

“Taking the Shackles off”: Metaphor and Metonymy of Migrant Children and Border Officials in the U.S.

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Abstract

The present paper utilizes (multimodal) critical discourse studies and cognitive linguistics to analyze the verbal and visual metonymies/metaphors found in online news sources that report on unaccompanied youths from Central America and Border Patrol/immigration officials in the U.S. Findings reveal verbal and visual metonymies that dehumanize and criminalize child migrants, while Border Patrol/immigration enforcement discourse creates WAR/WILD WEST metaphors that justify the militarization of the border. The significance of the study lies in showing how underlying conceptualizations of migrants by immigration and border control agencies help us understand the social imaginary which allows the government to garner public support for unjust policies and treatment of migrants. In addition, by examining the connection of media and law enforcement rhetoric to the Trump administration, it illustrates how right-wing populists gain and maintain power through their appeal to populist ideals and the repetition of core discourses.

Die Studie untersucht mithilfe diskurs- und kognitionslinguistischer Methoden multimodale (sprachliche und fotografische) Metaphern/Metonymien im Mediendiskurs über unbegleitete minderjährige Migranten und die Arbeit der US-Einwanderungsbehörden. Wir zeigen, dass die Einwanderer durch die Kombination von Kriegs- und Wildwest-Rhetorik zu Tieren und Kriminellen degradiert werden und die Arbeit der Grenzkontroll- und Einwanderungsbehörden als ‚Einfangen‘, ‚Einsammeln‘ und ‚Kontrollieren‘ einer ‚Herde‘ im Stil von Cowboys konstruiert wird. Die Aufnahme und weitere Steigerung dieser Metaphorik in der Selbstdarstellung der Behörden und ihrer Unterstützung durch die Trump-Regierung verdeutlichen das Aufnahme- und Identifikationspotential populistischer Rhetorik für den Aufbau einer ‚sozialen Imagination‘, in der die inhumane Behandlung von Migrantenkindern gerechtfertigt erscheint.

1. Introduction

Although an estimated 13% of the world’s migrating population are children (UNICEF 2016), there is a growing need for research that focuses on this segment of the population, especially those children that are unaccompanied or separated from their families as they make their journey. Since 2014, the United States has documented a significant increase in unaccompanied and/or separated youths¹

¹ The United States government defines “unaccompanied alien child” as “an individual under the age of eighteen who has no lawful immigration status in the United States and who has no

traveling from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Research about these children has found that their rights are routinely violated by Customs and Border Patrol agents in the process of apprehension and detention (Terrio 2015: 43). In a report published in 2008 by the NGO “No More Deaths”, hundreds of accounts of abuse by Border Patrol agents were documented, revealing “alarmingly consistent” patterns of mistreatment (ibid.). In 2011, four different NGOs found that the “institutional culture of the Border Patrol” was reinforced by an “absence of effective accountability measures” and Border Patrol agents “regularly overstepped their authority by conducting enforcement activities outside border regions, making racially motivated arrests, employing coercive interrogation tactics, and imprisoning migrants under inhumane conditions” (ibid.). In spring 2014, more reports were also published documenting body cavity searches, the shackling of children, denial of food and medical services as well as verbal, physical, and sexual abuse (Terrio 2015: 45).

Despite these well-documented accounts of abuse by border/immigration officials against unaccompanied youth in the United States, Donald Trump was elected as U.S. President with a central theme of his campaign being tough immigration policies and a rhetoric that dehumanizes these children. Once elected, he has continued to push border security and increased militarization of the border as a top priority. In June 2018, his anti-immigration policies sparked national and international outrage when news was released about the US Immigration and Custom’s Enforcement (ICE)’s policy of separating migrant children from their parents and holding some of them in Customs and Border detention centers, some of them in metal cages (*The New York Times*, 16 June 2018; *The New York Times*, 17–23 June 2018).

One might wonder how it is possible for so much of the American public to support policies and practices that ignore human rights violations and that so blatantly treat migrants so inhumanely (cf. Terrio 2015). The concept of the ‘social imaginary’ provides an interesting standpoint from which to view this conundrum. According to Rizvi/Lingard

parent of legal guardian to provide care and custody” (Heidbrink 2014: 34). For the purposes of this paper, we use “children” and “youth” interchangeably, and we use “unaccompanied alien child/ren” only when referring to direct quotes from U.S. government sources.

[a] social imaginary is a way of thinking shared in a society by ordinary people. The common understandings that make everyday practices possible, give them sense and legitimacy. It is largely implicit, embedded in ideas and practices, carrying within it deeper normative notions and images, constitutive of society (2010: 34).

Social imaginaries are upheld by large groups of people and often presented to the public in stories and anecdotes which shape how people think about the role of government (Hursh 2016: 28) and the “nature and scope of political authority” (Rizvi/Lingard 2010: 13).

While recent scholarship has featured the role of metaphor/metonymy in the representation of migrant populations around the world in political discourse (e.g., Charteris-Black 2005; Musolff 2016), and media discourse in general (e.g., Santa Ana 2002, 2016), few studies have focused on the discourse of immigration and border officials. We aim to fill this gap by examining metonymies/metaphors used to represent visually and verbally unaccompanied or separated youth in media and government discourse as well as in discourse about the Border Patrol/immigration/law enforcement officials themselves. By analyzing the underlying conceptualizations these agencies (which have been empowered by the support of the Trump administration) have about migrants, and about their own institutions and self-identities, we hope to understand better the social imaginary they put forth which allows them to garner public support for unjust policies and treatment of migrants.

2. Background

2.1 Unaccompanied Youths in the United States

Unaccompanied youths in the United States first gained special attention in the media in 2014 when an estimated 77,200 children were apprehended at the U.S. southern border – most of whom were from Central America (cf. Lind 2014). This media focus created a moral panic which “centered on the threat of criminality and disease they posed” (Terrio 2015: 10). Reasons for the sharp increase in unaccompanied youth include:

societal, household, and gang violence and recruitment; abandonment or neglect by caregivers; human trafficking; and the social exclusion of certain recognizable groups within the home countries, such as homosexuals and marginalized religious groups (Chen/Gill 2015: 117).

Additionally, lack of access to jobs and basic services have fueled this social exclusion and given increased power to gangs. Furthermore, “resource-deprived and overburdened” police forces and judicial systems have failed to protect children and families, often due to their involvement with organized crime groups (Stinchcomb/Hershberg 2014: 2). Despite the fact that the United States’ involvement in Central America in the 1980s planted “the seeds for the instability and turmoil” that started these problems (Corchado 2014), they have not taken responsibility for creating the conditions for this crisis.

Unfortunately, as the Trump administration has moved into power, many of the programs put in place by the Obama administration to protect unaccompanied youth (Heidbrink 2014; Terrio 2015) have been discontinued or are in danger of being discontinued and there has been a reduction in the number of refugees admitted to the United States, not to mention “zero tolerance” policies that separate children from parents when they are apprehended (Nelson 2018). For those children already in the United States, dire conditions (including a continual state of limbo while waiting for hearings, fears that go along with poverty, being undocumented, and trauma from the journey) have been exacerbated by the Trump administration’s crackdown on immigration.

2.2 Border Officials and the Discourse of Border Control

As stated earlier, Donald Trump has made border security a key priority in his administration, most notably with the “build a wall” slogan which was regularly chanted at rallies of his supporters. As part of this border security priority, in his January 2017 Executive Order, Trump called for 5,000 more Border Patrol officers, in addition to the 10,000-officer increase ordered by George Bush following 9/11. Trump’s requested increase disregards problems that the rapid hiring policy following 9/11 caused, e.g., the employment of unqualified or unfit agents who committed multiple crimes (Chávez 2012: 61). Furthermore, “hampered by poor morale, hiring problems and high attrition, as well as rampant corruption”,

the Border Patrol has not met the goal of 20,000 officers since 2013, and even after the executive order (at the time of this writing), the number of Border Patrol officers has actually decreased (Tanfani 2017).

To be clear, problems with the Border Patrol and immigration and law enforcement regarding the border did not start with Trump, and he cannot be held responsible for the militarization of the border and its consequences. In fact, militarization of the US-Mexico border has been in practice since the Reagan administration (cf. Chávez 2012: 49). Since then there have been record levels of human and financial capital invested by the state in order to militarize the US - Mexico border (Heidbrink 2014). "Militarization describes the way that people accept the beliefs of militarism and militarization in a way that upholds state policy... and the use of military rhetoric and ideology, as well as tactics, strategy, technology, equipment, and forces" (Chávez 2012: 49-50). Because the war on drugs and national security concerns help justify an increase in military units, the Border Patrol has become more and more like the military, particularly in terms of its equipment, structure, and tactics (Falcón 2006). Additionally, the Border Patrol's work is framed "as security and anti-terrorism, as well as a concern for greater communication and environmental responsibility", which hides human rights issues and the material impacts of the border on people (Chávez 2012: 49, 56, 61). Coupled with media discourse that talks mostly of violence and danger on the border, imagery of the border often portrays it as lifeless and desolate, which also reinforces calls for militarizing it (cf. Dorsey/Diaz-Barriga 2010). Moreover, the discourse of national security has now become intertwined with the War on Terror so that "militarization of regions of the US-Mexico border seems natural and warranted in order to protect citizens from these supposed threats" (Chávez 2012: 49). Referring to undocumented migrants as 'terrorists' has been found to be one of the most effective strategies for conveying that they are a danger (cf. Gemignani/Hernandez-Albujar 2015: 2760).

Along these lines, rhetoric that highlights the threat of gangs has also been used to justify "increased levels of surveillance and intervention" along the southern border and "within the interior of the country" (Heidbrink 2014: 47) - this despite the fact that many unaccompanied youths have been victims of gang violence and hence flee their countries to escape it. Nevertheless, "immigration is

constructed as a direct physical menace, it becomes logical to eliminate it through the use of the strongest means and most effective practices available, such as paramilitary gears, structures, and jargons” (Gemignani/Hernandez-Albujar (2015: 2760). Consequently, once we link terrorism (and or gangs) to undocumented immigrants, “we can justify military-technologies to regain control of the border” (Chávez 2012: 58).

One effect of increased militarization has been a stark increase in migrant deaths as a result of having to traverse “new, longer routes through less populated, more inhospitable country” to get around “heavily-patrolled urban corridors along the border” (Spener 2011: 121). When human rights organizations blamed these increased deaths on new enforcement tactics, authorities attempted to protect themselves from these accusations “by pointing to ‘alien smugglers’ as those responsible” (ibid.). Hence, ‘coyotaje’ (the border-crossing strategy which involves hiring traffickers) and ‘coyotes’, who provide those services, are blamed for deaths and violence during migration.

Although there has been “massive investment in sophisticated surveillance technology, fencing, military aircraft, and additional Border Patrol agents to secure the border” most migrants apprehended and detained have been people (including many children) crossing the border in the hope of finding work, often low-wage work such as day laborers, nannies, or maids (Terrio 2015: 16). However,

[d]iscourses that criminalize migrants and conflate migration with terrorism create the illusion that this moment in history is one of exceptionalism and thus warranting state intervention at a global level. Children are now caught in the crosshairs of the state’s wars on drugs, gangs, and terror (Heidbrink 2014: 157).

The militarization of Border Control answers the calls from populist politicians and groups who construct ‘illegal immigrants’ as dangerous ‘Others’ and propose a ‘solution’ to that danger which develops their own position of power (Gemignani/Hernandez-Albuja 2015).

2.3 Metaphor/Metonymy in Discourses about Unaccompanied Youth and Border Patrol/Law Enforcement

Metaphor is “understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another” (Lakoff/Johnson 1980: 5), and a way of conceptualizing a source (e.g., POLITICS) in terms of a target (e.g., SPORTS). Metonymy on the other hand, is the process of using one thing to refer to another, usually a more complex thing (e.g., 9/11 to stand for the events of that day) (Littlemore 2015: 1). Put simply, metaphor can be represented with an A IS (LIKE) B relationship, whereas metonymy is viewed in terms of an A IS RELATED TO B relationship. Although these definitions make them appear very distinct, the boundaries between the two are often blurry, as are the criteria used to distinguish between them. In fact, recent research has shown that the interaction between the two, also known as ‘metaphtonomy’ (cf. Goossens 2003) is found more often than when the two are separate (Pérez-Sobrinó 2016: 78), and that metonymy often motivates (or provides access to) conceptual metaphors (Barcelona et al. 2018); in addition, it has been claimed that no examples can be found of the reverse, i.e., metaphors that motivate or provide access to metonymies (Hernández-Gomariz 2018: 91).

In the case of this study, we focus on multimodal metonymy and metaphor that occur not only in text, but also in image and video. In addition, we are not as interested in describing the technical processes that create metaphor/metonymy or how they interact as we are in determining how they are used to hide ideologies that underlie the texts, and to uncover point of views they conceal (Charteris-Black 2014: 203).

Research focusing on the representation of unaccompanied youths in media discourse has found that metaphors of water (in which the movement of migrants is equated with the movement of dangerous water) are the most commonly used, especially to represent large increases such as the Central American migrants in the U.S. in 2014 (cf. Catalano 2017; Sundberg/Kaserman 2007). In addition, Antony/Thomas (2016) found that children were portrayed as an economic burden, disease carriers, offspring of irresponsible parents and channels for criminal infiltration. These same authors also uncovered that discourses of global human compassion were used to justify harsher policies as

protecting such children. Similarly, Terrio found detention of migrant children was “justified as a humanitarian response to exceptional conditions of instability and displacement” (2015: 11). Heidbrink/Statz (2017: 546) show how migrant youths are framed as “dependents left behind” by abusive and neglectful parents. They argue that “the pervasive pathologization of migrant youths’ parents diminishes and contorts valued relationships over time, and demands broader efforts to historicize and to contextualize youth mobility” (ibid.). The notion of the “Latino threat” has also been common in U.S. discourse about unaccompanied youth from Central America and is “embodied in the images of the drug runner, the human smuggler, and the gang banger” (Terrio 2015: 9). According to Terrio (2015: 9), stereotypes that underlie these images have been reinforced by grassroots rallies, citizen militias, talk radio, movies and television shows which “glorify the enforcement effort of beleaguered agents struggling to hold back the ‘flood of illegal aliens’ who wreak havoc on communities”. When migrant youths are discursively constructed as criminals, they can no longer claim rights, and thus the violation of their rights by Border Patrol, ICE, and other law enforcement is justified (Sundberg/Kaserman 2007: 740).

Santa Ana has examined media discourse in which Border Patrol agents are the protagonists in narratives drawn from the American western genre (2016: 97). In these narratives, the Border Patrol agent “represents the last line of defense against the incursion of the villain of the western hero and his society”, and defends an “allegorical nation that plays proxy for White American hegemony” (Santa Ana 2016: 104). News audiences that consume this coverage buy into the image of the Border Patrol officer as the hero who is carrying out “his sworn duty and code of honor in the face of inevitable defeat” (ibid.).

Law enforcement and immigration law discourse lumps the migrant child into the pervasive category of ‘illegal alien’, who must be apprehended, controlled, and removed from the state. This taps into the anxiety expressed in metaphors/metonymies about “flood” of “illegal aliens” “requiring repression and containment” (Heidbrink 2014: 41). Hence in official policy and government discourse of unaccompanied youth, they are seen as a “palpable threat to the body politic” (Heidbrink 2014: 48). Migrant children are depicted as victims, devoid of agency, as objects (e.g., property of the parents) and as outlaws

(Heidbrink 2014: 50, 74). Animal metaphors are also prevalent in discourse about unaccompanied youth (not unlike those found in the work of Santa Ana 2002). In these scenarios, children are “hunted” and “rounded up” (Catalano 2017) in what Border Patrol agents refer to as “the game” (Terrio 2015: 134). Martin’s research echoes these findings, positing that immigration law figures its subjects as objects and criminals whose mobility defines their legal status (2011: 491).

3. Method

3.1 Data collection

Two types of data were collected for the purposes of this study. The first type were online news sources while the second type were official documents (e.g., Trump’s executive order on immigration) and websites (e.g., Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Customs and Border Protection) including text or video in which unaccompanied children and policy regarding them were discussed, or in which immigration officials represented themselves and their organizations. Data was searched on www.google.com or www.youtube.com using the search terms ‘unaccompanied migrant children’/‘unaccompanied children’/‘unaccompanied minors’, ‘Border Patrol’, ‘Customs and Immigration Enforcement’, ‘Executive order’ and ‘Trump administration and immigration’. Criteria for selection of articles included the following:

- Articles/official documents or video² must be published between the years 2016-2017.³
- Articles/official documents or video must be between 200 and 2000 words.
- Articles/official documents or video must contain the topic of ‘unaccompanied children/minors’ or migration policies toward them and/or migrants in general.

² One exception was made for a Border Petrol recruitment video that was first published in 2009 and has been but widely viewed since then. The exception was made because this video shows the Border Patrol’s ideology and recruitment strategies *before* the rise of Trump, and therefore allows us to see how Trump aligned himself with the agency’s goals and self-portrayal.

³ The period of 2016-2017 was chosen because it coincides with the election campaign and election of Donald Trump, which is a secondary focus of this study.

After searching, articles were uploaded into MAXQDA (1989–2017) with a total corpus of 19,478 words (including video transcripts), 23 images, and two videos. The data was then coded for metonymies/metaphors that represented unaccompanied minors, Border Patrol and other immigration/law enforcement agencies.

3.2 Data analysis

Once metonymies and metaphors were coded and tabulated by MAXQDA, Tables 1–4 were created to determine common metonymies and dominant metaphors and percentages of metaphors/metonymies per source/type were calculated. Video and images data were analyzed separately. To determine metonymies and metaphors from photographs, context and captions were consulted, and the results were added to the tables for the written texts. The same was done for the two videos that were part of the data.

The first video was found on the Customs and Border Protection official website, while the second video was a Border Patrol recruitment video from www.youtube.com. The audio was transcribed, and a written transcript of each video was uploaded to MAXQDA and included with other verbal data. In addition, a storyboard was created in which screenshots were taken of each video and the script that went along with the camera shot (and notes about accompanying music) was documented in sequential order. Metonymies and metaphors from the verbal scripts were analyzed and counted with the other written discourse, but music and screenshots were analyzed in separate tables for metonymies and metaphors of unaccompanied youth and Border Patrol/law enforcement and later added to the tables from the verbal texts. After the tables were created, adjustments to metonymy/metaphor categories were made after checking with common terminology in relevant literature (e.g., Littlemore 2015; Charteris-Black 2005; Musolff 2016). In the next section, Tables 1–4 are displayed, and examples of important metonymies/metaphors are discussed and analyzed.

4. Findings



4.1 Metonymies and Metaphors of Unaccompanied Youths

Findings were divided into two sections depending on target domain. Below, Tables 1 and 2 display the most common metonymies and metaphors regarding unaccompanied youths (those constituting less than 2% of the corpus are not displayed). Note that many of the more common metonymies motivate metaphors listed in Table 2.

Tables 1 and 2 show that the majority of the metonymies/metaphors are stereotyping and degrading children to being mere criminals, foreigners, water, numbers and not whole people. Below we explore some examples from the texts that demonstrate how these metonymies and metaphors are used in context. The first example is taken from President Trump's Executive Order on immigration, released January 25, 2017.

- (1) Section 1. Purpose. Border security is critically important to the national security of the United States. ***Aliens*** who ***illegally*** enter the United States without inspection or admission present a significant ***threat*** to national security and public safety. Such ***aliens*** have not been identified or inspected by Federal immigration officers to determine their admissibility to the United States. The recent ***surge of illegal immigration*** at the southern border with Mexico has placed a significant strain on Federal resources and overwhelmed agencies charged with border security and immigration enforcement, as well as the local communities ***into which*** many of the ***aliens are placed***⁴ (Text 24).

⁴ Words in bolded italics indicate metonymies/metaphors of interest to the analysis. In addition, lexical items taken from examples are indicated with italics in discussion throughout the article.

<u>Type of metonymy /Example</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
DEFINING PROPERTY FOR PERSON <i>e.g., Central American refugees, unaccompanied minors /kid/minor/s, criminal aliens</i>	105	34%
FOREIGN BEING FOR HUMAN <i>e.g., alien, unaccompanied alien children, apprehended large numbers of aliens, criminal aliens</i>	63	21%
BODY OF WATER FOR ACTION <i>e.g., ... children that year swamped Border Patrol stations</i>	42	14%
NUMBER FOR PERSON <i>e.g., thousands still make it to the U.S.</i>	31	10%
NATIONALITY FOR PERSON <i>e.g., Central Americans, Mexicans, Mexican Nationals</i>	25	8%
TYPE FOR PERSON (second order metonymy) <i>e.g., UAC [abbreviation for: Unaccompanied Alien Children]</i>	16	5%
PART OF PERSON FOR WHOLE PERSON  <i>e.g., [children's bodies without heads]</i>	7	2%
SUB-EVENT FOR WHOLE EVEN  <i>e.g., [clothing donations]</i>	6	2%
Total	306	100%

* Numbers were rounded to the nearest percentage.

** Words in brackets are the authors', and describe what is pictured in the image.

Table 1: Metonymies referring to unaccompanied youth

Source Domain/Example	Totals	Percentage
a) Dominant		
CRIMINALS <i>e.g., told not to arrest illegals, parole, criminal aliens, detainees</i>	103	39%
FOREIGN BEING <i>e.g., criminal aliens, unaccompanied alien child, removable aliens</i>	63	24%
b) Secondary		
DANGEROUS WATER <i>e.g., stem the flow of unaccompanied minors, a flood of people</i>	42	16%
NUMBER <i>e.g., why dump the thousands off forcing thousands to leave their homes</i>	31	12%
c) Occasional		
ANIMALS <i>e.g., corralling them</i>	11	4%
VICTIMS NEEDING PROTECTION <i>e.g., humanitarian crisis</i>	8	3%
Total	262	100%

* Numbers were rounded to the nearest percentage.

Table 2: Metaphors for target domain IMMIGRANTS/UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

In Example (1), a clear narrative emerges in which migrants, including unaccompanied children, are an enemy *threat* to the security of the nation. Just in this one paragraph two tokens of *aliens* were found while *illegal* was mentioned twice. Overall, in this text of 2,337 words, the xenonym *alien* (FOREIGN BEING FOR HUMAN) appears 15 times while *illegal* (which ascribes criminal qualities to the out-group) has 10 tokens and leads to metaphors of spatiality in which immigrants are seen as dissimilated outsiders – FOREIGNERS and CRIMINALS. In addition, in the phrase *local communities into which aliens are placed are*

overwhelmed, the strategy of proximation is revealed. Proximation is a construal operation in which the speaker (in this case Donald Trump) locates himself and his readers inside a “deictic centre” (Hart 2010: 85). The participants view themselves and their values as inside this centre. Those without these values are seen as outside it. In the phrase *into which the aliens are placed*, migrants are conceptualized as an element outside the deictic centre which is moving into *local communities*, and thus threatening their well-being.

In April, 2017, then US Attorney General Jeff Sessions went to Nogales, Arizona, a southern border town that has been at the center of immigration debates to promote the executive order described in example (1). His speech illustrates mythopoesis (a type of legitimization through the telling of stories) (van Leeuwen/Wodak 1999), in which migrants are positioned in the same metonymy as both outsiders and criminals:

- (2) To that end, the President and I want to do our best to arm you, and the prosecutors who partner with you, with more tools in your fight against *criminal aliens* (Text 25).

In this example, the construction *criminal aliens* combines the FOREIGN BEING FOR HUMAN (*alien*) and DEFINING PROPERTY FOR PERSON (*criminal*) metonymies creating a double metaphor of UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS ARE FOREIGN CRIMINALS. In fact, the dominant metaphor for discourse regarding unaccompanied youth was UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS ARE CRIMINALS. This is a classic case in which metonymy motivates metaphor. That is, the metonymic process in which the characteristics of criminals and the language of crime come to stand for the youth themselves (e.g., *illegal*) leads to the metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS ARE CRIMINALS, a type of stereotyping in which the supposed characteristics of a few come to represent an entire group. The metaphor UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS ARE FOREIGN CRIMINALS was accomplished by frequent repetitive uses of *illegal* combined with *alien* or *immigrant*, as well as more subtle uses such as legal terminology used to describe the children in terms of their location and legal status such as *detainees* and *parole*. *Detainee* is a term used to describe people kept in prison, while *parole* is used to describe entry permission in this case, but more widely known as temporary release of a prisoner. Hence, on account of being apprehended in the attempt to

make a better life for themselves by moving to the United States, these children are placed in the CRIME frame.

- (3) The number of *illegal aliens* apprehended in March 2017 was 30 percent lower than February apprehensions and 64 percent lower than the same time last year. This decline also extends to *unaccompanied alien children (UAC)* (Text 6).

In this example, *illegal aliens* are mentioned first, followed by *unaccompanied alien children*, which repeats the FOREIGN BEING FOR HUMAN metaphor although it does contain the humanizing lexical choice of *children*. The proximity of *unaccompanied alien children* to *illegal aliens* allows them to be subtly associated with each other. Labels such as these underscore the need for children to be treated differently from adults “because of their differing competencies and developmental factors” (Chen/Gill 2015: 128). Although UAC is not the same as *illegal alien*, it is still *alien*, binding the entity of foreign immigrant and criminal forever in the minds of readers and viewers. Example (4) illustrates how this term is used along with aggregation that reduces children to numbers and statistics and again, creates fear.

- (4) The majority of *unaccompanied alien children* are cared for through a network of state licensed ORR-funded care providers, most of which are located close to areas where immigration officials apprehend *large numbers of aliens* and *hundreds of thousands of migrants* were fleeing to the U.S. seeking asylum (Text 8).

The following examples use hyperbole, aggregation, and lexical choices associated with water to describe the movement of the children and again, create fear and anxiety in the eyes of the public.

- (5) The State Department program, launched in December 2014 after a *massive influx of children* that year *swamped* Border Patrol stations... (Text 26).
- (6) The Obama administration was slow to respond to the *surge* in migrants from Central America that peaked in 2014 when *tens of thousands* of women and children *overwhelmed* the Border Patrol stations (Text 18).
- (7) The Obama administration has grappled with how to respond to an *influx* of migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras,

which spiked in 2014 with the arrival of *thousands of unaccompanied children streaming over the border* in South Texas (Text 21).

In example (5), the use of *massive* works together with metonymies *influx* and *swamped* which lead to comparisons of children to dangerous water. This exaggeration of events (e.g., hyperbole) contributes to the power of the overall message which produces fear of these children. In examples (6) and (7) water metaphors appear again (e.g., *influx*, *surge*, *streaming*), and numbers (e.g., *tens of thousands*, *thousands*) are used to quantify the children and treat them as statistics.

Besides the over-lexicalization of words that criminalize and dehumanize migrants and numbers used to create fear, this dehumanization and criminalization was also found in image. In example (8), headless, faceless children (PART OF BODY FOR PERSON) appear to be queuing up for something. Most likely the heads are cut off in the photograph because the journalists did not have permission to show their faces. However, what remains in the photo is a dehumanized image of a line of people, which connects to *unregulated flow of unaccompanied minors* featured in the text. We cannot see their faces or hear their voices or perspectives, and hence we are not allowed to empathize with their situation. In addition to this image of children's legs moving forward, the children are referred to as *detainees*, which connects to the UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN ARE CRIMINALS metaphor. Overall, the photo does not help in any way to create empathy for their cause by allowing us to see and engage with the children in any meaningful way.



(Text 18): Young detainees walk in a line in June 2014 at a border protection processing facility in Brownsville, Tex. The Obama administration is expanding a relief program created late that year.⁵

⁵ Words underneath photos or screenshots are captions from the accompanying article, or audio that accompanied the camera shot in the video.




In example (9) below, children are again collectivized as a group and distanced symbolically, through a longshot in which we cannot see their faces. Instead, the viewer sees groups of children sitting close together and looking down (except for one, who appears to look at the guard). The officer in the photo is sporting a gun, which is aimed at the ground, and his body and gun are pointed toward the children and he is looking toward them as if watching intently what they are doing. The photo is interesting from a metonymic point of view as the officer's uniform, gun and wired fencing could be easily placed in the genre of prison scenarios. The overall semiotic potential of the image is that of a prison/guard scenario, making the children disappear "behind the elements that categorize them", such as the cage-like enclosure and the guard with the semi-automatic weapon. In this case, the viewer is led to forget these children's only crime was to come to the United States in order to escape poverty, death and/or dangerous situations. Furthermore, by introducing the topic with words such as *surge* and providing this type of images, the journalist plays on the fear of the viewers/readers representing these children as a threat. Taken together, the metaphors found in media discourse and Border Patrol/immigration authorities' discourse about unaccompanied migrants support Quinsaat's (2014) findings of the DANGEROUS IMMIGRANT frame, which constructs them as a powerful threat worth fearing.



(Text 16): U.S. Customs and Border Patrol's numbers indicate a new *surge* of Central American minors, according to a Pew Research Center analysis.

4.2 Metonymies/Metaphors of Border Patrol/Law enforcement

Tables 3 and 4 tabulate important metonymies/metaphors found to represent Border Patrol or other immigration/law authorities.

<u>Type of metonymy /Example</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
INSTITUTION FOR PERSON <i>e.g., ICE, USBP, CBP, DHS, ERO, ORR, UNICEF</i>	116	27%
ACTIONS OF SOLDIERS FOR ACTIONS OF BORDER PATROL <i>e.g., serve on its frontline, protecting the homeland from terrorists,</i>	74	17%
ACTIONS OF SENTINEL FOR ACTIONS OF BORDER PATROL <i>e.g., guardians of our borders, we have your back</i>	69	16%
INSTRUMENT/OBJECT FOR ACTION  <i>e.g., [BP officer with flashlight inspecting train]</i>	32	7%
SUB-EVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT  <i>e.g., [BP officers in ceremony]</i>	25	6%
CLOTHES FOR STATUS/PROFESSION  <i>e.g., [Border Patrol officer in his national reserve uniform with colleagues]</i>	24	6%

OBJECT/ACTION FOR EVENT 13 3%



e.g.,
[memorial for officer that died]

ACTIONS OF COWBOY FOR ACTIONS OF BORDER PATROL 13 3%

e.g., *rounding up*, *corralling*

PART OF PERSON FOR WHOLE PERSON 11 3%



e.g.,
[boots and part of legs, military uniform]

DEVICE TO RESTRAIN PRISONERS FOR RESTRAINT OF FREEDOM 9 2%

e.g., *take the shackles off*, *handcuffing* of ICE officers

FACIAL EXPRESSION FOR EMOTION 9 2%



e.g.,
[officer bending down smiling in front of woman with milk carton]

BODY PART/POSE FOR ACTION 8 2%



e.g.,
[swearing in ceremony]

ACTIONS OF COAST GUARD FOR 8 2%
 ACTIONS OF BORDER PATROL



e.g.,
 [Border Patrol officer in scuba diving gear appears to jump off boat]

Total 435 100%

* Numbers were rounded to the nearest percentage.

** Words in brackets are the authors', and describe what is pictured in the image.

Table 3: Metonymies referring to law enforcement

Source Domain/Example	Totals	Percentage
a) Dominant		
SOLDIERS (in the WAR ON TERROR) <i>e.g., boots on the ground, front lines of this fight.</i>	105	47%
SENTINELS <i>e.g., we have your back, guardians of our borders</i>	88	39%
b) Secondary		
BORDER PATROL ARE SHERIFFS/ COWBOY HEROES <i>e.g., lies a vast frontier</i>	23	10%
c) Occasional		
VICTIMS/PRISONERS <i>e.g., take the shackles off agents</i>	8	4%
Total	224	100%

* Numbers were rounded to the nearest percentage.

Table 4: Metaphors with target LAW ENFORCEMENT (including Border Patrol, ICE and Police)

In terms of metonymies, the most commonly found were INSTITUTIONS FOR PERSONS (e.g., USBP for United States Border Patrol). One acronym in particular is worth discussing because of the second order meaning it conveys. This acronym (*ICE*) is shown below in an example from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement official website.

(10) *ICE* executes its mission through the enforcement of more than 400 federal statutes, and focuses on *smart immigration enforcement, preventing terrorism and combating the illegal movement of people and trade* (Text 2).

Not only does *ICE* represent the institution of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the people that work there, but it is an acronym possibly chosen for its more common meaning - frozen water. Through the metonymy HEAT FOR EMOTION, people that show little emotion are known to be COLD. Hence, when combined with the multitude of images and texts that associate *ICE* with soldiers, war, weapons, violence and terrorists, it is not a stretch to determine that this acronym was chosen carefully in order to subtly (and repetitively) convey the message that the officers are fear-provoking warriors, impervious to threats. One must also remember that *ICE* was formerly part of what was known as the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), and hence post 9/11, the new name for this newly separate organization was chosen. Evidence for the conclusion that the acronym was deliberately chosen to represent toughness comes from the contexts in which this acronym is used (such as example (11) and (12)) but also from a www.google.com search in which we yielded the following:

- Iceman (a fictional superhero from X-men with super human abilities)
- Iceman (nickname of an emotionless and strong air force soldier from the Tom Cruise film “Top Gun”)
- Iceman (a Donnie Yen action movie about an imperial guard and three friends who become buried in ice and frozen in time, but later resurface to continue their battle)
- Vanilla Ice/Ice Cube (rappers)

Except for cases where the word is referring to the actual frozen water, *ICE* appears to be used regularly in action figure/soldier contexts in which having the qualities of ‘ice’ signifies toughness or strength. Also noteworthy is the way that

example (10) associates *ICE* with preventing terrorism, even though the vast majority of adults apprehended for immigration violations are labor migrants (Terrio 2015: 16).

For many metaphors in the corpus, text and image complement each other. For example, the dominant metaphor BORDER PATROL ARE SOLDIERS folds into the larger metaphor GUARDING THE BORDER IS WAR. Examples (11) and (12) illustrate this metaphor well in the texts. In the first example, on the Customs and Border Protection website, an advertisement for careers in border protection incorporates lexical items associated with war:

(11) America needs men and women with integrity to serve on its *frontline* to stop *terrorism, criminal activities*, and promote fair trade (Text 3).

In example (12), Jeff Sessions refers to the border as *ground zero*:

(12) Here, along our nation's southwest border, is *ground zero in this fight*. Here, under the Arizona sun, ranchers work the land to make an honest living, and law-abiding citizens seek to provide for their families. But it is also here, along this border, that transnational gangs like *MS-13 and international cartels flood our country with drugs and leave death and violence in their wake*. And it is here that *criminal aliens* and the *coyotes and the document-forgers* seek to overthrow our system of lawful immigration.... (Text 25).

Since the testing of nuclear bombs for the Trinity Test in the New Mexico desert in 1945, the term *ground zero* has been used to refer to the point on the ground closest to nuclear detonation. However, after the terror attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the site where the buildings once stood was frequently referred to as *ground zero*. Hence, by using the term *ground zero*, Sessions subtly associates border events with the site of the former World Trade Center in the wake of the 2001 "9/11" terrorist attack, but also with war in general. In addition to associating the border with 9/11, Sessions uses almost every metaphor in the table including IMMIGRANTS ARE WATER (e.g., *flood*), CRIMINALS, FOREIGN BEINGS (e.g., *criminal aliens*) and BORDER PROTECTION IS WAR (e.g., *fight, death, violence, combat, attack, ground zero*). He also provides support for Spener's (2011) findings that *coyotes* are used as scapegoats to deflect blame for migrant deaths and violence/crime against migrants when he

mentions them (along with *document-forgers*, which is an interesting and novel metonymy in its own right). In the next example, note the similarity between the speeches of Trump and Sessions and these quotes from ICE and Border Patrol officers:

- (13) As representatives of the nation's *frontline* immigration officers and agents responsible for enforcing our laws and *protecting our borders*, we fully support and appreciate President Trump's swift and decisive action to *keep the American people safe* and allow law enforcement to do its job (Text 11).

What is of interest in this example is not only the metaphors of BORDER PATROL/ICE ARE SENTINELS and BORDER PROTECTION IS WAR, but the fact that the ICE agents such as the one quoted in this article repeat the language used in official Trump administration documents, in addition to openly showing their support for his administration and their actions. Trump received official endorsements for his campaign from Border Patrol and ICE unions and since the election, these agencies, along with other law enforcement such as police and local sheriffs, have become empowered by seeing their social imaginary officially endorsed and enacted. Example (13) illustrates how ICE officials who were used to being disciplined for arresting people out of their jurisdiction now feel empowered to do so.

Furthermore, Craig (2017) reports that many county sheriffs feel emboldened by Trump and his agenda, echoing his narrative on immigration policy, adopting his same rhetoric, and creating videos that put forth images of toughness (such as beating down doors), which "reflects broader trends that suggest law enforcement officials in many parts of the country are tacking even further to the right" (Craig 2017). Trump's recent pardon and strong support of Sheriff Joe Arpaio underscores his strong relationship with many county sheriffs and law enforcement in general, and sent strong messages to them about his support.

War metaphors were common and noteworthy in the texts, but in the videos and images, they are even more present. Examples (14) and (15) from the Border Patrol recruitment video show how the agency promotes jobs in their institution by manipulating viewers to equate being in the Border Patrol with being in the military. The accompanying audio for each image is listed below each screenshot.

(14)(Text 10)



Gain skills in firearms.

(15)(Text 10)



BORTAC, the tactical unit of the Border Patrol.

In the above examples, what is noteworthy (besides the fact that they depict typical war scenes) is the absence of the enemy. However, it is clear that the implied *enemies* which they are *defending* the country from are migrants. In example (16) in a featured video on the Customs and Border Patrol website, a Border Patrol officer talks about his job in the Border Patrol along with his work as an army reservist.

(16)(Text 23)



But in the end it's pretty rewarding.

This video blends the officer's job in the Border Patrol with war experiences both linguistically (talking about sacrifices he makes in both activities, about when he saw someone blown up in Iraq, about the specific aspects of both jobs) and visually (images of him in his army reserve uniform) with his work as an army reservist. The result is that the viewer closely associates one with the other.

Another interesting metaphor featured in the data that is closely connected to BORDER PATROL IS WAR is BORDER PATROL ARE SENTINELS. ICE officers are portrayed as *protecting* and *defending the homeland*, *scanning the horizon*, and *scouring the brush* in order to provide border *security*. Such verbal descriptions are matched by the numerous video shots of the officers physically scanning the horizon with binoculars or inside watchtowers utilizing high tech devices to surveille the land and gauge the presence of *enemies* (e.g., migrants) such as example (17):

(17)(Text 10)



More than ever, this border must be guarded...

Another occasional metaphor that was more prevalent in video than verbal text was BORDER IS WILD WEST and BORDER PATROL AGENTS ARE SHERIFFS/

COWBOY HEROES OF THE OLD WEST. This metaphor provides evidence for Santa Ana's (2016) claim that when Border Patrol are talked about in media discourse, the genre of the American Western is evoked. Examples (18) and (19) illustrate how this was accomplished in the video:

(18)(Text 10)



Border Patrol agents are the guardians of our borders.

(19)(Text 10)



Whoever takes the job must be ready to rise to the challenge.

Both images harken back to Western films in which the sheriff comes to town ready to arrest the outlaws and save the town from lawless invaders. Screenshot (19) is particularly effective because of the accompanying audio which declares that *whoever takes the job must be ready to rise to challenge*. As the audio is played, the camera pans upward accompanied by uplifting music, and the viewers are left gazing upward at the officers on horses at the top of the cliff. This upward camera angle symbolically suggests reverence and respect, but also reminds us of any American Western in which the cowboy heroes are pictured at the top of the cliff.

In terms of narratives put forward about the Border Patrol, the most dominant was that of WAR, in which Border Patrol agents are the soldiers and sentinels. However, the secondary narrative running particularly through videos, but also in speeches that focus on the border (such as that of Jeff Sessions) is the American Western. Just as Supovitz/Reinkordt (2017: 22) found that different frames could be used to persuade different groups of people to support one issue, we believe that the AMERICAN WESTERN and WAR frames appeal to overlapping value systems attached to the framing of unaccompanied children, which are lumped into the same category as other migrants. In addition, the AMERICAN WESTERN frame has been part of the narrative of the United States, particularly border areas, for much longer, whereas the framing of migrants as terrorists has appeared post 9/11. Hence, since the WAR frame was found to dominate the discourse, it is possible that the AMERICAN WESTERN frame is slowly being replaced with the WAR frame, which according to Gemignani/Hernandez-Albujar (2015), is the most effective in creating fear against migrants.

Returning to the AMERICAN WESTERN narrative, there is no question that in the official government discourse since the 2016 election, Donald Trump is the 'new sheriff come to town'. Not only has Donald Trump publicly and frequently praised law enforcement, even encouraging them to not be "too nice" (Neuhauser 2017), he has sent messages to sheriffs and law enforcement that they have his full support. One of these messages that rang loud and clear was his August 2017 pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, pictured in example (20) with Trump:

(20)(Text 9)



In his speech (featured in Text 9) in which he defends his pardon of Arpaio (convicted of criminal contempt for continuing to target immigrants in police patrols), Trump says,

(21) *Sheriff Joe* is a patriot. *Sheriff Joe* loves our country. *Sheriff Joe* protected our borders. And *Sheriff Joe* was very *unfairly treated by the Obama administration*... I stand by my pardon.

It is no mistake that in this speech Trump refers to the Sheriff as *Sheriff Joe* which utilizes his first name (not to mention the honorific *Sheriff*), and thus signifies intimacy and respect. Moreover, the photograph which pictures a smiley Trump with his arm around Arpaio speaks a thousand words about his relationship and physical and emotional closeness to the sheriff. More than that, Trump connects the sheriff to patriotism, and to his central call for border protection. What is also interesting is the way in which Trump portrays Arpaio as a victim (of the Obama administration) who was *unfairly treated*, as opposed to the many migrants Arpaio whom has racially profiled, violated human rights of, and used for political gain. The connection to Obama is also an effective strategy of activating moral values and opinions of Trump's supporters.

The utterance *treated unfairly*, is referred to by Kovács/Szilágyi (2013: 221-3) as "victim-victimizer reversal", a ubiquitous and highly effective strategy of right-wing populists in which they "turn the tables", transforming the victims into powerful perpetrators and the perpetrators into victims. Below we can see the same strategy being pursued by Breitbart news (affiliated with Donald Trump and managed by Trump's former Chief White House strategist Steve Bannon) and the then Press Secretary Sean Spicer, who make ICE agents appear as hard-working victims that were treated unfairly:

(22) Crane himself worked tirelessly during the presidential campaign to protest the *handcuffing of ICE* officers the Obama administration looked the other way while massive surges of illegal immigration flowed into the country (Text 12).

(23) White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said Tuesday that the Trump administration's goal was to "*take the shackles off*" agents (Text 11).

This role of the SHACKLING metaphor victim-victimizer reversal is particularly significant, given the well-documented cases in which migrants and particularly migrant children have been literally shackled and handcuffed among a slew of other human rights violations carried out by border/immigration officials.

Effectively, real-life shackling agents are turned into metaphorical SHACKLING-victims. In addition, the metaphor of ICE AGENTS ARE PRISONERS OF WAR draws on the emotions of viewers/readers who envision the agents with their hands tied.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown how unaccompanied youths (along with migrants in general) have been de-humanized visually and verbally both in media discourse but also in official government discourse on immigration policy, thus affecting and shaping the social imaginary about them. Metonymies such as *criminal aliens* motivate compelling metaphors that equate them to criminals (and often terrorists), water and animals. These metaphors create fear in the public, and thus aid in garnering support for policies and practices of border/immigration officials. Visually, migrants were shown to be de-humanized by being in the background with no gaze toward the viewer, heads cut off, or in settings which evoked crime.

The United States is not the only place where this type of representation of child migrants has been found. Rather, representation of unaccompanied minors in countries other than the U.S. has been just as problematic. For example, in 2016 in the United Kingdom, a fierce row broke out over the arrival of youths in England coming from the refugee camp in Calais (France), after an agreement had been reached between the British and French governments to dismantle the camp to prevent further illegal immigration from there into Britain. When the first group of youths arrived, photos made by the British tabloid press (*The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*) picked out the older ones in the age group 14-17 and alleged that they were not children at all but indeed adults (cf. e.g., the *Daily Express*'s headline, 18 October 2016: "How old are they REALLY? Concern as 'hulking' all-male refugee children arrive from Calais"). Without delay, prominent right-wing anti-immigration politicians joined the chorus: Nigel Farage, leader of the populist UK Independence Party tweeted "Pictures of the 'child' refugees entering from Calais prove the need to verify who is coming into our country", and the right-wing conservative (and later Secretary of State for "Brexit") David Davies opined:

“These don't look like ‘children’ to me. I hope British hospitality is not being abused” (*Daily Express* and *Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 2016). Davies demanded dental checks to establish the “true age” of the immigrants, which was rejected by the British Home Office and the British Dental Association as unethical (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 2016). The *Sun* (18, 20 October 2016) punned on the tooth-theme by devising the headline “Tell us the tooth”, and “The tooth will out” and interpreted crow’s feet on the faces of some youngsters as evidence of their adulthood, despite explanations by Home Office that their “tough” looks were the product of extremely harsh living conditions, including separation from their families, with whom they were to be united in Britain. No proof was found that any of the youths were older than 17, but even a year later the right-wing magazine *The Spectator* (30 September 2017) still continued to claim that the UK had no legal means “to stop a 26-year-old ISIS fighter coming here, stating he is 17 and claiming asylum”.

For anti-immigration discourse to succeed it seems necessary to undermine any possible humanitarian stance that might result from immigrants’ ‘child’ status. The existence of child immigrants as a social group would normally trigger an empathetic and more lenient approach and attitude, especially by ‘home’ societies that take pride in their humanitarian and Christian values (which is a default claim by conservatives both in the USA and the UK). Denying child immigrants their ‘child’ status, because they allegedly “look too old” or dehumanizing them as *flood* phenomena, *UACs*, *animals* or potential terrorists serves to ‘alleviate’ the ethical and emotional burden of having to justify their hostile reception or outright rejection.

Returning to the present study, in contrast to the representation of migrant children, Border Patrol, ICE, and other law enforcement officials connected to immigration present themselves as foot soldiers in the WAR on terror in which they have constructed migrant (children) as the enemy ‘Other’. Visual elements in their recruiting videos were particularly efficacious in putting forth the WAR and American Western narratives through repeated representation of Border Patrol officers completing actions normally attributed to soldiers and cowboys.

We also found that the Trump administration capitalizes largely on the WAR narrative but also the American Western to echo law enforcement/Border Patrol discourse. This connects to different but overlapping sets of moral values and hence garners support from various groups that make up Trump's voter base that might identify separately with each of these narratives. By combining matching visual and verbal metaphors, and sending clear messages of support for discourse that conveys them, the Trump administration taps into the social imaginary of their base, including many border officials, despite unrealistic and unfulfilled policies such as the border wall and the call for a sharp increase in Border Patrol officers. Hence, in illustrating metaphors used in media and Border Patrol officer's discourses and connecting them to the discourse of the Trump administration, we were able to illuminate some of the strategies used by Trump to gain and keep power. In addition, by focusing attention on how right-wing populists around the world use these same strategies to appeal to populist ideas and shape policy which supports the inhumane treatment of migrants and others, we aim to combat them. Finally, we heed Hamann and Morgenson's call to "continue to not let the current political moment - with its normalization of hate speech and acts - frighten us into silence" (2017: 401).

6. Corpus

(Text 2), <https://www.ice.gov/>.

(Text 3), <https://www.cbp.gov/careers/frontline-careers>.

(Text 6), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/06/21/written-testimony-cbp-senate-committee-judiciary-hearing-titled-ms-13-problem>.

(Text 8), <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/ucs/about>.

(Text 9), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/28/politics/donald-trump-joe-arpaiopardon/index.html>.

(Text 10), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik_hEhA41WU.

(Text 11), <http://dailycaller.com/2017/02/26/under-trump-ice-agents-actually-feel-free-to-do-their-jobs/>.

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