THE MINUTEMEN VERSUS THE ‘UNITED ARMY OF ILLEGAL ALIENS’:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF WWW REPRESENTATIONS

By

Margaret Webb Smith

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Margaret Webb Smith entitled
The Minutemen Versus 'the United Army of Illegal Aliens': A Critical Discourse Analysis of WWW Representations
and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____________________________________________________________ Date: 06/22/2007
Dr. Linda Waugh

_____________________________________________________________ Date: 06/22/2007
Dr. Jane Hill

_____________________________________________________________ Date: 06/22/2007
Dr. Amy Kimme Hea

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate’s submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

_____________________________________________________________ Date: 06/22/2007
Dissertation Director: Dr. Linda Waugh
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: Margaret Webb Smith
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DEDICATION

For

Maya Webb Gottlieb

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May you always dance like no one is watching
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ABSTRACT

Discourses surrounding U.S. immigration reform and border security are embedded with instances of the new racism (subtle and covert forms of racism in spoken and written language). One anti-immigrant organization in particular, the Minuteman Project, has gained widespread attention of the political establishment and mainstream press through its rapid expansion, physical involvement on the U.S.-Mexican border, and outspoken views on current U.S. immigration policy. There is a need to examine critically the discourse of growing citizen groups such as this one, who draw on web media resources to maintain and reproduce negative depictions of minority groups by masking and legitimating racist discourse.

The data set consists of textual selections from the Minuteman Project website. Print text data includes the organization’s mission statement and a context-specific article and email response related to immigration protests, as well as ‘disclaimers’ or statements of tolerance toward immigrants and elected officials that assist in the Minuteman Project’s positive representation of self. A critical discourse analysis approach with an emphasis on metaphor is employed to determine how lexical, semantic, and syntactic choices are employed in creation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ participant roles. This analysis includes examination of visual images in proximity to print postings as well as images employed on Minuteman Project merchandise such as T-shirts and hats. The images are analyzed in relation to their contextual role in supporting or subverting the Minuteman Project’s rhetorical strategies. The pervasive role of metaphor in this verbal and visual context is examined in relation to self and other representation, identity construction, and
in-group membership.

The analysis reveals contradictory and shifting self and other representations. Extensive use of patriotic and war tropes located in participant roles assist the Minuteman Project in masking underlying racist ideologies while overtly distancing itself from self-identified nationalist and white supremacist groups. Disclaimers, statements of tolerance, and metaphors assist the organization in successfully forging public connections with members of the political establishment. This study has implications for critical analysis of web-based texts, for multimodal analysis, and for the relation between circulatory web discourses and public policy in general.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Immigration discourses in the United States have fluctuated over the 20th and into the early 21st century according to varying social, political, and economic factors capturing national attention at any given period. The issue of national security has increasingly crept into the complicated and contentious national discourses surrounding undocumented immigration since the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. Immigration debates reference diverse groups of people, from long-term employed but undocumented U.S. residents to various populations of border crossers, including migrants seeking work, drug or people smugglers, and ‘terrorists.’ ‘Illegal immigrants’ is the term most often used when referring to these dissimilar populations, which conflates different groups of people and obscures issues related to border security and nationwide immigration policy reform.

Immigration discussions encompass a range of issues, including various perspectives and contradictory statistics on how the estimated 12 million ‘illegal immigrants’ living in the United States affect the economy, education and health systems; what measures should be taken when undocumented migrants are discovered; and opinions on whether and how to issue work permits and allow eventual citizenship for undocumented residents. Language used to discuss undocumented migrants or residents is widely circulated in major newspapers as well as on blogs and website postings, and represents voices of various activists, scholars, and politicians who espouse diverse perspectives on immigration reform. The highly public and politicized debates about immigration policy and border security generate a multitude of discourses, wherein
language reflects competing ideologies related to national identity and the place of immigrants in the context of ‘America’ as a nation. Such discourse presents a rich context to examine natural language as a site of social interaction and change.

Peter Brimelow, British immigrant to the United States, is a conservative and financial journalist for *Forbes* magazine and author of the controversial book *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America’s Immigration Disaster*. This book portrays a rather bleak view of immigration in the U.S. He depicts the American populace as victims of its government’s past immigration policies, legislation he claims that the people had little say in and now must suffer from. He writes,

> And what do Americans want? I don’t believe, after long and careful inspection, that they want anything very terrible for their fellow human beings. They seem to me as if they would accept any immigrant, of any complexion including plaid, given minimum goodwill and good intentions. (Which, however, I also suspect are now often lacking.) But there are limits. Enough, as Americans invariably say in private conversation, is enough. (1995, p. xviii)

Ironically, Brimelow himself is an immigrant to the United States, which he acknowledges in a brief, yet self-conscious personal history early in his book. He seems, however, to draw on his immigrant status to legitimize his critique of U.S. immigration policy. For example, in the above quote, he uses “they” and “their” to refer to “Americans,” and does not appear to include himself in this group. His tone has an edge of exasperation when he claims that discussing immigration with what he terms “immigration enthusiasts” is a difficult task, as “anyone who says anything critical of immigration is going to be accused of racism” (p. 9). Besides fear of the label “racist,” he argues, immigration enthusiasts put faith in the argument that “immigration is the American tradition,” which he invariably critiques (p. 191). Brimelow proposes that since
the label “anti-immigrant” carries with it such negative connotations, immigration critics should instead call themselves “Patriots” (p. 254). Interestingly, over a decade since his book was published, the trope of patriotism in a post 9/11 world works quite well for anti-immigrant organizations such as the Minuteman Project. This organization is a growing group of volunteers devoted to ‘securing’ the Mexican-American border and saving the United States from an ‘alien invasion’ or from becoming an “alien nation” to use the language in Brimelow’s metaphoric title. Like Brimelow, the Minuteman Project employs metaphors pertaining to ‘disaster’ to portray ‘illegal aliens’ as the imminent downfall of the nation as “harmonious melting pot” (Minuteman Project mission statement).¹

The Minuteman Project’s identity is inextricably bound to concepts of patriotism, which is unsurprising since the organization uses the same name of early, pre-American Revolution volunteers who were ready to guard against the British ‘at a minute’s notice.’² The Minuteman Project has successfully entered the national immigration debate by procuring media attention covering its border patrols, rallies, and growing number of state chapters. Amidst federal government efforts to reform immigration policy, including implementing measures for increased security at the Mexican-American border, the Minuteman Project has grown in membership and revised, concretized, and re-revised its identity and agenda in response to federally proposed legislation for immigration reform and border security. Pivotal to this organization’s self-positioning within national

¹ The Minuteman Project mission statement was posted online from October 2004 through May 2007 at www.minutemanproject.com/AboutMMP.html. In early June 2007 the mission statement was replaced.

² The role of the original minutemen will be discussed later in this dissertation.
immigration discourses, as well as its general growth, is its use of the World Wide Web as a site of communication, solicitation, and identity formation. In addition, the Minuteman Project has formed alliances with members of the political establishment, and has consistently taken action to implement what it views as solutions to a growing border problem—a national crisis, it argues, that lawmakers are ill equipped to address.

The Minuteman Project was officially founded in October 2004, when Chris Simcox and James Gilchrist, disillusioned by the current administration’s response to undocumented individuals crossing regularly over the Mexican border to enter the United States, combined their agendas and efforts to call on fellow Americans to volunteer their time to ‘secure’ the border. The organization quickly grew in numbers as the founders recruited others to join them in actively addressing what they term “the decades-long careless disregard of effective US immigration law enforcement” (Minuteman Project mission statement). In April 2005, the fledgling group urged Americans to participate in its debut, wherein volunteers camped along the U.S.-Mexican border in Tombstone, Arizona for one month to patrol for the “mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders,” and ultimately to demonstrate the organization’s presence, necessity, and efficacy as guardians of America’s border(s).

Politicians and the media greeted this first act, as well as successive patrols and rallies, with varying degrees of support and criticism. Discourse surrounding the Minuteman Project is ubiquitous on the Web. A keyword search for ‘Minuteman Project’

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3 Excerpted from the Minuteman Project mission statement, where ‘ILLEGAL’ is capitalized.
on the search engine Google brings up over 700 hits related to this organization.\footnote{This search was performed on July 17, 2007. An initial search brought up links related to a software company also titled ‘Minuteman Project.’ Therefore, an advanced search that excluded the word ‘software’ was performed; this yielded 591,000 hits. I searched through 775 of these to ensure that they related to the organization discussed in this dissertation. After listing 775 links, the search engine reported that more results were available but similar to the 775 listed. Therefore, I consider 700+ hits to be a highly conservative estimate of the number of times that the Minuteman Project is referred to on the Web.} The group has been termed “patriotic” by many and “racist” by many others. Admittedly, the term ‘patriotic’ is slightly elusive and therefore problematic, as its meaning has shifted since 9/11. Moreover, as Brimelow suggests, “patriots” might be synonymous with “immigration critics” for some. Increasingly, it seems that the terms “patriotic” and “racist” are imbued with similar connotations, depending on one’s national and cultural ideologies or political affiliations, as well as the context in which the terms are employed.

In a searing review of the Minuteman Project’s April 2005 border activities, a writer for \textit{Common Dreams News Center}, a progressive news organization, argues that the “so-called Minutemen” are “the most publicized of today’s vigilantes,” and compares the group to the Ku Klux Klan:

\begin{quote}
Vigilantes have always been to the American West what the Ku Klux Klan was to the South: vicious and cowardly bigotry organized into a self-righteous mob. Almost every decade, some sinister group of self-proclaimed patriots mobilizes to repel a new invasion from some subversive threat or other. (Davis, 2005)
\end{quote}

In early April 2005, \textit{The Washington Post} defined the Minuteman Project as “a combination ‘civilian patrol’ and immigration protest.” The national newspaper reported that President Bush criticized the organization as “vigilante,” and Vincente Fox, then President of Mexico, referred to the group as an “immigration hunter” (Argetsinger, 2005). On Bush’s calling the organization “vigilante,” however, the \textit{World Socialist Web Site}, another progressive news organization, commented that,
the opposition of the Bush administration to the Minuteman Project was based not on any disagreement with the xenophobic politics of the group. It rather had much more to do with concerns over the potential damage the group’s activities could do to US-Mexican relations and the White House’s effort to secure a permanent source of cheap labor for American businesses through the creation of a guest worker program. (Anthony, 2005)

Multiple layers of cultural, social, and political ideologies complicate immigration in the U.S. (and elsewhere). Of course, various factions will frame immigration-related issues in various ways at different times. The few examples above demonstrate a brief overview of the type of widespread press coverage and reactions that the Minuteman Project has elicited across the spectrum of the mainstream and progressive (or leftist) press.

Despite some negative press coverage, the Minuteman Project quickly gained support from members of the political establishment, especially Republicans (Anthony, 2005), and entered the mainstream, nationwide political conversation by forging alliances with politicians such as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, and U.S. Congressmen Charles Norwood (R-GA) and Tom Tancredo (R-CO). Indeed, the labels ‘racist’ and ‘xenophobe’ did not deter these public figures from expressing support for the group of self-appointed border guardians. For example, Austrian immigrant Arnold Schwarzenegger publicly praised the Minuteman Project for its 2005 border patrol efforts. The San Francisco Chronicle reported him stating that the organization “did a terrific job in cutting the influx of illegal immigrants in Arizona,” and that “it is natural for citizens to rise up, if the federal government fails to patrol the border” (Fulbright, 2007). Another Republican politician who has voiced support for the citizen activist group is U.S. Congressional Representative Charles Norwood, who submitted a 30-page
field report to the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus after observing the Minuteman Project’s month-long patrol along the Arizona-Mexico border. This detailed report argues that the federal government should place National Guard troops on the border to continue the efforts initiated by Minuteman Project volunteers (Norwood, 2005). Interestingly, on the Tancredo08 for President website, Congressman Tancredo posts a stance on immigration that closely echoes sentiments found in the Minuteman Project’s mission statement, which will be the focus of Chapter 3. Tancredo states that

> Illegal aliens threaten our economy and undermine our culture. While our brave soldiers risk their lives to protect us overseas, our political elites lack the courage to defend us at home. […] As President, I will secure our borders so illegal aliens do not come, and I will eliminate benefits and job prospects so they do not stay. (Tom stands for America, Immigration)

Tancredo boldly uses “our” to reference the U.S. economy, culture, soldiers, political elites, and borders. Clearly, he pushes “illegal aliens” far outside the sphere of “our,” as does the Minuteman Project. The difference, however, between Tom Tancredo and the Minuteman Project is that the former is seeking a nomination for the Presidency whereas the latter is a group of organized citizen volunteers. How does the Minuteman Project use rhetorical or persuasive mechanisms to draw vocal, public political endorsements? What are, in fact, the implications of an anti-immigrant group gaining such widespread support from both the populace and political elites?

The general public and mainstream media would have a difficult time dismissing the Minuteman Project as mere vigilantes or a right-wing fringe group after support shown by the political establishment, despite the comparisons of this organization to the Ku Klux Klan. In fact, it is apparent by the organization’s growth that a large number of
the general American populace welcomes this grassroots initiative, apparently reflecting Brimelow’s views that concerning immigration, at some point Americans feel that “[e]nough…is enough.” How much of this support might reflect the majority of Americans’ readiness for tighter border security and tougher immigration policies?

In the context of U.S. immigration discourses, the Minuteman Project’s persuasive strategies are both interesting and important to consider because of its success in positioning itself as a viable player within the larger framework of immigration discourses, including discussions surrounding federal border legislation. Transcripts of Congressional hearings on the topic of immigration and border reform in November 2005 reveal participants’ conflation and confusion regarding “traditional” border crossers (migrants); concerns about terrorists entering the U.S. through Mexico; fear of ongoing threats of gangs; and unease about people and drug smugglers. Despite differing opinions on the best measures for immigration reform, both Democrats and Republicans exhibit a general panic about undocumented peoples crossing into the U.S. via the Mexican border, and bipartisan voices in the political elite call for increased border security (Capitol Hill Hearing, 2005). Interesting parallels exist between the Minuteman Project’s and the national government’s sentiments to move toward militarization of the Mexican-American border, despite the fact that the former considers itself to be “doing the job Congress won’t do.”


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5 Slogan on homepage of the Minuteman Project until June 2007
The President gave four speeches between October and November 2005, at which time he lauded the work of Congress and assured the American people that “We’re going to get control of our borders. We’ll make this country safer for all our citizens” (The White House, 2005). The 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations act allocated $7.5 billion to expand Border Control stations, fencing, lighting, barriers and roads; increase hiring of enforcement agents; and place more beds in detention facilities. Increasingly, there seems to be a move by the national government to ‘close’ the Mexican-American border. $139 million of the total sum allocated by the Homeland Security Appropriations Act goes toward improving technology and intelligence along the border, which could be evidence that administrators are constructing a “virtual” fence. However, in some areas along the border, plans are underway for a real, material fence. Regardless whether this fence is virtual or material or a combination of both, references to fence construction indicates a growing national concern about border security. Furthermore, the construction of any type of fence signifies a desire to keep people out and to protect the nation—it clearly delineates that this land is ‘ours’ and not ‘yours.’ Fence construction sends an unambiguous message that border crossers are not welcome and the nation needs to be protected from this unwanted population.

The situatedness of the Minuteman Project in the current immigration context, wherein the federal government is moving towards immigration reform and increased border security, merits an investigation into the discursive strategies that increasingly procure more power and voice for this citizen organization, despite such bold and unconventional activities as camping along the border with loaded weapons. In the spring
of 2007, the original Minuteman Project founders split into two groups according to political differences and diverging priorities. The separation into two Minuteman entities parallels the directions from where they originally came. Chris Simcox, most immediately concerned about border security, is the head of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Headquarters (MCDC), whereas the more politically oriented James Gilchrist focuses his attention on “internal vigilance” and policy reform, and remains the head of The Minuteman Project. When questioned about whether the Minutemen members made up one or two entities, a spokesperson for the MCDC explained to me in an email communication that

Both evolved from the same origins but have veered in different directions since their leaders first joined forces. Among their similarities is their displeasure of elected officials who refuse to enforce existing immigration laws. Chris Simcox, President of MCDC has been conducting [sic] private citizen border patrol operations for 5+ years out in the Arizona desert. In the months before April of 2005, Jim Gilchrist from California contacted Chris with the idea of nationally promoting the citizen border operations [sic] and registering thousands of fellow Americans to join them as 21st century Minutemen.

After co-founding the Minutemen and leading that first month-long operation in April '05, Chris and Jim split up the work with Chris' focus mainly continuing on border operations and Jim intending on having his focus be on "internal vigilance," that is, bringing pressure to bear on employers hiring illegal aliens.

Since that agreement however Jim made a run for Congress in the fall of '05 and though he has set up a new website, its focus is unclear to us. We can only advise you to check out our website at www.minutemanhq.com as well as theirs at www.minutemanproject.com. (Email communication, November 22, 2006)\(^6\)

Clearly, from the above response, the two entities continue to share common goals and have both retained the term “Minuteman” in their respective names. However, the last

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\(^6\) Please see Appendix A.
segment indicates that the MCDC, at least, views the groups as separate, as the writer uses “we” and “theirs.” Thus, the Minuteman Project, once one entity, is currently (at the time of this writing) two entities with separate identities and different names. Accordingly, the groups’ separate websites reflect this official change in the infrastructure of this organization(s). This political split was reflected in gradual website revisions over a period of months. As the email above indicates, after the April 2005 debut the founders took on separate foci, which were reflected in website revisions to www.minutemanproject.com. In the spring of 2006, the organization made a significant change to the website wherein the homepage was revised to allow users to choose between two portals or entries via hyperlinks. A visitor to the site could proceed to either the Minuteman Project website or the newer Minuteman Headquarters for Civil Defense by clicking the respective links. Eventually, two separate sites were developed, and both sites continue to change rapidly, each reflecting the separate foci, purposes, and identities of the groups. In addition, the Minuteman Headquarters for Civil Defense is now the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Headquarters.  

The Minuteman Project and the newer MCDC owes it success, in part, to a destabilized, dynamic, and mutable identity continually revised through the medium of the World Wide Web (WWW), which includes the use of websites and mass email communication. The professional and well-kept websites allow for quick accessibility and mass emails keep subscribers informed. At the same time, data collection on the group(s) has proved challenging because of the significant changes to the website(s).

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7 Discussions about web design and data collection will be detailed further in Chapter 2.
Some of the data collected from the original www.minutemanproject.com site is now on the www.minutemanhq.com site or a different web space altogether or no longer on the Web at all. As the original intent of this project did not include studying the historical growth and evolution of the group nor how web technology reflects and archives those changes, I do not have physical evidence of each different stage of the project. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss in detail how the two groups use rhetorical strategies differently according to their emerging identities and purposes, some general observations and analyses will be discussed in Chapter 5. For the sake of simplicity, I will use ‘the Minuteman Project’ to refer broadly to both groups unless textual examples necessitate that I specify one group or the other. The web addresses www.minutemanproject.com and www.minutemanhq.com will steer the reader to the respective sites; however, the print texts and some of the visual images discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 are no longer online but can be located in the Appendix.

Importantly, the Minuteman Project draws heavily on metaphors and ensuing metaphoric narratives to represent itself and other groups. These narratives assist the organization in concretizing and legitimating its stance and involvement in illegal immigration discourses, thereby strengthening its position and identity as an official player in the immigration debate. The medium of the WWW has been pivotal to the group’s identity formation and capacity to situate itself in relation to national immigration news. Use of visual images and links allow the Minuteman Project to both align itself with certain groups and distance or separate itself from others. Furthermore, the Web allows for wide circulation of discourses, assisting the Minuteman Project to reach a wide
variety of the populace and media. Thus, a mutable and destabilized identity emerges wherein the organization consistently seeks to portray a patriotic, non-discriminatory ethos with the primary objective of ‘protecting’ the nation from ‘illegal invaders.’

The World Wide Web (WWW) is an ever-shifting medium that allows for continuous and unlimited updates of print and visual texts. Examples of Minuteman Project web print texts include official genres of postings such as a mission statement, a Pledge, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), as well as response commentaries to immigration issues in the news. Vivid visual images support the organization’s message that ‘illegal aliens’ are dangerous and capable of wreaking havoc within the United States. The strategic proximity of the images in relation to print postings support the group’s message that it is an organized and volunteer-based body of helpful civilians willing to go further than the government by physically taking action on the border. The Minuteman Project continually re-positions itself in relation to events or immigration news, such as protests or policy suggestions, and thus continues to morph its identity and stance. The organization actively seeks out a wide range of immigration related issues and then reframes and circulates its own versions on the WWW, which allows it, in a sense, to create new news. Importantly, the organization stays within the boundaries of fact by referencing or responding to real events, and rests heavily on the trope of patriotism to concretize its position. Drawing on media coverage of immigration issues to reframe events through pejorative discourses assists the organization in positioning itself in larger national discourses outside of the sphere of the group’s web space.
Metaphors of *self* and of *other* contribute to the construction of participant roles of self and other within a larger metaphorical narrative sustained through both textual and visual representations and repetition. Furthermore, the Minuteman Project distributes mass emails to subscribers, which re-inscribe messages on the websites. Email content focuses on the latest news surrounding immigration, from arrests of ‘illegal immigrants’ to Congressional discussions on suggestions for policy reform. These emails are an important subsidiary to the websites because even if volunteers do not check the Web on a daily basis, they still receive the latest news in their inboxes. Combined with emails, the group’s identity formation and ongoing re-positioning within the larger immigration debate is assisted through regular updates to professionally formatted web pages that include multiple, deep-links to other pages.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the Minuteman Project has been publicly lauded for its patriotism and heroism. The group draws heavily on historical images of Paul Revere and the American Revolution to depict members as revolutionary activists, willing to go further than the administration in dealing with border issues. The images and print text on both the websites and mass emails present a site and context to examine some underlying ideologies of a shifting, fluid identity formation, a construction that has allowed the organization to thrive and increase in its watchdog efforts, even while incensing numerous human and civil rights activist groups. Importantly, the Minuteman Project does not identify as a white supremacist group, as do organizations such as Stormfront, the National Alliance, and the still active Ku Klux Klan. In fact, the Minuteman Project website posts a disclaimer stating, “MMP has no affiliation with, nor
will we accept any assistance by or interference from, separatists, racists, or supremacy groups.” Even so, the organization has managed to attract members of white nationalist groups at rallies, indicating a link between underlying discriminatory ideologies as demonstrated in numerous instances and areas throughout its web discourse.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the rhetorical strategies that have allowed the Minuteman Project to grow and to obtain and sustain legitimacy through alliances with the political establishment despite racist ideologies that underlie the extensive use of metaphor and re-framing of events. The group depicts a frightening, and at times, apocalyptic, scenario of undocumented immigrants as an imminent threat to the United States. The Minuteman Project makes an overt effort to publicly separate itself from supremacist or hate groups by posting web articles that function to verbally distance itself from violent actions and insist on tolerance toward the very others that it demonizes (‘illegal immigrants’ and elected officials). However, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, these disclaimers primarily serve the function of what van Dijk terms positive self-representation. This organization constructs an identity through rhetoric of fear by claiming a just and critical role in protecting the nation from an imminent threat. Yet, in effect, the Minuteman Project preaches oppression, as the organization purposefully constructs undocumented immigrants as monstrous and effectively robs this population of its voice.

Van Dijk (2000a) has demonstrated the subtle but widespread racism toward immigrants evident in the mainstream press. Negative portrayals of immigrants, especially through disparaging metaphors, are not difficult to locate. For example, on
May 16, 2006, the *New York Times* featured an article discussing the diversity that Asian, African, and European immigrants have brought to Irish businesses, specifically traditional pubs in Dublin, commenting that “the efforts of immigrant bartenders to respect local traditions have been welcomed by many Dubliners” (Lavery, 2006). The newspaper features as example the story of Mr. Lee, a Korean immigrant and pub owner, to contextualize the mingling of cultures and a changing Dublin landscape. However, the title of the article is “Now, the Barkeeps May Come From the Ends of the Earth.” Although the article reflects the immigrants to Ireland in a positive light, the title constructs them as outsiders from a far away land by referring to their origins as “the Ends of the Earth.” Even the *Tucson Weekly*, which considers itself to be a little left of the mainstream press, featured on one of its May 2006 covers an article titled “Borderline Tragedy: The invasion along the border—and efforts to stop that invasion—continue harming the environment” (*Tucson Weekly*). On the cover of the weekly news magazine is a Wildlife Refuge officer looking disparagingly at a truck abandoned in the desert.

Santa Ana (1999, 2002) points out that numerous metaphors such as IMMIGRANT AS INVADER and IMMIGRANT AS NATURAL DISASTER pepper mainstream newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times*. Over time, and through circulation of discourses, pejorative metaphors used to characterize immigrants affects public opinion about this population.

The Minuteman Project is an interesting group to investigate because it draws on pre-existing metaphors of immigrants as threatening, but goes further by creating intricate metaphoric narratives wherein it situates itself as a group of patriotic heroes defending the nation from invaders. The narrative includes distinct roles for the Others in the
overarching metaphor of War. Yet, the organization manages to remain somewhat under the ‘cry racist’ radar by affiliating itself with the political establishment through alliances with elected officials who support its cause, while simultaneously distancing itself from groups that are overtly anti-immigrant through rhetoric of tolerance. Importantly, by employing metaphors and historical visual images, the Minuteman Project treads carefully in its harmful constructions of undocumented immigrants.

If Brimelow’s views on how immigration negatively affects the economy, education, and health care in the U.S. are indeed shared by the majority of American citizens, as he claims they are, then it is no wonder why the Minuteman Project rhetoric is so appealing to the American populace. Much of the anti-immigration rhetoric seems to be based on fear, even if that fear rests at a subconscious level. Perhaps the perceived threat of immigrants stems from fear of change, fear of loss, as well as human tendencies to guard rights and possessions and jobs and education or health care benefits, as these are often framed as limited commodities that should be allocated to a nation’s citizens and not newcomers. Is it, in fact, human nature to construct that which we fear as separate, alien, and outside of ourselves, as in the New York Times depiction of Mr. Lee who arrived in Ireland “from the ends of the earth”? Korea is no more the end of the earth than is Ireland, but it depends on one’s vantage point, and what is at risk.

It is not the intention of this dissertation to debate policy or suggest new directions for immigration reform. Rather, this research investigates immigration discourses through the lens of one citizen activist group that has gained widespread attention by forging a legitimate space within a broader, nationwide immigration
conversation via the technology of the World Wide Web. In this dissertation, I am primarily interested in exploring and describing the mechanisms that allow for (and serve as evidence of) the Minuteman Project’s successful growth as an organization and to consider how its expansion may or may not reflect and be reflective of public and Congressional expressions towards undocumented migrants and residents. Importantly, language policy initiatives such as the English Only movement reflect the majority’s fear of languages other than English or accented English, which is inextricably linked to cultural assumptions about language, and what it means to be “American.” Linguistic racism in the United States has important implications for analysis of Minuteman Project rhetoric because this organization targets a group whose first language is not English, which implicitly contributes to the construction of this population as outsiders.

Chapter 2 situates the Minuteman Project within the context of U.S. immigration discourses, covert racist discourses, and linguistic racism. The theoretical framework outlines a critical discourse approach, including foregrounding metaphor analysis, to examine discriminatory messages in print and visual images, and a review of the literature discusses previous research on discriminatory representations of minorities. A brief discussion of the World Wide Web seeks to address the challenges of applying a critical discourse analysis approach to data located on the World Wide Web. Chapter 3 analyzes self and other representations in the Minuteman Project’s mission statement, as well as visual images appropriated from other sources and posted throughout the website. Minuteman Project merchandise is discussed in terms of how it assists in selling the group’s ideas as a commodity. Chapter 4 discusses a Minuteman Project response article
to the large-scale student protest in late March 2006, as well as proximal images that support harmful constructions of immigrants in the print text. A mass email sent out to subscribers in response to the student demonstrations is analyzed in terms of macro topics and images. Statements of tolerance toward the groups that the Minuteman Project discriminates against are discussed as a rhetorical strategy that assists in positive self-representation. Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation. This chapter brings together the various images discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and discusses how intertextuality of sources and circulation of discourses assists the Minuteman Project in creating a strong membership base while not alienating itself from the political establishment. In addition, Chapter 5 discusses implications for future lines of inquiry.
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DATA COLLECTION

Context

Arguments for increased border protection and stricter policies to address what is often referred to as the problem or crisis of illegal immigration draw on a wide variety of rhetorical strategies, including extensive use of metaphor. Many of the rhetorical strategies located in text, talk, and visual images rely on harmful and unfair representations of undocumented residents or migrants. Discriminatory naming practices and metaphors surrounding immigration, and ‘illegal immigrants’ in particular, are often rooted in cultural, political, and linguistic assumptions about national identity. Wide-ranging media coverage of denigrating majority group discourses serves to maintain and reproduce power differentials and inequalities across groups.

In Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation, Chavez (2001) demonstrates that magazine covers depicting immigration’s effects on the nation have varied over the years depending on a variety of factors, including passages of new immigration legislation, the state of the economy, and Americans’ general feeling of safety. In the 1990s, immigration as a topic of debate centered on conflicting ideas of race and multiculturalism, and thus magazine covers of that time reflected cultural and identity related questions:

Is America defined by its racial/national origins—British and northwestern European—which must be kept demographically dominant through restrictive immigration laws? Or is America still a nation of immigrants that is defined more by the principles that guide it and are learned by immigrants? […] In the former vision, culture is fixed, and the cultural differences of immigrants pose a danger to its continuance. In the latter, culture is transformative; it changes in response to new stimuli such as that introduced by immigrants. (Chavez 2001, p. 17)
As Chavez points out, questions of cultural and national identity are inextricably linked to perspectives on immigrants and immigration policy. He argues that though the positions on culture outlined above are divergent, they both “adhere to a process of assimilation-acculturation in which all members of society, despite their differences, share some part of a common national culture” (p. 17). Chavez names visual images and surrounding text in the print media as an extension of the types of texts that Anderson (1983) highlights as “re-presenting the kind of community that is the nation” (Anderson, p. 30, qtd. in Chavez, pp. 43-44). For Chavez, in the context of Anderson’s now classic Imagined Communities, immigrants are “liminal” to the concept of nation as they are located “outside the borders of the sovereign nation and yet live within the nation” (p. 44). In his investigation of the immigration-related covers of ten national news magazines between the years 1965-1999, Chavez locates multiple themes, including nation as melting pot and metaphors related to “the survival of the ‘nation,’ the U.S.-Mexico border, ‘illegal’ immigrants, and national sovereignty,” especially during the month of July, which, of course, coincides with national identity and independence (p. 33).

Other researchers have drawn connections between U.S. conceptions of national identity and how news media reflects or substantiates notions of identity over given periods in time. For example, Hutcheson et al. (2004) found in their research that the attacks of September 11, 2001 were crucial for U.S. national identity, as seen in the “strategic political communication” in the press following the event (pp. 27-28). These authors define national identity as “a constructed and public national self-image based on membership in a political community as well as history, myths, symbols, language and
cultural norms commonly held by members of a nation” (p. 28). A consideration of what constitutes notions of U.S. or American national identity is a critical point of departure for locating how immigrants, and in particular ‘illegal immigrants,’ are represented in the media. Various symbols, icons, and shared knowledge or concepts that represent Americans or American-ness will be discussed throughout this project as they relate to majority groups’ constructions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ discourses in the context of immigration policy and the ‘crisis’ of ‘illegal immigrants.’ Chavez (2001) raises the issue of transnationalism, arguing that “contemporary social theory on ‘transnational migrants’ can, perhaps unintentionally, add to the concern over the future of the ‘nation’” because of the assumption that transnational migrants retain social connections in multiple cultures and nations (p. 49). Thus,

[…] examples of contemporary academic theory on transnational migrants can easily be read to raise the issue of competing national loyalties (“ambivalent loyalties”), which is central to a nativist view of the threat posed by immigrants. An alleged lack of interest in establishing roots in the United States and their persevering orientation back home underscores the threat to the nation posed by transnational migrants who supposedly insist on linguistic and cultural separateness. (p. 50, emphasis mine)

In this dissertation, I explore how the Minuteman Project depicts undocumented immigrants as a threat to the sovereignty, unity, and harmony of the nation. ‘Illegal immigrants’ or ‘illegal aliens’ are the terms most commonly used by the media to refer to undocumented migrant workers and residents living in the United States. These terms are

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8 Hutcheson et al (2004) note that this definition, supported by other researchers, “contains the assumption that invented or ‘imagined’ (Anderson, 1991) nations necessarily must construct and continuously reconstruct their identities in a public manner (p. 28). Much, of course, has been written about Anderson’s ‘imagined communities,’’ and it is difficult to find literature on nation and identity that does not reference the text. Anderson’s revised edition of this text includes a chapter titled “Travel and Traffic: On the Geo-biography of Imagined Communities” where he reflects on how the key concepts of his book have been translated and received in various countries.
employed not only by anti-immigrant groups such as the Minuteman Project but also by national newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and on nationally televised news programs such as *CNN*. Some of the literature refers to this population as ‘migrants’ or ‘transnational migrants’ as in the above quote; however, this term is not always appropriate because many ‘migrants’ living in the U.S. are actually long-term residents. Therefore, I will use the terms ‘undocumented residents,’ ‘undocumented migrants,’ and ‘undocumented immigrants’ interchangeably to reference the population most widely known to the American public as ‘illegal immigrants.’

Although my analysis does not focus specifically on the linguistic characteristics of undocumented migrants and residents, it is relevant to emphasize that the people targeted by the Minutemen Project are often non-English speaking, which serves to locate them as separate from or outside the sphere of commonly accepted notions of American-ness. Importantly, there is a long history of linguistic discrimination in the United States. Stereotypes and persistent mocking of speakers of other languages cannot be separated from American notions of foreignness or otherness. The next section discusses contemporary manifestations of racism in the United States to contextualize the Minuteman Project’s anti-immigrant contribution to the maintenance and circulation of racist discourses toward minorities.
Racism: Overt, Covert, and Circulatory Racist Discourses

Linguistic and Cultural Racism

Speaking English is a key aspect of American identity and a site of discrimination for those who deviate. Speakers of non-standard varieties or accented English face ongoing discrimination in the United States (Lippi-Green, 1997; Urciuoli, 1996). Issues of immigration and bilingual education are difficult to separate, as it is immigrants or speakers of minority languages who suffer from moves to designate English as the official national language. This linguistic discrimination manifests in educational policies such as the English Only movement, a practice that Macedo (2000) equates with colonialism. In examining the U.S. ideological context in the contentious debate surrounding bilingual education, Schmidt (2002) suggests that

a conjunction of the hegemonic position of the dominant English language and the socially constructed normalization of whiteness creates an ideological context within which Americans speaking language other than English, and whose origins lie in continents other than Europe, are racialized as alien outsiders, as Others. (p. 142, emphasis original)

Such racialization functions by marking members of minority groups as possessing certain characteristics that are so unlike the dominant group that it is “impossible to conceive of being equal members of the same political community with those so racialized” (p. 158). Hill (1999) raises the issue of English speakers’ uses of “Mock Spanish,” which “incorporates Spanish-language materials into English in order to create a jocular or pejorative ‘key’” and serves to reproduce negative stereotypes and images of this population (p. 682). Although linguistic anthropologists have sought to combat linguistic racism by raising awareness of language issues such as bilingualism and the
myth of “primitive” languages, “Official English” legislation and the relatively recent “moral panic” about whether Ebonics should be taught in schools are evidence that efforts to educate the wider American populace have not been successful (p. 680).

Aranda and Rebollo Gil (2004) offer as evidence of linguistic discrimination the American media equating the Spanish language as well as Spanish accents with “heartless drug dealers, funny maids, and talking Chihuahuas” (p. 917). In these examples, particular television, movie, or commercial characters speak with heavily Spanish-accented English to represent the American Hispanic population in consistently pejorative ways.

Because U.S. race relations are mostly discussed in terms of the Black and White dichotomy, the “sandwiched minorities,” or those individuals from minority groups discriminated against based on culture, origin, or language differences are often ignored. Aranda and Rebollo Gil (2004) suggest that race and racism need to be reconceptualized and set in a multiracial, multicultural context to include the often-ignored ethnic dimensions of the modern American social construct of race (see also Rodriguez, 2003 for a discussion on fluidity and identity). Huddy and Sears (1995) locate what they term a “theoretical dilemma” wherein white Americans seemingly support racial and ethnic tolerance, as well as equality and integration, but continue to exhibit ambivalence about public policies intended to increase opportunities for minority groups. These and other scholars use the terms “symbolic,” “modern” or “new racism” to describe covert racist practices (p. 134). Examples of covert language practices or “color blind racism…the dominant racial ideology of the post-civil rights era” are phrases such as “I am not
prejudiced, but…” and “Some of my best friends are black,” when accompanied by opinions on issues such as interracial marriage or affirmative action (Bonilla-Silva, 2002, pp. 41-42).

Kubota’s (2002) research indicates that multiculturalists have tried to redress power imbalances either by celebrating differences across race, class, and gender or by claiming equality for all. While the one approach emphasizes differences, the other ignores differences altogether, effectively masking the reality of social inequalities. Such efforts, she argues, have been unsuccessful, as “they fail to confront and question various forms of inequality, prejudice, and discrimination associated with different cultures in society” (p. 27). The New York Times article “Now, the Barkeeps May Come From the Ends of the Earth” discussed in Chapter 1 is a telling example of such racialization. This article portrays a positive, feel good image of immigrants as adding to the economy and multicultural flair of Dublin. However, while Mr. Lee, the Korean immigrant and barkeeper in Ireland, along with the larger working immigrant population seemingly bring appreciated diversity and increased business to Dublin, they are clearly outsiders to the normalized Irish majority. As such, ‘they’ conform to certain norms and therefore do not present a threat to Irish culture. By highlighting immigrants’ national and cultural differences, pointedly emphasized in the title, the text assists in framing this population as belonging to the outer margins of mainstream society, effectively suggesting an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy. This is a clear example of new racism or covert racist discourse wherein previous forms of overt racism such as epithets and slurs have been replaced by

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9 And even this positive portrayal is, in a sense, discriminatory and trite, as it draws on stereotypical notions of the immigrant as hard working as well as exotic differences that ‘they’ bring to the Western world.
more subtle discourse practices. Thus, such discriminatory linguistic practices cannot definitively be pinpointed as “racist” at first glance. In fact, the ways in which covert racist discourses manifest (through metaphors, for example) often mask racist ideologies and are probably not readily apparent to a non-critical reader.

Covert Racism and Circulatory Discourses

Van Dijk (2000a) suggests that the new racism “wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence first off denies that it is racism,” often by playing on the theme of difference. As such, new racism manifests in subtle forms, and racist discourse thus couched can be passed off as “‘mere’ talk” (p. 34). He points out instances of the new racism prevalent in a variety of discursive contexts, including parliamentary or congressional hearings on public issues such as immigration to everyday conversation. Van Dijk argues that these subtle instances of racism might be more dangerous than the overt, public racial slurs largely tolerated in the past because those in power (elites) frame discriminatory discourses from vantages of apparently valid ideologies and attitudes. In other work, van Dijk (2000b) suggests that “racism is a complex system of social inequality in which at least the following components are combined”:

a) ideologically based social representations of (and about) groups
b) group members’ mental models of concrete ‘ethnic events’
c) everyday discriminatory discourse and other social practices
d) institutional and organisational structures and activities
e) power relations between dominant white and ethnic majority groups. (p. 93)

Briggs (2005) points out the intersections between medical discourses and the racialization of minority groups. He notes that “[r]acialization and medicalization include control over the production, circulation, and reception of discourses. Racial and medical
knowledge does not simply flow but is dependent on communicative processes structured by inequities of power and resources” (p. 270). Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of circulation in perpetuating racist discourses:

[…] if racialized representations circulate on a daily basis, why do they gain such force when embedded in accounts of epidemics? Why do some narratives become authoritative? Why are statements that challenge them erased from public discourses? Questions of reception are crucial—meanings do not spring directly from textual features but are appropriated through practices of appropriation and reception. (p. 272, emphasis added)

Importantly, in considering racist discourses surrounding immigrants, it is crucial to remember that racialized language gains power the more it is circulated and received by a wider audience. Jane Hill’s (2006) work on the circulatory nature of overt and covert racist discourses clearly demonstrates the ongoing importance of addressing racism in contemporary America. She writes,

A very important context for the circulation and reproduction of overt racist talk and text is the case of moral panics played out in mass media ‘firestorms’ when a prominent public figure is accused of making a racist remark. During such panics the offensive remark is repeated again and again, over days and even weeks, often by those who intend to attack and discredit the speaker. (p. 3)

Indeed, media spokespeople often appear to be horrified (generally conveyed through facial expressions and a serious tone) when reporting occurrences of public racial slurs; however, the coverage inevitably includes repetition of particular racist epithets, and thus the language and embedded stereotypes are circulated more widely and for a longer period of time. Hill uses as example the discovery by the press of Senator George Allen’s (R-VA) common use of the “N-word” as a college student and his subsequent use of the term “macaca” to reference S.R. Sidarth, a member of opponent Jim Webb’s campaign.
Hill draws on a “personalist” language ideologies framework in considering the relationship between persons and language and how racial slurs or racist insinuations seem to merit hours of media discussion:

Overt racist talk raises a scandal […] because the elite consensus about the referential level of language is that statements that members of racialized populations are inferior or marginal are ‘false.’ They must emanate, then, from beliefs that are wrong, and such wrong beliefs discredit the inner selves of these celebrities [or politicians], who function as prototypical models for identity construction on the part of many ordinary people. (p. 5)

In our politically correct, “racism is a thing of the past” notions of contemporary American society, a politician’s or celebrity’s overt racial slur made public to the media, and hence to the general populace, causes scandal or “moral panic” because racism and people who are deemed racist by their utterances are considered—to be overly simplistic—bad or immoral people.

This type of circulation and the sporadic ensuing moral panics receive widespread media coverage on televised news, radio talk shows, entertainment sections of print newspapers, and perhaps most importantly, the World Wide Web, which serves to disseminate stories about public figures’ use of overt racist language widely and quickly. Consider, for example, the American actor and director Mel Gibson’s anti-Semitic comments during an alcohol-related arrest, or Michael Richards (who played Kramer on Seinfeld, an American hit TV show in the 1990s), repeatedly screaming the N-word to a group of African Americans in a nightclub where he was working as a stand-up comedian. Richards made an appearance on the Late Show with David Letterman to apologize, and claimed to be very confused by his angry outburst because, as he said, “I am not a racist” (“‘Kramer’ Apologizes”). Mel Gibson also publicly apologized for his
anti-Semitic slurs, checked himself into a rehabilitation center, and ensuing media
discussions questioned whether Gibson’s intoxicated state at the time that he made the
anti-Semitic comments should excuse his “racism” (Mann, 2006). Referring to the case of
Senator Allen and “macaca,” Hill (2006) points out that “while at all stages the source of
the intensity, and the overt purpose of the argument, was a personalist question, ‘What
kind of man is George Allen?’ [Or Mel Gibson? Or Michael Richards?], White racism
got a free reproductive ride throughout” (p. 12). Hill’s research on the circulation of overt
racist discourse and subsequent media firestorms or moral panics implicates that indeed,
overt racial slurs are not to be tolerated (because look at how upset everyone gets!).
According to Ezekiel (2002), who has employed an ethnographic approach in researching
the Ku Klux Klan,

> White racism remains a major strand in American culture, but as a political force,
it has expressed itself more often as a covert message within mainstream politics.
Major presidential candidates have not hesitated to win support by suggesting that
too much is being done for the undeserving poor, a code word for African
Americans. (p. 68)

Sadly, instances of covert racist discourse go unnoticed every day because they are
disguised in forms of seemingly valid ideologies or by linguistic shading devices such as
“code words” or metaphors.

Van Dijk (1993) maintains that racism extends beyond white supremacist
discourse and overt acts of discrimination. Rather, “racism also involves the everyday,
mundane, negative opinions, attitudes, and ideologies and the seemingly subtle acts and
conditions of discrimination against minorities […] that directly or indirectly contribute
to the dominance of the white group and the subordinate position of minorities” (p. 5).
Included in the concept of racism is *ethnicism*, wherein individuals are discriminated against based on language, religion, customs, or worldviews. Furthermore, contemporary racism is also “culturally based and legitimated,” (p. 15) which is important to consider in the context of the Minuteman Project’s strong identity with and representation of America as a nation and a people who abide by the “rule of law,” unlike the “illegal aliens” who disregard the law.¹⁰ Van Dijk (ibid) focuses primarily on how *elites*—in the political, media, educational, academic, and corporate domains—reproduce and maintain racism in contemporary society through “influential text and talk” (p. 8). Furthermore, he is interested in the *social* and *cognitive* aspects of racist discourse. He argues that “[t]ext and talk are produced and interpreted on the basis of mental models of ethnic events, and such models are in turn shaped by shared social representations in memory (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies) about one’s own group, about minority groups, and about ethnic relations” (p. 14). It is important to remember that there is a history of racialized immigration discourses when considering the Minuteman Project’s web texts. These racialized discourses inform and shape audiences’ perceptions or understandings of Minuteman Project representations of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the context of American immigration talk.

¹⁰ These terms (indicated by quotation marks) are located in the Minuteman Project mission statement, which is the focus of Chapter 3.
Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis

This research employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to examine covert racist language of the Minuteman Project in the broader context of immigration discourses. Specifically, I investigate rhetorical linguistic mechanisms that function in the presentation of self and other, and how the Minuteman Project draws on previously existing metaphors to create a narrative of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ in which immigrants are an imminent threat that will lead to the decline of the nation. A key focus of this dissertation is the Minutemen Project’s extensive use of metaphors and historical, patriotic images in conjunction with its success in appealing to members of the political establishment. This section begins by a consideration of the term ‘discourse,’ and then moves to a discussion of critical discourse analysis, and finally to a discussion of metaphor as a rhetorical trope subsumed under the larger framework of critical discourse analysis. In the data collection and methodology section, I address the medium of the World Wide Web (WWW) as well as my justification for the choices of print and visual texts discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Fairclough (1992) proposes a social theory of discourse, where “any discursive event” (like a news text, for example), “is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice” (p. 4). Within a social theory of discourse,

On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels […] On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive. […] Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it. (p. 64)
Importantly, discourse is constitutive and “contribute[s] to the production, transformation, and reproduction of the objects [...] of social life.” Furthermore, discourse is in active rather than passive relation to reality (pp. 41-42). Fairclough (ibid) hence argues for a three-dimensional method of discourse analysis, that of text, discursive practices, and sociocultural context, which he outlines in detail in other work (Fairclough, 1995; see also Fairclough, 1985 for earlier articulations on critical and descriptive goals of discourse analysis). Such an approach to discourse analysis includes

linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretive) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. (p. 97)

Put another way, a critical approach toward discourse analysis views discourse as a type of “social practice,” entailing “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258, emphasis mine). In the context of my research, the above discussion of a social theory of discourse analysis includes critical analysis of print text and images, analysis of the relationship between the wider context of the Minuteman Project’s identity formation and construction of self and other, and the larger historical, socio-political backdrop of immigration discourses.

Arguing that language is always political, Gee (1999) differentiates between discourses (language in use) and Discourses with a capital “D” to mean language “plus ‘other stuff’” (p. 17) The “other stuff” makes up a “dance that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places” (p. 19). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is concerned with analyzing language
in the context of that dance, taking into account issues of power and social inequities.

Furthermore, Gee (2004) argues that if discourse analysis is not concerned with
“sociopolitical and critical theories of society and its institutions,” then it is not critical (p. 20).

Importantly, CDA is a self-conscious approach to the study of language in context
and is primarily concerned with language and power. ‘Critical discourse analysis’ might be considered an umbrella term to represent various critical approaches to the analysis of discourse. As such, CDA encompasses a wide variety of diverse methodologies that focus critically on both macro and microstructures of discourse to examine word choice, naming, framing, metaphors, and other linguistic devices that assist those in power in the construction of self and other. This approach seeks to encourage wider awareness of how discriminatory discourses both reflect and serve to maintain power imbalances and thus perpetuate negative societal perceptions of minorities. CDA has been criticized as a scholarly approach to discourse analysis, termed “an ideological interpretation and therefore not an analysis” because of the inevitable bias of the researcher toward social justice (Meyer, 2001, p. 17). However, van Dijk (2001) bridges CDA researchers’ inclinations toward social justice with serious scholarship as follows:

CDA is a – critical – perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis ‘with an attitude’. It focuses on social problems, and especially the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. Wherever possible, it does so from a perspective that is consistent with the best interests of dominated groups. It takes the experiences and opinions of members of such groups seriously, and supports their struggle against inequality. That is, CDA research combines what perhaps somewhat pompously used to be called ‘solidarity with the oppressed’ with an attitude of opposition and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power. Unlike much other scholarship, CDA does not deny but explicitly
defines and defends its own sociopolitical position. That is, CDA is biased – and proud of it. (p. 96, emphasis added)

Widdowson (2004) expresses solidarity with the aims of CDA researchers, but takes issue with their methodological practices. He notes that “there has surely never been a time when the need for such an investigation is so urgent, when public uses of language have been so monopolized to further political and capitalist interests to the detriment of public well-being and in denial of human rights and social justice” (p. viii). However, on the issue of methodology he maintains that “CDA […] does not involve the systematic application of S/F [systemic-functional grammar] taken as a whole, but the expedient picking and choosing of whatever aspect of it seems useful for its purposes” (p. 97). Richardson (2007), writing from a journalism perspective, offers an interesting counterbalance in defining CDA. He suggests that critical discourse analysts offer interpretations of the meanings of texts rather than just quantifying textual features and deriving meaning from this; situate what is written or said in the context in which it occurs, rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in text; and argue that textual meaning is constructed through an interaction between producer, text and consumer rather than simply being ‘read off’ the page by all readers in exactly the same way. (p. 15, emphasis original)

According to Wodak (2001a), CDA “aims to investigate critically social inequality as expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)” (p. 2). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2004) place critical discourse analysis within the realms of critical social science, linguistics, and critical research on social change, and seek to locate the place of this approach in the context of contemporary, ‘modern’ (or postmodern) society. CDA emerged and gained in popularity throughout the 1990s when
scholars employing the approach in various ways met to discuss theories and methods. Although methods employed in CDA research are varied, three concepts are central to this approach: Power, history, and ideology. Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis are often used interchangeably, and both have roots in various disciplines, including text linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and classical rhetoric (Wodak, 2001a, pp. 3-5). Importantly, the development of critical discourse analysis is also indebted to social semiotics researchers (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress and Hodge, 1979) (in van Dijk, 1993b, p. 251).

Because critical discourse analysis is interdisciplinary, researchers place primacy on different aspects of the approach depending on which discipline most informs their scholarship. However, the various approaches and methodologies employed to investigate text and talk are not at odds with one another. For example, Wodak places primacy on a discourse-historical approach:

in investigating historical, organizational and political topics and texts, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded (2001b, p. 65).

Indeed, it is crucial to consider the location of political discourse within the larger context of previous and concurrent discourses surrounding a given issue. As Meyer (2001) points out, “one important characteristic arises from the assumption of CDA that all discourses are historical and can therefore only be understood in reference to their context” (p. 15).

Although context is crucial for all CDA researchers, topics of focus and research interests will affect choices in theoretical frameworks as well as methodological
decisions. In contrast to Wodak, van Dijk, for example, is interested in context models and social psychological aspects of CDA.

In this dissertation, I do not employ a discourse historical approach in Wodak’s sense of the term; however, I background the historicity of immigration discourses as well as the prominent role that highly circulated discriminatory metaphors and stereotypes of immigrants play in positioning the Minuteman Project in the broader context of national immigration discourses. The Minuteman Project is interesting precisely because of the larger political implications of its influence on or engagement with ongoing national discourses about immigration reform and border security issues. Wodak (2001b) articulates the importance of considering how discourse shapes discourse as follows:

If we take politicians, for example, as specific and not at all homogeneous groups of elites, then they are best seen both as shapers of specific public opinions and interests and as seismographs, that reflect and react to the atmospheric anticipation of changes in public opinion and to the articulation of changing interests of specific social groups and affected parties. The relationships between media, politics (all genres) and ‘people’ are very complex. Up to now, we have not been able to provide clear answers about who influences who and how these influences are directed. Only interdisciplinary research will be able to make such complex relationships more transparent. Simple conspiracy theories do not seem valid in our global societies. (p. 64)

Wodak touches on a necessarily complex issue—political discourses serve as both “shapers” of opinion and “seismographs that reflect and react to” public opinion. In her extensive analyses of anti-Semitic discourses in Austria, she takes into account a large body of historical information to position contemporary discriminatory discourses in a larger political and economic context. The Minuteman Project’s identity formation might also be examined in terms of a seismograph model: what external influences shape the
manner in which this organization approaches construction of self and other? And can one pin down concrete aspects of Minuteman Project self-identity that draw more volunteers and politicians to heed its solicitations? In addition, there are interesting parallels between the current administration’s move for immigration reform and Minuteman Project rhetoric. The citizen activist group’s recommendations are quickly becoming public policy.

Throughout this project, I draw mostly on the work of van Dijk, as his research seems to be most relevant for the analysis of metaphors in the context of cultural frames or constructs. That said, in his chapter encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to CDA, he opens with

In this chapter I formulate principles and practical guidelines for doing critical discourse analysis (CDA). This does not mean, however, that I offer a ready-made ‘method van Dijk’ of doing CDA. I have no such method. Nor do I represent an ‘approach’, ‘school’ or other scholarly sect that seems so attractive to many scholars. I am against personality cults. I do not want colleagues or students to ‘follow’ me – a form of academic obsequiousness that I find incompatible with a critical attitude” (2001, p. 95)

And yet, the principles that van Dijk outlines for a scholarly, methodological approach to critical discourse analysis fit best with my current topic of research, so his work is drawn on most often throughout this research project. In other work, van Dijk (1993b) argues that “CDA should deal primarily with the discourse dimension of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it” (p. 252). Furthermore, he emphasizes that understanding the crucial roles of social power and dominance is primary in undertaking a critical discourse analysis approach:

That is, while focusing on social power, we ignore purely personal power, unless enacted as an individual realization of group power, that is, by individuals as
group members. Social power is based on privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge. (p. 254)

The Minuteman Project, founded by two individuals, has managed to grow rapidly in numbers and receive widespread media attention through alliances with the political establishment, widespread dissemination of ideas, and membership solicitation via the World Wide Web. Primarily, this organization has gained social power through its relentless efforts in positioning itself in relation to its opposition and by developing strategies of in-group membership through text, images, and consumer goods. The extensive nationwide network that this group has created lends it legitimacy in numbers as well as familiarity in name. The group employs patriotic images from the pre-American Revolution period to procure credibility. The Minuteman Project sells as commodity in-group membership and the noble cause of protecting the border from undocumented crossers by offering a variety of wearable merchandise. In this way, the group encourages its web audience to literally ‘buy into’ its ideals by promoting its group.

Mainly, the Minuteman Project has been extremely influential in characterizing immigrants as invaders and imminent threats to the nation. The group has accomplished what van Dijk (1993b) terms “managing the minds of others” (p. 254) through dissemination of biased information via the web and mass email lists. Importantly, CDA is not an approach employed to “discover” racism, but rather to describe the mechanism by which racist discourses are enacted:

Critical discourse analysis is an approach, a way of looking at texts, not a rigorously systematic method of analysis. In a manner not unlike that of the
literary critic, a critical discourse analyst should use his or her best judgment as to which concepts are most appropriate to an insightful understanding of the text at hand. In most cases, the basic insight is gained during an initial reading of the text, before the CDA concepts are fully applied. In other words, CDA is not a “discovery” mechanism per se; rather, it serves to confirm, explain, and enrich the initial insight and to communicate that insight, in detailed fashion, to others. (Huckin, 2002, p. 163)

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how racism flourishes as subtle and under the radar, and is thereby attractive to rightwing political groups, which further adds legitimacy to the organization. There does not seem to be a major moral panic surrounding the Minuteman Project. The labels vigilantes and xenophobes to refer to members of the group are primarily found in alternative news sources which are less widely circulated and harder to find than mainstream press sources.

Van Dijk has done extensive analyses on how elite discourse serves to maintain and reproduce inequalities in society (1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 2000a). He focuses specifically on how majority groups talk and write about minorities, and argues that discourse “expresses, persuasively conveys and legitimates ethnic or racial stereotypes and prejudices among white group members” (1993c, p. 87). He is especially interested in political, media, educational, scholarly and corporate discourses, venues wherein elites have more access than minority groups. Importantly, van Dijk suggests that denials play a critical role in the identification of racist discourse. Racism denials are categorized as an “interaction strategy” in the sense that they serve to maintain positive self-presentation and face (1993c, pp. 179-180).

Importantly, “critical discourse analysts want to know what structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events” assist in
maintaining and reproducing racism (van Dijk, 1993b p. 250). Furthermore, in approaching text or talk, the objective of the researcher is to “systematically describe the various structures and strategies of text or talk, and relate these to the social, political or political context” (van Dijk, 2000a, p. 35, emphasis mine). For example, he applies a framework of forms and functions of racism denials in his examination of parliamentary hearings on immigration and ethnic issues in Britain, and reveals how “disclaimers, mitigations, euphemisms, transfers” among other forms of denials aid white speakers to “credibly…present the ‘others’ in a negative light” (1993c, p. 193). This dissertation argues that the Minuteman Project continues to flourish and gain access to elites, in part, because the organization draws heavily on disclaimers, euphemisms, and transfers. At the same time, the denials and disclaimers serve to create a safe space for mainstream politicians to express open support for Minuteman Project activities. Within a CDA approach, context is vital. Furthermore, this approach presupposes that the researcher is aware of the power in social structures as well as the power (or lack thereof) of the participants in any given situation.

Van Dijk (1993b) outlines concrete aspects of discourse that can be analyzed in regards to ‘us’ versus ‘them’ persuasion: argumentation, rhetorical figures, lexical style, storytelling, structural emphasis, quoting others, and, of course, semantic content (p. 264). Taking into account context or the larger backdrop in which political discourse is located includes paying attention to access, setting, genre, communicative acts and social meanings, participants and their roles, speech acts, macrosemantics, and text schemata (pp. 270-274). Importantly, van Dijk (2000a) points to the power of the media in
disseminating racist discourses because it serves as “the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens.” A case in point is that common recurring immigration news events in the media include characterization of deviance and a focus on threats of immigrants to the population at large (pp. 36-38).

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), discourse analysis must consider the “semiotic resources of communication, the modes and the media used, and the communicative practices in which these resources are used” (p. 111). CDA researchers have traditionally drawn on newspaper articles or other print texts (e.g. transcripts of interviews or parliamentary hearings) as a site of analysis. I argue that this dissertation adds to CDA research by investigating web discourses and grappling with the complexities and challenges that the Web presents to a discourse analyst. The objective of my research is to describe and analyze how the Minuteman Project employs web images and print text to its advantage to represent itself, its mission, and multiple others, while considering the larger context of the federal administration’s approach to immigration reform. The medium that this organization employs (World Wide Web) to impart its message and define itself will be considered later in this chapter.

Metaphor as Framing Strategy

Metaphor as a trope, rhetorical strategy or linguistic device is subsumed under a critical discourse analysis approach. Research on metaphor varies widely depending on the discipline from which it is approached. In this dissertation, I do not draw on cognitive theories of metaphor; rather, I am interested in how metaphors are employed to construct
participant roles in argumentation. Studies in pejorative metaphors and representations of minority groups (often termed ‘Others’ in the literature) are compatible with the goals of CDA. Both seek to locate underlying ideologies of speakers or writers toward minority groups by analyzing discursive messages or interactions in print text and images, which can include those on the medium of the World Wide Web. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” and that metaphor permeates everyday social life, including language, thought and action; in fact, they propose that the very nature of a human conceptual system is “fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (pp. 3-4). Therefore, one must examine language in order to locate the metaphors that pervade and influence our interactions. Language serves as a reflection of conceptual metaphors, and a given conceptual metaphor will be rooted in experience, or culture. As such, metaphors can point toward underlying notions or beliefs about particular experiences or groups of people. Arguing that linguistic metaphors point toward cultural assumptions and beliefs, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that “the most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in a culture” (p. 22). These claims are especially important when examining how metaphor functions in political discourse. Lakoff and Johnson point out that metaphor use can construct social realities:

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies. (p. 156)
They outline multiple linguistic examples such as the well known ARGUMENT AS WAR metaphor in which American English speakers draw on metaphors such as “Your claims are indefensible” and “You disagree? Okay, shoot!” (p. 4). The authors emphasize that war language is not merely borrowed to depict an argument; rather, speakers actually conceptualize argument in terms of war, in the sense that one can win or lose an argument.

Central to the cognitivist perspective on how metaphor functions is the notion of conceptual mapping from a source domain to a target domain. In general, the source domain references some aspect of the human physical world, and is familiar to humans (or to speakers). The target domain, on the other hand, is more conceptual or abstract in nature, and speakers rely on the more familiar source domain to “get a handle on” or “embody” the target (Santa Ana, 2002, p. 26). Palmer (1996) offers an example of how this works using illustrations from Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) ARGUMENT metaphor. Metaphoric expressions surrounding argument draw on the language of buildings or constructions, where “verbal arguments provide the target domain of the metaphor—the thing we are talking about—[and] our schematic knowledge of buildings provides the source domain” (p. 223).

Metaphors are systematic and vary across cultures. The systematicity of metaphors means that a metaphor system includes subcategories, which lead to entailments. For example, in ‘modern Western culture,’ time is considered valuable. The concepts TIME IS MONEY, TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, AND TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), “are metaphorical since we
[Western cultures] are using our everyday experiences with money, limited resources, and valuable commodities to conceptualize time” (p. 9, emphasis mine). These concepts make up a single system supported by subcategories: Money is a resource that is limited and therefore a valuable commodity; thus, TIME IS MONEY entails that TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, which in turn entails that TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. In this way, metaphorical subcategories signal entailment relationships. In this research, I am interested in how metaphors of immigrants as invaders and ‘illegal immigration’ as war draw on pejorative source domains to legitimize action against the target, ‘illegal immigrants.’

Naomi Quinn (1991), contends that culture merits a more central position in Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) argument. She argues that the proposition that metaphors essentially constitute abstract concepts (placing metaphor as constitutive of understanding to a greater or lesser degree), is not substantiated, especially given that they rely on an intuitive understanding of language and culture (and idealized examples of metaphorical expressions), and not on real discourse (pp. 64-65). Through a discourse analysis of real language data (as opposed to Lakoff and Johnson’s hypothetical examples), she attempts to show that “metaphors, far from constituting understanding, are ordinarily selected to fit a preexisting and culturally shared model” (p. 60). Ultimately, she suggests, “metaphor, far from being productive of understanding, is actually highly constrained by understanding” (p. 66). Quinn points toward the necessity of using real language data, and insists that cultural models, rather than metaphorical understandings, are pivotal in discussions of how worldviews are constructed.
Lakoff does, in fact, turn to real language data in later, more politically invested research (1995, 2002, 2003, 2004). Employing a cognitive metaphor framework, Lakoff makes connections between underlying values or beliefs of liberals and conservatives and the parties’ diverse perspectives on a range of issues. Discussing social and political issues such as the environment, education, family, and campaign and war rhetoric, he demonstrates that metaphors are reflective of ideology and can be employed to justify political decisions. Lakoff (2002) argues that differing worldviews of liberals and conservatives might be understood in light of the NATION AS FAMILY metaphor. Political differences arise because conservatives embody a Strict Father model, whereas liberals—or progressives—adhere to a Nurturant Parent view of the family (p. 12). By using the overarching conceptual metaphor of Nation as Family, he locates numerous underlying metaphors in political rhetoric. In Don’t Think of an Elephant, Lakoff (2004) ventures outside of scholarly, academic discussions to present a jargon-free analysis to Americans who are working for (or at least interested in) social change. He contends that conservatives have been much savvier in framing issues, evidenced by the use of language such as “The Clear Skies Initiative” and “No Child Left Behind.”

Researchers who draw on metaphor theory and political framing share a common ground with CDA researchers in their objective to make clear to educators and the public that language is a powerful political tool capable of influencing public policy through persuasion. For example, Lakoff’s (2003) research on metaphors embedded in presidential rhetoric points toward the power of this linguistic device in influencing the public and providing justification for such monumental decisions as going to war. Santa
Ana (1999, 2002) locates widespread use of racist immigrant and Latino metaphors in mainstream texts such as the *Los Angeles Times* and various California propositions. Arguing that “the use of metaphor on a daily basis in public/political discourse permits the creation of common ground by appeal to a shared cultural frame,” (p. 195) he demonstrates how metaphors can be used creatively by those in public office to depict certain groups in a negative light and thereby influence public policy.

The Minuteman Project draws heavily on metaphor in self and other representations. Its extremely negative portrayal of undocumented immigrants through metaphor must be considered in light of cultural models of its American audience. Metaphors employed by the Minuteman Project are successful because of shared cultural constructs, which again highlights the importance of considering various contexts surrounding a given issue in a critical discourse analysis approach. In a discussion on manipulative silences in discourse, Huckin (2002b) draws on van Dijk to stress the importance of context:

> Van Dijk defines context in general as ‘the structured set of all properties of a social situation that are possibly relevant for the production, structures, interpretation and functions of text and talk’ (Van Dijk, 1998:211); emphasis added [by Huckin]. In particular cases, the actual content consists of those features that are relevant to the topic at hand for the participants involved; in cognitive terms, the text producer and the text interpreter each construct a mental model of the situation, or what Van Dijk calls a context model, based on their personal experience and social knowledge. (p. 353)

Historical and patriotic images posted on the website of the Minuteman Project support metaphors in print texts. Audience interpretation of these images and metaphors can only be understood in light of the larger context—despite cultural differences existent within the U.S., an American audience will recognize and understand the connotations of iconic
symbols or images. Van Dijk (1993b) links context models to ideologies, arguing that for critical discourse analysis,

> ideologies are the fundamental social cognitions that reflect the basic aims, interests and values of groups. They may (metaphorically and hence vaguely) be seen as the fundamental cognitive ‘programmes’ or ‘operating systems’ that organize and monitor the more specific social attitudes of groups and their members. (p. 258)

He acknowledges, however, that what ideologies as such “look like exactly” and how they might “strategically control the development or change of attitudes” is, in effect, unknown (p. 258). Important for this research is the examination of how the Minuteman Project reuses and reproduces negative portrayals of immigrants to concretize discriminatory models of this population for the American public. For van Dijk (1993b),

> The core of critical discourse analysis [...] is a detailed description, explanation and critique of the ways dominant discourses (indirectly) influence such socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, namely through their role in the manufacture of concrete models. More specifically, we need to know how specific discourse structures determine specific mental processes, or facilitate the formation of specific social representations. Thus, it may be the case that specific rhetorical figures, such as hyperboles or metaphors, preferentially affect the organization of models or the formation of opinions embodied in such models. (pp. 258-259, emphasis added)

The Minuteman Project relies heavily on hyperbole in its creation of metaphorical narratives of self and other wherein ‘illegal immigrants’ are designated the general role of ‘invaders.’ The Minuteman Project is therefore better able to ‘fortify’ its position (to use a battle metaphor) of ‘protector’ of the nation. It is crucial, however, to consider this rhetoric in the larger framework of national immigration discourses to understand how American audiences might understand and be affected by these metaphors. The next
section discusses previous research on negative representations of minority groups, including immigrants and second language speakers.
Metaphors and Representations of Others: Review of the Literature

Many researchers have employed CDA for what Woodside-Jiron (2004) terms a powerful “social lens for change” because it illuminates “the links between policy and those who experience policy firsthand” (p. 203). She examines the discourse surrounding changes in California reading policies from 1995-1997, when policymakers identified a “crisis in education,” and consequently, called on various experts in an endeavor to redefine how teachers approach reading instruction (pp. 174-180). Lawmakers crept into the educational arena, usurping to some degree the local control of experienced instructors. This type of work has concrete implications for educators, as it raises awareness of power issues and points to how educators might take action when policy makers interfere in instructional practices.

Van Dijk (2001) notes that hyperbole and metaphor are effective strategies to polarize ‘us’ (in-groups) and ‘them’ (out-groups) (pp. 103-108). The metaphors embedded in Minuteman Project texts are certainly not original. Researchers across a wide variety of disciplines have located common metaphoric themes in immigration discourses that point to discriminatory ideologies and underlying assumptions about the population most commonly termed ‘illegal immigrants.’ In fact, the Minuteman Project draws on previously existing metaphors and then takes them to another level to create complicated narratives with particular roles for particular players.

O’Brien (2003) examines metaphoric themes underlying the early immigration restriction debate of the 1900s and locates themes such as the “organism metaphor,” wherein the community is seen as corresponding to a physical body. This overarching
theme allows for other linguistic metaphors relating to disease, discomfort, or disfigurement because “just as the integrity of our own bodies may be threatened by contaminating external elements, so too is the social body vulnerable to corruption by invading sub-groups” (p. 36). As immigrants gradually increased a century ago, people began to fear that they would take over communities, and perhaps even the entire nation (which is exactly what the Minuteman Project depicts through text and images). O’Brien demonstrates that pejorative metaphors related to the arrival of immigrants in the rhetoric of the early 20th century include IMMIGRANT AS OBJECT, NATURAL CATASTROPHE, WAR, ANIMAL, and SUBHUMAN. He contends that these harmful metaphors served simultaneously to disparage immigrants and to increase both conscious and subconscious fear among the U.S. population of that time. Sadly, 100 years later not much has changed. These metaphors have consistently been sustained, circulated, recycled, and embellished to sustain the American public’s level of fear and perception of immigrants as invaders, animals, and subhuman. He warns that discourse that denigrates marginalized groups as dangers to society

Constitute[s] an important and possibly essential precursor to inhumane or adverse social policies [and that] justification for limiting the rights of minority groups requires the development of negative social images of these groups in question; images that are often fostered through the use of both linguistic and conceptual metaphors. (p. 44)

As evidenced in the work of O’Brien, negative immigrant stereotypes and metaphors have been around for decades. The Minuteman Project web discourses, therefore, must be situated in this larger historical framework.
Santa Ana (1999, 2002) points out negative portrayals of Latin Americans in the *Los Angeles Times*, arguing that racist metaphors in the mainstream press affect readers’ views at an unconscious level. His work demonstrates that Americans are already accustomed to depictions of immigrants as national disasters or invaders or animals. In a discourse analysis of hundreds of articles related to anti-immigrant discourse printed in the *Los Angeles Times*, Santa Ana (1999) discovers pejorative metaphors that are frighteningly similar to the ones that existed 100 years ago. In *Brown Tide Rising*, Santa Ana (2002) explores racist Latin American metaphors evident in media discussions surrounding public policy. In an investigation of the metaphors surrounding California’s racially motivated Propositions 187, 209, and 227 in the *Los Angeles Times* in the 1990s, he depicts derogatory metaphors surrounding Latin American immigrants, and argues that these are “the key components with which the public’s concept of Latinos is edified, reinforced, and articulated” (xvi).

Wardi’s (1999) analysis of constructions of Arab Americans and Muslims exposes rhetorical practices that depict people of Arab backgrounds as monsters. She examines particular instances of language in the construction of the other and notes that whereas the Middle East used to be portrayed exotically as a place of “mystery, danger, and illicit sexuality,” the current trend in pejorative representations of this group has turned to demonizing Arabs and Islam:

The one-dimensional renderings of Arab men and women are manifest in our societal discourse and used as cultural currency by virtue of the fact that these images are widely held in the West as valid representations of Arab people. (p. 32)
One poignant example is the selling of Arab sheik masks at Halloween, so that children can “dress up” as Arabs—the masks belonged to a “Monster-Mask” line, and were a “hideous caricature” of this population (p. 32). She notes the identification of “terrorist” and Arab men in the media—ranging from Disney’s Aladdin to Sesame Street to the American movie Not Without My Daughter. Wardi (1999) argues that the regularity of these images portrayed in the mass media accompanied by a lack of critique of the negative representations assist in creating an accepted depiction of otherness. Accordingly, these representations play a fundamental role in the definition and maintenance of American politics. Her research has implications for the portrayal of immigrants and Latinos. Increasingly, as protecting the Mexican-American border has been linked discursively to taking security measures against terrorists, minority groups are conflated, and thereby identities are erased. All of the nation’s fears seem to be projected onto a conflated entity of non-White, non-English speaking Others.

Caldas-Coulthard (1999) employs “modes of representation” in her discourse analysis of news events to locate significant cultural themes associated with representing the Other. She focuses specifically on how the British press represents Brazilian immigrants through print text and images, and how Brazilian publications, in turn, draw on humor in news publications to subvert the racist perspectives of the West. For example, she finds that Latin American countries are underrepresented in the news, and when they are represented, it is often based on negative newsworthiness, as in the

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11 Not Without My Daughter came out in 1990, starring Sally Field as the American wife of an Iranian who was a “good husband” in the U.S., but then became abusive and controlling when they moved to Iran. Importantly, Wardi (1999) points out that no subtitles are provided for viewers during the scenes in which multiple people are speaking at once (assumedly in Farsi), which serves to devoice the people of this nation.
headline “BRAZILIANS EAT HUMAN REMAINS FROM HOSPITAL WASTE” (p. 281). She focuses specifically on how the British press represents Brazilian immigrants through print text and images, and how Brazilian publications, in turn, draw on humor in news publications to subvert the racist perspectives of the West.

Mehan (1996, 1997) draws on a framework of “modes” or “politics of representation” to examine the construction of others. Mehan (1996) examines rhetorical strategies employed in framing immigrants as the enemy in California’s Proposition 187. He notes the different ways in which supporters and opponents of the proposition represented immigrants, focusing particularly on how portrayals and naming practices assisted in the construction of immigrants as either ‘us’ or ‘them.’ Following van Dijk, Mehan speaks out strongly against “elitist discourse” on the part of the State, arguing “the idea that the immigrant is the enemy does not just bubble up naturally in the citizenry” (p. 267). He calls for a deeper understanding of underlying discursive practices in order to strategize more successfully against derogatory and divisive rhetoric. This dissertation considers the discursiveness between the Minuteman Project’s rhetoric and the federal government’s emerging policies on immigration reform and border security.

Sandikcioglu (2003) examines metaphors in media coverage of the Persian Gulf War, and points to a gap in previous rhetorical studies of this conflict—that is, the connection between these metaphors and the larger conceptual framework of Orientalism. The author outlines features that depict what he terms “the modern version of the West’s colonialist approach to the rest of the world” (p. 303). The ‘us’ versus ‘them’ relationship set up by the Western media is asymmetrical in nature, depicting ‘us’
(the West) as embodying *civilization, power, maturity, rationality, and stability* as opposed to ‘them’ (the East) who exemplify *barbarism, weakness, immaturity, emotionality, and instability* (pp. 303-304). This dissertation locates similar competing metaphors in immigration discourses wherein immigrants or ‘illegal aliens’ are set in sharp contrast to ‘us.’ Because the Minuteman Project is not a member of the political establishment, it has more freedom to draw on hyperbole and metaphor in its depiction of immigrants. At the same time, in order to distance itself from openly racist organizations, it employs strategies of exhibiting tolerance toward the same groups that it constructs as Others (undocumented workers, lawmakers, law enforcers, policymakers, Congress, and the Administration in general).

Multiple researchers have demonstrated common and frequent use of discriminatory metaphors, and indeed, the Minuteman Project’s construction of undocumented migrants or residents is certainly not new or radical, nor any more racist than much of the mainstream press. Rather, it could be that the plethora of metaphors existent in the mainstream press, such as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*, makes the Minuteman Project’s task of constructing undocumented migrants and residents as ‘illegal,’ and ‘alien’ that much easier. In other words, if, as researchers have demonstrated, the public is used to discriminatory metaphors, then they will not appear to be wildly racist when delivered again (albeit a bit more strongly) by the Minuteman Project. This organization is interesting, however, in its capacity to draw on racist metaphors as a rhetorical vehicle to mobilize and gain support of so many volunteers while not ostracizing members of the political establishment who have public reputations
at stake. Van Dijk argues that elite discourse functions in a top-down manner; this
dissertation explores how racist discourses circulate so quickly and widely on the World
Wide Web, to complicate notions of ‘where’ (if anywhere) they begin or end. What are
the discursive relationships or mechanisms of the circulation of discourses between
citizenship and government? My intention in this research is not to be overly concerned
by which direction (top-down or bottom-up or circulatory) it functions; rather, I seek to
point to parallels and interrelationships between citizen and government discourses in the
context of the larger national debate on immigration ‘control’ and policy reform.
Data Collection and the World Wide Web

Van Dijk (2001) emphasizes the importance of *selection* in analyzing discourse. The context, topic, and research focus inform particular choices of textual analysis. Furthermore, he calls for data collection and analyses from “other discourse genres,” noting that much CDA research is based on analyses of transcripts, news reports, textbooks, parliamentary and congressional records, and letters and informal communication (1993a, p.12). This dissertation analyzes data collected from the World Wide Web to add to the growing body of CDA research. WWW technology presents researchers with a wide variety of sites to access immigration discourses to examine various rhetorical strategies employed by both citizen voices and the political establishment. The mutable nature of the WWW allows for continual revision of authorial identity. Burnett and Marshall (2003) articulate well the complicated nature of the World Wide Web:

To write about the possibilities and the problems which the Web poses for any form of research, it is necessary to cope with its chameleon-like nature. From the point of view of the media analyst, the Web is just as complex and enigmatic a medley of modes as a John Coltrane jazz composition, for it can be regarded as a kind of postal service, or as a town hall meeting, or even an electronic Hyde Park Speaker’s Corner. It is at once a newspaper, a bookstore, a library, a museum, a shopping mall and so forth. It can be superficial, profound, entertaining, boring and a tremendous source of information and tool for communication. It is a media form that subsumes and potentially changes all electronic media. (p. 2)

The above quotation vividly captures the multiple dimensions of the Web. I would add to this poetic description that the WWW can also be extremely frustrating and, at times, overwhelming for the researcher who seeks to ‘capture’ that which is always changing. The WWW as a site of data collection has definite limitations and drawbacks—it changes
so rapidly that a researcher must be extremely diligent in archiving pages so that data is not lost. Well-designed websites such as those of the Minuteman Project and the MCDC have multiple deep links that quickly carry the user through cyberspace to new pages of information. As such, the mutability of web material offers, at best, only a blurred lens into the changing alignments of actions of websites.

As noted in the introduction, in spring of 2006, the original Minuteman Project began what would be an eventual split into two groups: the Minuteman Project and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC). At that time, the homepage of www.minutemanproject.com was revised to allow the web browser the option of entering one of two portals: The Minuteman Project for Internal Vigilance (which brought the user to the homepage of the Minuteman Project at www.minutemanproject.com) or the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC) (which brought the user to a new web address, www.minutemanhq.com). The two groups continued to separate gradually, and their respective websites increasingly reflected the different foci.

The data analyzed in this dissertation includes the following:

1) The original Minuteman Project “About Us” statement, which I consider and refer to as its mission statement;
2) a print text or ‘article’ responding to large-scale student walkouts in southern California in March 2006. This article was authored by the Minuteman Project and posted on the homepage of the original website;
3) a second text responding to the student walkouts that was sent to subscribers via email;
4) brief print texts posted on the website that serve as statements of tolerance toward others or instances of positive self-representation; and
5) visual images that explore how particular web images support or subvert linguistic messages in proximal print text web postings.
During the initial months of my research spent analyzing the mission statement and other texts, the group had not split, and listed James Gilchrist and Chris Simcox as the co-founders. Even after the split, when both groups maintained and continued to develop separate websites, the mission statement remained the same on www.minutemanproject.com from October 2004 through early spring of 2007 (personal observation). However, by early June 2007, the mission statement analyzed in Chapter 3 was no longer posted online. Although there is still an “About Us” link, it is currently linked to a profile on James Gilchrist. Throughout the process of researching these texts, the Minuteman Project website (www.minutemanproject.com), though updated daily, did not change substantially in terms of design. Although it expanded links to include new events such as a book club and radio show, the website remained consistent in its general format as well as its consistency in posting the latest news at the top of the homepage. Other, older news remained on the site, and thus, the homepage was a long, scrolling page of many events in reverse chronological order. Eventually, perhaps the page got too long, because one substantial change to the format was to keep the long scrolling pages but add the instruction to click on the hyperlinked “Next” in the lower right-hand corner to access more long-scrolling pages.

Meyer (2001) points out that one characteristic of CDA is “its continuous feedback between analysis and data collection” (p. 16). Certainly, this has been the case throughout this project, as specific choices of data subsequently lead to other choices based on current national immigration discourses. For example, I chose the mission statement as a baseline text because it introduces the Minuteman Project and
demonstrates this organization’s self-positioning within national immigration discourses. In late March 2006, student protests related to imminent immigrant legislation received national media attention, including a reactionary article or response text posted on the homepage of the Minuteman Project website. This web article therefore presented an opportunity to examine how the Minuteman Project responds to immigration related events as well as how the organization has continued to develop over time (the mission statement was posted in October 2004 whereas the response to the protests was posted in late March 2006). The response commentary to be discussed in Chapter 4 was originally posted at the top of the homepage—it was the latest news at the end of March 2006. Later, as more articles were posted, it was moved to the bottom of the scrolling homepage, and then eventually the user had to click “Next” five times to access it. The original scrolling pages indicate a fan-based community, and newer members or interested visitors can scroll through to learn what came previously. This type of site design serves as a showcase or storehouse for all types of Minutemen Project activities and postings.\textsuperscript{12} At the time of this writing, however, the long-scrolling pages are gone and both sites appear more institutional-like in design, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In addition to the response posting posted on the homepage of the website, the Minuteman Project distributed a mass email also related to the immigration protests.\textsuperscript{13} This presented an opportunity to examine another web medium—that of mass email distribution wherein an unknown (to me) number of subscribers receive the same information at the same time. Unlike web articles, email arrives directly into one’s inbox,

\textsuperscript{12} Amy Kimme-Hea, personal communication.
\textsuperscript{13} I have been a Minuteman Project email subscriber since January 2006.
thereby facilitating the ease with which one can click and read the latest Minuteman Project news. Also unlike web articles, one has to subscribe to be on an email list. To subscribe to the list, therefore, could be considered a move toward in-group membership.

Importantly, Kimme Hea (2007) points out that the “move toward critical, self-reflexive WWW research is not without its own complications. The WWW’s mutable nature, continued growth, and confluence of visual, aural, and hypertextual forms are difficult factors for a researcher to negotiate” (p. 2). Indeed, it is precisely those elements that make researching web texts both intriguing and frustrating. Kimme Hea argues that without attention to the broader aspects of the Web as a medium, researchers may miss some of the significant interrelationships among the modes of the WWW and its ideological and political messages. […] We should be mindful of ways in which technologies, like the WWW, cannot be examined outside of their cultural practices and our own research methods cannot be seen as neutral or easily transportable across contexts. (pp. 3-4)

It is important to highlight the differences between examining web texts versus transcripts of speeches or congressional hearings. For example, in a speech or an interview transcript, the researcher can go back and locate exactly what transpired linguistically. However, because the WWW is ever changing, mutable, and unpredictable as to when (or at what specific link) it will show updates, it is extremely challenging, if not impossible, for the researcher to keep track of the ongoing changes that reflect critically on the social identification or political agenda of a given institution or organization. Therefore, the researcher must make choices and acknowledge that textual selections from web-based sources will offer only a partial lens into a larger picture of an organization’s discourse.
In a discussion of previous research primarily directed toward personal web pages, Hine (2001) questions whether the “self presentation” framework might be applied to considering institutional and organizational web pages. The major social science framework for considering web pages has been to analyze them as “a form of construction of self, or self-presentation” (p. 183). She writes,

> The potential exists to apply the ‘self-presentation’ framework, and consider the web page as a form of identity project for the organization. However, if excluding consideration of context is problematic for personal homepages, it is even more so for organizational websites. It is clear that organizations are producing websites for multiple reasons, many of which they may poorly understand themselves. (pp. 183-184)

Indeed, in the context of this research, the Minuteman Project began with two members and only later grew into what might be defined as an “organization.” At different points in the process of development, the authors created a pledge, a standard operation of procedures, an online membership form, and declared itself an official organization (and also obtained the paperwork to confirm its existence and copyright its name). But who, in fact, is the “author(s)” of these pages? And how can anyone know for certain who the audience is? Hine (2001) interviews authors of university websites to examine notions of the authors’ concepts of imagined audiences and web presence and concludes that for the web authors, the audience is “multiple, fragmented and contested” (p. 195). For the purposes of this project, I refer to the authors of the web pages as “Minuteman Project,” understanding that there exist, most probably, multiple individuals who author the pages. I make assumptions about the audience based on how quickly the organization has grown (evidenced by the number of Minuteman state chapters and the split into two groups), as well as the material and messages on the web pages. But my primary point of interest is
the rhetorical mechanisms, particularly use of metaphor, that the organization employs to impart messages and construct identities.

Mitchell (2006) examines the development of the We Are Not Afraid website, which was created in response to the July 2005 bombings in London. This site served as a location where users from around the world could post images of solidarity against terrorist acts. He looks at the “communicative ripples caused by site,” including the creation of related sites that posted more satirical or explicitly religious imagery than the We Are Afraid site (p. 148). He points to how “the visual signs of identity and the markers of community become far less fixed and stable through their exposure in the public domain of the World Wide Web” because the signs are “highly elastic”:

> With the advent of digital technologies, pictures and photographs have become easy to manipulate and to send rapidly around the globe. In the age of sailing ships, to transport a framed picture between continents would have taken several weeks of costly and potentially dangerous travel. Today, for those with access to the appropriate technology, it can be transported in a few seconds across thousands of miles by no more than a few taps on a keyboard and several clicks of a plastic mouse. (pp. 149-150)

The Minuteman Project uses World Wide Web technology to its advantage by digitally altering photographs to quickly circulate racist messages to its audience. The multimodal nature of the Web captures browser interest with colors and links and the ability to travel through cyberspace in seconds. Representations of self and other are more vividly created by juxtaposing print text and visuals. As such, organizations are able to connect more personally with wider audiences. Chapters 3 and 4 will examine contradicting messages and identity shifts in the Minuteman Project made possible through the technology of the Web.
CHAPTER 3: MANUFACTURING IDENTITY AND IN-GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Overview

The Minuteman Project has been extremely vocal and, arguably, perhaps somewhat influential in national immigration discourses preceding government measures that have increased security on the Mexican-American border. Media sources across the political spectrum have covered the Minuteman Project, and thus the organization has been portrayed in various ways, from a progressive and committed group of heroic citizens working to reform immigration policy to racist border vigilantes akin to the Ku Klux Klan. Despite some negative press coverage, the Minuteman Project and the newer Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC) have continued to expand, and have consistently updated their websites to reflect national happenings in the domain of immigration policy and reform. The Minutemen entities offer an active membership forum for citizens interested in protesting national administrative efforts (or a lack thereof) to address the ‘problem’ of ‘illegal immigrants.’ In this chapter, I analyze the “About Us” Statement of the original Minuteman Project, which I consider to be and refer to as its mission statement, accessed by clicking the “About Us” link located at the top of the home page.14

As mentioned earlier, this text remained unchanged from October 2004 through early June 2007, at which time it was replaced. Chapter 2 discussed the ephemeral nature of the WWW, which poses challenges to researchers because of its constantly fluctuating nature. For example, a web page that posts daily news updates might retain its general

14 Please see Appendix B for original site.
layout and design for a long period, and then suddenly be listed as “under construction” and thereby inaccessible for hours or days or even weeks. Then, perhaps it reappears in a completely changed format that bears little resemblance to the original design, which was twice the case with www.minutmanproject.com in early June 2007. Of course, researching texts on the mutable and unpredictable WWW has its advantages as well. A researcher has the opportunity to observe micro developments and nuances that hint at the direction or growth of an organization, which are often indicated by rhetorical strategies reflected in daily web updates. For the purpose of clarity, in this chapter I employ the term “Minuteman Project” even though the group has since split into two entities, as my data collection began when it was one group.

It is not merely coincidental that the Minuteman Project shares a name with the original minutemen, who were ready to fight on a “minute’s notice” but did not desire war for the sake of war. The Minuteman Project considers itself to be the 21st century minutemen, and employs various images of Paul Revere to make this connection explicit. Paul Revere is perhaps most widely known for his midnight ride from Boston to Lexington, Massachusetts to warn countryside dwellers that the British were on their way (“The Real Story”). Paul Revere might be considered a prototypical figure that represents the 18th century minutemen residing in the colonies of the New World prior to the American Revolution. Although not famous (other than for his courageous ride on horseback to sound an alarm to fellow compatriots), Paul Revere is usually briefly but well documented in American history and social studies textbooks. The Minuteman

15 The newest design of both the Minuteman Project and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Project draws heavily on the theme of patriotism throughout its rhetoric in various print
texts and images to construct a positive self-representation and thwart any positive
portrayals of multiple Others. Van Dijk (1993a) has found that the “processes of
reproduction [of negative stereotypes of minority groups] involve both social
representations and discriminatory acts, and social representations are formed and
changed through discourse and communication” (p. 14). The Minuteman Project relies
heavily on negative social representations of undocumented immigrants to legitimize its
position in the immigration debate. These pejorative representations, in turn, assist in
maintaining and reproducing negative depictions of this population. The focus of this
chapter is to examine how the organization represents itself and defines its purpose as a
citizen activist group, and how it positions itself in opposition to three groups: ‘illegal
immigrants,’ U.S. lawmakers, and American citizens who complain about immigration
policy but do nothing to effect change.

The Minuteman Project wants to be taken as a serious player in the immigration
debate. In order to do so, it must build a membership base by soliciting a substantial
number of volunteers to participate in its watchdog efforts at the border and various
rallies across the country. The Minuteman Project builds a platform in its mission
statement by portraying U.S. lawmakers in charge of immigration reform as disorganized
and serving their own interests. To justify its existence as legitimate, the original
Minuteman Project founders draw on previous negative representations of immigrants as
invaders to create a formidable enemy and establish the idea that America, as a nation,
must be protected from the dangers of immigration, and “illegal” immigration in
particular. Such rhetorical moves on the part of dominant groups when discursively acting against minorities might be viewed as “models” that serve to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ and “if such ‘polarized’ models are consistent with negative attitudes or ideologies, they may be used to sustain existing attitudes or form new negative attitudes” (van Dijk, 1993b, p. 263). The Minuteman Project draws on well-established discourses of immigrants as invaders. Therefore, the linguistic task of denigrating immigrants and undocumented immigrants in particular is not such a difficult one, as researchers have documented a long history of linguistic Othering and discrimination against immigrants through discourse (Caldas-Coulthard, 1999; Johnson, 2005; Lippi-Green, 1997; Mehan, 1997; O’Brien, 2003; Santa Ana, 1999, 2002; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). Through reproducing and extending negative depictions of immigrants as invaders, the mission statement creates a threatening narrative in an appeal to American citizens to rise to the defense of the nation.
Mission Statement: Save America from the Invaders

The Minuteman Project’s mission statement is important for several reasons. Though the organization consistently updated the Minuteman Project website to reflect the latest news and activities of the Minuteman’s response to the immigration “crisis,” the mission statement retained its original language, even after the Minuteman Project split into two groups. Furthermore, this text presents the group’s stance toward immigrants, its definition of self, its reasons for organizing, and a justification for why others should join the group members in protecting the borders. The web page format of the homepage and the About Us statement employ the same design and layout, including the header at the top and various icons that line the right side of the page.

Following is the mission statement in its entirety: 16

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16 See Appendix C for the About Us statement in web format.
About the Minuteman Project

The Minuteman Project is not a call to arms, but a call to voices seeking a peaceful and respectable resolve to the chaotic neglect by members of our local, state and federal governments charged with applying U.S. immigration law.

It is a call to bring national awareness to the decades-long careless disregard of effective U.S. immigration law enforcement. It is a reminder to Americans that our nation was founded as a nation governed by the "rule of law," not by the whims of mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders.

Accordingly, the men and women volunteering for this mission are those who are willing to sacrifice their time, and the comforts of a cozy home, to muster for something much more important than acquiring more "toys" to play with while their nation is devoured and plundered by the menace of tens of millions of invading illegal aliens.

Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious "melting pot."

The result: political, economic and social mayhem.

Historians will write about how a lax America let its unique and coveted form of government and society sink into a quagmire of mutual acrimony among the various sub-nations that will comprise the new self-destructing America. (www.minutemanproject.com/AboutMMP.html).
The mission statement begins by first defining the organization by what it is not, and positioning itself as active keepers of peace and order:

**The Minuteman Project is not a call to arms, but a call to voices seeking a peaceful and respectable resolve to the chaotic neglect of our local, state and federal governments charged with applying U.S. immigration law.**

In this opening move, the organization might be attempting to deflect anticipated accusations of vigilantism or racism by emphasizing its “peaceful” intentions, but the explicit mention of “arms” suggests an ‘us’ against ‘them’ mentality, as it portrays a certain divisiveness and militaristic approach towards immigrants. In recent work, Lakoff (2004) endeavors to enlighten progressives about the importance of choosing language carefully when framing issues and debates, arguing that language is “not just language,” but rather a vehicle embodying ideas and worldviews (p. 4). Lakoff exemplifies this concept in the title of his book *Don’t Think of an Elephant*. He argues that the word “elephant” in this phrase necessarily causes people to imagine a large gray mammal with a trunk, despite the pronouncement not to do so. Likewise, in this opening passage of the Minuteman Project’s mission statement, the phrase “call to arms,” despite its place in a negation clause, suggests or implies a situation in which military-like protection might be an eventual and necessary recourse.

Contrasting “a call to arms,” however, with its own “voices seeking a peaceful and respectable resolve,” places the Minuteman Project in the non-confrontational camp, sending a message to its audience that even though the situation may potentially call for weapons, its particular organization is committed to a more diplomatic approach. Why might an organization open a statement by defining itself as something it is *not*, unless it
has already conceptualized itself as a military-like protector or defender of a nation—not unlike the U.S. military—perhaps prepared to take up weapons if deemed necessary? Rhetorically, the reference to arms alludes to an organized military group of some sort, not unlike the original minutemen prior to the American Revolution. Despite the reference to “peaceful voices,” the phrase “a call to arms” leaves residual connotations of an organized militia, which might be a scare tactic or a show of power.

Also apparent in this opening line is a justification for the organization’s existence: the Minuteman Project is acting in response to “the chaotic neglect” of those in charge of policymaking and law enforcement, from the local to the federal level. “Neglect” indicates that lawmakers are well aware of the existent problem, but are doing nothing to solve it. It accuses the various levels of government of neglecting immigration law, purporting this claim as fact by using definite article “the” plus a noun phrase. Hence, it presents “chaotic neglect” as the factual, existent state of immigration law, not merely the Minuteman Project’s perception of it. Additionally, the use of the adjective “chaotic” portrays a sense of disorganization and confusion on the part of lawmakers and enforcers. In effect, representing government enforcers as chaotic suggests a lack of unison and accord among them, which could serve to lower the confidence of American audiences in their would-be leaders of immigration legislation, policies, and law enforcement. This creates a space for the Minuteman Project to position itself as an organized team of active heroes willing and ready to peacefully confront and redress the existent confusion. The theme of “chaos,” in fact, continues throughout the mission statement in references to both immigrants and the U.S. government.
The Minuteman Project positions itself in opposition to the U.S. government and offers Americans the membership opportunity to join forces under its leadership to find a “resolve” to the “chaotic neglect” of lawmakers who are “charged with” but yet unable and, in fact, incapable of addressing. The noun “resolve” in the phrase “a call to voices seeking a peaceful and respectable resolve to the chaotic neglect of our […] governments charged with applying U.S. immigration law” presupposes an existent problem in need of reparation and indicates that the “problem” is indeed solvable if immediate action is taken. This serves to justify further the necessity of a citizen group to address the growing problem. Van Dijk (1993b) points out that “[t]he justification of inequality involves two complementary strategies, namely the positive representation of the own group and the negative representation of the Others” (p. 263). The Minuteman Project creates a total of three Others in its mission statement. Immigrants are the primary Other, and set in stark opposition to the general, law-abiding American public. U.S. government lawmakers and policy enforcers are a second Other. The creation of these first two Others strengthens the Minuteman Project’s position of ‘us,’ as it creates a space for the fledgling organization to take physical action on the border first by creating an enemy to act against, and second by setting itself up as an aid or alternative to elected or appointed lawmakers and enforcers. The emergence of the third Other, comprised of Americans who stand by merely observing and complaining about the “chaotic neglect,” will become apparent in successive segments of the statement.

In the second segment of the mission statement, the organization turns toward defining itself, reintegrating the word “call” to solicit fellow American volunteers in an
endeavor to protect a threatened nation. Additionally, it presents a hyperbolic situation to demonstrate further the problem caused by lawmakers’ “careless disregard” as well as the result of this carelessness:

It is a call to bring national awareness to the decades-long careless disregard of effective U.S. immigration law enforcement. It is a reminder to Americans that our nation was founded as a nation governed by the "rule of law," not by the whims of mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders.

Though the mission statement began by claiming the organization seeks “a peaceful and respectable resolve” to the perceived crisis of immigration, the above choice of words to characterize undocumented immigrants is far from “respectable,” and reveals the group’s bias towards this population. The call for “national awareness” references again the idea that a problem exists and needs to be resolved at the national level. The U.S. government serves as scapegoat—it is due to government neglect or “the decades-long careless disregard” of lawmakers’ approach to immigration that Americans are faced with this problem in the first place. Again, the organization employs a noun phrase with definite article “the,” making the claim that its postulations are facts. The call for “national awareness” also takes for granted that a problem is existent and factual, situating the Minuteman Project in a more stable position to propose a solution. Not only is there a problem, but this problem has gone unaddressed over a period of “decades.”

Woodside-Jiron (2004) demonstrates the rhetorical strategy of fabricating a crisis in her examination of changes in California reading policies in the mid 1990s. Policymakers first identified a “crisis” in education, and then called on various experts to redress the “problem.” By first establishing, (or rather creating) a crisis through naming practices, policymakers redefined how teachers should approach reading instruction (pp.
Woodside-Jiron points to discourse practices that serve to “make the unfamiliar familiar,” as in the tendency for California bills to introduce new information, and then subsequently reintroduce it and present it as fact (p. 182). In the first segment of its mission statement, the Minuteman Project notes a need to find a “resolve” to a situation that has long been neglected. In the second segment, the term “disregard” references the previous term “neglect” as both indicate that lawmakers are willfully ignoring a problem. Hence, the organization successfully creates, concretely defines, and subsequently offers both a cause and a possible solution for an immigration problem or crisis worthy of national awareness. Establishing its opinions as facts, the Minuteman Project builds a base for an anti-immigrant platform. Parallels exist in the first two segments in the form of adjectival modified noun-verbs: respectable resolve (MMP); chaotic neglect (government); and careless disregard (government). The adjectives preceding the noun-verbs serve to shape a reader’s perception of the supposed facts presented in this document.

The word “call” is repeated three times in these first two sections, lending the statement an air of officiality in its persuasive beckoning to fellow Americans: 1) not a call to arms; 2) a call to voices; 3) a call to bring national awareness to the decades-long careless disregard of effective U.S. immigration law enforcement. In this final example, the sentence structure sets up the “disregard of effective […] law enforcement” as existent fact by encouraging Americans to be aware of it. In other words, the statement does not postulate that maybe the government has been ineffective; rather, it calls out to U.S. citizens to be aware of the ineffective governance. After the consecutive repetitions
of “call,” the statement switches to the word “reminder,” indicating that the information that follows is, again, a fact—something that Americans used to know, are supposed to know, but have forgotten. The government, who is “charged with applying U.S. immigration law,” is aware of the problem but has continued to disregard its importance and neglected to act on it. Consider the parallel structures of these first three sentences in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Minuteman Project</th>
<th>is not a call to arms,</th>
<th>but a call to voices seeking a peaceful and respectable resolve to the chaotic neglect of our local, state and federal governments charged with applying U.S. immigration law.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is a call to bring national awareness to the decades-long careless disregard of effective U.S. immigration law enforcement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a reminder to Americans that our nation was founded as a nation governed by the “rule of law” not by the whims of mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Parallels and repetition in mission statement**

In the above table, the boldfaced text indicates the parallels—“call” is used three times to set a scenario for the current immigration situation, a “reminder” is issued to recapitulate or reframe what the Minuteman Project presents as fact. The underlined text shows what Americans need to be reminded of—that “our nation” (which denotes in-group inclusiveness) “was founded as a nation governed by the ‘rule of law.’” This “reminder” is contrasted with what the organization claims is the current state of governance,
characterized by “neglect” and “disregard” for the “rule of law,” on which the nation the
founded. “Chaotic neglect” and “decades-long careless disregard” are both followed by
“of” to identify the culprits of the nominalized phrases, creating an active, pejorative
picture of the government. The Minuteman Project creates its platform by posing as
authorities urging fellow citizens to return to the “rule of law” that the government has
neglected and Americans have forgotten. Immigrants are otherized more strongly than the
government by the label “ILLEGAL aliens,” but both parties are victim to qualifiers:
“charged with applying […] law” and “who endlessly stream across U.S. borders” to
once again, postulate a perception as fact. Overall, a patriotic theme resides throughout
this second segment, calling for “Americans” to remember that the nation must remain
governed by the “rule of law,” which emphasizes the need for more effective policies and
law enforcement. Furthermore, the statement characterizes undocumented immigrants
and the Minuteman Project as constants, wherein the former is creating the problem while
the latter seeks to fix it, but the U.S. government and citizens are subject to sway, as these
groups tend to forget about or ignore the “rule of law.” Thus, implicit questions to the
audience are embedded in the mission statement: Whose side are you on? Which way are
you going to lean?

The Minuteman Project characterizes immigrants as numerous and chaotic, acting
on “whims,” instead of planned, logical reasoning. They come in “mobs,” which
insinuates danger, and they metaphorically “stream across” the borders. The image of
“mobs who endlessly stream across U.S. borders” is in stark opposition to the “rule of
law.” The sense of this passage is that immigrants are engulfing or overcoming the
nation. The Minuteman Project refers to undocumented immigrants as “ILLEGAL aliens,” which is, importantly, the only instance of a word written entirely in capital letters in the mission statement. This emphatic, exaggerated choice of typescript in conjunction with the pejorative term that follows it further perpetuates an ‘us’ against ‘them’ scenario wherein the former is law abiding and the latter is law breaking. Again, the U.S. government is not included in the “us,” nor is it exempt from Othering; the Minuteman Project creates its identity once again in relation to what it is not. The organization’s members are not lawmakers, but citizen patriots willing to take action, and they are dissatisfied with the way the current government is addressing immigration.

Lawmakers are not law breaking (as are the “aliens,”) but rather careless in their neglect of the law, and are thereby rendered immobile and passive. In contrast to the government’s passivity is the Minuteman Project’s mobile, active approach to restoring the “rule of law.” Immigrants are also active, but in a dangerous sense—they are coming to get ‘us’ so we had better get ready. Other points of interest in this segment include the allusion to how “our nation was founded,” which is cohesive with the colorful images of Paul Revere on the site as well as the name “Minutemen,” as will be discussed later in this chapter. ‘Us’ versus ‘them’ framing is further developed by use of the possessive as in “our nation,” which implies that the nation is not ‘theirs’ (in reference to “illegal aliens”). Also, immigrants are depicted as “endlessly streaming” where ‘streaming’ is the source domain for the chaotic and rushing mobility of immigrants.

The first two segments successfully establish an existent, definitive problem and chaotic situation, paving the way for the Minuteman Project to connect on a personal
level with its audience, soliciting comfortable Americans to put forth time and effort to
save their nation from irresponsible lawmakers and mobs of invading immigrants:

Accordingly, the men and women volunteering for this mission are those who are
willing to sacrifice their time, and the comforts of a cozy home, to muster for
something much more important than acquiring more "toys" to play with while
their nation is devoured and plundered by the menace of tens of millions of invading
illegal aliens.

The picture of immigrants as threatening continues to build over the course of these first
three segments. In the first portion, the statement cited a need to resolve the issue of
immigration policy reform, avoiding the term "immigrants," altogether. Then, the second
segment introduced immigrants as "ILLEGAL aliens" who arrive in "mobs." Above, in
this third segment, the negative portrayal is intensified as immigrants (now and hereafter
in the statement referred to as "illegal aliens") are "invading" in the "tens of millions,"
and posing a "menace" to America. Therefore, the already exaggerated description of
undocumented immigrants arriving in "mobs" is even further hyperbolized by the
quantified guesstimate of "tens of millions." There is a stark difference between the
references "illegal immigrants" and "illegal aliens." I would argue that immigrants
cannot, by definition, be illegal, because people cannot be illegal (even though they might
not follow a given legal process to take up residency in a different country). This is a
metonymic reference: ‘illegal’ here means that the immigrant has entered the U.S.
illegally and thus this quality, rather than being attributed to the means of entry, is
metonymically transferred to the immigrant her/himself. The term “alien” is most
commonly used in reference to non-human beings that arrive from outer space.
Hollywood grosses millions with movies that vary on the theme of the human race at war
with evil, grotesque aliens, and thus an American public is not without mental images of strange creatures conjured up in reference to an “alien.” The term “aliens” suggests Martians, unearthly beings that literally arrive from the outside—outside of humanity, outside of the Earth, and certainly outside of the American nation that relies on the “rule of law.”

Importantly, in the third segment shown above, the Minuteman Project transitions to putting the responsibility for the safety of the nation onto the American public. The adverb “accordingly,” which connotes “consequently,” offers an officious segue from the proposed problem of “illegal aliens” and ineffective government by serving as a cohesive device and thereby functioning to strengthen the claims made about these groups. By connecting information presented in the first portion of the mission statement with “accordingly,” the authors are able to make a seemingly logical transition to suggesting active plans to resolve the situation. With this adverb in sentence initial position, the founders connect the now established, existent “problem” to specific actions to address it. The organization employs a not so subtle guilt maneuver, insinuating that those Americans who do not answer the “call” or “reminder” are standing on the sidelines, satisfied with quotidian life, and caught up in a consumer culture (too busy with “toys to play with”) while their nation is invaded. Toys are associated with children and fun, not serious adults, and the word is in quotation marks for emphasis. The implication that adults are frivolous and distracted by collecting possessions functions as a critical jab at those who do not want to join “the men and women volunteering for this mission” (i.e., ‘us’). Furthermore, the statement asserts that America is being “devoured” and
“plundered” by the “menace,” effectively depicting immigrants as locusts, thieves or barbarians. Immigrants are an abstract mob, a hyperbolic invading force numbering in the tens of millions. Faceless and nameless, real people become one large chaotic alien force who pose an imminent threat to the common good of the established nation. Rhetoric of fear and guilt attempts to move the average American to action to protect his or her country from demise, or at least to allow this organization to do so. That is, even if this mission statement does not manage to persuade a number of Americans to volunteer, thereby adding to the membership base of the Minuteman Project, this rhetoric assists in creating a problem, and thus a seemingly legitimate space for the organization to enter national immigration discourses.

In his research on how various nations discuss immigration, ethnic relations, affirmative action, and civil rights, van Dijk (1993b) finds that all nations under study have in common that they claim to be the most “tolerant.” He suggests, “Such nationalist rhetoric may […] function as disclaimers that precede negative statements and decisions about minorities or immigrants” (p. 266). The Minuteman Project exhibits this same tendency in its mission statement, as it initially represents itself as a union of peaceful voices seeking immigration reform, but gradually through the second and third segments creates a dangerous foe out of immigrants, leaving the idea of “peaceful” behind. Furthermore, “reminding” Americans that the nation was created by the “rule of law,” and that this law is being ignored by invaders and government alike, sets the organization up as responding to, not fabricating a crisis.
What began as a call for national awareness becomes more brazen, exaggerated, and full of pejorative metaphor as it moves further into portraying the enemy. In the fourth and penultimate segment, the Minuteman Project continues to instill fear in its audience, describing in vivid, apocalyptic detail a scenario of turmoil and destruction if fellow Americans do not heed the call of personal sacrifice to address this imminent invading force:

*Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious “melting pot.”*

*The result: political, economic and social mayhem.*

As seen in previous segments of text, the Minuteman Project founders present a negative depiction as factual, which is, according to van Dijk, a rhetorical move employed to support ‘us’ versus ‘them’ characterizations. He names this “argumentation,” wherein the negative evaluation follows from the ‘facts’” (van Dijk, 1993b, p. 264). For example, the “result” of Americans not heeding the call to volunteer to secure the nation is not in question, nor is the “mayhem” that will follow from their inaction. “The result” that will be the future is delivered as a list—no verb exists in this dramatic postulation. Indeed, the Minuteman Project presents the demise of America as a fact that historians will only be able to ponder in the apocalyptic future. Furthermore, van Dijk has found that “one of the ways to discredit powerless groups […] is to pay extensive attention to their alleged threat to the interests and privileges of the dominant group: ‘we’ will get less […] because of ‘them,’” which allows the dominant group to claim a victimized, discriminated position in the face of minorities (p. 264). Certainly, the
Minuteman Project mission statement relies on a victimized mentality to enlist volunteers, but it goes far beyond asserting that the nation’s citizens will get “less.” Rather, the definitive “result” of allowing immigrants to enter will be “political, social, and economic mayhem” unless Americans heed the call of the Minuteman Project founders, who call on selfless volunteers (like themselves) to keep the nation functioning in its assumed-to-be harmonious state. The idea of “mayhem” is supported, for example, by the verb “tangle,” (as in “tangle of […] cultures”) which connotes messy knots. Veins can be tangled, which can lead to aneurysms or hemorrhaging as in the genetic disease known as Arterio-Venous Malformations (AVM). String, fishing line, and chains or necklaces can also be tangled. Generally, the verb tangle is associated with something that is not straight or not functioning properly. In this case, cultures will be “tangled,” and therefore chaotic. Of course, this brings up another interesting point, which is to what “cultures,” exactly are the Minuteman Project referring?

Although it is not explicitly evident in the mission statement, Mexicans are generally implied to be the immigrant enemy. For some time, Mexicans have been considered the prototypical immigrants, replacing nationally shared images of the Irish, Italians, or Eastern Europeans of yesteryear. National media coverage frequently features stories of apprehensions of Mexican nationals at the border or altercations between ‘them’ and the U.S. Border Patrol. Thus, although not stated directly, the Minuteman Project audience certainly possesses a cultural framework, fed by the media, referencing Mexicans as the “illegal aliens.” Later sections of this chapter as well as Chapter 4 will demonstrate how Mexican as immigrant enemy is made more apparent in successive texts.
and images. The Minuteman Project espouses a nativist ideology which it consistently seeks to pass off as ‘patriotic’ by balancing its anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican rhetoric with nostalgic historical images of early America.

The predictions toward the end of the mission statement are ominous and dooming, and portray pandemonium and malice wherein the ‘invading aliens’ seek to trespass and harm what would otherwise be a peaceful, functional, law-abiding nation. The images allude to a confused and frenzied future with flamboyant, hyperbolic adjectives that seem better suited to a police report or science fiction novel than the mission statement of a civilian organization. Van Dijk (1993b) notes that “one of the most conspicuous forms of over-completeness in discourse is the irrelevant negative categorization of participants in order to deligitimate [sic] or marginalize their opinions or actions” (p. 275). The Minuteman Project draws on the concept of the “rule of law” to position itself in immigration discourses, but relies more heavily on demonizing immigrants with preposterous descriptions. Furthermore, the Minuteman Project draws on outdated terms and concepts by employing the archaic word “muster” and referring to the nation as a “harmonious ‘melting pot,’” the latter of which plays on the nostalgia of ‘what used to be’ and effectively glosses over the ongoing racial tensions existent in contemporary American society.

Hirschman (1983) points out that while explicit racism was largely tolerated for the first half of the 20th century, the concept of the melting pot represented “the liberal and radical vision” of America:

In a sense, it was a political symbol used to strengthen and legitimize the ideology of America as a land of opportunity where race, religion, and national origin
should not be barriers to social mobility. There is another interpretation of the melting pot symbol, which represents the emphasis on “Americanization” of immigrants around the turn of the century. While the melting pot image suggests a blending of culture, the process was essentially one of ‘anglo-conformity’. (p. 398) 17

Purporting the archaic idea of America as a “melting pot,” and a “harmonious” one at that, not only masks the ongoing reality of racism in America, but also claims that immigrants or ‘aliens’ are the disruptive force in a society that otherwise tolerates all American individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity. 18 The term “melting pot” assumes immigration and assimilation (“Americanization”), and yet the “aliens” in the Minuteman Project portrayal do not belong to the melting pot. They have no common bond and are outside of the sphere of society, dehumanized Others who will threaten the status quo of an otherwise strong, virtuous, and just America that abides by “the rule of law.” Nor, the Minutemen assume, will these new immigrants assimilate like the older ones. The Minuteman Project plays on the American fear that Mexican immigrants will hold onto their language and culture; this inherent fear among Americans is evidenced by language initiatives such as the English Only movement. In essence, in this segment, the Minuteman Project sets up “harmonious melting pot” as the existent state of the current nation. If immigrants continue to “invade,” however, the melting pot will cease to be “harmonious,” and will morph into a “rancorous, unassimilated and squabbling,” mix of cultures with “no common bond to hold them together.” Again, the founders present this statement as fact, claiming that it is a “certain guarantee” of the future of America.

17 Hirschman attributes the term “anglo-conformity” to M. M. Gordon (1964).
18 Popular use of the term “melting pot” dates back to 1908, when English playwright Israel Zangwill wrote “The Melting Pot,” which features immigrants of different religious backgrounds overcoming their differences because they are in America (“Destination America”). It is paradoxical that the Minuteman Project employs a term made popular by an immigrant-penned play as reason for keeping immigrants out.
When investigating how ‘us’ versus ‘them’ models are created, van Dijk (1993b) suggests that “the most obvious case is simply semantic ‘content’: statements that directly entail negative evaluations of THEM or positive ones of us” (p. 264). However, he argues that such statements also need to be “credible,” and for this reason, additional persuasive moves are necessary. Rhetorical figures such as “hyperbolic enhancement of ‘their’ negative actions and ‘our’ positive actions” serve to support negative semantic content (p. 264). This fourth segment of the mission statement is rich with hyperbole as the founders characterize immigrants as arriving from “rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures.”

The authors of this text place themselves in an authoritative position, one that claims to know inside information about particular populations arriving in the U.S. Furthermore, the connotations of these adjectives are beyond pejorative: they are hostile, aggressive, slanderous terms aimed at a group of people who have no voice, no opportunity to defend themselves. It is important to remember that these people are removed from access to the World Wide Web, and most probably from the English language, and therefore cannot represent themselves through rhetorics of resistance.

Presenting hyperbolic forecasts as facts or logical and inevitable consequences accomplishes what Fairclough and Wodak (1997) suggest about how majority group discourse “tr[ies] to pass off assumptions (often falsifying ones) […] as mere common sense” (p. 258). The idea of what will happen if Americans do not act to stop the influx of “invaders” is further perpetuated when the statement moves to an even more distant future. The mission statement ends on a dooming note, wherein Minuteman Project predictions become an after the fact reality that historians will only be able to ponder:
Historians will write about how a lax America let its unique and coveted form of government and society sink into a quagmire of mutual acrimony among the various sub-nations that will comprise the new self-destructing America.

In this fifth and final segment, more fear-instilling tactics are employed in the presentation of a futuristic self-destructing America that is so far removed from today’s “harmonious melting pot” that historians can only record it. This depiction of the future does not even include hedges such as “might;” rather, the devastation portrayed “will” happen if no action is taken. The term “lax” references the opposite of a nation of volunteers “who are willing to sacrifice their time, and the comforts of a cozy home,” further perpetuating the idea that some concrete form of action must be taken in order to forestall the chaos. Rhetoric of guilt is carried over from the prior reference to Americans who are too busy playing with toys to volunteer time and effort to secure the nation. In addition, chaos and a “quagmire of mutual acrimony” are not the only by-products if citizens do not act to stop the force: the nation will be divided into competing groups or “sub-nations” that bicker and work against one another. The term “acrimony” references the previous idea of “rancorous” individuals who come across the border with malicious intentions, to destroy what otherwise is a peaceful, law-abiding, “harmonious” nation.

The grammatical structure of this segment is interesting considering how the organization presents opinion as fact. For instance, in its claim that historians “will write” about an apocalyptic future, the group actually presumes to know what specifically historians will record with use of the word “how” to give the sense that the purported horrid scenario is inevitable. Likewise, “future generations” is followed by “will inherit”
to present another outrageous apocalyptic scenario as fact. Consider the parallels as depicted in Table 2:

| Historians will write about lax America | how a unique and coveted form of government and society | sink into a quagmire of mutual acrimony among the various sub-nations that will comprise the new self-destructing America. |
| Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious "melting pot." |

Table 2: Presuppositions and future predictions

The above table seeks to illustrate how the particular use of adjectives, noun phrases and future tense verbs create a sense of a frightening but inevitable future. The use of “will” plus a verb indicates a definitive future action. “How” in this context assumes description of the information that follows it. In fact, “how” is, in a sense, stronger than “that,” (as in “Historians will write that…”), because “how” assumes that a scenario has transgressed and can actually be described. And shame on America, who functions under the “rule of law,” for “let[ting]” its government “sink into a quagmire.” This phrasing assumes that America, as a nation—or more specifically, people who are reading this text—can do something to change a certain tragic future by taking action now. Again, the Minuteman Project employs rhetoric of guilt by putting the responsibility on citizen volunteers to manage immigration reform. In the first example in the above table, the final clause “that will comprise the new self-destructing America” denotes a definitive futuristic scenario. This is a message of doom, a message of fear, a picture of a chaotic future where
America’s governance according to the “rule of law” and status as a “harmonious melting pot” are forever lost to a state of “acrimony among various sub-nations.” In the fifth and eighth columns above, “unique and coveted form of government and society” is contrasted with “rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures” and “the new self-destructing America” is contrasted with the “harmonious ‘melting pot.’”

In considering ‘us’ versus ‘them’ portrayals throughout the mission statement, it is important to remember that the Minuteman Project distances itself from both the government and those Americans who are dissatisfied with and complain about the government’s “careless disregard” toward immigration enforcement, but do nothing to ameliorate the situation. The Minuteman Project thereby creates three THEMES: 1) ‘illegal immigrants’ 2) government, and 3) Americans unwilling to take action. The immigrant category of ‘them’ is, of course, the furthest from the Minuteman Project’s ‘us,’ which is apparent throughout the statement’s characterization of this group. The government or lawmaker ‘them’ is not as grotesque or dangerous as the immigrant category, but this other is nonetheless irresponsible, disorganized, neglectful, chaotic, and ineffective. Additionally, project founders accuse the government/lawmaker ‘them’ of being responsible for the purported status of chaos in America. Finally, the Minuteman Project criticizes an American citizen ‘them’ and characterizes this group as negligent and unwilling to put forth efforts to assist the volunteer organization in changing the situation. These multiple ‘them’ depictions in turn create a contrast for the ‘us’ category, which comprises the two Minuteman Project founders, the group’s current volunteers or members, and those Americans reading who are willing to take action where lawmakers
are not. The following table attempts to capture these constructions, where “US” represents the Minuteman Project and those Americans who share the viewpoints of the Minuteman Project, “THEM 1” represents ‘illegal immigrants,’ “THEM 2” represents the government, and “THEM 3” represents Americans who do not assist the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US (MMP + Some Americans)</th>
<th>THEM 1 (‘Illegal’ Immigrants)</th>
<th>THEM 2 (Government: local, state, and federal)</th>
<th>THEM 3 (Some Americans)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Unorganized</td>
<td>Uninformed; Forgetful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“peaceful voices”</td>
<td>“whims”</td>
<td>“chaotic neglect”</td>
<td>“reminder to Americans”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just / Fair</td>
<td>Threatening; Dangerous</td>
<td>Irresponsible</td>
<td>Complacent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“respectable resolve”</td>
<td>“mobs…who endlessly stream”</td>
<td>“chaotic neglect”</td>
<td>“comforts of a cozy home”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Barbaric; Predatory; Inhuman</td>
<td>Careless</td>
<td>Self-absorbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“seeking…resolve”</td>
<td>“devoured and plundered by the menace of”</td>
<td>“a lax America”</td>
<td>“acquiring more toys”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>Foreign; Alien</td>
<td>Careless</td>
<td>Irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“bring national awareness”</td>
<td>“invading illegal aliens”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“acquiring […] while their nation is devoured and plundered”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>Numerous; Unstoppable</td>
<td>Careless</td>
<td>Careless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“remind[ing]…Americans”</td>
<td>“endlessly stream”</td>
<td></td>
<td>“a lax America”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law-abiding</td>
<td>Vengeful; Resentful; Hostile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“governed by the ‘rule of law’”</td>
<td>“rancorous”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble</td>
<td>Unpleasant; Disagreeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“volunteering…willing to sacrifice” time and comfort</td>
<td>“squabbling”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unorganized; Separate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“unassimilated”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“various subnations”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powerful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“political, economic, social mayhem”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“death to this nation”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“new self-destructing America”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Representations of self and others
The above table is one way to organize the constructions of self and other(s) in the mission statement to consider the general impression that it leaves the reader. It is important to point out that as a web researcher I have spent considerable more time reading and rereading this text than would the casual—or even meticulous—web browser. I analyze word choice, repetition, parallel syntactic structures, metaphors, and systematic ‘us’ and ‘them’ representations in order to consider positioning of self and other. To state the obvious, the targeted audience of the Minuteman Project will not dissect the mission statement as I have. However, even a casual reader that merely scans the text is exposed to the powerful and biased representations of the participants depicted in the above table.

In this depiction, the Minuteman Project is a lawful, fair and diplomatic organization. It is knowledgeable about current events concerning immigration policy, which lends it credibility and authority. The members of this group are proactive, unselfish, and willing to sacrifice their time and creature comforts for the greater good of the nation. Overall, this is a noble organization comprised of and soliciting additional patriotic leaders concerned about the welfare and future of America. Assumedly, the intended audience is fellow Americans who are also concerned about the welfare of the nation. However, these people need to be reminded of the foundation and guiding principles of America as a nation, and are therefore portrayed as somewhat childlike. Condescendingly, the Minuteman Project infantilizes this group of Americans, chastising the passive readers for their selfishness, complacency, ignorance, and attention to “acquiring more ‘toys’ to play with” at a time when the nation is in peril. These
Americans share some characteristics with the local, state, and federal governments. Both groups (citizens and lawmakers) are careless and irresponsible. However, as lawmakers are “charged with” enforcing immigration law, ‘they’ are considerably more careless and neglectful because ‘they’ are not doing ‘their’ job. In the end, however, both groups will be held responsible for the demise of the nation, when historians write about “how a lax America let its unique and coveted form of government and society sink” into despair.

The mission statement, however, details a considerably more concrete and aggressive portrayal of immigrants by using more adjectives in its depiction of this ‘them’ than for the American and lawmaker ‘them’ groups. Immigrants are impulsive, dangerous, threatening, predatory, barbaric, alien, numerous, unstoppable, vengeful, and generally unpleasant and disagreeable. That migrant workers cross the U.S.-Mexican border to work at minimally paid jobs to feed families is erased. Thus, the primary reason for which so many men and women risk their lives to travel to the U.S. is silenced. The Minuteman Project depicts this group as non-human and powerful: this ‘alien’ force holds malicious intentions and is capable of destruction and mayhem. In short, immigrants are monstrous killers of the harmonious nation and must be stopped.

Ingebretsen (2003) argues that monster-making is political, and serves “civic uses of scandal” by assisting in the formation of a “hermeneutics of fear” (p. 25). The rhetorical creation of monsters serves to keep the masses in check, and aids in the maintenance of a stable society. He exemplifies that monsters are not only the popular subject of horror films, but also of the daily media:

They are created as civil agents by media and in daily politics; at the polls and on the evening news; in church rhetoric and in state polemic. Why make a monster?
The monster—located, decried, and staked—reconfirms the virtues of the normal for those who, from time to time, need persuading. (p. 25)

For Minuteman Project adherents, “the virtues of the normal” is an American nation functioning under “the rule of law.” The three ‘them’ groups, by contrast, do not hold these virtues to be important; rather, they flout these virtues to varying degrees, which will be cause for the certain eventual downfall and ultimate demise of the “rule of law” that the nation was founded upon.

The intensely negative, racist representation of immigrants purposefully seeks to denigrate this group and to instill fear in the web audience in an effort to solicit more volunteers. The Minuteman Project is, in this text, a progressive, heroic group of committed citizen leaders selflessly acting to curtail an eventual collapse of the nation. Charging lawmakers with neglect and disregard presupposes the existence of a particular situation, because how can one neglect or disregard something that is not there? By highlighting the shortcomings of the government, the Minuteman Project creates an opening for its organization, a justification for its position to take a legitimate role in acting to secure the border. Interestingly, although the Minuteman Project distances itself from the government, it also needs to draw on the notion of a monolithic and faceless government to forge a space for its entry into the immigration conversation.
Patriotic Images Support the 21st Century Minutemen

The Minuteman Project relies substantially on an appeal to patriotism by drawing explicit parallels between its own mission and the formative period in America’s history when colonists of the New World broke away from British legal and financial authority in a move toward independence and self-government. For an American audience, the name ‘minutemen’ bring to mind the independent spirit of the colonists of the New World that inspired the American Revolution. Although the terms “minutemen” and “militia” are sometimes used interchangeably, they were two different groups:

Militia were men in arms formed to protect their towns from foreign invasion and ravages of war. Minutemen were a small hand-picked elite force which were required to be highly mobile and able to assemble quickly. Minutemen were selected from militia muster rolls by their commanding officers. Typically 25 years of age or younger, they were chosen for their enthusiasm, reliability, and physical strength. (“Minutemen”)

Regardless of whether the project founders researched the specific connotations associated with the original minutemen, it is apparent by the group’s self-presentation that it strives to distance itself from explicitly militaristic connotations that would be associated with terms such as “militia.” It relies, rather, on its own portrayal as selfless, peaceful voices who are “highly mobile,” enthusiastic, and committed to protecting the nation. As discussed earlier, a large portion of the American populace educated in public schools (as well as many private and parochial educational settings) has been exposed to heroic images of Paul Revere. Importantly, Revere is also not an overly defined historical figure such as early American Presidents George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. We know only one story about him (his midnight ride to warn about the imminent arrival of British troops), and that story functions as a cohesive, rather than contested, myth of
American independence. Importantly, in the cultural connotations surrounding Paul Revere, he is lauded for his courageousness in signaling the countryside that the enemy was coming, which is much the same position the Minuteman Project takes in articulations of its purpose for organizing. Stories and images of the original patriots hold a central place in U.S. history, and American social studies textbooks portray that the desire for members of the newly formed colonies in the New World to separate politically and financially from England was a heroic and honorable time in the beginning of the nation’s history. The Minuteman Project explicitly draws on these historical parallels to assert itself as the united, official group of contemporary minutemen who are willing to secure the nation in its time of need.

Patriotic images are ubiquitous on the websites of the Minuteman Project as well as the newer Minuteman Civil Defense Corps.\(^\text{19}\) The activist group promotes a historicized connotation of the word “patriotic” with a variety of images, such as a hybrid historical-contemporary image of Paul Revere. Small images line both the left and right hand sides of the web pages of the Minuteman Project. These images are hyperlinked to other pages that to lead to information including a radio show, book club, state chapters, how to make a contribution or subscribe to the email list. Elsewhere on the site is a link to an online membership form to solicit more Minutemen and Minutewomen\(^\text{20}\) volunteers. Patriotic

\(^{19}\) I collected images at the time that these groups shared one website with two portals or links for the web user.

\(^{20}\) The Minutewomen have a special icon, and the women seem to have particular communicative roles. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delineate gender differences, but some issues will be addressed in the conclusion. The women are cast as motivational characters, and play a role in blogging, interviewing, and writing. Thus, they are “active” in a different sense—with words and communication, yet not as aggressively active as the men, who are depicted with binoculars and flashlights, actually patrolling the border.
visual texts on the Minuteman Project website work in conjunction with the organization’s name and rhetoric in print texts (postings and email) to create a strong sense of patriotism and Americanism.

For example, an image of a watchful Paul Revere looks off into the distance with a poised and controlled expression on his face. In his right hand, he grasps a pair of clunky binoculars that hang around his neck. The large binoculars reminiscent of the type seen in WWII contrast with the more modern-day technology in his left hand: an open cell phone that appears to have camera functions as well. The explicit digitalized integration of technology that crosses time periods in this image supports messages of the organization’s commitment to historical traditions, networking and communication (Figure 1). Paul Revere is depicted against the backdrop of the United States, which is colored to resemble an American Flag. The text “MinutemanHQ.com” is superimposed at the top of the image in blue, and is written in boldfaced capital letters. Also superimposed on the backdrop of the flag-nation are the words Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. This image, accessed on April 11, 2006, was on the homepage of www.minutemanproject.com when the web user could choose to enter either of the two organizations’ portals. However, this image has since moved around quite frequently throughout regular web updates, and is employed by both the Minuteman Project and the MCDC. In addition, the image is used in altered form for other hyperlinks and for merchandise (see Figure 2).
The use of Paul Revere as a mascot of sorts draws explicit parallels between the historical minutemen’s readiness to guard the colonies, and suggests that the Minuteman Project is concerned with the same ideals as the original ‘patriots.’ In Figure 1, the cell phone in Paul Revere’s right hand represents modernism and technology. The minutemen of today send the message that they are more technologically equipped, of course, than the minutemen of more than two centuries ago. The phone and binoculars portray a sense of accessibility, preparedness, and networking, further perpetuating the idea that the Minuteman Project is an organized group adequately spread out through various regions of the country.
The image in Figure 2 shows Paul Revere holding a musket or (what might now be referred to as an ‘antique’ rifle). He stands next to an old-fashioned radio, indexing that he, as a minutemen on guard, is listening to the nation’s news and poised to act. The image harks back to a nostalgic era and suggests early Americana. Before the advent of television, cell phones, and email, families would gather around one family radio to listen to current events. Thus, the radio in this sense suggests unity: we are all one nation hearing the same news. And, according to the contemporary minutemen, the news is that ‘illegal immigrants’ and the government’s ineffective handling of this problem is slowly but certainly destroying the nation. This icon, when clicked, brings the user to the Minuteman radio program “Wake Up America!” The consistent use of Paul Revere in various settings, for various purposes, with various surrounding texts creates cohesiveness throughout the site. Paul Revere is depicted with symbols representing various historical periods in America—from the musket of the pre-revolution days, to the large radio and the clunky binoculars, to a modern-day cell phone, Paul Revere as symbolic of the nation’s committed minutemen is unwavering. Additionally, these
images assist in framing the ideas in the mission statement as based in historical concepts of America as a nation.

Visual messages located in the header on the top of the Minuteman Project website overlap with those of Paul Revere as an official figure for the organization (Figure 3). The header includes three small photographs of Minutemen Project volunteers positioned as on guard and looking off into various directions with binoculars. These are the modern day minutemen.

![Minuteman Project Banner](www.minutemanproject.com)

Figure 3: Banner or header of [www.minutemanproject.com](http://www.minutemanproject.com)

The image above supports the depiction laid out in the mission statement of Congress as passive, chaotic, and inept. In the header, MINUTEMAN PROJECT is in all caps and in bold, and the font is considerably larger than the two sentences that follow. The following line, “Americans doing the jobs Congress won’t do” sums up in brief the message in the mission statement. “Americans” is in subject position and therefore given agency. Furthermore, the ‘–ing’ form in “doing,” indicating an action in process, follows the agent “Americans.” Assumedly, Congress’s unwillingness to do its job, as indicated in the verb “won’t,” necessitates American action (such as that of Minuteman Project volunteers). The background of the text is a deep blue. To the immediate right of the text, the blue fades to a sundown color, and darkened images of a group of individuals are walking. The implication is that the group is patrolling the border even at night, thereby demonstrating a willingness to volunteer their time instead of “acquiring more ‘toys’ to
play with” or resting in the comforts of a cozy home. The next image to the right features a man up close looking through binoculars, and the final image shows either this same man or another also looking through binoculars, but gazing off in a different direction. The background of the final image shows dry desert-like land and mountains, indicating that these volunteers are in a remote area, such as on the Mexico-Arizona border of the U.S. The banner depicting real people in photographs is cohesive with the Paul Revere image, signified by the binoculars and sense of watchfulness in both images. Also, the juxtaposition of the ‘real’ men in these images with the historical depiction serves to ground us (the audience) in the present with the Minuteman Project and send the message that these patrols have actually taken place and have been photographically documented. These types of visual images support linguistic messages in print postings to assist in forming identity and creating in-group membership. Furthermore, the intertextuality of the print and visual images works to support the organization’s stated purpose as well as to send a powerful message: immigrants are an enemy force encroaching on the nation, and we, the volunteers of the Minuteman Project, are watching and ready.

Another national icon or symbol employed by the Minuteman Project is Uncle Sam, who is used in a variety of ways to solicit membership. Below, an Uncle Sam image beckons the web audience to help fight the “war” on immigration. The original WWI image of Uncle Sam is slightly altered to be cohesive with other Minuteman Project figures:
Figure 5 depicts the most famous image of Uncle Sam, painted by James Montgomery Flagg in 1916-17 as a World War I recruiting figure ("Biography of Uncle Sam"). Figure 4 is the Minuteman Project’s image, where Uncle Sam is wearing a hat more in keeping with 18th century minutemen. Mitchell (2006) found similar uses of historical images sent to the We are not Afraid website to show solidarity with victims of the July 2005 London bombing:

A further rhetorical device [of the We are not Afraid website] is the employment of pictures from the past, thereby encouraging viewers to step away from the immediate and look backwards. […] For example, the famous image from the Second World War of St. Paul’s Cathedral surrounded by clouds in the Blitz is given the headline “We Fought Terrorism Before and We Won…” […] [In addition,] Lord Kitchener’s First World War recruiting poster is enlisted to the
cause with him pointing out to the audience. Instead of saying “Your Country Needs You,” his words now read “We’re Not Afraid of You.” (p.160)

In addition, Mitchell (2006) notes appropriation of or morphing images for one’s own message. For example, “following the failed bombings on July 21, an old tube ticket is apparently embossed with the claim: ‘We are still not afraid.’ Like many of the submissions, this is a sophisticated piece of forgery, as the typescript looks identical to the font used in the untampered-with parts of the ticket” (p. 153). Digital technology makes it easier for more and more people to transform and post images to the WWW, where they are then widely circulated to deliver messages. In Mitchell’s words, “playfulness with both technology and its visual representations reflect a growing confidence among non-professionals in using digital technologies to manipulate images” (p. 155). The images of Paul Revere holding a cell phone and binoculars or Uncle Sam wearing a minutemen hat are examples of altering images with digital technology to create new messages.

Importantly, the architecture, design, and consistent updates to the Minuteman Project’s web space echo the organization’s rhetoric in the mission statement. In order to build a membership base, the fledgling group must appear to be active and on guard. The daily updates and small changes to the website send the message that the Minuteman Project is an active organization that spends a lot of time and effort not only patrolling the border, but also distributing the latest information about the state of immigration in the nation. As such, the active images of Paul Revere and the photographs of men patrolling the border reflect the rhetoric in the mission statement. The Minuteman Project sends a
message of mobility, activeness and networkedness through print text and images as well as in the delivery of those texts. The quickly changing website, therefore, serves as a metaphor for the group’s mission: Here we are—we are the 21st century minutemen—and we are on the move and ready to protect you.
Buying into Membership: Messages and Commodity

As illustrated in previous discussions, the Minuteman Project suggests that they are everywhere and on guard. They are selfless volunteers protecting the American people. The citizen group organizes state chapters and rallies and updates the website regularly to reflect its ongoing knowledge of and participation in the immigration debate. One way that the group conveys a sense of organization and an established communicative network is by advertising Minuteman Gear to create a sense of in-group membership. From the MCDC site\textsuperscript{21}, a viewer or browser can access the link to buy minutemen paraphernalia. Once at the site, the viewer has choices of T-shirts, wristbands, caps, cloisonné pins, dog tags, and license plate frames.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{figure}[h]
    \centering
    \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{merchandise}
    \caption{Link to merchandise}
    \end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
    \centering
    \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{logo}
    \caption{Official Logo ‘Watchman George’}
    \end{figure}

In the above images, the Minuteman Project offers its followers an opportunity, to use a metaphor, to ‘buy into the ideas’ espoused in the mission statement. The variety of items

\textsuperscript{21} This link (Figure 6) was posted on the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Headquarters site when the two groups shared the same homepage on www.minutemanproject.com.

\textsuperscript{22} Please see Appendix D.
for sale creates a sense of in-group membership by producing consumer goods with slogans that can be worn and seen. Mitchell (2006) notes that on the We Are Not Afraid website, one can also purchase a wide variety of consumer merchandise, including hats, mugs, and T-shirts with the slogan ‘We are not Afraid’ printed on the items. In both of these cases, the organizations are, in a sense, selling not only membership into a club or group, but selling ideas and encouraging members to share in a sense of belonging by physically wearing or carrying items emblazoned with the name of the group.

Many of the T-shirt options feature the above ‘Watchman George Logo’ that resembles the image of Paul Revere. Watchman George looks almost hawkish and conveys a sense of cynicism and vigilance as he darts a glance back over his left shoulder. The open and ready to use cell phone and binoculars are in black, which matches the www.minuteman.com text at the top of the logo. The black contrasts sharply with the white space within the character itself, further obviating the phone and binoculars. Figure 8 below is what the user sees and reads when ordering.

Figure 8: T-shirt description and ordering
The T-shirts come with two text options: America Defending Americans: Minuteman Civil Defense Corps or Minuteman Civil Defense Corps: Operation “Secure Our Borders.” The text description names these as “extremely popular with those who cannot serve on the border but who wish to support and contribute…and to get out our message.” Selling wearable merchandise perhaps allows those Americans who ‘prefer the comforts of a cozy home’ to voice their support for the Minuteman Project by supporting the group with profits and advertisement.

*Gold Eagle Enterprises* distributes the consumer items shown above and below. In addition to T-shirts and caps with the Watchful George logo, the site offers the user an opportunity to buy other ‘official’ gear such as INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) or ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) caps. These images are presented in the same format as the one above, with the ‘add to cart’ option on the right. Figures 9 and 10 show the description and pictures of these items.

**Figure 9: INS caps for sale**
Is it even legal to sell clothing or other merchandise with logos worn by the official members of the INS or ICE? In this move, the Minuteman Project arrogantly places its status as that of the official guardians of the nation by assuming an official state or federal identity. The text that follows the cap in Figure 9 is mocking: “People like to wear these caps and visit construction sites.” This statement is overtly racist and harassing. The authors blatantly assume that the workers at construction sites are most probably ‘illegal.’ Furthermore, they encourage the web audience to harass other people by pretending to be an organization that they are not (the INS), and going out of their way to threaten the potential undocumented workers who might be doing manual labor in the nearby area. In Figure 10, a web browser sees a man being searched by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). From the picture only, it is not clear whether he is in actual legal trouble or experiencing a routine search at a border patrol site. However, this photograph, along with the second image of the cap for sale and explanatory text clearly mark this man as an ‘illegal alien.’ The text reads, “You won’t find these anywhere else. The
people who have invaded our country illegally will know what "I-C-E" means.” The insinuation here is that the man in the far left picture has ‘invaded’ the country, has been ‘caught’ by an ICE official, and therefore will “know” what the acronym stand for. The images combined with text are harassing and mocking, and serve to belittle a voiceless population. These tasteless advertisements support the message that America must abide by the “rule of law.” The Minuteman Project sells merchandise to mask volunteer border patrol identity to imbue them with more authority. The metaphors and portrayals of ‘us’ and ‘them’ introduced in the mission statement are strongly supported and repeated throughout various links on the website such as the one that leads to racist merchandise. This chapter has demonstrated broadly constructions of self and other in the mission statement and various images. Chapter 4 examines how the Minuteman Project responds to one specific immigration-related event in an effort to examine more closely creation of identity via web technologies.
CHAPTER 4: METAPHORICAL BATTLES: THE MARCHING MINUTEMEN VERSUS THE UNITED ARMY OF ‘ILLEGAL ALIENS

Overview

Chapter 3 demonstrated ways in which the Minuteman Project employs language and visual images to create the metaphor IMMIGRANTS AS INVADERS. At the same time, by using images and text the Minuteman Project portrays its own group as selfless volunteers who adhere to and wish to restore the “rule of law.” The organization positions itself in relation to ‘illegal immigrants,’ an inept Congress, and ‘comfortable’ Americans to establish a space for its own voice in national immigration discourses. Importantly, the Minuteman Project draws on historical, patriotic tropes to substantiate its active involvement on the border. Membership solicitation is apparent through the group’s efforts to sell ideas through merchandise, and membership and in-group identity via a plethora of hyperlinked images on the website that allow the user to click on various forums (i.e., radio show, book club). This chapter takes as a point of departure a specific incident to which the Minuteman Project responded through web postings and mass emails to demonstrate the group’s active framing of immigration events.

Through print and visual texts, I explore how the metaphor IMMIGRANTS AS INVADERS is expanded and elaborated on in an overarching war metaphor wherein the ‘invasion’ is portrayed as an imminent and very real possibility. Such framing is accomplished by systematically constructing participants (‘illegal aliens,’ government and lawmakers, and the Minuteman Project) under an umbrella war metaphor to depict a dire situation in urgent need of repair. The Minuteman Project reframes immigration protests that occurred in southern California in late March 2006 and uses the event to its
advantage to develop further representations of self and other. The website features print text and visual images juxtaposed in such a way as to falsely convey a sense of urgency and thus further justify the organization’s involvement in national immigration discourses and border patrol activities. In these situation-specific response commentaries, the group legitimizes its position in the immigration debate by integrating themes first introduced in the mission statement with new information stemming from the protests to flesh out a detailed WAR metaphor to frame contemporary immigration concerns.

“War” connotes at least two armies (official or otherwise) or opposing sides fighting for power or control or territory. As established in Chapter 3, the organization presents itself as a group of peaceful voices in dissent of lawmakers’ handling of immigration policy, and qualifies that the Minuteman Project is not “a call to arms.” However, the group reframes the immigration protests as an ‘invasion’ and discursively creates an ‘army of illegal aliens’ by employing war metaphors in print text juxtaposed with colorful photographs taken during the demonstration. The Minuteman Project texts that respond to the protests support previous representations of self and other as demonstrated in Chapter 3 to create a narrative where previously defined Others act out roles. Furthermore, it constructs ‘battles’ on two ‘fronts’: 1) on the border and 2) within the nation. The organization focuses on both territorial and political security by emphasizing the necessity to keep out the ‘invaders’ crossing into the U.S. via the Mexican-American border and keeping Congress in check regarding immigration policy reform. These ‘invaders’ are depicted as dangerous, demanding and obnoxious. The U.S.
is but a victim in this scenario, and while the government turns its back on the situation, the minutemen are on guard and actively working to restore the “rule of law.”

Perhaps in a move to distance itself from inevitable accusations of racism, the Minuteman Project steers away from naming the nationality or ethnicity of the ‘illegal aliens,’ but the group does post articles and links to immigration-related news such as border patrol apprehensions of Mexican nationals. As discussed in Chapter 3, although the Minuteman Project avoids explicitly using the term “Mexican” in its official postings, it implicates this group through reported speech by making readily accessible news pieces that feature discriminatory reports on Mexican nationals. Constructions of Mexicans as the enemy ‘illegal immigrants’ is further supported by photographs posted on the website adjacent to articles related to immigration news. As this chapter will demonstrate, visuals alongside exaggerated, boldfaced accusations that reframe events promote racism and hate towards non-white immigrants.  

23 It is important to point out that periodically there are references in postings to specific groups (such as Hezbollah, a militant, fundamentalist Shiite Islamic political party based in southern Lebanon). This seems to be an attempt to justify further the necessity for a border fence by conflating border crossers with potential ‘terrorists’ to employ a rhetoric of fear.
Two Army Fronts: Domestic and the Border

Context

The specific situation that serves as the context for the following textual and visual analysis is the large-scale student walkouts in the Los Angeles area on March 25, 2006. The student walkouts at Montebello High in California preceded the widely covered May 1, 2006 protests when immigrants and supporters estimated in the hundreds of thousands left work or school and boycotted stores in New York, Chicago, Houston, and Florida. According to the New York Times,

Most of the demonstrators’ ire was directed at a bill passed by the House that would increase security at the border while making it a felony for an illegal immigrant to be in the country or to aid one. The marchers generally favored a plan in the Senate, for which President Bush has shown signs of support, that would include more protection at the border but offer many illegal workers a path to citizenship. (“Immigration Debate”)

Importantly, this New York Times article employs the terms ‘illegal immigrant’ and ‘illegal workers’ to reference the targeted population, demonstrating that pejorative naming practices are widely circulated in national newspapers. That the Minuteman Project uses ‘illegal aliens’ ubiquitously throughout its website, therefore, remains under the radar of racial slurs. However, the hyperbolic language in the mission statement and web postings, combined with images and embedded ideologies of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ denigrate this population by emphasizing specific, assumedly factual information about the negative effects of immigrants on the nation.

In late March, 2006, over 20,000 students walked out of classes to demonstrate against Congressional plans to imprison immigrants without legal documentation and to add more security to the border (“Protests Go On”). The demonstrations were so large, in
fact, that some compared the outpouring of protest to the civil rights movement in the 1960s, which makes this event an interesting one to consider (Swarns, 2006; Stolberg, 2006). In a country divided on immigration related issues, the large-scale demonstrations where immigrants and their supporters waved home country flags in lieu of an American one inspired some and angered others.

The student walkouts in Los Angeles were aired widely in mainstream, conservative, and progressive print and web news in late March 2006, and were discussed widely on blogs in the following weeks leading up to the larger May 1 boycotts. During the student protests at Montebello High, a photograph was taken of a Mexican flag raised above an upside down American flag. Later, high school administrators punished the student at the school who raised the flags in this way (“Invasion USA”). Importantly, the image was widely circulated on conservative websites and blogs on the World Wide Web and thus gained national attention. In April, Vietnam veterans in the southern California area called for the involved students to be expelled (“Whittier Vets Angered”). The Minuteman Project has taken full advantage of this flag image by using it to demonstrate visually an imminent ‘invasion’ of ‘illegal aliens.’ The organization’s subsequent reframing of the student walkouts through metaphor and visual images is the focus of analysis for this chapter.

The Minuteman Project recasts the student walkouts at Montebello High not as protests, but as an ‘invasion’ that could potentially lead to riotous acts in states and districts as far away as Washington, D.C. Importantly, the student walkouts also presented the Minuteman Project with an opportunity to go further in pejorative
constructions of lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The Minuteman Project’s article in response to the event, posted on the homepage of its website, builds on roles established in the mission statement, and expands on the negative representations of the two primary Others (immigrants and government), and then proposes concrete actions to ensure that America as a nation continues to abide by the “rule of law.” In effect, the Minuteman Project accuses these Others more severely than it did in the mission statement, and fleshes out characteristics of the participants in the war metaphor to procure more positive self-presentation for its own group. The anti-immigrant organization reframes the demonstrations by depicting protestors and their supporters as an “invading army,” effectively overlooking rights to free speech and citizen protest.24 Both the demonstrators and the Minuteman Project have in common that they disagree with how the government is handling moves toward immigration reform. However, the Minuteman Project successfully masks this commonality by emphasizing differences between immigrant rights supporters and its own group through persuasive metaphor constructions. The Minuteman Project portrays the American populace as victims who must act defensively in response to the ‘invading armies.’

24 One might argue that because not all of the protestors were “citizens” in the legal sense, they are not entitled to the same rights. Many of them, however, were ‘legal’ immigrants and other American supporters demonstrating in alliance with undocumented immigrants awaiting citizenship.
Text Analysis

The first text to be examined is a response article to the student walkouts posted on the homepage of www.minutemanproject.com. This posting encompasses four main themes or topics: 1) The danger of immigrants and their demands; 2) The ill effects of undocumented immigrants on the educational and health care systems; 3) The corruption in the political system intended to protect the nation; and 4) A call to join the Minuteman Project to march on the Capitol and stop the ‘invasion.’ The reactionary “America on Notice” posting emphasizes the harm that “the Army of Illegal Aliens and Open Border Traders” are inflicting on Americans. In this text, the Minuteman Project derides politicians for their ineffective actions, and accuses them of serving their own interests instead of those of the American people. The image to the left of the title is a snapshot of the Mexican flag flown on top of the distress-signaling upside-down American flag discussed above. The underlying message is that the mission of the volunteer organization has now moved beyond protecting the nation at the border to include securing America on the domestic front, which reflects or perhaps pre-shadows the eventual split of the organization into two political entities.25 Below (Figure 11) is what the web user viewed on the homepage at the time of the posting:

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25 In essence, the Minuteman Project gains power by having two groups because each is in charge of a specific mission and domain or territory (and in their current manifestations, www.minutemanproject.com and www.minutemanhq.com reflect these specific missions, but still have overlapping images such as the Paul Revere and Uncle Sam images discussed in Chapter 3).
America On Notice: Occupying Army demands more from their captives!!

Is the new rule of law, “The Biggest Thugs With The Biggest Clubs?”

In a show of strength the Army of Illegal Aliens and Open Border Traders set their example at Montebello High School California for the entire world to see! On March 25th 2006 the United Armies of Illegal Aliens marched on Los Angeles being welcomed with opened arms from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. The message went forth that the invaders demand all U.S. citizenship rights and privileges without pledges of allegiance to the Red White and Blue, however many did pledge allegiance to the Red, White and Green. What was the response from Capitol Hill? Many cowardly Senators voted to give-in to the screaming hordes and passed treasonous legislation. Once again politicians surrender to the, biggest thugs with the biggest clubs!

The illegal armies across the United State have unified to lay claim on not only the South West United States but also to enslave the America tax payer by forcing good hearted Americans to foot the bill. The bill is now due. The education system is being destroyed by anti-American teachings that encourage the destruction of the constitution. The health system is crumbling under the pressure of the weight of millions of illegal aliens who refuse to assimilate into America unlike the tens of millions of legal immigrants who happily joined the American spirit and celebrated the American culture.

Our government has broken its promise to the American people by refusing to protect against known threats to our country. This has been done on a national scale and has disenfranchised the very voter that soon politicians will be courting for precious votes! In the name of misplaced freedom blind politicians has embarked upon a dangerous path all the while dreaming of the day they can cash in by legalizing millions upon millions of illegal aliens. Sightless politicians arrogantly dream of the day that they will be seen as the savior of America riding into Washington on a white stallion gloating in the accolades as illegal alien armies sing their praises. What many

26 Please see Appendix E for the web version of this text. As the reader will note, although the flag image is present on the homepage, the linked article contains only a text box without an image.
politicians fail to realize is there will be neither appreciation nor gratitude from the invading army but rather more demands! Demands which Washington can never fulfill! The despicable political acts committed by a long string of blind politicians are nothing less than political prostitution painting America a whoring nation, but the Minutemen will stand in their way!

YES! I want to stop the occupying army and secure America

The proud Minutemen are on duty as you read this article. They are on the border. They are in the neighborhoods. They are e-mailing, calling and they are marching. The Minuteman Project is dedicated to protecting America against invaders. We can't do it alone.

Can you help us do the job the Capitol Hill refuses to do? I want to halt the invading army and stand my ground, you can count on me!

Please Join! We need your financial help, as well.

The title of the posting is structured as that of an official announcement and draws on language of war. It thereby mimics an urgent and important newsbreak by calling on Americans to be “on notice” and referring to the protestors as an “occupying army.” The term “army” connotes an organized, disciplined, and united group working toward a common mission or goal and also carries explicitly militaristic connotations:

1. America On Notice: Occupying Army demands more from their captives!! Is the new rule of law, “The Biggest Thugs With The Biggest Clubs?”

The tone of this text, established early by the title, is sarcastic and sensational, rendering it less credible for the critical reader. For example, the first words in the title, “America On Notice,” followed by a colon seemingly connotes a serious announcement; however, the double exclamation points at the end of the first line exaggerate the declaration, and ultimately detract from what otherwise could be likened to a formal warning genre of text. “Captives,” which references the law-abiding Americans, plays into the war metaphor and portrays the nation’s citizens as victims of the army. The sarcastic question “Is the new rule of law, ‘The biggest thugs with the biggest clubs?’” takes away from any attempt at seriousness and makes a parody of the demonstration. In this catchy, rhyming
rhetorical question, the Minuteman Project reintegrates the phrase “rule of law” introduced in the mission statement, and insinuates that the protesters or “thugs” are not only in opposition to the rule of law, but actually seek to create a “new” one. Ironically, the Minuteman Project builds its platform by protesting, in a sense, the “rule of law” through speaking out against government leaders (those in charge of creating and maintaining the “rule of law”), and by proposing more efficient or effective ways to deal with immigration reform.

However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the organization apparently seeks to revise the concept of “the rule of law” wherein citizens wearing official caps emblazoned with “INS” or “ICE” can legitimately patrol next to border enforcement agents. Protestors’ disagreement with the “rule of law,” on the other hand, is framed as “defiance of the law,” and set in stark opposition to Americans who obey the “rule of law.” At the same time, the Minuteman Project justifies its own activities by deriding Congressional proposals for immigration reform and thereby frames its subsequent volunteer efforts not as defiance of the law but as mobilization. Fabricating an ‘illegal army’ by reframing the student walkouts equips the Minuteman Project with a rhetorical platform to show a face of solidarity and present itself as an “it,” an entity of united and highly mobile volunteers. Hence, the organization justifies its involvement in a ‘crisis’: they are literally “doing the job that Congress won’t do,” as noted in the header on its website.

The title refers to the protestors as an “Occupying Army,” which contradicts other metaphorical constructions in the mission statement where undocumented immigrants are described as “mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S.
borders” and are “rancorous, unassimilated, and squabbling.” An “Occupying Army” does not connote “squabbling” and “unassimilated” “mobs” of people; therefore, through this text, the Minuteman Project effectively constructs the faceless entity of ‘illegal aliens’ as even more dangerous because now they are organized and united with one mission: taking over the nation and subverting the law. Importantly, the flag image to the left supports the idea that America should be “on notice,” as the “occupying army” is raising its flag above the distress-signaling upside-down American one. Even though protestors from countries other than Mexico attended the demonstrations, this particular image specifically highlights Mexicans with the flag image. The flag image also reinforces the portrayal of Americans as victims of the invaders, or “captives,” which is a strong word implying that citizens have lost all control and freedom. Furthermore, many of the demonstrators at these student walkouts are immigrant citizens or citizen supporters of undocumented family members. Therefore, the Minuteman Project insinuation that the protests were comprised of only undocumented immigrants is, at best, erroneous and misleading.

The metaphor IMMIGRANTS AS ARMY introduced in the title is further concretized and rendered more realistic to web readers by officially naming that army and then imbuing it with characteristics by falsely representing the scenario:

2. In a show of strength the **Army of Illegal Aliens and Open Border Traders** set their example at Montebello High School California for the entire world to see!

3. On March 25th 2006 the **United Armies of Illegal Aliens** marched on Los Angeles being welcomed with opened arms from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

27 The flag image will be discussed in more detail in the following section.
The army becomes more powerful from the second to the third sentence as it multiplies from a singular army to the plural “united armies” that are “march[ing] on” the city. The Minuteman Project, however, seeks to render this army powerless by using a disparaging tone and discriminatory naming practices. In Example 2, ‘illegal aliens’ have joined forces with ‘open border traders.’ The Minuteman Project portrays Congress as generally neglectful and, as will be seen in upcoming examples, more interested in self-serving policy measures than the good of the American people. Thus, ‘open border traders’ in this passage is an attempt to discredit, perhaps, any policymaker or business owner who does not make immigration reform a priority. It is well known that many American businesses employ undocumented immigrants for cheaper labor; many make the argument that these businesses are contributing to a lax immigration policy by not being diligent in checking for work permits. These ‘open border traders’ therefore impede the Minuteman Project agenda. The term, of course, is pejorative and references again a lack of adherence to the “rule of law.”

By presenting the protests and demonstrations as a “march[..] on Los Angeles,” the Minuteman Project represents the student walkouts in southern California as potentially physically threatening as opposed to people organizing to demonstrate objections to proposed Congressional legislation. An interesting contradiction exists in which the Minutemen Project derides the “army,” but also purports it as an entity to be feared. The sardonic tone and mocking construction of this army that reigns throughout the posting contributes to rendering it less powerful; in effect, the Minuteman Project belittle the demonstrators through use of pejorative terms and hyperbole. However, the
hyperbole and implication that ‘illegal aliens’ are now organized is also employed as a fear tactic for the web audience. The “army” is imbued with false power in Example 2, where it “set [an] example […] for the entire world to see.” By using “world,” the Minuteman Project frames the demonstration as something of worldwide interest, which makes it seem more dangerous and newsworthy.

In Example 3, the Mayor of Los Angeles is depicted as a traitor to the nation, as he hospitably greets the marching army with “open arms.” The Minuteman Project employs the Los Angeles Mayor’s Hispanic name to its advantage by implying in-group complicity in permitting a potential rise to power of a Mexican army. This is an example of the Minuteman Project’s implicit discrimination against Mexican immigrants in particular. The mayor’s Hispanic name comes early in the article—early enough so that the text “Mayor Antonio” appears in the small blurb on the homepage before the reader is instructed to click the hyperlinked “Read More.” His name in proximity to the Mexican flag image implies that Americans should beware of Mexican immigrants and their political supporters who serve in prominent places in the government. Furthermore, the student walkouts present a context wherein the Minuteman Project is able to create a legitimate space to be on the offensive, as opposed to a more defensive stance presented in the mission statement. Thus, contradictions exist across the mission statement and this response posting. The Minuteman Project is both victim and savior, captive and mobile.

The immigrant population and its supporters are portrayed as aggressive, territorial and demanding of their “captives”:
4. The message went forth that the invaders demand all U.S. citizenship rights and privileges without pledging allegiance to the Red White and Blue however many did pledge allegiance to the Red White and Green.

Apparently, a “message went forth,” but no agent exists in the passive construction, thereby allowing the Minuteman Project some liberty or poetic license in reporting the event. Claiming that a “message went forth” suggests that an official, united, and public announcement was issued by this army. In this way, the Minuteman Project not only frames the protests as dangerous, but also speaks on behalf of the constructed army by putting words into the mouths of others in such a way as to insinuate that the Minuteman Project’s representations are actually a ‘message’ from the organized army. In Example 4 above, the tone is sarcastic and informal, and the authors draw on parallelism and repetition with “Red White and Blue” and “Red White and Green.” The lack of allegiance to the flag while insisting on citizenship rights is assumed to be the ‘message’ conveyed by the army; however, these are false accusations created by the Minuteman Project for propaganda purposes. The flag image supports the claim about the erroneous message and the charge of the army pledging allegiance to a flag other than the “Red, White and Blue.” The label “occupying army” is replaced with “the invaders,” further perpetuating the metaphor of immigrants as unwanted, dangerous, and on the offensive, which bolsters the Minutemen volunteers’ reasons to be on the offensive. The text then transitions to disparaging lawmakers:

5. What was the response from Capitol Hill? Many cowardly Senators voted to give-in to the screaming hordes and passed treasonous legislation. Once again politicians surrender to the biggest thugs with the biggest clubs!28

28 In this example, “give-in” is hyphenated, and a comma is inserted after “the”; both are examples of the writers’ inattention to standard punctuation conventions. Other instances throughout this text clearly demonstrate that editing or proofreading is sacrificed to creating a sensational and reactionary text.
Example 5 creates roles for the participants of Them 1 (immigrants) and Them 2 (lawmakers) introduced in the mission statement. A rhetorical question introduces the participant “Capitol Hill,” which serves as a metonymical reference to the lawmakers and politicians first introduced in the mission statement. As demonstrated in Table 3 in Chapter 3, the lawmaker “Other” is initially characterized as chaotic, neglectful, irresponsible, and lax. In this posting related to the protests, however, the Minuteman Project goes further by accusing lawmakers of being “cowardly” and betraying the American people by passing “treasonous legislation,” but no specific details are offered as to what alleged legislation the group is referring. Hence, the accusations gain in strength, but not in concrete evidence.

That the Minuteman Project does not present evidence to back up any of these accusations implies that web response postings such as this one are meant to be eye-catching and to attract donations or membership, not as a factual reporting of events. As a web researcher I read these texts very differently than will the average web browser, who might skim or scan the text to extract what they want to see. Of course, the derisive sarcasm in this posting sets this genre of text apart from a news report. The website forum offers the Minuteman Project a site to create and transform narratives according to national immigration-related news. Within this narrative, the role of immigrants in the example above is that of riotous criminals, dangerous “thugs,” and animals (embedded in the reference to this population as “screaming hordes”). The posting then segues into the malicious intentions of the “illegal armies”: 
The illegal armies across the United State [sic] have unified to lay claim on not only the South West United States but also to enslave the America [sic] tax payer by forcing good hearted Americans to foot the bill.

The effects of the demonstrations are hyperbolized wherein the student walkouts are framed as immigrants having “unified to lay claim” to “the South West United States.” Spatial and geographical language plays a role in the conceptual organization of this war. For example, “South West” is capitalized and made into a proper noun, which suggests that this area is an official region in and of itself. The metaphorical narrative of war is expanded through phrases that denote participant actions such as “lay claim to,” which connotes assertion of power over land or territory. The term “enslave” carries a strongly pejorative connotation wherein Americans—constructed as victims and good people—have been captured and are at the mercy of the invaders.

In addition to employing the language of war, the Minuteman Project touches on a hot issue among Americans: taxes. First, Americans are depicted as victims at the whim of the ‘illegal armies’ (THEM 1) and then, Americans are further depicted as victims because they are unprotected by lawmakers (THEM 2). The developments in the “war,” which affect political territory as well as government infrastructure in the example above, serve as further justification for offensive strategies on the part of the Minuteman Project. The rhetoric of war, armies, and spatialized spreading also justifies the need for two entities on two territorial (or political) positions: Internal Vigilance and the Headquarters for Civil Defense. Examples 7 and 8 move from the concept of a physical or spatial ‘invasion’ to focus on how the ‘illegal aliens’ are effecting the educational and healthcare systems.
The insinuation in Example 7 is that immigrants and their supporters are anti-American, desiring the benefits of the nation (in Example 4, immigrants “demand all citizenship rights”), while tearing at the very fabric of the nation: the U.S. Constitution. Furthermore, just as “taxes” is a buzzword in every election, Americans’ diverging perspectives on how money should be distributed among education and healthcare systems bring about strong emotional responses during election years. It is unclear, however, what “anti American” teachings means in this sentence and why they would lead to the destruction of the Constitution. This could be a jab at supporters of bilingual education or those who have argued that students should not be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools.

Example 8 makes a distinction between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ immigrants, and lauds the former group who “happily joined the American spirit and celebrated the American culture.” The new immigrants who comprise the ‘invading army,’ however, refuse to assimilate or pledge allegiance to the flag. Assimilation is a veiled reference to the “harmonious melting pot” referred to in the mission statement and serves to divide and polarize the two groups of immigrants, further marginalizing undocumented or migrant workers. Contrasting these two different groups of immigrants assists in strengthening the Minuteman Project case for citizen involvement and activism. The implication is that if
some immigrants can be patient and follow the law, then why do others refuse to do the same? Positioning these two groups in opposition to one another separates them and makes it easier to find fault and address concepts of “lawlessness.” In addition, this separation serves as a method of positive self-representation for the Minuteman Project because embedded in this concept is the claim that “we are not against ALL immigrants—just the illegal ones.” Finally, separating the two groups of immigrants furthers the Minuteman Project’s cause because it points out that “millions of immigrants” already exist, and now there are MORE. The “army” is portrayed as a band of leeches that seek only advantages.

By grounding accusations against undocumented immigrants and the government in the context of the student walkouts, the Minuteman Project further strengthens and defines the categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.</th>
<th>Our government has broken its promise to the American people by refusing to protect against known threats to our country.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>This has been done on a national scale and has disenfranchised the very voter that soon politicians will be courting for precious votes!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept of ‘us’ is clearly seen in the use of the word ‘our’ as in “our government” and “our country.” The noun phrase “known threats” in Example 9 above presupposes both that threats exist and that those in charge of policy are aware of said threats. The “promise” that the government has allegedly broken seems to be the general act of “protect[ing]” the American people. Stubbornly, the government has “refus[ed]” to do this. These depictions are again much more accusatory than those in the mission
statement where lawmakers were merely careless and neglectful. The Minuteman Project presents itself as an entity seeking to protect the nation against the ‘invading army of illegal aliens,’ but at the same time caught in a struggle with deserters (the politicians) who are giving up on the nation in search of their own greedy interests.

The passive construction in Example 10 employs the general demonstrative “this” in subject position, masking what exactly “this” is, but “this” assumedly refers to the refusal of lawmakers to protect against known threats. The Minuteman Project therefore uses the student walkouts as an opportunity to emphasize the ineffectiveness of the government. Hyperbolic language and elements of sensationalism and derision increase as the posting backgrounds the topic of ‘illegal aliens’ to focus on THEM 2, represented here as “politicians.” Casting THEM 2 as treasonous and greedy creates a space for the Minuteman Project to solicit membership at the end of the posting.

11. In the name of misplaced freedom **blind** politicians has [sic] embarked upon a dangerous path all the while dreaming of the day they **can cash in** by legalizing millions upon millions of illegal aliens.

12. **Sightless** politicians **arrogantly** dream of the day that **they will be seen as the savior of America** riding into Washington on a white stallion gloating in the **accolades** as illegal alien armies **sing their praises**.

13. What many politicians fail to realize is there will be neither appreciation nor gratitude from the invading army but rather more demands! Demands which Washington can never fulfill!

14. The **despicable political acts** committed by a **long string of blind politicians** are nothing less than **political prostitution** painting America a whoring nation but **the Minutemen will stand in their way**!
At this point in the posting, certainly even a non-critical reader (if he or she is still reading at this point) cannot ignore the hyperbole and exaggerated depiction of politicians engaging in a grand scheme of sorts to “cash in” on the revenues from the legalization of “millions upon million of illegal aliens.” Newspaper reporting is known for its conventions of putting the main points of a story at the beginning of the article because most readers scan as the article progresses or perhaps do not get past the first few paragraphs. In the web postings of the Minuteman Project, which it refers to as “articles,” one might also assume that readers—even active members or fans of the organization—do not read every word in its entirety. Of course, the Minuteman Project’s ‘articles’ are not articles in the new coverage sense. Though based on factual immigration-related news and events, the authors of the Minuteman Project postings infuse their articles with highly sensationalist language.

The term “politicians” is used seven times in the text, and thus the repetitious role of this ‘other’ in the destruction of America is exacerbated. Elected officials (“our government,” “Senators” and “politicians”) are “sightless” and “blind.” This language serves as a metaphor to indicate that they are ignorant or unaware of the danger posed by the invading army. In the above four segments, where politicians are accused of being “blind,” and “sightless,” the Minuteman Project contradicts a previous statement about lawmakers not attending to “known threats.” In essence, politicians are accused of using people (‘illegal aliens’) as a commodity to get rich. No longer are they merely careless and inept, politicians are essentially dangerous and “arrogant” because what ‘they’ are doing is deliberate. In addition, elected officials are portrayed as cowards and traitors
who “give in” and break their promises to U.S. citizens so that they can “cash in” on immigration legislation. The lawmakers are depicted as money hungry and shortsighted, irresponsibly playing with or gambling with the future of the nation as they seek their own gain. They care only for money, not for the American people. The politicians have not only severely neglected their duty of protecting the nation from “known threats,” but have committed “despicable political acts,” insinuating that they have done something illegal, unethical, or immoral. These accusations bring into question exactly who the term “politicians” refers to, as the Minuteman Project also relies on the political establishment to legitimize its position. Such characterizations of the inept politicians serve to increase the positive face of the Minuteman Project—this organization becomes a balanced alternative to the government within the ongoing chaos of the immigration situation.

The end of this posting and the mission statement are similar in that both texts employ increased hyperbolic language toward the end of the texts. Additionally, both texts end on an apocalyptic, futuristic note. Whereas the mission statement warns that historians will write about the inevitable death of America as a harmonious nation, this posting integrates a bizarre old western America image of lawmakers dreaming of being “seen as the savior of America riding into Washington on a white stallion gloating in the accolades as illegal alien armies sing their praises.” Example 14 shows the transition between the final and most flamboyant attack on politicians where they are accused of “political prostitution painting America as a whoring nation” before the topic changes in mid-sentence to the triumphant statement “but the Minutemen will stand in their way!” The references to ‘prostitution’ and a ‘whoring’ nation might be an accusation that
lawmakers accept money illegally or otherwise financially benefit from cheap immigrant labor. This language is suggestive of the accusations against the ‘open border traders’ at the beginning of the article. In a largely right-wing conservative and prudish America, ‘prostitution’ and ‘whoring’ are certain to raise eyebrows among web readers. Finally, the Minuteman Project opens a space or a platform to further justify its organization and solicit more volunteers. The end of the posting is motivational and solicitous in tone and persuasive tactics, as the organization seeks to enlist more support:

**Example 15:**

**YES! I want to stop the occupying army and secure America**

**Example 16:**

The proud Minutemen are on duty as you read this article. They are on the border. They are in the neighborhoods. They are emailing, calling and they are marching. The Minuteman Project is dedicated to protecting America against invaders. We can’t do it alone.

Perhaps the sensational images of politicians gambling with tax payers’ money and gloating in the praises of the ‘illegal armies’ as they ride to Capitol Hill on white stallions is intended to incite the audience enough to move people to action. After the exaggerated ending, web users can click on “YES! I want to stop the occupying army and secure America” to join the Minuteman Project activities, which at the time that this was posted included an organized caravan to march on Capitol Hill. As an aside, the Caravan, though portrayed as a success on the website, only drew 100 people by the time it got to Washington, D.C. 

In Example 16, the organization turns back to positive self-presentation wherein it is ubiquitous and never resting. The volunteers are everywhere and mobile and “emailing,

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29 Example 15 at one time was hyperlinked to a sign-up process (personal observation), but as the posting moved “down” the page when new news was posted on top, the hyperlink was eventually removed.
calling, and [...] marching.’ Embedded in the solicitation is a sense that the minutemen are all over the place, they are aware, alert, and informed of the situation, and they are prepared to lead fellow Americans onto the ‘battleground.’ Messages in this text are supported by the images of Paul Revere and Watchful George who hold a cell phone and binoculars, as well as the photograph of the minutemen volunteers looking off into different directions on the header of the web pages. The management of the website serves as another metaphor for the organization’s mobility—it consistently updates the site with the latest news and also allows the user the option to receive news directly in their inboxes via email. The final two sentences continue to solicit involvement:

17. Can you help us do the job the Capitol Hill refuses to do? I want to halt the invading army and stand my ground you can count on me!

18. Please Join! We need your financial help as well.

The tone in the last two segments above is upbeat and motivational, peppered with repetition, rhetorical questions and exclamation marks, ensuring confidence in its audience that the Minutemen are everywhere and ready to serve. Throughout the text, the organization makes an appeal to its viewers by exhibiting a sense of group networkedness, and willingness to act. The request for “financial help” is added subtly at the end, almost as if it were in parentheses, perhaps not to turn off a prospective member by asking for money too quickly. Armies need funds too—so even if web readers are unprepared to go on active patrols, they might be lured into giving money. It would be ‘unpatriotic,’ after all, not to support the ground troops protecting our border.

In these segments as well as in Examples 15 and 16, appeals for membership
draw on the language of war with terms such as “secure America,” “on duty,”
“marching,” “dedicated to protecting America against invaders” “halt the invading
army,” and “stand my ground.” Throughout the posting, the Minuteman Project creates a
role for itself as a reluctant but willing army. Originally intended as group of “peaceful
voices,” members are now calling out for help to secure the nation from the ‘invasion,’ of
the ‘united army of illegal aliens’ who has succeeded in raising its flag above the
American one. However, the ‘Army of Illegal Aliens’ and the Minutemen are two
different types of armies. The former is invading, attacking, pillaging and stealing what is
not theirs, whereas the latter is only protecting and defending what is ‘rightfully
American.’ The ‘Army of Illegal Aliens’ are not American, but rather foreign nationals,
whereas the Minuteman Project purportedly stands for American ideals and liberties
within the harmonious melting pot of the nation.
Co-Opting Visual Images

The context of this posting as a response to the student walkouts is critical, as the metaphors are more powerful against the backdrop of a real, organized event. Whereas the mission statement drew on metaphors of immigrants as ‘invaders,’ it did not respond to any specific situation in as much as it served the function of introducing the organization and raising awareness about the general ill effects of ‘illegal aliens’ on the nation. On the other hand, the demonstrations in California required mobilization and movement on the part of protestors, actions that are pivotal to the Minuteman Project’s portrayal of this group as invaders taking over the country. The Minuteman Project therefore draws on this situation as a springboard to further the construction of participant roles in the overarching metaphor of war. The flag image is interesting to consider, as well, since according to news reports, it was the work of one student, or perhaps a small group of students. However, the Minuteman Project employs this image to strengthen the representation of immigrants as united and organized. Furthermore, the organization uses digital technology to re-present or repurpose this image, which alters the messages of the flag image. Figures 12, 13, and 14 below show the different images.
Figure 12: Original photograph of upside down flag image

Figure 13: Flag image on tearful face

Figure 14: Tear for my country
Figure 12 is the original photograph of the image taken by photojournalists on the day of the walkouts. This image was inserted next to the title of the “America On Notice” posting on the website. Figure 13 was accessed on the homepage of www.minutemanproject.com at the time when web browsers could choose to enter either The Minuteman Project or the newer Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. The flag image is enlarged and superimposed on a face. Although it is unclear whether the face is of a child or an adult, or a woman or a man, the image clearly depicts a downward cast eye and a single teardrop on the face. The ‘Tear for my country’ with Uncle Sam image (Fig. 14) was also generated from the original photograph. Uncle Sam points a finger out toward the audience, signaling that the viewer is needed to help with the ‘invasion.’ Uncle Sam’s head touches the bottom part of the upside-down American flag, further appealing to patriotism. The text “Minuteman Civil Defense Corps” is superimposed across the American flag in white, and “Tear for my Country” is written in black, diagonally following the top line of the flag pole next to the American flag. Flags are powerful national symbols. Chavez (2001) argues that “As a symbol of the nation, scenes in which the flag is changed or acted upon can be a powerful metaphor for changes in the nation itself” (p. 76). The Minuteman Project sends the message in these digital alterations to the original photograph that sadness is upon ‘us’ because immigrants—specifically Mexican immigrants—are attempting to change the face of the nation. Furthermore, this is a serious issue because Uncle Sam is imploring viewers to help.

Figure 14 was accessed on June 6, 2007 on the new Minuteman Headquarters for Civil Defense website. From the homepage of the site (www.minutemanhq.com), the user
is given eight options or hyperlinks. These are 1) Stop Amnesty NOW (which flashes in yellow); 2) Illegal Alien Action Center; 3) State Chapters; 4) Border Watch Operations; 5) The Forum; 6) On-Campus Campaigns; 7) Border Fence; and 8) Political Action Committee. Figure 3, which depicts the flag image superimposed on the crying face with “Stop Amnesty NOW! Fax the Congress” also superimposed on the face, can be found on the right hand side of the web pages accessed by clicking any of the first three links listed above. Furthermore, the text “The Illegal Alien Invasion Continues” is written in large bold blue text above the image. This image is hyperlinked to a page that allows the user to “blast fax” congress to reject amnesty. The user must then click on who they wish to fax and each option lists a different price. This altered image, therefore, is used in different ways for different purposes. Furthermore, the flag photograph was taken on the day of the student walkouts, in late March 2006. Over one year later, the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps still employs the photograph for persuasive purposes, which gives the ongoing sense of urgency about the ‘invasion.’

Mitchell (2006) found that members from various countries sent in images of their flags with ‘We are not Afraid’ typeset over the image to show solidarity with Londoners after the bombings. In that case, the flags were used not as divisive signs but rather as demonstrations of support. In the example above, however, the Mexican flag is used to depict Mexican nationals as outsiders and invaders. The image, therefore, comes to represent all ‘illegal aliens’ and serves as purported evidence of harmful intentions.
Print Text and Images in Mass Emails

On March 30, 2006, just a few days after the student walkouts, the Minuteman Project sent a mass email out to subscribers with the following subject line: “[mmproj] Senate Surrendering to Illegal Alien Mob? Ready to Pass Amnesty.” In the body of the email is a pdf (see Figure 15) with the request to email copies to “everyone you know” or download, print, and hand out copies. The content of the email resonates with the posting discussed above, as it also responds to the student walkouts. Visual images include the Uncle Sam image, the Paul Revere image, and the flag image discussed above.

Van Dijk suggests that examining “semantic macrostructures” or “macropropositions” reveals the most pertinent information in a given text by offering an overview of what a text is generally about (1980; 2001):

For discursive, cognitive, and social reasons, the topics of discourse play a fundamental role in communication and interaction. Defined as ‘semantic macrostructures’ derived from the local (micro) structures of meaning, topics represent what a discourse ‘is about’ globally speaking, embody most important information of a discourse, and explain overall coherence of text and talk. […] Topics defined as global meanings cannot, as such, be directly observed, but are inferred from or assigned to discourse by language users. However, they are often expressed in discourse, for instance in titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts, thematic sentences or conclusions. These may be used by language users as strategic devices for the inference or assignment of topics – as intended by the speaker or writer. (2001, pp. 101-102)

Much could be said about the text in the email; however, this highly visual document will be examined in terms of its macrostructures or macropropositions to demonstrate the cohesiveness of print and visual messages across two mediums: web articles and emails.
Senate Surrendering to Illegal Alien Mobs – Ready to Pass Amnesty

Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Says NO!

Mob... decorates US Flag while Demanding US Citizens' Rights

This weekend illegal alien mobs came out of the shadows and descended on Phoenix, Denver and Los Angeles.

Like an invading and menacing horde, they shouted USA citizenship rights, but without any citizen duties, responsibilities, loyalties.

Are riots in the streets and the burning of cars in Washington, DC next?

One million illegal foreign immigrants and their advocates marched in the streets of America under the banner of Mexico, demanding that our federal laws be ignored, and their criminal trespasses into our sovereign United States be rewarded with unlimited benefits—including all the rights of American citizenship?

These mobs claim the right to live and prosper in the United States as “Immigrants.” But their own actions reveal an organized effort to force the American taxpayer to accept large foreign colonies in our nation, pressing upon us through acts of intimidation and the threat of violence. We have the right and moral obligation to defend America, and “just say NO!”

Law-abiding US citizens reject invasion, aggression and acts of defiance against our republic’s ordered liberty. Minutemen will respond in April at the US borders... saying, as loyal Americans have always said, “Immigration, yes... colonization, not!”

Illegal aliens and their handlers are shouting: “No nation, No borders” and “Our ‘rights’ trump the US Constitution, its citizens and its laws.”

But illegal aliens are in America only because they are guilty of criminality jumpping our border. Since when do mobs of lawbreakers deserve the blessings of liberty, over their honesty, patience and faithfully seeking to become American citizens?

This is more than a takeover call—it is an assault to the basic requirements of responsible self-government. Our government has failed in its duty to enforce the rule of law. It has allowed international criminal syndicates, drug cartels, foreign governments, and radical advocacy groups to undermine the very foundations of the constitutional rights Americans have fought for and died to protect.

What will the politicians do now?

Represent the 92 PERCENT OF AMERICANS WHO WANT THE US BORDERS SECURED? Or make common cause with the mob, and endorse the agendas of radical globalization, “free trade” ideologies, and big business lobbyists seeking to exploit cheap foreign labor—even if it means within our borders a fiscal migrant class of indentured servants, and provides a magnet for illegal welfare claims? President Bush has called for civility. Patriotic citizens concerned to protect our sovereignty, security and prosperity are not the lawbreakers wading in the streets, screaming racism and desecrating our flag.

The American people understand there can be no responsible immigration reform UNTIL OUR BORDER IS SECURE. “Guest worker” amnesty programs ARE NOT a part of border security.

It is CRITICAL that you ACT TODAY! Over 200,000 Faxes have already flooded the offices of every Senate US Senator, demanding that they SIGN the “Guest worker” amnesty bill. Send your faxes all AT ONCE.

Go to www.minutemanhq.com/fax/

Our political leaders lack the spine to enforce the law, and are SURRENDERING to a radical agenda that would eliminate enforcement of our borders, violate our Constitution, compromise our national security and national sovereignty, and undermine the rule of law.

The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps is on duty again throughout April protecting our borders from foreign invasion. Always respectful of the law and generous in compassion for the exploited and indigent humanity flooding our frontier, we will provide the “eternal vigilance” that is the price of liberty.

YOU can make a REAL DIFFERENCE. The politicians will talk; the liberal media and the “ Hate America” crowd will complain about offending illegal aliens, and the foreign mobs will ramble. The Minutemen will ACT in defense of America!

Sincerely,

Chris Simcox, President
Minuteman Civil Defense Corps

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Figure 15: PDF sent in email to MMP subscribers
The document appears to be a hybrid genre of a newspaper article and a letter: while the format resembles an official announcement of sorts, the President of MCDC, Chris Simcox, signs the document at the end. The title, “Senate Surrendering to Illegal Alien Mobs – Ready to Pass Amnesty” is in bold black type and extends across the top of the page. Just below is a picture of large groups of people walking together, and the ‘leaders’ carry Mexican flags. Just underneath the visual image is the large text “Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Says NO!” The text is organized into three columns and includes boldfaced headers or topics. The overall impression of the document is symmetrical, as the image of the “desecrated” flag is positioned in the upper middle column of text, and at the bottom is a donation form, with the images of Uncle Sam to the left and Paul Revere against the backdrop of the United States colored like an American flag on the right.

Underneath the title and picture, the first bolded ‘topic’ is situated at the upper left hand corner of the page in the first column of text. It reads, “Mob…Desecrates US Flag while Demanding US Citizens’ Rights.” The ‘mob’ apparently refers to the large group of people walking in the image above the text. However, if one looks closely, it is clear that one picture is used four times, laid side by side to portray a larger group or ‘mob.’ Therefore, it appears that large groups of people are carrying eight instead of two Mexican flags. This image, along with the upper center image of the ‘desecrated’ flag (the Mexican flag flown on top of the upside down, distress-signaling American one) sends the message that Mexicans, as a national group, are the enemy immigrants responsible for the ‘mob.” Importantly, under this first topic, there is no reference to the
student walkouts. Furthermore, the ‘mob’ of Mexicans in this photograph could very well have been born in the United States or otherwise be American citizens.

The second bolded topic, also positioned in the left hand column of text, is “Are riots in the streets and the burning of cars in Washington, DC next?” Student walkouts, therefore, become precursors to acts of riots and destructive acts in the capitol city. The underlying message is that immigrants are to be feared because ‘they’ are unpredictable and might be prone to violence. The suggestion of riots and burning cars is resonant with the apocalyptic images at the end of the mission statement, and implies a sense of urgency to stop the worst from happening. The third bolded topic, positioned directly under the flag image in the center column of text, is “This is more than a wakeup call—it is an affront to the basic requirements of responsible self-government.” As in the mission statement and the “American on Notice” article, both immigrants and government are attacked. In addition, the phrasing “more than a wake-up call” presumes, firstly, that the student walkouts should be a ‘wake-up call’ to a crisis. The emailed document, therefore, follows again the pattern of depicting immigrants as dangerous and then addressing how the internal structure of the government or national system is being affected.

Close in proximity underneath the third topic is a fourth bolded topic: “What will politicians do now?” This, of course, is cohesive with the “American on Notice” article that employed the word “politicians” repetitiously. Part of the first two lines of text underneath this bolded header is capitalized so that the words “92 PERCENT OF AMERICANS WHO WANT THE US BORDERS SECURED?” jumps out in close proximity to the word “politicians.” This move serves to marginalize immigration rights
supporters by claiming that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not want ‘them’ to be allowed ‘in’ the country. Furthermore, this serves as a move to decrease support for “politicians,” the lexical item that functions as a metonym for “government,” and instead put trust into the hands of the Minuteman Project.

The only bolded print in the third column of text is “Go to www.minutemanhq.com.” Directly above this, however, are several capitalized words and phrases including UNTIL OUR BORDERS ARE SECURE; ARE NOT; CRITICAL; ACT TODAY; FLOODED; EVERY SINGLE; REJECT; and AT ONCE. Toward the bottom of the third column, near the end of the ‘letter,’ “YOU” and “REAL DIFFERENCE” are capitalized. At the bottom of the document, running along the width of the page, is a donation form surrounded by small, bolded dashed lines symbolizing perforation, indicating that the reader can cut it out to mail it to the address provided in the lower right corner. Centered between the images of Uncle Sam on a poster in a minuteman hat and Paul Revere looking off into the distance is the bolded text “Yes, I want to halt the invasion! Here is my donation to help with REAL Border protection. I’ve enclosed my generous donation of […]” From here, a prospective donor can choose various amounts between $5000 and $25 or “Other,” and the form indicates that credit cards are accepted, which sends the message of consumerism, commodity, and of course, the latest technology. As demonstrated in the discussion of merchandise in Chapter 3, the Minuteman Project is literally something to “buy into.”
Positive Self-Representation Disguised as Rhetoric of Tolerance

Despite the strong discriminatory representations examined thus far, the Minuteman Project does seem to be concerned, at times, with sending a message of fairness and anti-discrimination practices. On the other hand, perhaps because the group is aware at some level of its exaggerated depictions of immigrants, it makes an effort to present a fairer and just side to its organization through web postings encouraging tolerance toward others. This leads to interesting contradictions on the Minuteman Project website, such as statements expressing acceptance and good will to the very groups that the mission statement denigrates. In this way, the organization walks a careful line. On the one hand, it depicts a horrendous scenario of invading immigrants and an incompetent and corrupt government, but on the other hand, it argues for a stance of non-violence and peace toward those same two groups. Van Dijk (1993c) points out that overall, social norms dissuade dominant group members from appearing as ‘racists’ or directly discriminating against minority groups. Rather,

When they want to say something negative about minorities, they will tend to use denials, disclaimers or other forms that are intended to avoid a negative impression with their listeners or their readers. […] Such denials may not only be personal, but especially in elite discourse, they may also pertain to ‘our’ group in general: ‘We’ British (Dutch, French) are not racist…’ That is in talk about minorities, white people often speak as dominant group members. (p. 180)

The Minuteman Project denies that its activities are racist by overtly separating itself from supremacist or nationalist groups, beginning with a prominent header on their home page. The following statement has in common with the mission statement its
permanence: this statement was posted on the original site since the beginning of this research project through June 2007.

MMP has no affiliation with, nor will we accept any assistance by or interference from, separatists, racists, or supremacy groups or individuals, no matter what their race, color, or creed.

At some point, however, the Minuteman Project removed the final phrase “no matter what their race, color or creed.” This header, similar to language used by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC), serves the function of positive self-representation, differentiating the Minuteman Project from hate groups. Despite the racist depictions of immigrants in its mission statement and web articles, here the Minuteman Project members proclaim that they believe in equality for all. Perhaps in order for the organization to maintain credibility, it hopes that this statement might warn overt racist groups away from identifying with the organization and showing up at its border activities. Other statements also serve to counteract and seem to contradict the negative depictions located in the mission statement by exhibiting a show of tolerance toward others. However, when examined closely, the disclaimer texts do not exhibit tolerance as much as they serve a function of positive self-representation for the Minuteman Project.

In the two postings to be discussed below, the organization distances itself from outwardly violent acts such as burning other nations’ flags and acting in a hostile manner toward elected officials.

The Minuteman Project posted a statement against flag burning shortly after the student protests in the Los Angeles area in late March 2006. A member of an anti-immigrant organization similar to the Minuteman Project, Border Guardians, burned a
Mexican flag in front of the Mexican Consulate in Tucson, Arizona in early April (“Group Burns”). Perhaps to distance themselves from people who might act as the Border Guardians did (or to keep its own members in check), the Minuteman Project published an admonishment on its website. The organization posted this statement on March 30, 2006, just after the large-scale student protests in southern California, but before Roy Warden of the Border Guardians burned the Mexican flag30.

**THERE WILL BE NO MEXICAN FLAG BURNING!!**

The Minuteman Project does not endorse or encourage violence; this includes aggressive demonstrations that create malicious behavior such as flag burning, rioting, or any physical contact of any kind. In this time of social turmoil many anti-American groups wish to cause harm to the name of the Minutemen, because they know that the Minutemen stand for peace and the Rule of Law. The Minutemen are a model of strength and personal control in a time of civil disobedience. The Minuteman Pledge declares our virtues while our Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.) declare our actions.

*Stephen J. Eichler J.D.*
Executive Director of the Minuteman Project, Inc.

([www.minutemanproject.com](http://www.minutemanproject.com), accessed April 11, 2006)

Importantly, language is the Minuteman Project’s weapon—perhaps members believe that taking a stance against physical actions separates them from other “racist” groups, and, in effect, it does—language is slippery and use of metaphors and disclaimers assist in positive self-representation. Statements such as this one serve to inform a wider

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30 This was the original format of the posting, which I copied and saved in a word document. Unfortunately, I do not have the web page saved that shows the posting in this format. Shortly thereafter, the web authors altered the typeface and colors, which will be shown below.
audience on how this group would like to be perceived and to possibly protect against some inevitable negative press coverage and accusations of racism by civil rights groups.

The formatting of this four-sentence statement lends it an air of being official and important. At first glance, it appears as a powerful reprimand to those who would commit such an act, and obtains a substantial amount of credibility in several areas. The title “There Will Be No Mexican Flag Burning” is in 18-point typeface in all caps, bolded and red, with “NO” underlined and two exclamation points at the end, sending an apparently strong signal that the Minuteman Project is adamantly against this type of flagrant action. The audience for this posting could be internal and external; that is, they might be informing current members of the organization that they had better behave, and they could be targeting a wider audience of potential members who are unsure if they want to affiliate themselves with this group. For the latter audience, statements such as this one would reassure them that they are not joining racist vigilantes; rather, they are joining a democratic and fair organization that engages in non-violent protests. Underneath the posting, in 16-point typeface, is the signature of the Executive Director of the Minuteman Project in blue, complete with a “J.D.” for Jurist Doctorate at the end of his name, signifying his education and credentials. Furthermore, although the brief statement initially appears to serve the function of directing volunteers on what NOT to do, it actually serves a more important secondary function of positive self-representation.

Interestingly, the first sentence reads that this organization “does not endorse or encourage violence,” which is certainly not a strong statement against violent action (emphasis mine). In fact, the statement serves much more of a disclaimer or positive self-
presentation function than to sincerely discourage the burning of other nations’ flags. Not “endorsing” or “encouraging” violent acts is very different from condemning them. Besides the lightweight treatment towards violent or destructive acts, only the first sentence in the four-sentence statement actually refers to the kind of actions not encouraged (flag burning, rioting, or any physical contact). All other sentences in the brief posting function to depict the Minutemen volunteers as victimized, under attack, and in need of protection.

As in the mission statement, this posting frames statements as facts. In the second sentence “anti-American groups” want to “cause harm to the name of the Minutemen, because they know that the Minutemen stand for peace and the Rule of Law” (emphasis mine). The word “because” joining the two clauses assists in framing the first clause as an indisputable fact. “Because” followed by a concrete reason offers a cause for why “anti-American groups” wish to cause harm to the Minuteman Project. In this sentence, the organization puts thoughts and words into the mouths of vague, unidentified “anti-American” groups by professing what these groups “know,” thereby actually speaking for these unnamed people. This rhetorical strategy was also employed in the “American on Notice” posting wherein the Minuteman Project seemingly spoke for the ‘army of illegal aliens.’ Furthermore, readers may have additional cause to believe that anti-American groups wish to cause harm, as the text offers being in a “time of social turmoil” as a reason for why others might act out. The reference to a “time of turmoil” is cohesive with the ‘problem’ created in the mission statement. Word choice and sentence structure presents the immigration ‘crisis’ as fact, and not merely a perception or opinion. The
phrase “rule of law,” emerges again, justifying Minuteman Project activities as just and necessary, and further assists in its positive self-presentation.

The third sentence is not related at all to the bolded title, stating only “The Minutemen are a model of strength and personal control in a time of civil disobedience,” successfully turning the statement into a positive platform for itself. The state of the nation is currently one of “civil disobedience,” (and “social turmoil,” as seen in the previous sentence), where the Minuteman Project intends to bring about a peaceful resolve without causing harm to others who may not be as peaceful or tolerant. Heroes again by the fourth and final sentence of the statement, the group urges readers to familiarize themselves with the “virtues” and “actions” of the Minuteman Project by referring them to official-sounding genres of text like The Minuteman Pledge and the Standard Operating Procedures, leaving no room for questioning of ideas, intentions, or code of conduct.

Because these are web texts, it is important to keep in mind that authors have choices about how text and images are positioned in relationship to one another. Therefore, the tolerance statement discussed above must be considered in the visual context in which it is posted on the website, including the text and images that are posted directly above and below the statement. The following is what the web browser viewed on the homepage at the time the “No Mexican Flag Burning” statement was posted:
Importantly, the “America on Notice” posting discussed in the previous section features the controversial flag image as a header. The juxtaposition of this posting with the “There will be NO Mexican flag burning!!” posting therefore sends very mixed messages to the audience. The image of the flags that incited anger across the nation could, presumably, anger or re-anger any member of the audience. In effect, the web viewer has the flag and flamboyant title in view and then directly below lies a contradiction: Despite naming immigrants an “Army of Illegal Aliens,” the Minuteman Project points out that it stands for the “rule of law” and no action should be taken against the “invaders” through acts such as rioting or flag burning. This serves as a positive self-representation move for the Minuteman Project—whereas the ‘army of illegal aliens’ desecrated the flag, as demonstrated in the photograph, its own group is calling for no
violence toward other groups’ flags. However, what seems initially to be a bold statement against flag burning or other violent acts (title is in red, all-caps, with exclamation points at the end) in retribution for an incident that is unnamed in the text is, in fact, only a weak non-endorsement and non-encouragement of flag burning and violence. Perhaps the Minuteman Project wishes to infer that the “Army” is the one rioting, while they sit back peacefully and watch.

The visual image and accompanying text directly below the tolerance toward Mexican flags are even more egregious. The web browser sees a “mob” of people (which supports claims made in the mission statement, the “American on Notice Posting,” and the “Senate Surrenders” email) apparently supporting this young Latino male as he waves the Mexican flag in front of a crowd of people at Los Angeles City Hall. The text included to the right of the image is the beginning of the posting (the reader must click to read it in its entirety). The statements “We demand your rights! We demand your jobs! We demand your future! If you don’t give us America then you are racist pigs!” are Minuteman Project words. However, “we” is used here as if it were the voice of the crowd of protestors. As such, the Minuteman Project takes on the voice of the population it silences. People become puppets as the Minuteman Project arrogantly speaks for them.

As discussed elsewhere, flags are symbols of nations and of armies. Publishing images of the Mexican flag above the U.S. flag image is an effort to arouse controversy and to disseminate this picture lest viewers have not already seen it on the national news or all over the WWW. The organization employs this image as justification for the “social turmoil” in hopes to persuade other Americans to action. The image above of the
young Latino flying the Mexican flag in front of a crowd of people represents a threat, confirming the negative portrayals of Other: ‘The invaders are coming. They are abusing our flag and flying their own. They come in mobs to destroy our country.’ The statement exhibiting tolerance for other nations’ flag is thus *sandwiched between* two images of the Mexican flag, which is used in other incidences to support the ‘invasion.’ The tolerance statement is therefore rendered a meaningless act, a meaningless message. It serves merely as a disclaimer and does not even do a good job at that.

In addition to showing tolerance for other nations’ flags, the Minuteman Project also posts a statement to discourage its members or browsers from harming elected officials and the “anti-American” groups who do not support the organization. However, just as the statement against flag burning is posted between contradicting messages, the posting encouraging tolerance for elected officials is located *directly below* a text that serves to subvert the message on tolerance, as shown in Figure 17.

**Minuteman Caravan**

We have seen defiance of the rule of law by foreign nationals. We have seen protests across America with disdain for American sovereignty. Defiance of the law supported by protest is outrageous to those who are lawful and proud of America.

Criminal aliens and their followers have taken to the streets demanding not their rights but your rights. This sort of massive illegal incursion would not be tolerated in any other country. Many in Congress refuse to listen to the will of Americans and turn a blind eye to the rule of law. Capitol Hill has been bought and paid for by special interest groups who benefit from cheap sweat shop labor and the 21st century economic slave trade. **Read More**

Sign Up Now!

**No Violence!**

The Minutemen believe in the rule of law. The Minutemen Project does not endorse or encourage violence; this includes making threatening statements or participating in any hostile actions against anyone. All elected officials must NOT be threatened or have their security compromised in any way! In this time of social turmoil many anti-American groups wish... **Read More**

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Figure 17: Positive self-representation through juxtaposing text and images
The text above the ‘No Violence’ towards elected officials posting is one in which the organization advertises the Minuteman Caravan, an organized road trip across the country that ended in Washington, D.C. with the purpose of confronting lawmakers about the ‘alien invasion.’ Only a brief excerpt informing viewers about the caravan is viewable (one must click “read more” to see it in its entirety). The ‘Minuteman Caravan’ text strongly criticizes the administration by suggesting that they are getting rich on current immigration laws, and the Minuteman Project is organizing to protest against lawmakers’ actions. The second text, the profession of tolerance toward elected officials, is located just below the critique of the administration and therefore sends mixed messages. The proximity of these two texts works to subvert the Minuteman Project’s show of goodwill toward its enemy, further reducing the statement calling for tolerance to a mere disclaimer.

In the ‘No Violence’ posting above, much of the text repeats word for word the ‘No Mexican Flag Burning’ text, demonstrating perhaps a lack of effort in differentiating between the two Others or lack of creativity or effort in trying to diversify language. As demonstrated in the discussion on the statement admonishing flag burning, very little of the passage above actually addresses the subject matter of the title, which is “No Violence.” Only two out of seven sentences actually refer to the subject of violence. Furthermore, the sentence that refers specifically to elected officials is grammatically awkward, lending it less strength: “All elected officials must NOT be threatened or have their security compromised in any way!” A firmer wording of this statement might be “No elected official should be threatened […]” or “No one should threaten or
compromise the security of an elected official,” or simply, “Elected officials must NOT be threatened […]. The confusing wording in the posting, however, throws the reader off balance.

For the critical reader, the extensive repetition across the two texts might take away some credibility from the messages because it seems as if the organization is merely recycling the same words in different contexts. On the other hand, the repetition could serve a comforting function. The more readers are exposed to the words and concepts, the more likely they might be to believe that what the Minuteman Project claims is true. Furthermore, the repeated statements are consistent in that they assist in positive self-representation strategies for the Minuteman Project in the claims that the organization believes in the “rule of law,” does not encourage violence, and operates under principles written in the Pledge. In both statements, the Minuteman Project refers to the current time as one of “social turmoil” and “civil disobedience,” which functions to create a sense of urgency or panic for its audience. Repeating the idea of social chaos serves to depict it as the factual state of affairs of the nation, further perpetuating the idea of a “problem,” as established in the mission statement. Consider the two side by side:31

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31 Please see Appendices F and G for both texts in web format
**Posting A: No Flag Burning**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>The Minuteman Project does not endorse or encourage violence; this includes aggressive demonstrations that create malicious behavior such as flag burning, rioting, or any physical contact of any kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>In this time of social turmoil many anti-American groups wish to cause harm to the name of the Minutemen, because they know that the Minutemen stand for peace and the Rule of Law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>The Minutemen are a model of strength and personal control in a time of civil disobedience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>The Minuteman Pledge declares our virtues, while our Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.) declare our actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Posting B: No Violence (toward elected officials)**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>The Minutemen believe in the rule of law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>The Minuteman Project does not endorse or encourage violence; this includes making threatening statements or participating in any hostile actions against anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>All elected officials must NOT be threatened or have their security compromised in any way!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>In this time of social turmoil many anti-American groups wish to cause harm to the name of the Minutemen, because they know that the Minutemen stand for peace and the Rule of Law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Therefore Minutemen must be a model of strength and personal control in a time of civil disobedience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Minutemen must respect the Constitutional rights of all even if there are those who hold different viewpoints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>The Minutemen hold themselves to the values outlined in the Minuteman Pledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Statements of tolerance serve function of positive self-representation**

The italicized text in Posting B above references statements that repeat word for word language in Posting A. Both postings are written almost entirely in the third person, creating a feeling of distance from the author. The only first person usage in both statements is found in Posting A: “The Minutemen Pledge declares our virtues” (A4). However, “themselves” is used in the corresponding sentence concerning the pledge in the Posting B: “The Minutemen hold themselves to the values outlined in the Minuteman Pledge” (B7). Also, Posting B employs modals whereas Posting A does not. The “musts” give this posting a stronger tone, emphasizing how Minutemen members need to behave. Could this be an attempt to prevent its own members from committing violent acts? Perhaps these “musts” are an effort to control potential renegade members or unwanted participants. Another sense arises from the “musts”: In the context of the “social turmoil”
and “civil disobedience” laid out in the mission statement, perhaps the organization is demonstrating that someone must take control, especially given the outrageous acts of the illegal army and Capitol Hill benefiting from “cheap sweat shop labor” (see “Minuteman Caravan” posting in Figure 17 above).

The Minuteman Project’s disassociation from violent actions as well as its demonstration of control in a time of social turmoil assists in masking its clearly stated racist views on undocumented immigrants displayed in the mission statement and the “America on Notice” posting located above the “No Mexican Flag Burning” statement. Furthermore, the organization draws on its group identity to purport itself as peaceful citizens and upholders of the law, referring web readers to the official group pledge and S.O.P as proof. Importantly, van Dijk (1993c) points out that racism denials come in many forms, but generally a denial “presupposes a real or potential accusation, reproach or suspicion of others about one’s present or past actions or attitudes, and asserts that such attacks against one’s moral integrity are not warranted” (p. 180). The “No Mexican Flag Burning” and “No Violence” statements serve as racism denials for the anti-immigrant organization, claiming that others want to tarnish its name because they “know” that the Minuteman Project stands for truth and justice.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Minuteman Project juxtaposes print text and images to reframe immigrated-related events and make unfounded accusations and absurd hypothetical future predictions. The introduction and construction of the participants in the mission statement sets up a background for the unfolding saga of ‘invading aliens’ which is made more realistic and concrete through subsequent response texts to real events such as the student protests. Scare tactics work in conjunction with heavy soliciting of American audiences to volunteer their time and put faith in the Minuteman Project. National symbols such as Uncle Sam, the U.S. flag, and various representations of Paul Revere index patriotism and security of the nation. The Minuteman Project draws on nostalgic tropes of Americana in an effort to tap into romantic, historical concepts of the great American melting pot. The Minuteman Project also draws on well-worn metaphors of immigrants as invaders that reinforce Americans’ cultural models of immigrants as dangerous. That the web audiences understand that ‘aliens’ are not literally invading the nation is evidence that the metaphors created through language and imagery succeed—audiences know that they are metaphors, on some level, and yet that does not mean that the negative depictions are any less dangerous to Americans’ cognitive perceptions of undocumented immigrants.

Stereotypes of Mexicans as unwanted outsiders are reinforced and employed as a solicitation tool to increase membership numbers. In the Minuteman Project mission statement, the organization warns against the “mobs of ILLEGAL aliens who endlessly stream across U.S. borders” (italic emphasis added). Santa Ana (1999) locates the
metaphor IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS in the debate surrounding California Proposition 187, which sought to deny undocumented immigrants public benefits such as education and non-emergency health care. For example, the terms ‘floods’ and ‘tide’ are often used to describe migrant travel and serve as source domains for the metaphors IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS or NATURAL CATASTROPHE (pp. 67-69). In the Minuteman Project mission statement, the verb ‘stream,’ indexing water, characterizes immigrants as a nonstop entity flowing across the border—in this depiction, the undocumented migrants remain faceless and nameless and are rendered an abstract, unstoppable, and dangerous phenomenon. Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999) also locate metaphors that use water as a source domain in Austrian immigration discourses. The authors point out that at the end of the communist regime in 1989, when immigrants from Eastern European countries began migrating west, Austria experienced emerging racist discourses and xenophobic immigrant-related sentiments. Racism spread beyond extreme right-wing parties to enter mainstream politics (p. 84). For example, Austrians feared being ‘‘inundated’ and ‘overrun’ by foreigners (Überflutung and Überfremdung)” (p. 87, emphasis added). In his examination of racist ideologies and immigration discourses in Western European countries, van Dijk (2000b) finds that “common to nearly all countries [the UK, France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain] is the current preoccupation with a ‘flood’ of asylum seekers” (p. 92). What are the implications of widespread cognitive models across cultures and languages of immigrants as ‘floods’ or entities that ‘inundate’?
The Minuteman Project uses to its advantage powerful metaphors in its negative depictions of immigrants to create an immigration ‘crisis.’ By altering images, the organization serves up evidence of false, hyperbolic depictions of the immigrant population. The social reality created by the Minuteman Project is one of impending deterioration if not annihilation of the nation unless Americans act now to stop immigrants from entering the country. Daily news postings to its original website, as well as numerous informational emails sent to subscribers reflect the urgency to act embedded in the rhetoric. The dominant metaphor in the mission statement is IMMIGRANTS AS INVADERS. The student protests allow an opportunity to transform the ‘invaders’ into an actual ‘army.’ Accompanying photographs function as evidence of the arrival of the army. The Minutemen, following their predecessors who protected the nation from the British prior to the American Revolution, are ready to lead volunteers on a mission to secure America. Racist depictions of undocumented migrants as locusts and barbarians assist in creating the foundation for physical action on the border. This masks the fact that the Minuteman Project is not legally authorized to act in the same capacity as Border Patrol Agents, even though caps emblazoned with INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) or ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement) are readily available on the Minuteman Project website.

The Minuteman Project draws heavily on rhetorical tropes of patriotism and an America governed by the “rule of law” to create an identity of selfless and peaceful volunteers protecting the nation from harm. Contradictions, however, of its alleged peaceful and respectable intentions lie in blatant racist depictions of others in the mission.
statement. By relying heavily on metaphors, this organization exhibits the new racism, and carefully skirts explicit mention of race or ethnicity. The Minuteman Project alleges tolerance and goodwill toward other nations’ flags, and refers its audience to the Minuteman Pledge and the Standard Operational Procedures. These official sounding textual genres ensure a certain amount of credibility to the project, as members appear to be acting according to rules and virtues. The Minuteman Project and the MCDC make use of images to portray themselves as active patriots ready to protect the nation from foreign invaders with the photographic banner depicting a group of men walking at night as if on patrol and another man looking through binoculars for ‘illegal’ border crossers. These images contrast with rhetorical portrayals of lawmakers as ‘sightless’ and ‘blind’ to send the message that ‘we’ (the Minutemen) see what is happening. ‘We’ are watching and ‘you’ can become part of ‘we’ if you join.

Santa Ana (2002) argues that the only solution to combat negative metaphors of immigrants is to replace existing metaphors with new ones that re-present this population in a positive light. Importantly, creating new metaphors means more than merely employing new terms. New cultural frames for viewing immigrants as human beings are necessary to initiate more respectful and thoughtful treatment of these individuals. However, how does one revise cultural frames or schemas, which are based on experience? Quinn (2005) suggests that

Although schemas can change, those built on repeated experiences of a similar sort become relatively stable, influencing our cultural interpretations of subsequent experiences more than they are altered by them. To the degree that people share experiences, they will end up sharing the same schemas—having, we would say, the same culture (or subculture). (p. 38, emphasis original)
Reframing negative depictions of minority groups by creating new metaphors is complex because it requires the consideration of shared cultural experiences and majority perceptions of immigrants. As Quinn argues above, repeated experiences assist in stabilizing a given cultural frame. Negative representations of undocumented migrants have been circulated so widely and for such a long period of time that the notion of this population as a burden and therefore unwanted are fairly fixed in mainstream discourses. It is important to remember that the Minuteman Project would not be so successful in employing war metaphors if its American audiences did not share, at least in part, a frame or schema of ‘immigrants as invaders.’ Metaphors are understood only because speakers share cultural frames. Thus, creating new metaphors is a monumental task because it involves changing audiences’ cognitive perceptions of particular issues.

Although the Minuteman Project clearly constructs ‘illegal immigrants’ as dangerous, at the same time, the group also makes moves to downplay its vilification of this population by infusing a heavy “we’re just here to protect you” rhetoric. And therein lies the tension in its rhetorical constructions of self and other. The Minuteman Project represents itself as patriots and pioneers, activists and lobbyists, the movers and the shakers who are willing to go further than passive Americans content to acquire more ‘toys.’ However, even as the group criticizes the consumerist tendencies of Americans, the Minuteman Project also sells, literally, its ideas through the vending of merchandise and membership. Immigrants are therefore exploited as a commodity to be consumed by the American public.
Macedo (2000) points out that slurs employed by the popular press to reference Mexican communities, such as “border rats,” “wetbacks,” “aliens,” “illegals,” “welfare queens,” and “non-White hordes,” serve to “not only dehumanize other cultural beings, but also […] to justify the violence perpetrated against subordinated groups” (p. 15). Importantly, the Minuteman Project does not employ ethnically-specific racist epithets that would align its group in the public eye as similar to the Ku Klux Klan. American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) groups, who are already upset with the rhetoric of the Minuteman Project, would perhaps have an easier time with depicting this organization as ‘racist’ if it did employ generally agreed upon ugly racial slurs. Rather, the Minuteman Project uses patriotic tropes that are hard to argue with, especially after 9/11. When nationally televised news corporations such as CNN also employ terms such as ‘illegal alien’ to reference undocumented migrants, anti-immigrant organizations such as the Minuteman Project are not distinctly differentiated from mainstream news media. In fact, even official White House statements employ the term ‘illegal alien,’ thereby legitimizing the language as that of the official name for undocumented migrants and residents.

Santa Ana (1999, 2002) argues that the pervasive racist metaphors such as IMMIGRATION AS INVASION and IMMIGRANTS AS ANIMALS located in national newspapers and ‘informative’ texts about California propositions are not only dangerous, but perhaps more insidious than overt racial slurs precisely because of their subtle and covert nature. Journalists who write for national newspapers do not necessarily intend to employ well worn immigration metaphors maliciously; however, the continued circulation of denigrating constructions of this population is nonetheless dangerous.
because readers become accustomed to conceptualizing immigrants as invaders and harmful. The Minuteman Project makes the most of these metaphors by using sensationalist, hyperbolic language, which signals an authorial intention to capitalize on existent denigrating metaphors to build a narrative of war wherein immigrants are an ‘illegal occupying army.’ Santa Ana (2002) makes multiple searing accusations against racist political rhetoric, and calls for social justice and activism. He contends that new, more positive metaphors can effectively replace the racist metaphors surrounding Latinos and bilingual education. But that is easier said than done when one considers cultural models and ubiquitous, widely circulated discourses of immigrants as burdensome. O’Brien (2003) has demonstrated that immigration metaphors in circulation today have existed since the early 1900s, and calls for scholars to play a more active part in increasing awareness about pejorative themes that may lead to repressive public policy against minority groups (p. 45). However, how do scholars and activists answer this call when mainstream, widely viewed news media regularly contributes (perhaps even unaware) to racist depictions of minorities?

On June 13, 2007, CNN featured a story on border patrol agents highlighting ‘corruption’ in the agency wherein some officials have been lured by cash to ‘smuggle illegal aliens’ across the border. The headline reporter consistently used the term ‘illegal aliens’ to reference undocumented immigrants in his narration of the story. In the upper right hand corner of the screen, the text “Battle at the Border” appeared in a red box. The metaphor of immigration as a battle or a war is all over the news, and ‘illegal alien’ is used as a term to both ‘report’ on and overtly mock this population. For example, a
search for the key term ‘illegal alien’ on CNN’s website brings up links to “Illegal Alien Ringtones” under the heading of “Sponsored Results.” Web users can click on the hyperlinks and travel through the web interface to receive a complimentary ‘illegal alien’ ring tone for their cell phones. As such, the term ‘illegal alien,’ is used in a variety of ways—from the seemingly ‘neutral’ employment of the term in a CNN news report to darker, more sardonic uses of the term, as in encouraging subscribers from a wide variety of cell phone companies to download tones named ‘illegal alien.’ These types of practices, frankly, are obnoxious and appalling. Nevertheless, by avoiding commonly agreed upon racial slurs such as the ‘N-word’ or ‘wetbacks,’ these derisive practices do not cause the moral panic that older, overt racial slurs do. In the example above, undocumented immigrants are again consumable commodities, sold as musical themes for cell phone ring tones. Such practices serve to disseminate racist discourses more widely and further dehumanize this population.

Although counter or resistance discourses exist, they are difficult to establish as widely accepted practices because the majority is accustomed to covert racist hegemonic discourses. Racist groups are ready with rebuttals to resistance discourses arguing for positive naming practices of undocumented immigrants. For example, one anti-immigrant website argues that using the term “undocumented immigrant” is “politically correct nonsense” because “calling an illegal alien an undocumented immigrant is like calling a burglar an uninvited house guest” (“IllegalAliens.US”). This response creates extensions of the metaphor ‘immigrant as invader’ by bringing the term ‘burglar’ into the circulation
of discourses. Immigrants are thereby labeled as thieves who steal from homes or, as the Minuteman Project claims, thieves of health care and education benefits.

The Minuteman Project employs as a prime strategy the repurposing of images to create a narrative of fear. By digitally altering the Mexican flag image and using it in multiple ways, the organization appropriates it as its own. Scollon and Scollon (2003) propose the term *geosemiotics* for “the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world” (p. 2). This work, though focused on discourses in the ‘material world,’ has implications for considering how the Minuteman Project co-opts discourses. Scollon and Scollon suggest that

‘What is that?’ cannot be understood unless we look at the world outside of language to fix a meaning for ‘that’ and unless we look at where exactly in the world the person saying this is located as well as what he or she is doing. The meaning of ‘What is that?’ is anchored in a person (who is the speaker?), a social relationship (who is the hearer?), a social situation (what are the speaker and the hearer doing – looking or pointing at something?), and a physical world (what is a potential ‘that’ within the spaces of those people?). (pp. 2-3)

In the context of the Minuteman Project’s appropriation and digital alteration of the flag image, ‘what is that?’ drastically changes meaning. ‘That,’ originally, was a photograph of a student’s expression of dissent toward proposed immigration legislation. The context was a student walkout at a high school in southern California. ‘That,’ however, becomes a symbol for an ‘illegal occupying army’ when used across such various contexts as discussed in Chapter 4. Within geosemiotics are three main systems: the interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics (p. 8).

The meaning of a sign is anchored in the material world whether the linguistic utterance is spoken by one person to another or posted as a stop sign on a street
corner. We need to ask of the stop sign the same four questions we would ask a person: Who has ‘uttered’ this (that is, is it a legitimate stop sign of the municipal authority)? Who is the viewer (it means one thing for a pedestrian and another for the driver of a car)? What is the social situation (is the sign ‘in place’ or being installed and worked on)? Is that part of the material world relevant to such a sign (for example, is it a corner of the intersection of roads)? (p. 3)

The authors seek to contrast the difference between a stop sign located on a busy corner and a defunct stop sign lying in a pile of trash. In the first instance, the viewer understands the symbol to mean ‘stop,’ whereas in the second example, a passerby understands that the stop sign is not heeding one to halt. The Minuteman Project uses photographs of the demonstrators in such a way as to support its claim that ‘mobs’ invaded Los Angeles. The organization masks what the above quote references as imperative to understanding a sign in the material world. The digitally altered image of the flag silences the student voices of dissent and misrepresents or reframes the context by manipulating the image into a representation of an ‘army.’ Subsequently, the repeated posting and circulation of the altered image imbues it with new meaning. Interestingly, despite altering images and employing hyperbolic language, the organization seeks to remain within the boundaries of fact to a certain extent, and thereby walks the line between ‘news’ and sensationalist propaganda. That is, the organization posts and reframes actual news events. However, the narrative framing is so overly exaggerated and outrageous that certainly, the average viewer interprets the postings, at least in part or to a certain extent, as hyperbolized rhetoric, even if he or she ‘buys into’ the underlying ideologies of the discourse.

Since May 2006, President George W. Bush has deployed close to 6,000 National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexican border to assist Border Patrol Agents in a plan titled
‘Operation Jump Start.’ In a fact sheet posted on the White House website, the President names “Securing Our Border” as a “critical part of our strategy for comprehensive immigration reform.” The number of Border Patrol agents has increased from approximately 9,000 in 2001 to almost 13,000 as of April 2007, and plans include increasing the number of agents to over 18,000 by the end of 2008. Language of war is embedded in this text that reports the developments, claiming that “Operation Jump Start Has Put More Manpower On The Border And Allowed The Border Patrol to Move 563 Agents Into Front-Line Positions” (The White House, 2007, emphasis added). This news update, released in April 2007, highlights that “The President Called on Congress to Act This Year To Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform That He Can Sign Into Law” (The White House, 2007, underlining original). Unfortunately for the President, who hailed ‘immigration reform’ as one of his major domestic priorities during his last five years in office, the immigration bill fell through on June 8, 2007 when the Senate could not agree on exact measures proposed in the bill (Hulse and Pear, 2007). The parallels between the President’s initiatives and Minuteman Project rhetoric are obvious, and even some of the language overlaps. The “Fact Sheet” states that

*Illegal immigration is a serious problem that has been growing for decades. Past efforts to address it have failed because they did not do enough to secure our Nation’s borders, failed to address the underlying economic reasons behind illegal immigration, and failed to provide sensible ways for employers to verify the legal status of the workers who they hire.* (The White House, 2007, emphasis added)

The above excerpt points out that ‘illegal immigration’ is a ‘problem that has been growing for decades,’ echoing the Minuteman Project mission statement wherein Americans are called upon to address the “decades-long careless disregard of effective
U.S. immigration law enforcement.” The passage above repeats “failed” three times to reference “past efforts,” wherein a specific agent to blame does not exist. The three-time repetition parallels the Minuteman Project’s use of the word “call” in its solicitations to potential volunteers. The terms “illegal immigration” and “secure our Nation’s borders” are used by both groups, not only in the above passage and the mission statement, but also throughout texts on both of the groups’ respective websites. This indicates that the national government shares with the Minuteman Project underlying ideologies towards immigrants, which has definite implications for why the anti-immigrant organization has been successful in its growth and alliance with the political establishment. The Minuteman Project positions itself as performing actions that have been neglected because of politicians’ carelessness or greed. The President’s placement of National Guard troops at the border ratifies the Minuteman Project’s claim that the country is in a time of social turmoil or crisis. The message is clear that the border requires more security. The Minuteman Project then conveniently offers a venue of participation for the average American. By infusing motivational speech such as ‘Please join!’ with the offer of such commodities as a book club, radio show, merchandising, and scheduled, organized calendar events, the group seduces more members to participate in this ready-made anti-immigrant forum.

Although this dissertation does not focus on gender as a specific area of analysis, observations on the construction of women in Minuteman Project web discourses point toward implications for exploration of gender roles. The ‘Minutewomen’ appear to have different roles than that of the ‘Minutemen.” Namely, women seem to be ‘helpful’ in
documenting Minuteman Project events in writing, and assisting with community organization. Ezekiel’s (2002) ethnographic research with the Ku Klux Klan, interestingly, suggests that this White power group is essentially masculine in nature:

The actors in the stories are masculine; the stories are about combat, domination, and subjugation; the stories are not about nurturance or cooperative effort that adds new elements, not about creativity or about tenderness. In a very fundamental way, the world of the leaders and the followers is an only-masculine world, a world impoverished of half the range of human feeling and through—like the Army, like prison. (p. 57)

Although he has witnessed women around the Klan, Ezekiel suggests that they serve only “quite traditional supportive roles” (p. 54). The women in the group are the wives or the girlfriends of the members, and are relegated to tasks such as serving food at the meetings. The Minuteman Project also portrays white masculinity through images and war metaphors. Women who participate in the group, however, are allotted the following small green icon:

**Figure 18: Minutewomen Link**

This icon was posted on the Minuteman Project website in spring of 2006 when the Minuteman Project organized the caravan to travel to Washington, D.C. Importantly, there is no female depiction of a Paul Revere-like character. Furthermore, women are characterized as chatty and motivational. There are definite implications for gender research and the construction of women across groups such as the KKK and newer groups who practice more covert racist discourses. By paying attention to discourses of discrimination such as those produced and circulated by the Minuteman Project, we are
more aware of trajectories of growth and can compare discourses of citizen organizations
with those of widely circulated media discourses.

As the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps and the Minuteman Project continue to
emerge as separate identities, their respective websites reflect different rhetorics. Factors
influencing their diverse modes of persuasion are their different priorities and
geographical foci. The MCDC continues to employ the Mexican flag image
superimposed on the tearful face, whereas the Minuteman Project, in its most recent
update, resembles a more official politically oriented organization with more
conservative images. A simpler cloud-blue header with white-topped mountains in the
background has replaced the original header on the homepage that depicted photographs
of men walking in the dark and looking through binoculars. A large, colorful image of a
bald eagle is perched on a limb near an American flag in the upper left hand side of the
page just underneath the blue header. Simplistically drawn stars fan out from the image
of the eagle to the white-topped mountains. Paul Revere is still featured on a link to the
radio show, and stands within a small logo on the header. Both the MCDC and the
Minuteman Project feature links to “Blast-Fax” Congress; however, whereas the MCDC
uses the co-opted Mexican flag image (as discussed in Chapter 4) to link to this page, the
new Minuteman Project website uses a photograph of the Congressional building in
Washington, D.C. against a sky-blue background. These differences demonstrate a
tendency that the Minuteman Project, in moving toward a more politically oriented and
politically-allied agenda, is employing more conservative images. The MCDC, on the
other hand, uses flashing yellow on its homepage to bring attention to the link “Stop Amnesty Now” as well as less subtle imagery.  

The destabilized identity of the Minuteman Project that emerged in postings and images on the World Wide Web allowed the original group to appeal to a wide variety of audiences, from members of the political establishment to members of white nationalist groups. As the groups have split according to political differences and diverging agendas, the separate websites reflect the newly emerging identities of the different Minutemen; namely, the newer Minuteman Project site appears more conservative as it looks toward aligning itself more closely with the political establishment. However, that does not mean that ideologies have changed as much as have the presentation of the organization’s views. For example, links on the left side of the new page still include discriminating references to immigration such as ‘Alien Criminals,’ ‘Corruption,’ ‘Illegal Immigration,’ and ‘Illegal Voting.’

The different groups’ respective agendas point to interesting geographical metaphors, wherein the overarching group ‘Minutemen’ is serving both on the border and within the nation. With two separate political entities, the Minuteman Project is able to expand the narrative of war where it battles on two fronts: domestic and on the border. In addition, an interesting parallel exists between the “illegal armies across the United States” and the quickly growing Minutemen chapters across the nation. Just as the illegal armies are spreading, so are the Minutemen members and state chapters. Resistance discourses must also seek to enter more widely into national immigration discourses. As

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32 Please see Appendices H and I.
scholars and activists, we need to explore various mechanisms through which counter
discourses can endeavor to reach wider audiences in local communities and thereby
counteract the damage that racist discourses continue to inflict on minority groups.
APPENDIX A: EMAIL RESPONSE FROM info@minutemanhq.com

Minuteman: Re: question (1 of 26)  

Date: Wed, 22 Nov 2006 21:45:34 -0700 (MST)
From: info@minutemanhq.com
To: Meg Smith <wsmsmith@email.arizona.edu>
Subject: Re: question

Hi,

Both evolved from the same origins but have veered in different directions since their leaders first joined forces.

Among their similarities is their displeasure of elected officials who refuse to enforce existing immigration laws.

Chris Simcox, President of BONC has been conducting private citizens border patrol operations for 5+ years out in the Arizona desert. In the months before April of 2005, Jim Gilchrist from California contacted Chris with the idea of nationally promoting the citizen border operations and registering thousands of fellow Americans to join them as 21st century Minutemen.

After co-founding the Minutemen and leading that first month-long operation in April ‘05, Chris and Jim split up the work with Chris focusing mainly on border operations and Jim intending on having his focus be on “internal vigilance,” that is, bringing pressure to bear on employers hiring illegal aliens.

Since that agreement however Jim made a run for Congress in the fall of ’05 and though he has set up a new website, its focus is unclear to us. We can only advise you to check out our website at www.minutemanhq.com as well as theirs at www.minutemenproject.com.

You can also check out http://www.minutemanhq.com/bf/ to learn about the border fence we are building and which you’ve probably heard much talk of lately in the news.

Thank you

BONC HQ

----- Original Message ----- From: "Meg Smith" <wsmsmith@email.arizona.edu>
To: <info@minutemanhq.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2006 2:05 PM
Subject: question

> Dear Chris Simcox,
> > Hi—could you please tell me the difference between the Minuteman Project and
> > the Minutemen Headquarters? I thought that you were the same thing but it
> > looks like two separate organisations.
> >
> > Meg Smith
> >
> >
APPENDIX B: MINUTEMAN PROJECT WEBSITE
APPENDIX C: ABOUT US STATEMENT

The Minuteman Project (MMP) is a citizens’ Vigilance Operation monitoring immigration, business, and government.

MMP has no affiliation with, nor will we accept any assistance by, or interference from, separatists, racists, or supremacy groups.

Home | About Us | About Us Statement | Hate Mail | Photos | Theater | Contact Us

Projects
- Operation Sovereignty
- Membership
- Donations
- Fax Blast Capitol Hill
- Billboard Project
- Start A Chapter
- Minuteman Radio

About the Minuteman Project

The Minuteman Project is not a call to arms, but a call to voices seeking a peaceful and respectable response to the chaotic neglect by members of our local, state, and federal governments charged with applying U.S. immigration law.

It is a call to bring national awareness to the decades-long careless disregard of effective U.S. immigration law enforcement. It is a reminder to Americans that our nation was founded by a nation governed by the “rule of law,” not by the whims of millions of Illegal aliens who University streams across U.S. borders.

Accordingly, the men and women volunteering for this mission are those who are willing to sacrifice their time, and the comforts of a cozy home, to muster for something much more important than acquiring more “votes” to stay with while their nation is devoured and plundered by the millions of illegal aliens.

Future generations will inherit a tangle of ramshackle, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious “melting pot.”

The result: political, economic and social anarchy.

Historians will write about how America let its unique and revered form of government and society sink into a quagmire of mutual antipathy among the various sub-nations that will re-embrace the new self-destructing America.

“We love wealth greater than liberty; the benefits of mankind better than the animating warmth of freedom, our hopes and homes in remote ages. The task will proclaim not your arms. Count your days and the hand that feeds you, and thy properly forget that we save our countryman.” — John Adams

Support The Minuteman Project
- Book Club Contributions
- Billboard Project
- Start A Minuteman Chapter

Minuteman Radio Network

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Site updated January 14, 2007

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Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm
California/West Coast Time. Closed on weekends.
APPENDIX E: “AMERICA ON NOTICE” ARTICLE

Minuteman Project

America On Notice: Occupying Army demands more from its captives!

In a move that will throw the American and David Duke Tragedies in the dust, the United States Army has demanded that Occupying Army members submit themselves to a special screening process. This move comes after the Army was caught red-handed at the border, with members seen openly violating the laws and regulations of the Occupying Army. The Army's new policy is aimed at ensuring that all members of the Occupying Army are screened for potential security threats. This move has been met with mixed reactions, with some praising the Army for taking a strong stance, while others are concerned about the potential impact on the Occupying Army's operational effectiveness.

Minuteman Radio

We Are Waking Up America!

The Minuteman Project has announced a new initiative aimed at waking up America to the realities of the Occupying Army. The project will focus on educating Americans about the Occupying Army's activities and the potential threats it poses to the nation. The Minuteman Project has already started to build a grassroots movement to raise awareness about the Occupying Army's activities.

The Ramace and California Field Force

We Support Them!

The Ramace and California Field Force have announced their support for the Minuteman Project. The Ramace and California Field Force are a group of volunteers who work to protect the Occupying Army and ensure its success. They have been working with the Minuteman Project to raise awareness about the Occupying Army and its activities.

Contribute

Visit Minuteman.org

We Support

Wake Up America

Sign the Minuteman Pledge

Starr's Minuteman Corps

California Minuteman for Immigration Reform
APPENDIX F: NO MEXICAN FLAG BURNING

There will be NO Mexican flag burning!

The Minuteman Project does not endorse or encourage violence; this includes aggressive demonstrations that create malicious behavior such as flag burning, yelling, or any physical contact of any kind. In this time of social turmoil, many anti-American groups wish to cause harm in the name of the Minuteman, because they know the Minutemen stand for peace and the Rule of Law. The Minutemen are a model of strength and personal control in a time of civil disobedience. The Minuteman Pledge declares our virtue while our Standard Operating Procedures (S.O.P.) declare our actions.

Stephen E. Eichler, J.D.
Executive Director of the Minuteman Project, Inc.

MINUTEMAN PROJECT RALLY INSTRUCTIONS

1. The purpose of our rally is to show our opposition to illegal immigration. Bring appropriate signs and/or flags (U.S. or CA) to carry and wave during the demonstration. Smile and wave to people passing by. Follow all instructions from the event organizer or other supervisors and security personnel. Any question, ask.
2. Stick with your group. Use the buddy system at all times. Protect yourself from attacks from the opposition. Call for help if you are attacked. Several Minutemen will be designated as “Security” for the event and
3. Wear your Minuteman shirts and good-quality footwear. Do not wear ties, suits or ties. People with ties may be mistaken for illegal aliens trying to turn around the crowd.

Support The Minuteman Project
Book Club
Contribute
Fox News - Capitol Hill
Billboard Project
Start a Minuteman Chapter

Minuteman Radio Network
APPENDIX G: NO VIOLENCE
APPENDIX H: MINUTEMAN CIVIL DEFENSE CORPS
(www.minutemanhq.com)

MinutemanHQ.com
Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Headquarters

Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Mission Statement: To see the borders and coastal boundaries of the United States secured against the unlawful and unauthorized entry of all individuals, contraband, and foreign military. We will employ all means of civil protest, demonstration, and political lobbying to accomplish this goal.
APPENDIX I: THE MINUTEMAN PROJECT (www.minutemanproject.com)

Welcome To the Minuteman Project Official Website

Our New Site has Arrived!

We are pleased to introduce the New Jim Gilchrist's Minuteman Project Website. The site is designed so that our organization can be better suited to reaching every American that is concerned about the issues surrounding illegal immigration. Our site is currently in transition so we will be adding new information and resources as quickly as possible. Thank You.

Immigration Headliner News

Minuteman Project Calls on All Americans: Stop the ACLU!
June 16, 2007

Jim Gilchrist, President of the Minuteman Project to Speak at Protest Event

Sponsored by:
The Citizens of Lake Forest
The Minuteman Project
The FAI Coalition and ALL Activists

Read More...

Protest Senator John McCain - Join our No Amnesty Rally!
Saturday, June 16, 2007

The McCain 2008 Orange County Finance Committee will host a reception for Senator John McCain. This is an opportunity to express our stance on illegal immigration to a Republican candidate campaigning for President.

Read More...

AVOR: MMP Radio Network on the Showmesy Falls and Our Efforts on the Border!
Saturday, June 16, 2007

Our Minuteman Radio Network - Wake Up America show is hosted by Steve Wilmer, spokesman for the Minuteman Project. The 2 hour show for Thursday, June 7, 2007 was just too short to cram in all the info and news but Steve did a great job along with his guests Jim Gilchrist, President of the MMP and Steve Sanson, from Veterans in Politics.

Read More...

Looking Up From the Grass Roots: Minuteman Project Represents "Middle American Radicals" in Action
Saturday, June 16, 2007

"For decades, well-funded organizations fought to put the illegal immigration issue on the front burner. Finally, it was Jim Gilchrist and his Minuteman Project that finally put the illegal alien invasion in the headlines of newspapers and cable news shows-and kept it there."

-Linda Maler, www.ForTheCause.us

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VIDEO: Bush Lied About's Law on the Illegal Alien Invasion
June 17, 2007

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