



# Images of the Modern Immigrant: Persuasive Metaphors Presented in U.S. Newspapers



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# Rationale



- 37.9 million immigrants in the U.S. (2007)
- Arizona Immigration Law SB 1070
  - Passed April 23, 2010
  - Ultimate goal is to fight illegal immigration in the state, which has a large influx of illegal immigrants coming in from its border with Mexico
  - Allows police officers to question/check identification of anyone they believe to be an illegal
    - ✦ Forces all immigrants to carry paperwork in case they are stopped

# Research Questions



1. What are the metaphors present in U.S. American Newspapers and how do they influence U.S. American perceptions of immigrants?
1. How have metaphors in current newspaper rhetoric, related to SB 1070, affected the perceptions of Latino immigrants?

# Method



- **Metaphoric Criticism**

- Looks for explicit and implicit metaphors to reveal rhetorical trends
- Examines text for the tenor (the subject) and the vehicle (the means of portraying the subject)
- Groups the metaphors according to common themes

# Artifacts



	<b>The New York Times (2010)</b>	<b>The Washington Post (2010)</b>
1	“Immigrants in Work Force” (April 16)	“A Hateful Law” (April 24)
2	“Arizona’s Effort to Bolster Local Immigration” (April 22)	“Battles Loom” (April 25)
3	“Arizona’s New Immigration Law” (April 26)	“Both Sides” (April 27)
4	“For Migrants, New Law Is Just Another Hurdle” (April 29)	“Immigration’s Moral Crossroads” (April 28)
5	“Why Arizona Drew a Line” (April 29)	“Arizona Measure Puts Police in Tight Spot” (April 30)
6	“Stopping Arizona” (April 30)	



## Data Analysis

### Negative Metaphors

- Immigrant as alien
  - Associated with racial profiling statements
  - Hints at the dehumanization of the immigrant
    - ✦ They are unlike the dominant culture and will never be able to assimilate



## Data Analysis

### Negative Metaphors

- Immigrant as criminal
  - Used the words “crime” and “criminal” 13 times
  - Alluded to the idea that the criminals are primarily Latino
  - Labeled the immigrant as a primary cause of societal harm





## Data Analysis

### Positive Metaphors

- Immigrant as river
  - Shift towards a neutral metaphor
  - Repeatedly used statements like “flowed in”
    - ✦ Suggests that immigrants will constantly be flowing, or will continue coming into the United States
  - Implies the need to “dam” or control a river
    - ✦ Arizona SB 1070 is a document created to prevent the chaos that could ensue from an influx or constant flow of immigrants



## Data Analysis

### Positive Metaphors

- Immigrant as victim
  - Articles include personal interviews and stories of immigrants
    - ✦ Who have been raped, mistreated, and abused during their border crossings
  - Articles discuss racial profiling
    - ✦ Mention “race” and “racial” 21 times
    - ✦ Ignites the idea that the law will encourage racial profiling of Latinos
    - ✦ Suggests that a particular type of individual looks like an immigrant

# Conclusions and Implications



- Newspapers overall
  - *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* present the same 4 metaphors of the immigrant
    - ✦ Demonstrates their commitment to present both sides of a current issue as objectively as possible

# Conclusions and Implications



- Overall shift in rhetoric
  - River metaphor is a more realistic depiction
    - ✦ Demonstrates there is no simple or correct solution to the issue of the immigrant
    - ✦ Forces audiences to realize that the immigrant is here to stay
    - ✦ Emphasizes the need to integrate the immigrant into our economy and culture
  - Victim metaphor creates the emotion of sympathy
    - ✦ Works towards humanizing the immigrant
    - ✦ Can also be a disempowering metaphor
      - It insinuates that the victim, or the immigrant, requires the help of others

# Conclusions and Implications



- **Cultural norms and worldview are changing**
  - Emergence of the river and the victim metaphor allude that U.S. Americans are gradually becoming more accepting of immigrants
  - These changes reflect the inevitability of the immigrant and multiculturalism in the U.S.
  - Overall emergence of two new humanizing metaphors demonstrates a media's attempt to shift society's attitudes towards a more favorable perception of the immigrant

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