proposition 187. At this particular forum, the absence of an alternative perspective was evident. Ramos described the event moderator as having "wondered aloud" if the hesitation on the part of the immigrant advocates "hurt the anti-187 cause." No competing metaphoric view of immigration was offered at the event. Nor was an alternative view advocated in most anti-Proposition 187 commentary. The common response of opponents of Proposition 187 was to describe how objectionable its backers were. In the absence of a credible alternative viewpoint, this amounted to an *ad hominem* attack.

This could have been avoided with the consistent use of metaphors to characterize immigration affirmatively. In the history of U.S. views on immigration, there have been periods when immigration was sought after vigorously. Then, endorsing imagery was used. Andrew Carnegie, for one, expressed his estimation of immigrant workers in positive terms as flowing water:

> Were the owners of every gold and silver mine in the world compelled to send to the Treasury at Washington, at their own expense, every ounce of the precious metals produced, the national wealth would not be enhanced one-half as much as it is from the golden stream [of immigrants] which flows into the country each year (1885, 27, cited in part in Calavitas (1996)).

Thus, affirmative metaphors were readily available to represent a pro-immigrant view, even as spoken by a nineteenth-century robber baron.15

Both the advocates and opponents of Proposition 187 used the same kinds of metaphors, and articulated a situation in which native-born citizens were imperiled by a *tidal wave* of immigration (12/8/93, A-3). From the vantage point of cognitive linguistics, the pro-immigrant advocates gave their implicit
assent to their opponents' social values. Instead of offering rival metaphoric characterizations of immigration, advocates for the immigrants denied the claims and characterizations of their opponents, which left them defending a status quo that had been seriously challenged.

The period of anti-Latino political initiatives did not end with Proposition 187. In 1996, the California Civil Rights Initiative, as Proposition 209 was cynically called, abolished statewide use of affirmative action (Chávez 1998). In 1998, the brazenly named English for the Children initiative, Proposition 227, effectively ended bilingual education for California's 4.5 million non-English-speaking children. Proponents for affirmative action and bilingual education were immediately placed in a defensive position due to the strategic linguistic representation of the referenda (Santa Ana, in preparation). Most strikingly, legitimate competing representations of the issues in metaphoric terms were absent. In the absence of alternative metaphoric framings to balance the political debates, the possibility of further anti-Latino referenda remains large.

Analysis of Los Angeles Times Editorials

One question that arises from the foregoing analysis of the public discourse is how closely the conceptual framework consciously articulated by the print media institution, the Los Angeles Times, fits with the predominant metaphoric representation of immigration during Proposition 187. Prose metaphor, a feature of discourse that has not drawn much attention, is not presently considered a measure of journalistic objectivity, so it is premature to condemn the newspaper for bias, however foundational. So we compared Los Angeles Times editorials (during the last six months of the 1994 campaign) and news reports (during the eighteen-month Proposition 187 campaign), which indicated no difference in the pattern of metaphors registered in two distinct newspaper genres. IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS dominated both sets of texts. Yet, the Los Angeles Times editorials steadfastly excoriated Proposition 187. Consequently, we compared other aspects of the editorials, especially their rhetorical structure, to clarify this ostensible contradiction.

Newspaper editorials are important to any investigation of the material detail of public discourse and the formation of
public opinion, because editorials are the clearest expression of a newspaper's ideology.

Indeed, the editorial is the formation place for newspaper ideologies.... Confronted with fundamental changes in the social and ethnic context, many readers have sought for interpretative frameworks, for definitions and explanations of the new situation and for practical guidelines for future communication and action. Editorials, even more than the news reports on which they are based, offer precisely such practical, common-sense frameworks for making sense of the social situation (van Dijk 1991, 150, emphasis in the original).

Furthermore, van Dijk fixes the ideological force of an editorial on the interpretive frameworks it utilizes to present its topics to readers. Editorial structures, in contrast to relatively unconscious metaphor choice, are deliberately constructed to convey, even persuade its readers to, the editors' views. Editorial descriptions of the contending parties and points of view involve stylistic choices intended to evoke emotional responses, as well as rational consideration, on the part of readers. Although not at the same level or on the same basis, such purposeful structuring offers readers a way of perceiving the world that parallels the process of metaphoric understanding. For this reason, it is fitting to compare the structure of the Proposition 187 editorials of the Los Angeles Times from August to December 1994 (including post-election editorials) to the prose metaphors of its news reports. The focus in this section is on comparing the description of the contending parties addressing Proposition 187, followed by an analysis of the way pro and con arguments were made in the Los Angeles Times editorials.

The Los Angeles Times editorials were uniformly opposed to Proposition 187 and editorial writers were scathing in their characterization. The most neutral description called the referendum: "the measure that would prohibit state and local governments from providing education, health care and other social services to illegal immigrants" (11/6/94, B-20). More passionate descriptions included "half-baked" (10/2/94, M-4), "draconian" (10/28/94, B-6) "ridiculous" (10/30/94, M-6), and "wrong morally...wrong politically" (11/2/94, B-6). The editorial writers frequently included indirect quotes of opponents
of the referendum. For example, conservative politicians William Bennett and Jack Kemp were said to have "essentially called the ballot measure what it is—an unconstitutional and nativist reaction to a complex problem, a misconceived measure that carries the potential to spread poison elsewhere and undermine the very spirit of democracy in this country" (10/21/94, B-6). Furthermore, editorial writers provided extensive and numerous quotes from a whole range of opponents to Proposition 187. A sampling of quotes attributed to different individuals in a single editorial includes: "an angry knee-jerk reaction," "immoral...godless," "fundamentally flawed," "abomination," "a fraud and a hoax," and so on (11/6/94, B-20).

Through such characterizations, the editorial writers sought to discredit the proponents of the referendum. In fact, the major organizers and spokespersons for Proposition 187 were often not even named, with the exception of political candidates who voiced their support as part of their campaigns. When candidates were singled out, it was frequently in unflattering terms: "Rogan is a conservative who opposes virtually all forms of gun control. He supports Proposition 187 and, on the basis of one evening spent with the Border Patrol, has made inflammatory statements about the motivations of Mexican immigrants" (10/31/94, B-6) and "then there's Pete Wilson... who grandstands on the volatile illegal immigrant issue, even advocating the odious Proposition 187... he is utterly, totally, hopelessly wrong on Proposition 187" (10/30/94, M-6).

In contrast, the opponents of Proposition 187 were positively portrayed as "farsighted" (11/12/94, B-7), "eloquent," and "prominent" (12/6/94, B-20). If the opponent was a candidate for office, then he or she was termed "courageous" (10/28/94, B-6), "brave, widely-regarded and a top-tier contender" (10/21/94, B-6). Opponents were named and their photo sometimes accompanied the editorial. Conversely, no photos of Proposition 187 proponents made the editorial page of the Los Angeles Times during the period under study. This rhetorical structure of foregrounding opponents and backgrounding proponents served to diminish the standing of the Proposition 187 spokespeople.

Likewise reports that bolstered the anti-187 position were carefully cited, even the ungainly Summary of Legislative Analyst's Estimate of Net State and Local Government Fiscal Impact. Such reports were lauded by Los Angeles Times editorial writers as: "penetrating and time-proven analyses written
by highly regarded professionals" of whom "Republican and Democratic legislators alike avail themselves" (11/2/94, B-6). In contrast, no reports or studies in support of Proposition 187 were ever named in the editorials.

The characterization of the unnamed voters for and against Proposition 187 was also asymmetrical. On the one hand, there were the "thoughtful Californians" and the residents of a "mature California" (9/16/94, B-6). These people stood in contrast to "California voters lured by the quick fix" (10/27/94, B-6), "who abandon all reason" (11/2/94, B-6), and define "illegal immigration as nothing but a problem—ignoring the powerful economic benefits that derive from this valuable labor pool" (11/2/94, B-6). After the election, the Los Angeles Times continued its articulated opposition to Proposition 187 in a rare explanation of the vote: "It is hardly surprising that the global backlash against population pressure by poor people is a powerful force here, where a deeply rooted middle class perceives itself to be threatened and views existing public policy as ineffectual. Proposition 187 is a symptom, not a cure" (11/13/94, B-18).

The argument structure of the Los Angeles Times editorials is regular and uncomplicated. Van Dijk (1991, 133) suggests that statements of opinion in editorials fall into three categories: definitional, explicative, and moral. Defining opinion statements answer the question: "What happened?" Explicative opinions address the question: "Why did it happen?" and at times provide an account of causes for particular events. Moral opinions subsume prediction, recommendation, conclusion, and moral pronouncement by answering the question: "What should be done?" Van Dijk's classification describes the Los Angeles Times editorial structures. In its attention to topics involving Proposition 187 and "illegal immigration" (as undocumented migration was invariably termed), the Los Angeles Times more frequently assumed the role of a teacher than a preacher (Page and Shapiro 1989). The Los Angeles Times seldom resorted to moral opinions, but often posed didactic yes/no questions that were elaborated in the body of the text and explicitly answered. Alternatively, editorial writers posed rhetorical questions at the end of an explanatory portion of the editorial that was structured to persuade the reader of the Los Angeles Times point of view.

We turn to one particular editorial for more detailed discussion. The Los Angeles Times published it a month before the vote on Proposition 187. Its argument structure reveals the ideological
stance of the editorial writers. *The Law of Unintended Consequences* (10/2/93, M-4) begins first with an explicit moral theme and an evaluative theme, both of which are stated as questions: Is a referendum that “roils schools and makes snoops out of teachers” what California wants? And, will California produce “thoughtful policy that can be a model for the nation or a half-baked approach that could have dangerous consequences?” The explicit answer is offered: “We strongly recommend a ‘no’ vote.” (The contrast of “thoughtful policy” to a “half-baked approach” is reiterated throughout the editorial.) The editorial writers explain why Proposition 187 has become a “fever pitch” issue, referencing the supporters of Proposition 187 and their emotional and irrational presentation of the topic (especially as compared to the Los Angeles Times editorial writers).

The preceding serves as introduction to the main theme of the piece: Proposition 187 will “produce many unintended bad results” much like Proposition 13, which was an inadvertent fiscal disaster for state and local communities. While admitting that Proposition 187 is appealing since it is based on the assumption that “something must be done,” the editorial writers reject Proposition 187 by posing six unintended consequences of its approval: “Decimate this state’s low-wage labor pool”; “Deny people basic medical care”; “Throw kids out of school”; “Turn teachers into spies”; “Send a message that is counterproductive”; and “Risk losing federal aid.”

The six consequences become capitalized headings for six subsequent paragraphs of the editorial, each elaborating the predicted negative consequence. The format of the headings invokes the question posed at the outset of the editorial: “Is Proposition 187 what California wants?”

As an example, to answer the question of whether California should “decimate” its “labor pool,” the editorial writers characterize immigrants as a “low-wage, high productivity labor force” that provides California with positive economic benefits, making it “the envy of the world.” The editorial writers specifically mention the industries most often associated with the gross exploitation of immigrant labor: garment manufacturing and agribusiness.

An explicit answer is given to the question: “What draws most immigrants? The experts are virtually unanimous...the lure is jobs, however ill-paid, not welfare.” The editorial writers then recommend that the United States and Mexico work out an arrangement that acknowledges the “magnet,”
“minimizes the exploitation,” and “discourages illegal resettlement” in the United States.

Along the way, the editorial writers define the Public Good as policy decisions taken with the long-term perspective in mind. Short-term policy decisions, for example barring children from school, are associated with the proponents of Proposition 187. They also remind their readership that many children of immigrants are citizens who are fully entitled to public education and restate the unconstitutionality of Proposition 187 as a state referendum designed to supersede federal law.

This brief description does not enumerate all the points made in this well-constructed commentary. The Los Angeles Times concludes that “187 purports to offer a simple answer to a complex phenomenon; it really is no answer at all.” It then summarizes its effect on immigration, its legal consequences, and its social divisiveness.

There is little overt moralizing in this editorial, which is representative of other Los Angeles Times editorials. The arguments against Proposition 187 are framed in terms of financial irresponsibility, poor legal wording, practical unenforceability, and social divisiveness.

**Conflict or Concord in Representation?**

It might be argued, then, that a conflict exists between the anti-Proposition 187 editorial position and the anti-immigration metaphors of its news stories. The political position articulated in the Los Angeles Times editorials was undercut by the dangerous waters metaphors. Since the judgment of the Californian electorate was overwhelmingly in favor of Proposition 187, it would seem that the metaphors promulgated by the various news writers, editorial writers, pundits, and spokespeople quoted in the Los Angeles Times weakened the anti-Proposition 187 thrust of the editorials, since the metaphors invoked peril and urgency, which contradicted the status quo and fiscal arguments of the editorials.

The existence of conflicting ideological stances between the Los Angeles Times news reports and editorials is not likely, however. In a volume studying public opinion as a dependent variable, Page and Shapiro (1989) note the important, long-standing biases of U.S. newspapers. In order of rank, the “most pronounced” is a nationalistic and ethnocentric bias, followed by an anti-Communist and pro-capitalistic bias with an
associated theme of maligning the political Left. The third and fourth are a minimal government bias and a pro-status quo, pro-incumbent bias. While it must be stated that such blanket generalities have little value if overextended, the tendencies toward nationalist and pro-status quo biases thread through the Los Angeles Times representation of immigration to the public during the 1994 political year.

We argue, then, that although the Los Angeles Times editorials are in opposition to Proposition 187, they do not take a pro-immigrant stance. The Los Angeles Times used the term illegal immigration thirty times more frequently than a more neutral term such as noncitizen. It did not use the pro-immigration term, undocumented immigrant. While describing Proposition 187 as a “unconstitutional and nativist” referendum, the Los Angeles Times also describes immigration as a “very real problem” (11/10/94, B-6) requiring a “solution” (10/30/94, M-6). As Donald Schöhn would predict, the so-called solution is shaped by the narrative of the dominant metaphor: IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS. The Los Angeles Times solution is to “beef up border enforcement” (12/16/94, B-6), “to regulate the flow of workers,” and to establish “a bilateral accord...as a way of controlling the immigration flow” (11/26/94, B-7). In the Los Angeles Times view, this will “permit the orderly movement of temporary workers into agriculture and other industries in which they are needed” (10/30/94, M-6). Thus, the Los Angeles Times characterization of immigration in its editorials can be described as follows:

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**Narrative 2.** The Los Angeles Times political position on immigrants

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Immigration is a permanent part of the California social setting and provides a steady, net economic benefit to the state. California has always absorbed immigrants without disrupting established power relations, including Anglo cultural dominance. Recent immigrant population increases during an economic recession have led to vocal nativist anger, yet the increases have not disrupted dominant power relations. Proposition 187 is an extreme proposal to eliminate this valuable labor pool. It will create economic disequilibrium across all economic sectors. It is more costly than doing nothing. The federal government has become aware of nativist anger. This perception will effectively lead to federal responses to reduce the flow of immigrants at minimal cost to the state. California will then stand to gain even more as the labor pool is controlled to serve its economic interests.
As the narrative summarizes, the editorial emphasis on fiscal arguments obscures the humanity of undocumented workers, much in the same way that the Dangerous Waters metaphor does. There was almost no discussion in the Los Angeles Times editorials of the human costs borne by the immigrants, but only those borne by citizens and the state. Human rights and dignity were never broached. In the six months of editorials under consideration, economic exploitation of immigrants was only mentioned twice. Frequently cited were the financial benefits that immigrant labor brings to agribusiness and garment manufacturing. The Los Angeles Times editorials fail to mention that these are associated with immigrant abuse. The Los Angeles Times editorial writers made a concerted effort to educate their readers about the excesses of Proposition 187, but did not attempt to explain the economic engines driving international migration. Its rejection of Proposition 187 was most indignant when it came to the possible monetary losses to the state—not the daily human costs sustained by the immigrants, or the ethical obligation of a citizenry that profits from their energies. The so-called solution proposed by the Los Angeles Times was to regulate immigration flow to better exploit the pool of "low wage, high productivity labor pool."

Further evidence that the Los Angeles Times news report metaphors and the editorial argument structure are not in conflict, but share a view of dehumanized immigration, is found in the absence of contestation between the newspaper's genres. While Halliday (1978) notes the existence of "anti-languages" (oppositional discourses that evolve outside of the dominant discourse in order to controvert its practice), Fairclough (1989, 91) proposes that even within the dominant discourse there are "contained" anti-languages. In the case of the Los Angeles Times, if ideological support for Proposition 187 existed within the newspaper, one might find a contained anti-language, that is to say, evidence in the news reports that the newswriters disavow the Los Angeles Times editorial position. For example, a decidedly more anti-immigrant expression might be manifest in news reports, in defiance of the dominant editorial discourse. Nothing of the sort was detected, however.

In sum, by comparing the metaphor representation of the discourse of immigration in the Los Angeles Times news reports, and the editorial argumentation in the Los Angeles Times during a political campaign that targeted undocumented immigration, we find that the Los Angeles Times anti-Proposition
187 editorial stance is compatible with the dominant DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor. Both the editorial writers and newswriters, by means of editorial argument structures and prose metaphors, emphasize controlling the volume of immigration. The editorial emphasis is on immigrants and immigration as a commodity. Consequently, however anti-187 the editorials are, they are also anti-immigrant. They argue for conventional solutions to a perceived problem, rather than attempting to reconceptualize immigration. To address the so-called immigration problem, they call for better regulation of California’s renewable resource. With this fiscal point of view, the Los Angeles Times readily passes over the human costs, the ethical responsibility that California’s public should assume as the principle economic beneficiaries of the low-wage labor of immigrant workers, and the international sources of and reasons for immigration.

**Conclusion**

The present study has engaged the actual texts of the public discourse on immigration, as sampled from the Los Angeles Times. Two analyses were chosen to reveal the material elements of the political discourse that conceptually framed the concept of immigration for California voters in 1994. First, the metaphors used to describe immigration in Los Angeles Times texts were analyzed with a method based on a cognitive theory that takes metaphor to be a central means by which humans conceptualize worldviews and values. The dominant metaphor used by all parties in the debate was a distinctly anti-immigrant metaphor that tends to evoke fear and concern among the electorate, DANGEROUS WATERS. No sustained alternative metaphoric representation of immigration was found in the news texts of the Los Angeles Times.

In the second analysis, the argumentation structure of the Los Angeles Times editorials were analyzed to reveal an ideology that commodifies immigrants and discredits the referendum because of its fiscal, not human costs. In both these language analyses, the ideological character of public discourse and of the Los Angeles Times editorials were appraised and found compatible.

The public discourse of 1994 in California, as revealed in the metropolitan newspaper of the largest city in California and the largest Latino city in the United States, dehumanized
immigrants. The *Los Angeles Times* ideology conceptualized immigrants in metaphoric and argumentational terms that made it acceptable, commonplace, and natural to overlook the humanity of nearly two million people when speaking about immigration to California.

**Recommendations**

Given the constitutive power of metaphor, certain observations can be noted. For one, the predominant metaphor, DANGEROUS WATERS, did not make reference to the economics of immigration, as did others such as IMMIGRANT AS BURDEN or IMMIGRANT AS CRIMINAL. The theme of this predominant metaphor, and indeed the crux of the referendum, was not fiscal, but cultural. The debate on immigrant costs and benefits, on the so-called “welfare lure” (11/19/94, A-1), or on the “international magnet effect of California’s taxpayer-financed health programs” (9/1/93, A-1) was less important, as measured by the numbers and types of metaphors it generated. For the electorate, fear of loss of Anglo-American hegemony was the ultimate concern in Proposition 187. Citizens Together organizer Glenn Spencer expressed this agitation in Example 16 when he said, “I don’t want my grandchildren to live in chaos. Isn’t that enough?” When the anxiety is more palpable, as in Example 27, then the metaphors tend to become militaristic:

27. “We’ve lost our country without ever firing a shot,” a man said. “And they’ve done it using our money.” (8/30/93, A-1)

Social sentiment, worldview, and the underlying deep values of the public may be sampled in the immigration metaphors of public discourse. Metaphor analysis provides an explanation for the behavior of the electorate at large and the supporters of Proposition 187, in particular throughout the political season. They were found by Mehan (1997) to be dismissive of the “rational discourse” of authorities on the economics of immigration. Instead they were interested in personal anecdote about the alien “marauder” (9/6/93, A-1) or “fortune-seekers” (6/21/93, A-3). Economics, it seems, was besides the point.

The metaphor analysis undertaken in this article may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of political strategies, both
for social scientists and social advocates. For example, from our point of view, the pragmatic political strategy taken up by mainstream opponents to Proposition 187 was self-defeating. They admitted that undocumented immigration was a "serious problem" (9/26/94, A-16), while avowing its economic benefits (11/24/93, A-1). In addition to being contradictory, this strategy conceded the anti-immigrant values encapsulated in the DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor, rather than offering an alternative metaphoric vision of immigration to the United States.

These comments are not a rebuke of advocates of immigrants or progressive ethnic politics. The aim of this post hoc analysis is to focus attention on the force and pervasiveness of the IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor. Its potency in constructing a worldview is vast, in so far as the premises of its grounding epistemology, Experiential Realism, are valid (Lakoff 1987).

Additionally, the preponderance of DANGEROUS WATERS metaphors demonstrates the unique access and control of the media in diffusing a steady stream of stories and imagery, which in this case reinforced a single rendering of immigration, rather than multiple renderings. The media have unique access to the public and control over the form of the message that is disseminated (van Dijk 1993). Thus, responsibility lies with the media to take into full account the role metaphor plays in making the social world comprehensible. The unrealized responsibility of journalism, then, is to provide the full range of images that their readership needs to reflect broadly the social and political world. For the responsible press writer, recognition of the constitutive power of prose metaphor might affect daily copy. Alternative metaphors would give indispensable balance to news stories, which the readership evaluates in terms of metaphoric understanding, and not solely by way of rational reflection on facts and figures.

The authors admit to a sense of frustration with California's understanding of immigration, as expressed in its public discourse. Metaphor analysis, in our view, unearthed the depth and ubiquity of the societal values of the referendum voters. The DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor signals continuing misgivings about Latinos and our apparently still foreign culture. Still, we can point to the historical contingency of a society's worldview, particularly its political aspects. The metaphors that structure society are malleable. Woolard (1989) has demonstrated the efficiency of insurgent metaphor in reconstructing
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an electorate's view of a political issue. For progressive politics, which almost by definition are a minority enterprise, more creative and concerted use of insurgent metaphors is critical to fashion a coherent and compelling political agenda that is compatible with notions of social justice and the best, deeply held American values of fair play.

Notes

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1. Linguistics has both constructivist and positivist streams of research. Constructivism encompasses both Critical Discourse Analysis and cognitive metaphor theory. Constructivism assumes that cognition is a mental construction. Its tenets contrast with those of the positivist paradigm. Within the positivist point of view, the social world is made up of things that are independent of our thinking and have constitutions unaffected by human interaction. Consequently, these things fall into evidently natural groupings. When we turn our attention to them, the so-called natural categories of these social objects may be discovered, and we can make statements that mirror our discoveries. One linguistic goal within the positivist paradigm is to provide the means to accurately transmit these statements about the ostensibly immanent order of the world. These are stated in terms of logically consistent propositions that correspond to the real social world. Emphasis in positivist theories is placed on the expression of so-called facts. Ways of expression that are non-factual or figurative are less
important. In strong forms of positivist linguistics, literal sentences are normal and unmarked. Non-literal expressions such as metaphor can only be understood by means of literal ones. Thus, in order to understand the expression *Truth is the daughter of Time*, the positivist requires a corresponding literal expression, such as *Truthful statements are consistent with real world facts and logical inference*. Since in this positivist view the interpretation of metaphor is dependent on a corresponding literal expression, metaphor consequently is an incidental aspect of language. On the other hand, to various degrees, constructivists have imputed a larger role in humankind's way of making sense of the world through metaphor and other associated language behavior, as is the case in the present research.

2. Two sets of labeling conventions are used. In the metaphor analysis, following the conventions of cognitive metaphor research, italics indicate that reference is being made to a particular word, such as *garden*. Metaphors are also italicized. The specific word on which the token of the metaphor turns, as in *blossom*, is pointed out with boldface in the enumerated examples. The use of capitals, as in *PLANT*, indicates the semantic domain.

3. Lakoff (1993) distinguishes between the labels of metaphoric mappings and the metaphoric mappings themselves. The labels, such as *love as madness*, are mnemonic "names for a set of mappings" of conceptual correspondences between a source and a target domain (1993, 207). In this article, such mappings will be presented. The mappings are an effort to characterize the ontological correspondences between the entities of the source domain that are mapped onto the target domain. By convention and for convenience the names of mappings are also called the metaphor.


5. As noted above, the premises of this research paradigm are constructivist, not positivist. From the point of view of constructivist linguistics, the measures of theoretical success are: conceptual coherence across as many semantic domains as possible; and a comprehensive accounting of the linguistic expressions in the text. As an anonymous *Aztlan* reader pointed out, a positivist criticism of constructivist arguments is that they do not "prove" that metaphoric reasoning leads to cultural constructs. Skeptics of the constructivist enterprise will hold the converse; namely, that for the case of *love is madness*, our cultural construct of love leads us to make statements such as *When Thelma is around I can't control myself*. Cognitivists counter that the meaning, use, and source of this and a thousand conceptually related statements about *love* cannot be explained within the positivist framework, and are falsely described in non-cognitive accounts as merely accidental turns of phrase. Within constructivist cognitive linguistic theory, each such example is understandable.
precisely because it is linked by networks of inferences and entailments that are metaphoric at base. Furthermore, cognitivist theory specifically acknowledges cultural domains of metaphor, such as love. Other domains, such as up-down orientational metaphors are argued to be universally "embodied" for humans, since as infants, regardless of our particular cultural setting, each of us must come to terms with the fact that we are creatures subject to gravitational forces. The paradigmatic conflict between positivists and constructivists will not be resolved in this article.

6. Metaphors and other quotes from the Los Angeles Times are identified by a month, day, year, and article page number; for example (10/28/94, A-3).

7. The term deixis refers to the use of words such as that, this, them, those, here and there, among others, that index or point out things in the world. Deixis creates ad hoc classifications of this versus that. When people are involved, deixis is the principle means to create the Other. For a discussion of deixis in the Proposition 187 debate, see Mehan (1997), and Johnson (1994) on the construction of Chicano/Mexicano/Anglo identity along the Mexico-U.S. border.

8. There is a view that metaphor above all is a rhetorical device that writers chose to enhance their compositions. This is true in part. However, to assume that style is the only purpose of metaphor is to ignore the extent to which metaphor is woven into language, natural language texts, and discourse. Indeed, one of the most grammaticalized components of linguistic structure, prepositions, are metaphorically based. Chilton extends this criticism against the purely rhetorical view of metaphor in political discourse by reminding us "that metaphors are passed back and forth between participants in dialogues and conversations, giving communicative cohesion, and providing a means for both consensus and conflict" (1996, 37).

9. The Los Angeles Times is now commercially archived on compact discs (CD-News). The archived articles are purchased fully indexed. This permits the retrieval of every article published for a given period that was indexed under a heading, such as illegal alien or immigration. Thus the data-gathering is systematic, not ad hoc, since the texts to be studied were selected on the basis of an independently derived index. The computer files of each article were then read by different people and coded for metaphorical information, thus providing intersubjective assessment of the metaphor tokens; that is, a newstext instance of a metaphor. Each token was inputted into a computerized database with seventeen pieces of journalistic, metaphorical and contextual information. When a source and target domain was first assigned to individual tokens, it should be noted that the names given to the semantic domains were in no way restricted or in any conscious way predetermined. The only mandate was to try to specify the source and target domains. Thus there was
a great deal of variation in the initial inputting. The next step was to edit the database. Alphabetic sorting of the database on the source domain placed all tokens with similar source domains together. The wording used to characterize similar source domains was then regularized so that, with the next alphabetic sorting, similar tokens would group together. This cycle of sorting and editing was repeated until all the tokens were arranged systematically. Through this procedure the research team became familiar with the database, and the major typological dimensions of the source conceptual domains became clear. This procedure was remarkably enlightening. The same cyclic procedure was followed for the target domain, in order to organize and understand the conceptual dimensions of the database. Through these sort and edit cycles, the source and domain labels were clarified, one token at a time in full context. No particular conclusion was forced, although clear patterning emerged.

10. Another criticism of the cognitivist account of metaphor is that mappings are considered to be constitutive. More accurately, the ontological mappings are constitutive, while the particular wordings of each individual token in the text is an instantiation of the mapping. The mappings of the immigrant and immigration are both linked to more encompassing domains such as NATION AS HOUSE and NATION AS BODY. See Chilton (1996) for a sophisticated analysis of the metaphors articulating Cold War international relations which also invoke NATION AS HOUSE and BODY metaphors. These abstract mappings must be interlinked in order to make sense of the world. Thus the mappings create hierarchical relations across semantic domains, which is the level of abstraction at which the constitutive claim is made. On the other hand, as presented in Table 1, the classification of dominant, secondary, and occasional metaphors operates at the level of text and is based on quantity as well as coherence of metaphor tokens.

11. Example 1 contains another metaphor, namely whipping boy, because this particular token has IMMIGRANT as its target domain, and not IMMIGRATION, which is the semantic domain discussed in this article. This metaphor was recorded in the full database. There are also metaphors that pertain to the Proposition 187 issue, but that involve neither immigrant or immigration target domains. These will not be discussed in this article, but along with other associated metaphors, and other California referenda, are being investigated in a book-length project.

12. The Morse code signal call for help was originally chosen because of the ease of signaling the sequence · · · − − · · · and not because of any reference to meaning.

13. Another criticism of the cognitive metaphor approach noted by an anonymous Aztlan reader is that the full range of entailments and implications noted in Narrative 1 are not made in each article or
by each news writer, thus the narrative is unsubstantiated. Space
does not permit listing the 115 DANGEROUS WATERS instantiations lo-
cated in 117 Los Angeles Times articles, but they do substantiate the
narrative. For the metaphor analysis to be valid, it is not necessary
that each individual writer articulate the full narrative. Lakoff has
noted that the full range of entailments of a metaphor are tacit with
the first linkage of separate semantic domains, and available to be
employed by others. If any associated entailments are metaphori-
cally invoked, understanding among interlocutors is made by auto-
matic reference to the other stated associations. It is from these
networks of associations that each entailment draws its comprehensi-
bility. Brimelow also uses the DANGEROUS WATERS metaphor. In fact his
book-length discussion of immigration provides a good example of
the use of the entire DANGEROUS WATERS narrative. Moreover, a good
writer can evoke a whole narrative in a few sentences (as exemplified
in the long Los Angeles Times excerpt), which is a sketch of lifeboat
ethics. Finally, the use of metaphor to establish a narrative (called
an allegory in medieval scholarship) is not limited to political dis-
course. Scientific spheres of thought often evoke metaphors, such
as comparing the solar system to an atom.

14. Subervi-Velez’s (1994) comprehensive review of media cov-
erage of Latinos, in mass media institutional terms, indicates seri-
ous shortcomings continue to disfavor Latinos. News report studies
that find an anti-Latino bias include Fishman and Casiano (1969),
Sánchez (1973), Chavira (1977), Gutiérrez (1977), Tan (1978),
Fernández and Pedrazo (1982), Wilson and Gutiérrez (1985),
Greenberg and Brand (1994), and Tobenkin (1996). Studies that do
not find bias include Greenberg et al. (1983) and VanSlyke Turk et
al. (1989).

15. There is no question that advocates for immigrants can do
better, since Carnegie’s estimation of these people is monstrous. In
the essay (1885), he continues by comparing their dollar value to the
cost of slaves: “The value to the country of the annual foreign influx,
however, is very great indeed. ... During the ten years between 1870
and 1880 the number of immigrants averaged two hundred and eight
thousand per annum. ...These adults were surely worth $1,500
each—for in former days an efficient slave sold for this sum... The
cash value of immigrants upon this basis for the year 1882 exceeded
$1,125,000,000.”

16. No newspaper stylebook mentions metaphor. See, for ex-
ample, United Press International Stylebook, 3rd edition, National
Textbook Co.; Associated Press International Stylebook, 3rd edition,
Addison-Wesley; and Walter Fox, Writing the News: Guide for Print
References


Immigration Metaphors in Public Discourse


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