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The Argentinean-Jewish Community as Scapegoat: Textual Analysis of Argentinean Newspapers' Coverage of The Bombing of AMIA.

(Under Direction of MARIA CAROLINA ACOSTA-ALZURU)

In 1994, 89 people are killed and more than 300 are injured in the worst terrorist attack in Argentina's history: the bombing of (Israelite Argentinean Mutual-Aid Association [Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas]) AMIA. Argentinean media avidly covered the event and its repercussions. Drawing on cultural studies and the relationship between news and myth, I analyzed six years of coverage of events related to the bombing of AMIA in two major Argentinean newspapers: Clarín and La Nación. Through textual analysis of news stories and photos, this study reveals the ways in which the meaning[s] of "the Jewish" is [are] represented and perpetuated in these two newspapers. Argentinean-Jews are consistently portrayed as outsiders, and singled out as the terrorists' only target. A process of symbolic denigration, isolation and expulsion of Argentinean Jews occurs in the coverage as this minority is represented as different from the rest of society, guilty, deserving of punishment, and as a threat to Argentina. This process mirrors the Scapegoat myth in which a society frees itself from its burdens by transferring them to a beast that is later expelled.

INDEX WORDS: Argentinean-Jews, Bombing of AMIA, Argentina,
Construction of News, Argentinean Media,
Textual Analysis, International Communication,
Myth[s] as News, Minorities and Media,
Minorities and the Press, Jews and the Press,
Jews and the Media.

THE ARGENTINEAN-JEWISH COMMUNITY
AS SCAPEGOAT:
TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ARGENTINEAN NEWSPAPERS' COVERAGE
OF THE BOMBING OF AMIA.

by

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DEDICATION

To the memory of the victims, their relatives and friends,
who are still waiting for justice.

To those who, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or religion,
believe in and work for a more egalitarian and inclusive Argentina.

To Mayté Labrador,
my inspiration, friend, partner in life and love.

A Haydeé (Kuka) Groisman,
siempre apoyándome, transmitiéndome su fe.

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I believe that terms such as luck, fate and chance explain a will or power that transcends human beings, and that we cannot fully understand yet. As beings possessing limited energy, all of us luckily have the capability to channel our energy toward a specific purpose. During the last three years of my life, I have had the chance and privilege of training on how to focus my energy on a specific goal. I consider myself immensely lucky since I have run into very special individuals who guided me on my path. They have appeared and remained besides me during these years. In chronological order, I first ran into my professors and classmates at the American Language Program, who taught me English and always had the right words of encouragement. I especially thank Laura Chason, my teacher and tutor, who came to be an invaluable friend.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Objective

On July 18, 1994, the Israelite Argentinean Mutual-Aid Association [*Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas* (AMIA)] was bombed. The event ensued a debate about the attack, its implications, its connection to other terrorist acts, and the investigation into the attack. This debate was held by and for the mass media.

To date, there has been no trial. The identity of the perpetrators remains “officially” an enigma. Regardless of judicial uncertainty, most experts on terrorism and particularly those who specialize in the attack,¹ credited “Hezbollah,” a Lebanon-based terrorist group, with the attack. Hezbollah or one of its cells, Ansar Alá, is believed to have acted in coordination with an Argentinean group to perpetrate the attack. The Argentinean group is believed to be comprised of current and former members of the intelligence and security local agencies. Members of this same “coalition” are also considered the main suspects in an attack against the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992.

Media coverage of terrorism is a significant topic since the media play a meaningful role in constructing and defining the terrorist act and its characters.

¹ Juan Jose Galeano, the judge of the case; United States’ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); Israel’s intelligence service (Mossad); and Spain’s intelligence service (CESID).

The media constructs, defines the events for their audience assigning to these events different degrees of importance (Acosta-Alzuru, 1996, p. 2).

The media coverage of terrorist attacks defines the victim, the perpetrator, and the reason for the attack. In other words, the media make sense of senseless violence.

This study poses questions regarding media coverage of AMIA's attack. It explores the representation of "the Jewish" in two major Argentinean newspapers. It goes beyond the quantification of articles about the Jewish community to reveal the "available stock of meanings" (Hall, 1975, p.12) used in these newspapers during the six-year period after the bombing of AMIA.

2. Significance of Research

This study contributes to the areas of international and intercultural communication, news construction, and media representation. In a global environment in which the relationship of nations and their internal minority groups has become an important world dynamic (Barber, 1992), this study highlights the relationship between the Argentinean social formation and one of its minority groups: the Jewish community.

3. Context

3.1. The recent history of Argentina and its Jewish community

At 9:53 a.m. on July 18, 1994, a bomb destroyed the seven-story building housing AMIA in Buenos Aires. The explosion killed 86 people and injured more than 300. The bombing of AMIA resulted in the largest number of victims in a terrorist attack in Argentina's history – and constitutes the worst terrorist attack against a Jewish

community since the Nazi era. Unfortunately, violent episodes are not uncommon in Argentina's history.

Domestic terrorism marked the decade of the 1970s. "The Argentinean government, responding to domestic terrorism, launched a massive attack on dissidents as a means of restoring the order" (Picard, 1993, p. 117). The Army forces fought against "the insurgency" within Argentina's borders under the "National Security Doctrine [Doctrina de Seguridad Nacional]." This remedy was worse than the illness. In 1976, the military overthrew the weakened democratic government. Congress was discharged and a military government called La Junta (comprised of the commanders-in-chief of the Army, Navy and Air Force) was instituted under the motto "National Reorganization Process." Under this seven-year military dictatorship (1976-1983), at least 11,000 individuals and as many as 30,000 were abducted from their homes, taken to hidden prisons, tortured and summarily executed by military task forces (Marchak, 1999). Many of these prisoners were drugged, tied and later thrown alive from military airplanes into the freezing waters of the South Atlantic Ocean (Verbitsky, 1995). Due to the lack of constitutional warranties, La Junta's government is considered a terrorist state.

Silencing journalists and the constitutional right to a free press were among the first objectives of La Junta. Andrew Graham-Yool, chief editor of the Buenos Aires Herald in 1976, went into exile in London after receiving threats against his life. Jacobo Timerman, chief editor of the daily La Opinión, was not as fortunate. In 1977, Timerman was abducted from his home, taken to a clandestine jail and tortured. When his situation became internationally known and governments worldwide pressured to free him, the government recognized him as an official prisoner and placed him under house arrest.

After almost three years, he was exiled and his Argentinean citizenship revoked (Conadep, 1986).

By the end of 1976, most Argentinean media no longer scrutinized the dictatorship, nor informed their readership about the disappearance of individuals. Marchak (1999) notes that in 1977 the French newspaper Le Monde reported that at least 72 journalists had been killed, detained, or disappeared in Argentina in the previous year. Indeed, any individuals whose ideas were suspected to oppose “Western, Christian civilization” were considered anti-Argentinean and subject to elimination without trial (Conadep, 1986, p. 442). In this way, intellectuals, students, professionals, human rights and union activists, and others, became targets of the terrorist state (Picard, 1993).

The beginning of the end of La Junta’s rule came in April 1982. In an attempt to regain the support of a society unhappy with a difficult socioeconomic situation, the Argentinean military government embarked on a foolhardy mission to recover the Malvinas or Falklands, a group of islands long claimed by Argentina but under British domain. The reckless undertaking resulted in the Falklands/Malvinas War. One month later, Argentina’s capitulation facilitated the end the dictatorship. In December 1983, democracy was reinstated in Argentina. In the following years, the Junta’s government and the insurgency’s leaders were brought to trial. Several military uprisings had to be suppressed before growing strong enough to overthrow the emergent democracy. Years later, the Argentinean government granted amnesties to the Military Junta members and guerrilla leaders sentenced in 1985.

In 1992, after nine years of uneasy transition to democracy, the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was car-bombed, killing 28 and injuring more than 200. This attack was the

first against a foreign state objective within Argentinean borders. The terrorist group Hezbollah allegedly claimed responsibility for the attack. Two years later, the AMIA bombing – the primary focus of this thesis – shocked Argentinean society because of its magnitude. The event received intense media coverage for several weeks, and the Argentinean-Jewish community was obsessively covered in the news media.

Argentina boasts one of the largest Jewish communities in the world, and its capital, Buenos Aires, houses one of the largest Jewish communities outside Israel. Despite this, Argentinean-Jews were banned from certain circles of power within Argentinean society. These included exclusion from military forces, and, as non-Catholics, constitutional prohibition from holding the presidency until 1994. Marchak (1999) argues “there can be little doubt that anti-Semitism has had a long run in Argentina, whether it originated with the Spanish conquest and the ideology of Christendom at that time, or whether it arose in a more recent period of history that includes the corporatism of Juan Perón’s government and the fascism of many sectors of the army”(pp. 13-14). In early 1919, a violent series of strikes erupted in Buenos Aires. Rock (1993) comments that during the “Tragic Week [Semana Trágica],” the Jewish community was attacked by nationalistic and anti-Semitic groups. The events began with a metalworkers’ strike and evolved into a general strike and mass protest march. Rock recounts “the strikers burned streetcars and automobiles, ransacked and destroyed a church, and later, ... laid siege to several police stations.” The army quickly suffocated the strike. Shortly thereafter, the Jewish neighborhoods were attacked by gangs of “Patriotas” who accused Jews and other minority groups of being “Bolshevik agents,” ideologists of the strikes (p. 64).

The years of La Junta's ruling were especially tough for Argentinean-Jews. In Nunca Más (1986), several survivors of the dictatorship's clandestine jails recall how Jewish prisoners received harsher treatment. "If life in the camp for any prisoner was a nightmare, the situation was even worse for Jews. They were the victims of constant beatings and other acts of aggression, to such an extent that many preferred to hide their origin, saying, for instance, that they were Polish Catholics" (p. 68).

Jews have been an organized ethnic group in Argentina for more than a century. Many have become important figures in Argentinean society. However, Argentinean-Jews are often seen as a threat and as a problem. As a result, Argentinean-Jews are rarely present in important sectors of the Argentinean society such as security, intelligence and army forces. Historically racist attitudes conform a part of present-day Argentina. These attitudes are ethically and morally condemnable and seriously limit the full development of Argentina's human resources potential.

What 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? (Quoted in Stevenson, 1937, p. 756).

In other words, Argentina will become a stronger, fairer and more developed society only when the majority of Argentineans work together towards this goal.

3.2. The actors

The Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas [Association of Israelite-Argentinean mutual-aid organizations (AMIA)] is the central institution of the Argentinean-Jewish community. The association promotes actions of public good, social assistance and education of the Argentinean-Jewish community

The Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas [Delegation of Israelite Argentinean Associations (DAIA)] has a political and educational mission. Among its central objectives is to fight anti-Semitism, Nazism, and acts of ethnic, social and religious discrimination. DAIA is comprised of 140 Argentinean-Jewish cultural, professional, sport and religious organizations, and has branches in each of the Argentinean provinces where there is a Jewish community. DAIA also fights the threat of national and international terrorism by fortifying concepts of right and justice in Argentinean society (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas, 2001).

Memoria Activa [Active Memory] is a non-governmental organization founded in 1994 by a group of relatives, friends and survivors of the attack against AMIA. Considered combative activists, the group demands justice for the bombing of AMIA. Every Monday morning since its foundation to present day, Memoria Activa holds a demonstration across the street from the National Palace of Justice in Buenos Aires to demand justice for the bombing of AMIA.

Familiares y Amigos de las Víctimas [Relatives and Friends of the Victims, (Relatives)], like Memoria Activa, is a non-governmental association representing part of the relatives and friends of the victims of the bombing. The main difference between Memoria Activa and Relatives is political. Relatives is more moderate than Memoria Activa in its strategies.

La Nación and Clarín

The two Argentinean newspapers used in this study are La Nación and Clarín. La Nación is considered Argentina's agenda-setting daily. It has fifteen percent of the market, which mainly consists of Argentinean government authorities, politicians,

lawmakers and high-income class. Merrill and Fisher(1980) consider La Nación a journal that “is in, or aspires to, the elite press” (p.28). Salwen et al. (1991) alleges La Nación is rated among the best newspapers in Latin America, while “Clarín is sometimes also included in this list”.

“Clarín, established in Buenos Aires in 1945, has become a leading force in the nation. Clarín is the nation’s largest newspaper” (Salwen et al., 1991, p. 275). With forty five percent of the market, Clarín boasts the largest circulation in Argentina (Hudson, 1998).

La Nación and Clarín offer contrasting personalities and styles. La Nación targets the elite readership. Clarín appeals to a cross section of class structure in a way no other Argentinean newspaper can rival. Together, La Nación and Clarín collectively represent the largest circulation both numerically and geographically in Argentina, as well as the “popular” and the “quality” (Hall, 1975, p.12) press respectively.

4. Literature Review

4.1. The bombing of AMIA

Argentinean authors generally agree on three major points: President Menem’s probable role as a political target, the connection of the AMIA bombing with that of the Israeli embassy and the failed investigation into both attacks.

Lanata and Goldman (1994) suggest the attack was committed to damage President Menem’s image. “[S]everal elements support the thesis of president Menem as the selected target for both attacks (AMIA and Embassy of Israel). [T]he distressed president recognized that the aim of the attacks was to damage him: this bomb was meant

for me—he said the first time” (p.83). They also connect the attacks against AMIA and the Israeli embassy. Additionally, Lanata and Goldman argue the terrorists did not “discriminate” whether the victims were Argentinean-Jews or not.

“Impunity [*Impunidad*]” is the term used to describe the insecurity and general distrust that Argentineans feel for their institutions. Goldman says,

I am not Argentinean, but I lived in Argentina for more than a decade. The sense of impunity in Argentina is terrible, but even more terrible is the impotence of the individuals to change it.

[No soy argentino, pero vivo en Argentina desde hace más de una década. La sensación de impunidad en Argentina es terrible, pero más terrible aún es la impotencia de la gente para atacarla] (p.3).

This general feeling of impunity is omni-present among Argentinean-Jews. Seven years after the attack against AMIA, they only remaining hope lies in identifying those Argentineans boycotting the investigation. Nevertheless, the probability of identifying the perpetrators of the attack is unlikely.

La Denuncia (1997) reproduces the complete document presented by AMIA and DAIA before the judge investigating the AMIA’s case. In the book,² representatives of AMIA, DAIA and jurists argue that current and former members of the Argentinean security agencies have purposely obstructed the investigation. Simultaneously, they denounce state “structural failures” and “functioning problems” (p. 139). In their opinion, the attacks against the Embassy of Israel and AMIA are connected since the failure of the investigation into the first attack is one of the “possible causes of the perpetration of the second” (p. 19). Both attacks are connected to the Middle Eastern conflict, and Hezbollah

² La Denuncia includes statements by some of Argentina’s best jurists and lawmakers, Arslanián, D’Alessio, Gil Lavedra and Zaffaroni.

is identified as the probable perpetrator of the attacks. However, Argentinean groups, composed of former Army members, are also suspect.

Salinas (1997) suggests the first objective of the bombing was to warn president Menem of repercussions should he not honor his international and national commitments. Salinas also connects the attacks against the Embassy of Israel and AMIA. He emphasizes the failure of the investigation of the embassy attack created the climate favorable for AMIA's bombing. Salinas uses the term "impunity" to describe the cultural conditions created by the failure of the state to provide justice.

... the complex impunity that benefited the perpetrators of the attack against the Embassy of Israel encourages them to perpetrate a new and bloodier attack. That impunity encourages those who deny or present as relative the right of our Jewish compatriots to be Argentinean among Argentines.

[... la compleja impunidad con que se beneficiaron los responsables del atentado a la Embajada de Israel los alentó a dar un nuevo y más sangriento golpe. Esa impunidad da aire a quienes niegan o relativizan el derecho de nuestros compatriotas judíos a ser argentinos entre argentinos] (pp. 7-8).

Due to the professional prestige of these authors in Argentinean society, their work provides meaningful insight into the analysis and interpretations of the bombing against AMIA. Argentinean writers and journalists like Lanata and Salinas offer a more detailed and condensed version of the event than that provided in the newspapers.

However, my intent remains to study this event from an academic perspective.

Considering no study analyzes media portrayal of the Argentinean-Jewish community in the reporting of this event, this research treats the coverage as an opportunity to analyze the ways in which the Argentinean-Jewish community is represented in the media.

4.2. Terrorism and the construction of news

Picard (1993) explains that the central element in “communication about terrorist acts is not the acts themselves but the meaning assigned to them by media, authorities and the populaces. How the media report and interpret a violent act is a key element in determining its “impact and significance”(p.4). This determination is more relevant than the violence itself. In a different work, Picard (1991b) argues the media’s role in covering these events is perceived “quite differently by authorities, media critics and scholars” (p.40). Picard explains terrorist events are symbolic acts, and journalists, governments, victims and perpetrators assign meaning to them. Often information about the event is scarce or even unknown. Thus, the information provided by “second-hand” sources becomes vital for journalists who re-construct the terrorist act in a news story. Journalists play a significant role in the representation and construction of terrorism and terrorist acts on a public stage. Picard notes:

Journalistic emphasis on descriptions of what is visible, however, can easily create distortions and confusion in the meaning that is constructed by audiences because most of what occurs in terrorist events is invisible to journalists... (p. 42). Even though observers have criticized the media coverage of terrorist attacks, few studies explored what the “media actually say and do in their coverage” (Picard, 1993, p. 80).

Using content analysis, Picard and Adams (1987) studied the characterization of acts of terrorism and their perpetrators in the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times and the Washington Post from 1980 to 1985. Their study shows a “significant difference in the ways media personnel, government officials and witnesses characterize acts of political violence and the perpetrators of those acts” (p. 12).

Gerbner (1991), a leading scholar on the effects of media-portrayed violence, studies the symbolic communication of terrorist acts and the struggles for control of the meaning assigned to these events by the media. Gerbner argues individuals and nations assign different meanings to the same events.

Most of what we know, or think we know, we do not personally experience. Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of our species is that for all practical purposes we live in a world erected through the stories we tell. Violence and terror have a special role to play in this great story-telling process. They depict social forces in conflict. They dramatize threats to human integrity and the social order. They demonstrate power to lash out, provoke, intimidate, and control. They designate winners and losers in an inescapably political game (p. 3).

Jack Lule (2001) studies the ways terrorist events are reported by the media and the mythical implications of the meanings attached to these events. He explains terrorist acts as messages the terrorists communicate to a chosen audience. The audience can be defined as “an individual, nation, or the whole world,” while the particular victim, the injured, killed or so forth, symbolically represents the audience in its entirety. Lule notes:

The terrorist victim is the primary symbol in the communication: Terrorists actually want the victim to symbolically represent the audience. The terror—as opposed to disgust over the slaughter or grief over the loss—resides in a personal, primarily unconscious understanding that the victim is a symbol of the self: It could have been me (p. 57).

For an individual or group of individuals to consider themselves the “victim,” it is necessary to perceive the attack as against him or herself. Lule (1989, 1991, 1993, 1995) explores and develops the use of Burke’s dramatism theory to study the construction of news. He uses Burke’s pentad—act, scene, agent, agency and purpose—as one of his main tools of inquiry.

[The pentad] probes the structure and content of symbolic acts and addresses five questions: ‘what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose) (Lule, 1991a, p.32).

The pentadic criticism provides a “flexible and fluid chart” for the researcher. In Burke’s words, the researcher does not seek “terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise” (Burke, 1969, p. xviii).

British cultural studies scholars use textual analysis to study the construction of news (Hall, 1972; 1978). In the same tradition, Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2000a, 2000b) examined the press coverage during the Falklands/Malvinas war. They found that newspapers from four different countries constructed different versions of the same war. Individuals’ perceptions of “reality” and “truth” heavily depend on what they are told by media.

These findings follow Hall’s claim that the media not only reproduce but define reality (1975). In other words, the media construct reality by selecting and re-presenting events and their characters. However, according to Hall (1982), the mass media construct reality based on the definitions of those in power. Hall argues that news is constructed to support the ruling ideology, which according to Althusser, is the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (McQuail, 1994). Hall (1982) describes the relationship of ideology to media as “a way of representing the order of thing which endowed its limiting perspectives with that natural or divine inevitability which makes them appear universal, natural and coterminous with ‘reality’ itself” (p.65). In other words, ideology “is the power which arises shaping perceptions, cognitions and

preferences in such a way that [social agents] accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained or beneficial” (Lukes, 1974, p. 24).

News stories construct reality by assigning meanings to events and objects.

Textual analysis reveals the latent meaning contained in these news texts.

4.3. Minorities in the Press

The systematic study of representation of minorities in the news is a relatively new area of inquiry. Moreover, most of the studies about the subject are conducted within the industrialized societies of Europe and North America.

Fisher and Lowenstein (1967) analyzed the results of the “8th Annual Conference of the Freedom of Information Center of The University of Missouri.” These conferences were organized for the first time in 1958 to foster reflection among mass media workers. The 1965 conference entitled “The racial crisis and the news media,” was co-sponsored by the Anti-Defamation league of B’nai B’rith. One of the conclusions of the conference is that there are valid reasons for minorities, especially for African Americans to distrust the press. Fisher and Lowenstein argue that “[T]he Negro, is often in crime stories but virtually never in society, civic-affairs, or business stories” (p. 7). They conclude “News coverage of crimes involving minorities is often hostile rather than objective” (p.7).

Hartmann and Husband (1974) studied racism in the British mass media. In their study about the portrayal of minorities in the press, they analyze the coverage of the British Jewish community in the press. They argue “there has always been an

undercurrent of anti-Semitism which has on occasion become more visible” (p. 182). In the early 1920s the British newspaper, Morning Post, published 18 articles “expounding a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy” (p. 183) against the British Empire. Hartmann and Husband define the 1933 response to the emigration of the German Jews (escaping from Germany under the increasing influence of the national socialist party) as “generally sympathetic” (p. 184). However, “there was press opposition to the immigration” (p.184) of Jews into Britain. The researchers also present articles from the newspaper British Sunday Express in which British Jews are portrayed as outsiders who live among the British people. Before the Second World War, British Jews were portrayed in the press as generally “well treated” (p. 185) group. However, this good treatment would be jeopardized if more Jews sought refuge in Britain. Hartmann and Husband argue the press seems to portray the presence of Jews themselves as the source of British anti-Semitism.

van Dijk (1988) studied the ways minority groups are portrayed in the European press and the discursive reproduction of racism. He explains that news reports in the press are essential in social information processing. van Dijk argues the reproduction of ethnic prejudice in the media represents a vital part of society’s cognitive and social mechanisms. Prejudicial attitudes need “to be communicated to other group members within a framework of an ideological ‘ethnic consensus.’ Their efficacy, van Dijk notes, lies in their persuasive ‘normalization’”: individuals learn through the mass media what is “normal” for society (p. 222). In his study on the Dutch press, van Dijk argues that the ruling elite, including journalists, “tends to deny the existence of structural racism in the Netherlands” (p. 247). Racism is usually identified or related to foreign countries, extreme right-wing small parties or to individual behaviors. However, “societal structures

and institutional actions that underlie the minority position of ethnic groups are not qualified as racism” (p. 247).

Dates and Barrow (1993) study the different representations of African Americans in the “Black” and in the “White” press in the United States. They argue the black press has historically presented the African American community “from a vastly different perspective that of the white press” (p. 19). These different representations are related not only to the historical lack of work-opportunities of the African American minority in the white press, but also to the presence of racist attitudes within the North-American society.

Christopher Campbell (1995) examines news programs aired in 25 cities and towns throughout the United States. After analyzing the “readings” of his sampling of television news programs, he argues myths and stereotypes about the African American community and its members are reinforced in those programs. Campbell explains media construct meaning through the interpretation and presentation of events. He claims traditional or overt racism is present in the local television coverage of the 1990s in the United States.

In The Black Image in the White Mind, Entman and Rojecki (2000), explore the messages about race perpetrated in the media about African Americans and the African American community. They imply white people who do not experience personal contacts with African Americans rely on newspapers, or other media to construct an image about black people. Entman and Rojecki, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze their data, conclude that most whites show an ambivalent or negative attitude toward African Americans rather than extreme positive or negative.

Tator and Henry (2000) examine the discursive strategies used by Canadian media, including journalists and editors, to cover three controversial cultural events. Drawing from their analysis, they claim “minority groups are largely excluded from participation in the public discourse” in Canada. The news media “constructed the minority group as oppressor and accused its members of engaging in “reverse racism” and of violating the rights of others.” The media trivialize or dismiss minority concerns about systemic forms of inequality, such as racism in cultural productions, and represent minorities as hypersensitive about race. Media use denigrating images and promote ideas about ethno-racial minorities influencing the way we construct our beliefs and opinions. Tator and Henry conclude minority communities are “seldom invited into the mainstream discourse of what defines Canadian national culture” (Tator & Henry, 2000).

The literature of representation in media coverage of minority groups speaks about the struggles of these groups to be respected and accurately represented. Minority groups are often misrepresented in the press, sometimes consciously. However, the main source of misrepresentation dwells in unconscious cultural patterns permeating society as a whole. Journalists, editors and media workers have the historical role of acknowledging and questioning those patterns to represent groups in a more accurate way.

5. Research Questions

How was “The Jewish” constructed and re-presented in the six-year period after the bombing of AMIA?

How did this construction and re-presentation vary over this six-year period?

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND METHOD

1. Theoretical Rationale

1.1. Myths

The English word “myth,” as well as the Spanish “mito,” derives from the Greek *mythos*, meaning word or story. Myths exist throughout human history as a venue for explaining and describing individuals’ perceptions (Leeming, 1990). Human beings traditionally used stories to make sense of and explain events to other people. In Lule’s view, the function of mythical stories is to describe archetypical figures and forms serving as exemplary models for human life.

In terms of myth, they are patterns, images, motifs, and characters, taken from and shaped by the shared experiences of human life, that have helped structure and shape stories across cultures and eras. They are fundamental figures and forces, such as heroes, floods, villains, plagues, patriarchs, pariahs great mothers, and tricksters. Given life in narrative they help create the fundamental, archetypical stories that are the heart of the human storytelling (Lule, 2000, p. 15).

According to Jung (1949), myth is present in all peoples. In his book Essays on a Science of Mythology, Jung affirms “myth[s] precede any type of culture, even the most primitive, though, of course, their verbal expressions are molded according to different cultural styles. Myths are the expressions of primordial psychic process that may even precede the advent of the human race. Together with symbols, myths are the most archaic structures of the psychic life” (Jung, 1949, p. 101). Jung views myths “not as relics of the

infancy of the human race, but as revelations of humanity's tendency to draw on a collective store of archetypes—a set of patterns in the unconscious mind that peoples of all cultures express through similar images and symbols” (Encarta, 1998). Claude Lévi-Strauss was one of the most important contributors to the field of the study of myths. Lévi-Strauss argues “myths provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction” (1963, p. 179). In other words, myths supply guidelines for reading reasonable explanations to make sense of pair of dialectics such as life versus death, God versus evil and self versus society. For Lévi-Strauss, “the kind of logic which is used in mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science, and the difference lies not in the quality of the intellectual process, but in the nature of the things to which it is applied.”

Another scholar whose work centers on myth is Mircea Eliade. Eliade (1990) argues “myth constitutes the paradigm for all significant human acts” (p. 23). Like Lévi-Strauss, Eliade attributes a major importance to myths. “By knowing the myth, one knows the ‘origin’ of things, and hence can control and manipulate them at will” (p. 23). He explains that myths can teach people “how to repeat the creative acts” originally limited to the “supernatural beings” and therefore how to ensure the continued existence of things (pp. 23-4). According to Eliade, myth is not just a fable or a folktale, but instead constitutes a powerful blueprint made of the words and stories that describe the origin of things. These rules set guidelines for repetition and reinforcement in society. In our age, the term myth often describes something unreal, fantastic or impossible. Nevertheless, when the term is critically re-defined, it becomes evident myth is central to the formation

and reproduction of culture. Furthermore, myths can now be easily transmitted and reach entire nations via the mass media.

The folklore of all nations contains a large number of myths and mythical motifs emptied of their religious values and functions, but preserved for their epic or fantastic qualities. Some forms of ‘mythical behavior’ still survive in our own day; one can speak of ‘myths of the modern world,’ the mythic structures of the images and behavior imposed on collectivities by the power of the mass media, and so forth (Eliade, 1990, p. 38).

1.2. Myths in News stories

In this study, both myth and news are seen as vehicles for the great stories of humankind. The analysis follows the lead of scholars such as Lévi-Strauss, Jung, Eliade and Lule, who see mythical stories as deeply connected to human development, and not as fables, or fantastic and unrealistic stories.

Storytelling of myths is a tradition that survives and thrives in our time (Lule, 2001). Furthermore, Lule argues mythical or “eternal” stories can be found in the media, particularly in the news. “The daily news is the primary vehicle for myth in our time” (p. 19) he writes, describing the relation between myth and news as a rich, essential part of social life. In this way, myth is related to news, in which the story of an event or object is communicated to readers in an understandable manner. Following Eliade’s argument, Lule notes modern societies also need to hear the stories of myth. Those news stories, he says, “offer more than a retelling of common story forms. Those news stories offer sacred, societal narratives with shared values and beliefs, with lessons and themes, and with exemplary models that instruct and inform. They are offering myths” (Lule, 2001, p. 18).

Though myth is not always the origin of news stories, Lules acknowledges its significance:

Like myth tellers from every age, journalists can draw from the rich treasure trove of archetypal stories and make sense of the world (p. 15).

Reporters and editors often “draw upon a fundamental story of earthly existence, a universal and shared story of humankind” (p. 15). Following the logical patterns provided by universal stories, journalists find a common ground to communicate their perceptions to their audiences in a meaningful way.

1.3. The Scapegoat

The recorded history of humankind offers numerous examples of the ways different peoples throughout the ages cope with societal inequities. Animals and human beings have been used as Scapegoats in this mythical ceremony or gradual process. The four versions of the myth of the Scapegoat below provide examples relevant to this study.

The Old Testament, in the ritual of Yom Kippur (Leviticus, 16:8–10), tells the story of Azazel.³ Azazel, the high-priest of the Israelites, selected a goat, laid his hands on the goat’s head and “confessed over it all the inequities of the Children of Israel, and, having thereby transferred the sins of the people to the beast, sent it away into the wilderness” (Frazer, 1955, p. 210).

Greek mythology tells the story of individuals used as purgative vehicle for mitigating a plague or other calamity. During a ceremony known as “the expulsion of hunger,” a slave was beaten with rods of the “agnus castus” (a tree of alleged magical

³ Frazer (1955) says, “the word translated ‘Scapegoat’ in the Authorized Version is Azazel, which appears rather to be the name of a bad angel or demon, to whom the goat was sent away. In later Jewish literature (Book of Enoch) Azazel appears as the prince of the fallen angels.”

properties), and “turned out of doors with the words, ‘Out with hunger, and in with wealth and health’” (p. 252).

Similarly, in ancient Rome, an innocent man, called “Mamurius Veturius,” was paraded through the streets of Rome, beaten with long white sticks and expelled from the city limits. The ceremony stood for the expulsion of the outworn deity of vegetation, called the “old Mars.” The beaten and expelled man acted as the material vehicle or embodiment of the discarded divinity (p. 231).

In modern history, Jack Lule tells the story of Huey Newton, a radical activist in the United States, who after being violently murdered, was denigrated and ridiculed by major newspapers of the United States. In this story, as in the ancient versions, the murdered man and his cause are embodied with undesirable elements society wants to purge (Lule, 2001).

These stories tell us of the “beast of burden” within a society who carry the troubles, misfortunes or faults of the community. Each of these stories represents the same “eternal” (Lule, 2001, p. 22) story: the story of the mythical Scapegoat. The stories portray two groups, those who select the Scapegoat and the individuals selected as Scapegoat. These stories also depict individuals freed from a burden, while others are literally loaded with it. A society invokes the Scapegoat myth in a series of steps: isolation, denigration, expulsion and annihilation. This process can occur either symbolically or literally. During the isolation step, the Scapegoat is set apart from society and comes to be perceived as the other. This ritual separation creates difference permitting wrongful action or inertia by the society’s members. Denigration follows: the group’s burden is transferred to the Scapegoat. Expulsion occurs when the Scapegoat is

separated from society by being cast out. Annihilation may occur as well. In some cases, the Scapegoat is killed after its expulsion. This measure supposedly ensures the sins die as well; ironically, this process is reenacted by societies again and again (Frazer, 1951; 1955).

In his book, Daily News, Eternal Stories (2001), Jack Lule explains how the Scapegoat myth evolved throughout centuries, cultures and societies. Nowadays, it surfaces in the news stories reported in mass media. According to Lule, “the Scapegoat has its origin in the quite natural practice of transferring a physical load to another’s shoulders, usually a beast of burden, such as a mule or an ox. Rituals developed in which bodily and mental ailments and burdens could also be transferred to another individual, animal or object. Eventually, these practices developed into potent rituals and myths whose centerpiece is the transference of evil. The misfortunes and faults of society are transferred to an individual or sacrificial animal (like a goat) who is then driven, literally or symbolically, out of society, cleansing and purifying those left behind” (p. 63).

In The Golden Bough, one of the most important studies on Myth in the 20th century, Sir James George Frazer thoroughly investigates the Scapegoat in vol. 9. Frazer argues the Scapegoat is “the material vehicle” used by a group of people aiming “to expel the accumulated ills of a whole community” (1955, p. 109). Frazer says evil can be regarded as invisible and intangible. In contrast, the evil can be embodied in material form, rendering it tangible and visible. The Scapegoat, he notes, is “nothing more than” the embodied and material vehicle of evil (1951, p.665-6).

These key elements of the Scapegoat myth provide the groundwork necessary to understand the research presented here.

2. Method

2.1. Textual Analysis

The two types of analysis commonly applied to texts in media studies are content analysis and textual analysis. Content analysis is a statistical method limited to the study of frequencies in manifest content of messages (O’Sullivan et al., 1994). Therefore, content analysis is not the adequate method to analyze the latent content of texts, “which is essential to the study of historical, cultural and social processes” (Acosta-Alzuru, 1996, p. 47).

Textual analysis assumes texts are capable of signifying multiple meanings (Hartley, 1997), or that the texts are “polysemic.” Hartley defines meaning as “the product or result of communication” (p. 174). Thus, mass media do not reflect reality through presenting factual information, instead, mass media constructs or re-presents reality (Acosta-Alzuru, 1996).

Since the aim of this study is to explore the “latent meaning of the text,” and to understand “why-the-content-is-like-that” (Hall, 1975, p.16), textual analysis is the method used in this study. The method follows Stuart Hall’s (1975; 1978) “Introduction” to Paper Voices (1975). According to this methodology, the text is explored and taken as a vehicle to understand the “available stock of meanings” (p. 12) used and shared in newspapers. The focus is on what the text signifies. The text is studied for the subjective or cultural forms which it realizes and makes available to its readers.

This study analyzes news stories, feature articles, editorials, photos, political cartoons and texts regardless of placement in the newspapers. To understand the meaning

of media accounts, the study interprets the cultural codes embedded in these articles and attempt to reveal their meaning (Hall, 1975).

2.2. Procedure

The selection of newspapers was made according to the following criteria: First, one of the newspapers should represent the “popular press,” characterized by the highest readership. Second, one of the newspapers should represent the “quality press” or the Argentinean paper “of record.” Third, the newspapers selected should represent a diverse readership among the Argentinean society. Finally, the newspapers should not represent any particular interest related to the attack against AMIA.

The text was selected on the basis of specific dates representing the largest possible amount of coverage about the Argentinean-Jewish community. The time period analyzed begins the day after the bombing of AMIA (July 18, 1994) and ends the day after the public act commemorating the sixth anniversary of the attack (July 19, 2000), encompassing an overview of more than 400 news items. To study the construction and re-presentation of the events in the press and its changes over time, news articles from this six-year period were chosen as follows:

1. The first week of coverage (July 18 to July 25, 1994),
2. the day commemorating the first month and the next day (August 18-19, 1994),
3. the sixth month commemoration day and the next day (January 18-19, 1995),
4. the first anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 1995),
5. the second anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 1996),
6. the third anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 1997),
7. the fourth anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 1998),

8. the fifth anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 1999),
9. the sixth anniversary of the bombing and the next day (July 18-19, 2000).

The analysis began with a “long preliminary soak” into the texts to allow me to select “representative” news stories while understanding them as individual parts of an overall story. The pre-selected news stories were intensively analyzed looking for “recurrence” and “emphasis” (Hall, 1975, p. 15). The final stage involved the integration of the findings to the overall framework of the study.

Textual analysis methods are “useful in penetrating the latent meaning of a text, and they preserve something of the complexity of language and connotation which seems to be sacrificed in content analysis in order to achieve high validation” (Hall, 1975, p. 15). Previous textual analyses of news coverage include Lule (1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2001), Lester (1994a, 1994b) and Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamir (2000a, 2000b) among others. As a native Argentinean, I am qualified to address the subtleties of the culture, language and particular idiomatic expressions used in the text. Belonging to the Jewish faith, I am particularly sensitive to minority voices often unheard or subverted in Argentina’s dominant discourse.

CHAPTER 3

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS⁴

1. Presenting Argentinean-Jews as Sole Target of the Attack

Though the bombing of AMIA occurred in Argentina, both Clarín and La Nación portray the attack as exclusively aimed against the Argentinean-Jews. One of the ways this occurs is through the representation of the non-Jewish Argentinean people as “sympathetic observers” who feel “sympathetic to the Jewish pain” and exhibit “sympathetic gestures.” Then, Argentinean Jews appear in the accounts as suffering the attack while non- Jewish Argentineans appear in the same accounts as merely sympathetic witnesses:



Both government and the opposition parties condemned the attack that yesterday destroyed the headquarters of AMIA, putting aside their individual political interests to manifest their sympathy towards the Jewish community.

[Oficialismo y oposición se unieron para condenar el atentado que ayer destruyó la sede de la AMIA, dejando de lado las banderas partidarias para manifestar su solidaridad con la comunidad judía] (“Repudio unánime,” 1994, p. 23).

Sympathy emerges as an inherent characteristic of Argentinean society.

Emergency expert, **Santiago Zerrandi**—born in Barcelona—admitted that “what really caught our attention is the **sympathy of the people**. Honestly, **the people have poured themselves into helping in a tremendous way**.”

⁴ For the original texts in Spanish and their translations to English, **bold texts** reflect original emphasis given in the news story while underlined texts reflect emphasis assigned by me once the text is already translated to English.

[Experto en emergencias, **Santiago Zerrandi**—nacido en Barcelona—reconoció que “lo que realmente nos llamó la atención es la **solidaridad del pueblo**. La verdad, es que **la gente se ha volcado a ayudar de una forma tremenda**] (Messi, V. and Lamazares, S., 1994, p. 11).

The day after the attack, La Nación’s banner headline reads, “Twenty-six deaths and one hundred and twenty seven people hurt in the attack against the Jewish community” (“Veintiseis muertos,” 1994). The account singles out the Argentinean-Jewish community as “the” target of the attack. The attack against AMIA appears an aggression aimed solely against Argentinean-Jews. Newspapers find increasingly difficult to provide Argentines with a fresh angle regarding the attack. A vehicle is needed to create interest among the predominantly non-Jewish readership. Sympathy becomes a link to engage those defined in the press as non-victims.

Most sectors of Argentinean society “unanimously condemned” the attack against the Jews, reinforcing the concept of the Jews as the primary target. The Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), the corporative representative of Argentinean labor unions, issued a statement that its members... “sympathized with the Jewish community,” the injured people and the victim’s relatives (“Dura condena,” 1994, p. 22). Additionally, Eduardo Angeloz, governor of the Argentinean province of Córdoba, declared in Clarín his and his citizens’ consternation regarding “this barbaric act against the Jewish community” (“Opinion del,” 1994).

A month following the attack, an August 1994 article appearing in the front page of La Nación suggests that “to show authentic sympathy is to make justice” (“AMIA: se,” 1994, p. 1). In other words, justice, not tribute, would prove a truer expression of sympathy.

Jewish “pain” counterbalances non-Jewish expressions of “sympathy.” Pain is the term used to describe the feelings of the Jews during the aftermath of the bombing. However, it is because of this pain they, as a people, are inevitably destined to suffer. Both Clarín and La Nación portray “pain” as the collective feeling among Argentinean-Jews after the attack against AMIA. This portrayal contrasts strongly with Argentinean suffering through “sympathy.” The news stories seem to say: “We,” Argentineans, are touched by the suffering of the Jews, although the pain does not belong to “us” and the violence was not aimed toward Argentina. Pain belongs to the Jewish community and not to the Argentinean people, who feel only sympathy. For instance, Ernesto Sábato, one of Argentina’s best writers and a living symbol of civil rights activism, writes an article for Clarín about his friend Simja Sneh. Sneh, head of the now-destroyed library of AMIA, survived the attack. The article portrays the fate of the Jewish people through the representation of Sneh.

...his painful existence of Jew... in his book “El pan y la sangre,” written not with ink, but with his own blood, with the memory of the torment and extermination of his family... This man belongs to the people chosen for pain and persecution, these people that have always exerted a mysterious fascination over me (emphasis mine).

[...su dolorosa existencia de judío... en su libro “El pan y la sangre,” escrito no con tinta, pero con su propia sangre, con la memoria del suplicio y exterminio de su familia... Este hombre pertenece al pueblo elegido para el dolor y la persecución, ese pueblo que siempre ejerció sobre mi una misteriosa fascinación.](Sábato, 1994, p. 29).

The Jews appear in the text as the “chosen people.” Through the use of this Biblical concept, Jews become synonymous with pain and persecution. A superior power beyond human control chose the Jews to carry this burden. AMIA’s bombing becomes, then, one

more violent episode within Jewish history. Its reality and history, therefore, is distanced from Argentinean's reality and history. The presentation of the Jews as a people enduring consistent misfortune is echoed by Cardinal Antonio Quarracino's declarations in Clarín:

Again, we have to painfully lament an aberrant and criminal act—he said—**the bomb is not only an attack to meritorious Jewish work, but a renewed wound in the heart of that people** (original emphasis).

[Otra vez tenemos que lamentar dolorosamente un hecho criminal de aberración—dijo—la bomba no es sólo un ataque a la obra meritoria judía, sino una herida renovada en el corazón de ese pueblo] (“Dura condena,” 1994, p. 22).

The emphasis on sincere expressions of consternation and sympathy clarify a continuing distinction between Argentinean-Jews and non-Jews. Argentinean-Jews appear to Clarín readers as “wounded people” who have been attacked before. An attack against them remains almost predictable since they comprise a group whose history is synonymous with life-long pain and suffering. This attack, this “wound,” is not new, but instead is “renewed.” This identification strengthens the idea that Argentinean-Jews are the likely targets. After all, they have a collective history that confirms them as targets. The articles seem to reflect on the history of Jewish persecution: what a pity, history is repeating itself, and this time, Argentineans have to witness it.

2. The Degrading Portrayal of the Jews

In Argentina's large cities, Jews are commonly, and many times, negatively, referred to as “Rusos [Russians].” Perhaps it is because Jewish immigrants arriving in Argentina at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th were Russians

escaping from pogroms⁵ or from the Bolshevik Revolution. Those who use the term say “ruso” is a nickname used in a friendly manner to identify a person of Jewish heritage. For example, a famous Argentinean TV host, actor and film director, Gerardo Sofovich, is popularly known as “El Ruso.” However, Sofovich is Argentinean with Jewish heritage. Most of the time, the term “ruso” connotes more than just an immigrant heritage, “ruso” perpetuates dominant stereotypes about the Argentinean-Jews.

In 1919, during “La Semana Trágica [The tragic week],” the Jewish population of Buenos Aires was harassed by nationalist groups accusing Jews of being “Russian Bolshevik agents” rioting against the Argentinean authorities to install a communist regime in Argentina (Rock, 1993). By that time, “ruso,” the nickname for the Jews, connoted communist revolutionaries, anarchists, anti-Argentinean and anti-Christians (Rivanera, 1986). In usage, the term acquired an additional connotation; “ruso” became a synonym for stingy, miserly and parsimonious. Individuals say “don’t be ruso,” meaning “do not be stingy.” The stereotype of the Jews as miserly people in this variation of “ruso” remains common in Argentinean slang. The singularity of the Argentinean use of the term centers on the simultaneous use of “ruso” as a synonym for stinginess, and as the nickname for Jews. This dual meaning provides the perfect excuse for bigots to deny its anti-Semitic connotations when used.⁶

⁵ An organized, often officially encouraged massacre or persecution of a minority group, especially one conducted against Jews.

⁶ Other interesting uses of stereotypical terms defining groups of outsiders are common in Argentinean slang. An example is the term “Bolita [roly-poly]” to pejoratively designate Bolivians. Possible connotations of the term are “insect” and “uncultured.” Another example is the term “Peruca,” used as a pejorative nickname for Peruvians. Possible connotations are “pickpocket” and “thief.” “Paragua,” the term used for Paraguayans, includes connotations of “smuggler” and “uncultured.”

If non-Orthodox Argentinean-Jews have a long history of being the “other” in their own country, then Orthodox Jews are depicted as radically different from non-Jewish Argentines:

Consecrated to the study of the scriptures, they carry the signs of the orthodox ones, the hat and the long-curly sideburns. But there, the traditional attributes acquired a human sense (emphasis mine) that exceeded any political association. [*Consagrados al estudio de las escrituras, llevan las señas de los ortodoxos, el sombrero y las largas patillas enruladas. Pero allí los atributos tradicionalistas adquirirían un sentido humano que excedía cualquier connotación política*] (“La ‘ayuda’,” 1994, p. 11).

This example reflects the portrayal of Argentinean-Jews. The account represents Jews as different from Argentinean non-Jews and debases them as non-human characters. Meanings in the text concerning “political connotations” attributed to Orthodox Jews remain murky. What is clear, despite the attempt to equalize Jewish and Argentinean experiences, is that Jews are presented as radically different from the rest of Argentines.

Even professionals employed in respected newspapers become victims of prejudice. Months before the attack against AMIA, Argentinean journalist Román Lejtman was criticized by Alberto Pierri, president of the Argentinean Chamber of Representatives (similar to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives). Pierri answered Lejtman’s criticism by saying “Lejtman is a filthy Jew.” The newspaper did not ask Pierri to account for using the derogatory term. The day after the bombing, Pierri went to AMIA’s temporary facility. Clarín, reported the results of the visit:

‘Get out, get out you, you shameless anti-Semitic, nazi.’ The latter was one of the phrases that the head of the representatives, Alberto Pierri, had to withstand (emphasis mine) when he went to the Mark Chagall Cultural Center, where the

Israelite Argentinean Mutual-aid Association (AMIA) is temporarily located. The presence of Pierri provoked the irate response of the relatives of the victims.... As soon as the people perceived the legislator's presence, they remembered the way in which Pierri attempted to disqualify a journalist by calling him 'filthy Jew'... [*'Andate, andate, caradura antisemita, nazi,' fue una de las frases que debió soportar el titular de la Cámara de Diputados, Alberto Pierri, al asistir ayer al centro Mark Chagall, donde funciona en forma provisoria la Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA). La presencia de Pierri provocó la airada respuesta de los familiares de las víctimas... . Al percibir la presencia del legislador la gente recordó el modo en que Pierri intentó descalificar al periodista Román Lejtman, al definirlo como un 'judío piojoso'...* .] ("Insultos a," 1994, p. 14).

Clarín's news story casts Pierri in the role of the victim who had to deflect or withstand the insults of the relatives of the victims. Most markedly, Pierri's behavior and continued public service demonstrate that anti-Semitic attitudes do not endanger a politician's career in Argentina.

2.1. The Deicide people

In some news stories, Jews are represented as a "people chosen" for suffering. In others, however, the denigrating story of the Jews as the "punished people" is enacted. The story of the Jews as the "punished people" derives from the historical representation of the Jews as the Deicide people, blamed for the death of Jesus (Carmichael, 1992). According to this mystical, anti-Semitic story, the Jewish people, acting through Judas, betrayed Jesus by surrendering him to the Romans to be crucified. Clarín writer Hernán Firpo describes the general atmosphere at the temporary facility of AMIA and the mood of those waiting for news from the rescue groups. In its last paragraph, the article reads:

A posture of mixed rage and pity, which summarizes the spirit of a punished people.

[Mezcla de bronca y pena, se encerró en una postura que resumió el espíritu de un pueblo castigado] (Firpo, 1994, p.2).

This representation of Jews as a punished people resembles the representation of Jews as a people chosen for pain and suffering. Both imply wrongdoing on behalf of Jews. In this case, the Argentinean-Jews become historic victims of attack such as AMIA's, but also the attack becomes the "punishment" for something the Jews did.

2.2. Blaming Argentinean-Jews

Both in Clarín and La Nación, a distinction between Argentinean-Jews and non-Jews is made. After the bombing of AMIA, non-Jewish Argentines are portrayed as innocent victims of the attack. As a result of this portrayal, Argentinean-Jews are presented as the non-innocent victims. The coverage seems to imply that the terrorists not only killed Jews but also innocent people. In other words, "innocent people," implies a definition that excludes Argentinean-Jews:

What shakes us is the horror of a reality characterized by innocent people who, in that tragic morning, were working or running their errands around the area...

(emphasis mine) Today is a day to accompany those who are in pain and suffering the consequences of this terrible tragedy that has no justification since anything that attempts against another's life is a perverse and irrational act.

[Estremece de espanto una realidad protagonizada por gente inocente, que en la mañana fatídica trabajaba o hacía sus diligencias por la zona, sin imaginarse lo que el descontrol había planeado... Día para estar junto al dolor de los que padecen las consecuencias de esta terrible tragedia que no tiene justificación]

alguna, porque todo lo que atenta contra la vida ajena es un acto irracional y perverso] (Cané, 1994, p. 51).

In the article above, it appears as though higher value is placed on the lives of the Argentinean non-Jews, the “innocent victims,” and a lesser value placed on the lives of AMIA’s Jewish victims. The article invokes the presence of “innocent people” who were, perhaps by chance, “around, near or in” the area.⁷ In opposition, the article tacitly represents those who normally live or work around AMIA, as the guilty, or non-innocent victims of the attack. This representation of the Argentinean-Jews in Clarín is not a unique example. In a different article, Mariano Grondona,⁸ who regularly writes for La Nación, furthers the representation of the Jewish community grouped under AMIA as a non-innocent victim:

For the people who induced the attack of AMIA, not only their direct enemies are enemies, but also the neutrals. The innocent pedestrian that was walking near by the building, the innocent citizen that was running an errand in the area, the innocent worker that was working around the area, they are all enemies (emphasis mine).

[Para la gente que indujo a atacar a la AMIA, no sólo sus enemigos directos lo son. También los neutrales. El inocente transeúnte que por allí pasaba, el inocente ciudadano que allí hacía un trámite, el inocente empleado que allí trabajaba, son todos enemigos] (Grondona, 1994, p. 10).

For terrorists, there is no distinction between “direct enemies,” characterized by AMIA, and “innocent people” who were around the area for different reasons. Therefore, though the terrorists do not discriminate between Jews and non-Jews, the coverage does. By

⁷ “The area” where AMIA was located is known as “the Once neighborhood,” a busy commercial sector and the best-known Jewish neighborhood of Buenos Aires.

⁸ Mariano Grondona is a respected, popular and influential Argentinean talk-show host, lawyer, university professor and journalist.

establishing sets of opposites in the text, Jews are portrayed as “direct enemies” and non-Jews as “innocent people” – though for terrorists, everyone is an enemy. In the text, Argentinean-Jews are dialectically contrasted to “innocent and neutral,” and therefore, framed as guilty and combative. From this perspective, Argentina may be the geographical location where the attack was committed, but the country is simply around or near the real target. Jews are the real, direct target of this foreign Middle Eastern conflict. Clarín and La Nación’s readers are told that the non-Jews are innocent victims of the attack. These elements demean Argentinean-Jews, depicting them as different, less worthy than Argentinean non-Jews, and possibly inviting their own fate.

A few voices, however, identify the bombing of AMIA as an attack against Argentina as a whole. The Permanent Assembly for Human Rights (APDH) defines the attack as “one injury against the Argentinean society as a whole” (“Dura condena,” 1994).

Psychologist Eva Giverti criticizes media coverage of the bombing in an article for Clarín. She emphasizes the dangers connected to the representation of the AMIA bombing as a Jewish issue, and questions the responsibility embedded in this representation:

But also the children perceive other things, for example, the expression that says: “What a shame! Not only they killed the people who were inside AMIA’s building, but also the poor innocent people who were passing by the street.” This text, repeated in the mass media that naturalizes the division between Jews and innocent people and transforms what constitutes the paradigm of racism in something normal by allowing us to suppose that those who were inside the building were not innocents (emphasis mine). Thus, the explosion is justified.

Simultaneously, another comment: “This happened because they are at war, but we are not. Why are we being involved?”

Let us be clear: we are witnessing the gestation of another explosive, deadly, although invisible and bloodless: the teaching of discrimination.

[Pero los chicos también captan otras cosas, por ejemplo, la expresión que dice: “¡Que barbaridad! No solo mataron a quienes estaban dentro de la AMIA sino a los pobres inocentes que pasaban por la calle.” Texto reiterado en los medios de comunicación, que naturaliza la división entre judíos e inocentes y transforma en algo natural lo que constituye un paradigma del prejuicio, permitiendo suponer que quienes estaban en el edificio no eran inocentes y por lo tanto justificando la explosión.

En paralelo, otro comentario: “Esto sucedió porque ellos están en guerra, pero nosotros ¿Qué tenemos que ver?...”

Tengámoslo claro: estamos asistiendo a la gestación de otro explosivo, mortal aunque invisible e incruento: la enseñanza de la discriminación] (Giverti, 1994, p.14).

Unfortunately, Giverti’s position is the exception. The way Argentinean-Jews and AMIA’s bombing is defined in the news stories reproduces and perpetuates negative stereotypes.

3. Argentinean-Jews are Israelis

In 1992, two years before the AMIA bombing, a car bomb destroyed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires killing 29 and injuring about 250 individuals. Without being sidetracked in the account of this earlier terrorist attack, the most relevant point remains that an Islamic-fundamentalist group allegedly perpetrated it (Barcelona, 1994, p. 15).

Among the casualties of this attack were Israelis, Argentineans and Bolivians. The Argentinean-Jewish community experienced the attack against the embassy as an anti-Israeli attack and as a shocking awakening to the revival of anti-Semitic activity in

Argentina. Though the suspected perpetrators were terrorist fundamentalist groups from the Middle East, Argentines, and especially the Argentinean-Jewish community, believed the terrorists must have counted on groups acting within Argentina to place a bomb potent enough to destroy an entire building. Nationalistic anti-Semitic groups were suspected. However, during the two years and four months between the two attacks, the efforts of judicial, security and intelligence institutions failed. The embassy case remained under the jurisdiction of the Argentinean National Supreme Court of Justice for almost five years. At the time of this study, nine years after the attack against the Israeli Embassy and almost seven years after the bombing of AMIA, no trial has been held nor has anyone been officially accused of having car-bombed either institution.

Immediately following the bombing of AMIA, both La Nación and Clarín establish a connection between the latter attack and the bombing of the Israeli Embassy. One day after the attack on AMIA, Clarín's article, "The same as the embassy [Igual que la embajada]" compares the details of the AMIA attack to the Israeli Embassy bombing with equal consideration:

It was right in the middle of the Once⁹ neighborhood, and not in Barrio Norte.¹⁰ It was the headquarters of a local mutual organization, and not an embassy, the representation of a foreign government. It was winter of 1994 and not summer of 1992. But the parallelism was instantaneous and the verbal lapse ended up imposing itself. After the explosion, the headquarters of the Association of Israelites Argentinean Mutual-Aid Organizations (AMIA) became 'the embassy'. *[Era pleno Once, no Barrio Norte. Era la sede de una mutual local, no de una representación diplomática. Era invierno del 94 y no el verano del 92. Pero el paralelismo fue instantáneo y el lapsus verbal terminó imponiéndose. Después de*

⁹ "Once" is the traditional Jewish neighborhood of Buenos Aires, where AMIA is located.

¹⁰ "Barrio Norte" is the neighborhood of Buenos Aires where the Israeli embassy was located until 1992.

la explosión, la sede de la Asociación de Mutuales Israelitas Argentinas (AMIA) se convirtió en 'la embajada'] (“Igual que,” 1994, p. 19).

On the same day, La Nación’s front page explains (“Veintiseis muertos,” 1994, p. 1):

The governments of Israel and Argentina coincided in qualifying the incident as a terrorist attack. Because of its magnitude, it is comparable to the one occurring on March 17 of 1992, when a car-bomb destroyed the Israeli diplomatic headquarters...

[Los gobiernos de Israel y de Argentina coincidieron en calificar el hecho como una ataque terrorista, que por su magnitud, sólo es comparable al ocurrido el 17 de marzo de 1992 ...]

This constructed connection between the two attacks has the effect of blurring the lines between the Argentinean-Jewish community and Israelis. Although an Argentinean mutual-aid institution and a foreign embassy have little in common, both Clarín and La Nación portray both attacks as “against the same community.” The people working at the embassy were working for the state of Israel, while the people who worked in AMIA worked for an Argentinean institution. An ambassador is defined as a “diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government to another,”¹¹ while AMIA’s president represents the voice of the Argentinean mutual-aid association, which groups the Argentinean-Jewish institutions of varying purposes.

A connection between the Israeli Embassy and AMIA occurs repeatedly, almost obsessively, throughout Clarín and La Nación’s coverage of the first days after the bombing. By connecting the two attacks, Clarín and La Nación foster an image of interchangeability in which the embassy and community center belong to a non-

¹¹ Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition, Copyright © 1996, 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Argentinean jurisdiction. For example, in Clarín the caption of a photo by Mario Cocchi reads:

The image returns us immediately to the attack against the Embassy of Israel, in March of 1992. But the picture is from yesterday, in Pasteur Street, right in the middle of the Once neighborhood.

[La imagen devuelve inmediatamente al atentado de Israel, en marzo del '92. Pero la foto es de ayer, en la calle Pasteur al 600, pleno barrio de Once. El edificio de la AMIA, destruido por la explosión] (Cocchi, 1994, p. 4).

La Nación asserts in a banner headline, “More than two years ago, the first commotion.”

A picture of the ruins of the Israel Embassy a few days after it was bombed is presented to La Nación readers. The emphasis connects both attacks and presents them as “Jewish objectives.”

Two years, four months and one day after the bloody attack against the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, a new bombing attack against that community (emphasis mine) destroyed a seven-story building located in the Once neighborhood, and caused at least 26 deaths and 127 injured.

[Transcurridos dos años, cuatro meses y un día del sangriento atentado contra la embajada de Israel en Buenos Aires, un nuevo ataque explosivo contra esa comunidad destruyó ayer un edificio de siete pisos situado en el barrio de Once y provocó al menos 26 muertos y 127 heridos] (“Veintiseis muertos,” 1994, p. 1).

Another of La Nación’s articles, this one by Alfredo Vega, portrays the two attacks as strikes against the one community. He writes:

Like two years ago, the Jewish community in Argentina has again been cruelly hit (emphasis mine); with the iniquity of the ones who detonate an explosive careless of the innocent victims that it can produce.

[Como hace dos años la colectividad judía en la Argentina ha sido golpeada cruelmente; con la bajeza propia de quienes detonan un explosivo sin que les importe las víctimas inocentes que pueda producir] (Vega, 1994, p. 14).

The repeated portrayal of the bombings “against the same community,” establishes Argentinean-Jews as Israelis, or foreigners who have an embassy in Argentina. A month after the attack the Argentinean-Jewish community continues to be portrayed as a foreign group, and AMIA as similar to the Israeli Embassy.

This conflation of Argentinean-Jews and Israelis is strong. When Clarín and La Nación cover the first month commemoration event following the attack against AMIA, Argentinean-Jews continue to be identified as Israelis who “will protect buildings with concrete barriers.” The decision to place the barriers results from the talks between federal authorities and the “Israeli community,” La Nación asserts. However, the talks were held with the leaders of the Argentinean-Jewish community, portrayed as Israelis, and not with the Israeli community (“Protegerán edificios,” 1994). Clarín also identifies AMIA as “the Israeli mutual” (Rios, 1994). Without doubt, Clarín and La Nación identify the Argentinean-Jewish community as Israeli.

Argentinean-Jews are identified as Israelis through the use of the word “Jew” as a synonym for “Israeli” and vice versa. In this way, Argentineans professing the Jewish faith may be taken for Israelis, acquiring a public, if illusory, dual nationality through the newspapers’ portrayal. In an article published the day after AMIA’s bombing, Clarín does not differentiate between Argentinean-Jews and Israelis. The account reads “[in the building] there were between 90 to 120 people, according to [Argentinean] police and Israeli sources” (emphasis mine) (“Removiendo más,” 1994, p. 2). The “Israeli source” to which Clarín refers, is, in fact, DAIA’s president Ruben Beraja. Beraja is not an Israeli, but an Argentinean-Jew. Simultaneously, Israeli diplomats are presented as Argentinean-Jewish community leaders:

... a multitude condemned... the attack against AMIA and DAIA; leaders and diplomatic Jews (emphasis mine) demanded a prompt resolution of the case.

[... *una multitud condenó... el atentado contra la AMIA y la DAIA; dirigentes y diplomáticos judíos exigieron el pronto esclarecimiento del hecho...*] (Antognoni & Correa, p. 1.).

The “diplomatic Jew” cited in this example is the Israeli ambassador in Buenos Aires, while the “Jew leaders” are the presidents of AMIA and DAIA. La Nación then, suggests Argentinean-Jewish leaders may be equated with foreigners, Israeli diplomats. In this way, both Israelis and Argentinean-Jews are reduced to their “Jewishness.”

Another La Nación writer, Alejandro Margulis, quotes the declarations of a policeman working in a neighborhood with a large Jewish population. After the policeman explains that the police force is focusing on “Israeli objectives,” Margulis says,

Evidently this is a neighborhood with many people from the Jewish community (Margulis, 1994, p. 19).

[*Evidentemente es un barrio con mucha gente de la colectividad judía.*]

Mariano Ovarrio interviews an Israeli authority visiting Argentina. The dignitary, Uzi Baram is the minister of Israel’s tourism bureau. When asked for the reasons for Israel’s suspicions of Hezbollah in the AMIA bombing, Baram explains that as part of its philosophy, Hezbollah interprets “Jewish” as a synonym for “Israel.” Baram’s words reinforce this representation in the two newspapers under study.

3.2. The Israeli Prime Minister as the Representative of the Argentinean-Jews

A few hours after learning of the attack against AMIA, Argentinean president Menem calls Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. Menem offers condolences for the deaths

resulting from the attack against AMIA as if Rabin would be the official representative of the Argentinean-Jews who have died. The responsibility for the Argentinean-Jews is transferred to the Israeli prime minister despite the fact that they are Argentines. Clarín and La Nación coverage furthers the portrayal of the Israeli Prime Minister as a direct link to Argentinean-Jews. La Nación says,

President Menem talked by phone with Prime Minister of Israel, Ytzkak Rabin, to express condolences.

[El presidente Menem se comunicó telefónicamente con el primer ministro de Israel, Ytzkak Rabin, para expresarle sus condolencias] (“Veintiséis muertos,” 1994, p. 1).

Clarín, like La Nación, furthers the portrayal of Argentinean-Jews as Israelis as their readers are shown the bombing of AMIA as an issue primarily concerning the prime minister of Israel.

Argentinean president, Carlos Menem, expressed condolences to the Israeli Prime Minister, Itzhak Rabin, for the attack that destroyed the building of the Israelite Argentinean Mutual-aid Association.

[El presidente argentino Carlos Menem expresó al primer ministro israelí Yitzhak Rabin sus condolencias por el atentado que destruyó este lunes el edificio de la Asociación Mutual Israelita en Buenos Aires] (“Condolencias mundiales,” 1994, p. 20).

In a different article, Clarín reports another conversation between Menem and Rabin in which the Argentinean-Jews are again presented as Israeli. Moreover, the Argentinean people are shown expressing their rejection of the attack to the Israeli government. Since the news story portrays the Argentines repudiating the attack before a foreign authority, it appears as though the attack was not against Argentina:

Menem dialogued yesterday with Israeli Prime Minister, Itzhak Rabin, to whom he expressed the grief of the Argentinean people over the attack that totally destroyed the headquarters of AMIA.

[El presidente Carlos Menem dialogó ayer con el primer ministro israelí, Itzhak Rabin, a quien expresó el repudio total del pueblo argentino por el atentado que destruyó totalmente la sede de la AMIA] (“Memem prometió,” 1994. p. 5).

Viewing Argentinean-Jews as Israelis constitutes a normal and pervasive practice in Argentina. Menem’s official call to the Israeli Prime Minister is reported on the front pages as an act that fits the situation—despite the fact AMIA is an Argentinean organization and its members and victims are also Argentinean.

3.3. The Attack and the Middle East Conflict

During the first weeks of coverage after the attack, both Clarín and La Nación frame the bombing as part of the Middle Eastern conflict. The day after, Clarín declares in a deck headline, “The conflict of the Middle East has no borders [El conflicto de Oriente Medio no tiene fronteras],” and in the headline, “Argentina is in the line of fire [La Argentina está en la línea de fuego]” (“La Argentina,” 1994, p. 19). In its article, “It was not by chance [Ya no fue una fatalidad],” Clarín reinforces the connection of the attack as an extension of the Middle Eastern conflict.

... it seems that international conflicts that in a different time sounded remote—such as the Arab-Israeli one—have begun to be experienced in this land at the southern extreme of the world.

[... en esta tierra del extremo austral del mundo se han comenzado a dirimir, al parecer, conflictos internacionales—como el árabe-israelí—que en otra época sonaban remotos] (“Ya no,” 1994, p. 16).

Clarín's open editorial two days after the attack is entitled, "Toward another Middle East [Hacia otro Oriente Medio]." In this piece, Clarín specifically connects the attack to the Middle East conflict, arguing that neither the violent confrontation in the Gaza strip, nor the attack to AMIA, are able to hinder the peace process in the Middle East ("Hacia otro," 1994).

The message is that the AMIA attack is directly related to the Middle Eastern conflict. In this way, the newspapers strengthen the apparent connection between Argentineans-Jews and Israel. The attack against AMIA belongs to the Middle Eastern conflict, a conflict that is foreign to Argentina. Instead, the bombing belongs to a Muslim-Arab / Jewish-Israeli world on the other side of the globe.

The public opinion has the right to know how important is the danger of Argentina becoming the stage of international confrontations whose historic and ideological roots are foreign.

[La opinión publica tiene el derecho a saber en qué medida existe el peligro de que la Argentina se convierta en el escenario de enfrentamientos internacionales cuyas raíces históricas e ideológicas le son ajenas] ("Un crimen," 1994, p. 18)

Clarín says "the suspicions point toward an Islamic, pro-Iranian group that acts in Lebanon," reinforcing the connection of the attack to the Middle Eastern conflict.

Largely, the AMIA story becomes framed as a foreign issue instead of an Argentinean one. Thus, Argentinean-Jews are victims of an attack against another country.

Furthermore, the newspapers find it hard to connect, in any way, Argentinean groups in an attack related to the Middle East. Argentina becomes the circumstantial scene of the attack, an accessible location for foreign terrorists to execute a plan against Israel, represented in the press as the Argentinean-Jewish community. A few writers, such as Clarín's Oscar Landi, argue that the attack affects Argentineans because it constitutes "a

violation of universal rights, and it is in this sense that the crime is against every Argentinean.” Even Landi acknowledges the tacit connection of the AMIA bombing to the Middle Eastern conflict. He writes:

The attack produced in many people an odd feeling. Suddenly, we become an involuntary part of a conflict always felt as something from afar (emphasis mine), but at the same time we feel very much affected because we feel the attack as a violation of the victim’s human rights.

[El atentado produjo en muchas personas una sensación de mucha extrañeza. De pronto somos parte involuntaria de un conflicto vivido siempre como muy lejano, pero al mismo tiempo nos sentimos afectados muy de cerca por el mismo porque participamos de los derechos humanos de las víctimas] (Landi, 1994, p. 27).

In a different Clarín article, writer Jorge Halperín acknowledges the apparent link of the Middle Eastern conflict to the Argentinean-Jewish community, though he wonders about the reason for the attack:

Buenos Aires is neither a Middle Eastern capital nor the capital of any leading country. It is located at a remote distance from the conflict area, and has an important Jewish community; however, there are many other countries where large Jewish communities live.

[Buenos Aires no es una capital del Medio Oriente ni de los países centrales. Está a una distancia remota de la zona del conflicto y tiene una importante comunidad judía, pero hay mucho otros países con comunidades judías numerosas]

(Halperin, 1994, p. 27).

In Argentina, the federal police (similar to the United States’ Federal Bureau of Investigation) act as a regular police force in some jurisdictions. In an interview with La Nación’s writer Ricardo Larrondo, the new chief disowns the attacks:

This [the attacks against the embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires and against AMIA] makes us feel, in some way, in the operational theatre (emphasis mine) of

wars that we have not declared and in which we have never thought about participating.

[Esto nos hace sentir, de alguna manera, en el teatro de operaciones de guerras que nosotros no hemos declarado y en las que jamás hemos pensado participar] (Larrondo, 1994, p. 20).

The coverage of the new police chief seems to say, “we” Argentineans feel like witnesses of a conflict against and between others, and “we” have no interest at all in getting involved. Six days after the attack, Clarín again frames the event as a Middle Eastern issue. Moreover, Clarín’s readers are told “we,” the Argentineans, have unwittingly become involved in this conflict (“Guerra y,” 1994).

As its leaders [the leaders of Hezbollah and Israel] had anticipated, the fundamentalist terrorism has installed the Middle East war among us.

[El terrorismo fundamentalista ha instalado la guerra de Oriente Medio entre nosotros, tal y como lo habían adelantado sus dirigentes] (p. 4).

Argentina emerges as the right place for terrorists to attack Jews, a strategic battleground in an ongoing foreign conflict. Both Clarín and La Nación depict Israel as the real target of the terrorists. In contrast, Argentina is a circumstantial victim of the attack. This depiction is constructed on two basic premises: first, the attack is related to the Middle Eastern conflict, and, second, the Argentinean-Jewish community is essentially Israeli. In other words, the attack is portrayed against Israel, and Israeli individuals, not against Argentina (“La Argentina,” 1994, p. 19).

Government actions detaining foreign citizens immediately after the attack substantiate the portrayal of the attack as foreign. Most people detained by security authorities are from Middle Eastern or other countries:

Once they overcame the horror of being considered a couple of temerarious terrorists, yesterday a German female and an Iranian male, who were detained, were set free...

[Superado el espanto que les provocó ser considerados una pareja de temerarios terroristas, fueron liberados ayer la alemana y el iraní demorados...]

(Accidentada luna,” 1994, p. 20).

Along the same lines, La Nación says in one of its headlines, “Iranians living in the country are under investigation [Investigan a iraníes radicados en el país]” (“Investigan a,” 1994, p. 20) reinforcing perceptions of the bombing of AMIA as a foreign issue.

4. Jews as Threat

Overall, Jews are presented as a threat to Argentinean interests. Argentinean-Jews are portrayed as powerful, independent agents within Argentinean borders with international allies of immense influence.

4.1. The Argentinean-Jewish Connection to the Israeli Army

Supposedly, Argentinean-Jews have suspicious connections with a foreign army. Clarín reports AMIA has its own “secret service,” suggesting a connection between Argentinean-Jews and a foreign army. The active threatening presence of a nameless, faceless, foreign army, within Argentina’s borders evokes Argentinean anti-Semitic groups’ commonly-held fear of a secret plot to create a Jewish state in Patagonia.¹²

¹² An example of the seriousness of these tales is represented by the recent story of Jacobo Timerman, chief editor of the Argentinean daily La Opinión. Timerman was abducted from his home by the Argentinean military dictatorship ruling the country between 1976 and 1983. In 1977, he was taken to a secret-clandestine jail and tortured (Conadep, 1986, p. 238). Several times, he was interrogated about the Jewish-Israeli plan to create a Jewish state in Patagonia, the southern part of Argentina. Timmerman recounts: *How would you answer this question? For many years, Argentine Nazi ideologues have claimed the existence of a Jewish scheme to seizing Patagonia, the southern zone of the country, and creating the Republic of Andinia. Books and pamphlets have appeared on this subject, and it’s extremely difficult to convince a Nazi*

The “symbol of the Jewish Argentinean community,” AMIA, becomes a place with a “secret service run by an Israeli army member.” The following account reflects and perpetuates long-standing tales fueling anti-Semitic sentiment in Argentina:

... the [AMIA] building had a secreta vigilance service, ran by a member of the Israeli army, known as ‘Sr. Muni’. This service would intervene under the request of the members of the community that would suffer a problem of racial persecution.

[...la AMIA contaba con un servicio de vigilancia secreta a cargo de un miembro del Ejercito Israelí, conocido como ‘Señor Muni’. Este servicio intervenía a pedido de los miembros de la comunidad que sufrían algún problema de persecución racial] (“Otra vez,” 1994, p. 8).

4.2. The “Powerful Jews”

During the years of this study, Clarín and La Nación present Argentinean-Jews as an influential economic and political group with strong connections to the “powerful” Jewish community in the United States. In the following examples La Nación depicts the Argentinean-Jewish community as a group capable of influencing the Argentinean government. La Nación interviews Ruben Beraja, DAIA’s president:

La Nación: has the [Argentinean] president ever consulted DAIA when solving state issues (emphasis mine)?

Beraja: when in some cases the president asked my opinion or commented about a decision about a community related issue, I believe he did it in the same way he might have done it with other leaders.

La Nación: But the Jewish community is a very large economic power in the country (emphasis mine).

that the plan is, if not absurd, at least unfeasible. Naturally, my questioners wanted to now more details that were presently available to them in this matter (Timerman, 1981).

Beraja: I am convinced that if we have ever talk about something, it was not about the alleged economic power of our community since among the Jews there are the same social strata that exist in any society.

[La Nación: ¿La DAIA fue consultada alguna vez por el Presidente para resolver temas de estado?

Beraja: cuando en alguna ocasión el Presidente me pidió una opinión o me transmitió una decisión sobre un tema vinculado con el interés para la comunidad, creo que lo hizo como podría haberlo hecho con otros dirigentes.

[La Nación: Pero la comunidad judía es un poder económico muy grande en el país].

Beraja: estoy convencido de que si alguna vez conversamos algunas cuestiones no fue en función del supuesto poderío económico de nuestra comunidad, ya que existen entre los judíos los mismos estamentos sociales que en cualquier sociedad (“Beraja dijo,” 1994, p. 13).

Reporting the visit of the president of the Jewish organization B’nai B’rith International, La Nación explains:

The president of Bnai Brith International, Kent Schiner, will arrive tomorrow to express his sympathy to the victims of the attack and to hold an interview with president Carlos Menem and with counselor Guido Di Tella.

The Jewish entity (Bnai Brith), of which Schiner is the president, has 500 thousand members in 54 countries. Its headquarters are in Washington D.C., Bnai Brith exerts a powerful influence in the Unites States (emphasis mine).

[El presidente de la Bnai Brith Internacional, Kent Schiner, llegará mañana al país para expresar su solidaridad con las víctimas del atentado y para entrevistarse con el presidente Carlos Menem y con el canciller Guido Di Tella. La entidad judía que preside Schiner tiene 500 mil afiliados en 54 paises. Su sede central está en Washington D.C. y la Bnai Brith tiene una poderosa influencia en los Estados Unidos.] (“Visitante,” 1994, p. 2).

In 1996, the Jewish are presented as a lobbying group whose influence on the government of the United States is so great they can influence the U.S. president

(“Menem asegura,” 1996, p. 8). A few months after the attack against AMIA, a series of bombs shook Europe, and among the targets was the Israeli embassy in the United Kingdom. These events give Clarín the opportunity to highlight the “connections” between Argentinean-Jews and their U.S. counterparts.

The detention of five individuals suspected of having perpetrated the two attacks from yesterday was **rapidly communicated** from the United States to the DAIA’s leaders in Buenos Aires, which showed a formal interest of the Jewish leaders for not to disconnect the attacks (emphasis mine).

*[La detención de cinco sospechosos de haber perpetrado los dos ataques que se produjo ayer, fue **rápidamente comunicada** a la dirigencia de la DAIA en Buenos Aires, lo que evidencio un interés formal de la dirigencia judía por no desconectar los atentados]* (“La densa,” 1995, p. 24).

The Argentinean-Jews are presented as having their own political agenda. They act independently, and regardless of the official investigation. Rodolfo Barra, the Argentinean Minister of Justice until 1996, was formerly an active member of the nationalistic, ultra right-wing and anti-Semitic group, Tacuara. Clarín’s front page carries the headline, “Barra left with applause [Barra se fue con aplausos].” The article jumps to page two and fills page three in its entirety. The complete title reads, “Barra left with applauses after his last minister meeting [Barra se fue con aplausos de su última reunion de gabinete].” The deck of the headline explains the reason Barra leaves:

He had to resign after being denounced for his militancy in a philonazi group. The international pressure (emphasis mine) on the government was a decisive element. *[Debió renunciar tras denuncias sobre su pasada militancia en grupos filonazis. Resultó decisiva la presión internacional sobre el gobierno]* (“Barra se,” 1996, pp. 1-3).

“International pressure” consists of alleged phone calls between members of the United States’ Jewish community and Argentinean authorities.

The U.S. Jewish community, then, appears as a fearsome entity capable of forcing the much-admired Argentinean Minister of Justice to resign. As such, it is also capable of shaping Argentinean foreign policy and jeopardizing the success of president Menem's trip to Washington, D.C.

Menem travels next week to the United States [to meet president Clinton]. And he did not want to leave having in his horizon the **sure demands** of the **powerful** North American Jewish community, which extends its **influence** to the political and financial circles of that country (original emphasis).

*[Menem viaja la semana próxima a los Estados Unidos. Y no quiso emprender el viaje teniendo como horizonte los **seguros reclamos** que haría la **poderosa** colectividad judía norteamericana, que extiende su **influencia** en los círculos políticos y financieros de ese país]* (original emphasis)(“Barra se,” 1996. p. 1-3).

The next day, July 13, 1996, Clarín re-emphasizes the pressure exerted by the U.S.

Jewish community,

Abroad, the pressure of the North American Jewish community, of **enormous** political and economic **influence**, did not yield, and that pressure could put Menem's trip to the U.S. **in jeopardy** (original emphasis).

*[En el exterior, en tanto, **no cedía** la presión de la comunidad judía norteamericana, de **enorme influencia** política y económica, y esa ola podía **poner en jaque** el viaje de Menem a los EE.UU. ...]*(“Menem asegura,” 1996, p. 8).

Days before a commemorative event for AMIA bombing victims organized by the Jewish community in New York, Clarín consistently presents the U.S. Jewish community as powerful and influential. With a banner-head in the “politics section,” Clarín reports a pending meeting between Presidents Menem and Clinton. In the piece, “AMIA case is in the agenda,” Clarín reports AMIA's bombing as an important part of their conversation. “Menem needs to show results,” and the United States president is “pressured by the

Jewish-American lobby.” The United States’ Jewish community is portrayed as simultaneously pressuring the Argentinean and the United States governments (Pazos, 1996).

Two years after the bombing and pressured by the Jewish-North American “lobby,” Clinton will demonstrate that **the issue is of his personal interest.**

*[A dos años del hecho y presionado por el “lobby” judío-norteamericano, Clinton demostrará que **el tema es de su interés personal.**]* (original emphasis)(p. 6).

In 1997, the Argentinean media covers a commemorative event of the attack against AMIA held in front of the Argentinean consulate in New York. The event, organized by Jewish groups in the United States, is represented in Clarín and La Nación as if supported by a variety of U.S. interest groups including churches and politicians. Elie Wiesel, a Nobel Peace prize winner and counselor to President Clinton, is a keynote speaker. Clarín depicts the New York Jewish community as influential, supportive of the Argentinean-Jewish community and critical of the Argentinean government (Aizen, 1997). Additionally, Argentinean-Jews are said to work directly with the United States Congress (“Presión del congreso norteamericano”LN). La Nación’s headline reads “In New York they also accused the president [En Nueva York también acusaron al Presidente].” Jews in the U.S. are said to directly blame Menem for a lack of results in the investigation of the case (Rivera, 1997, p. 15). Beneath this article and inside the same box, La Nación presents a second article about the same event, “Emotion 10 thousand kilometers away.” The article contrasts the general atmosphere of sympathy toward the U.S. Jewish organizers among the attendees to the attitude of “indifference and coldness” of the Argentinean Foreign Service personnel at the consulate (Firpo, 1997, p. 15). La Nación, in a different article, notes increasing numbers of individuals

from disparate social backgrounds support the demands of the Argentinean-Jews nationally and internationally:

The protests over the lack of results in the investigation will reach international dimension (“A tres,” 1997).

[La protesta por la falta de resultados en la investigación alcanzará dimensión internacional].

And,

The archbishop of New York, Joseph O’Connor, will offer a prayer; the mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, and the leaders of the Jewish community will attend the commemoration event (Rey, 1997, p. 12).

[El arzobispo de Nueva York, Joseph O’Connor, quien ofrecerá una plegaria; el intendente de Nueva York, Rudolph Giuliani, y los dirigentes de la comunidad judía asistirán al acto].

In this way, the illusion of the Jews as a powerful, unified entity is strengthened.

In 1998, Clarín covers protests occurring in front of the Argentinean consulate in New York. The power of the United States and Argentinean Jewish communities seems to have grown measurably, since Al Gore, vice president of the United States, sends a salutation message to organizers of the event. Moreover, the protests receive the support of an “influential” North American congressman Ben Gilman, the New York state legislature, New York archbishop, John O’Connor, and Argentinean priest Carlos Mullins, among others. Clarín assigns Memoria Activa a central role in the New York event. A unique U.S. Jewish community is thus constructed, supporting “the most combative group,” among the Argentinean-Jewish community, Memoria Activa.

In the text, the New York Jewish Counsel for Community Relations—which groups more than 60 organizations of the community—will reproduce the message of protest that wielded on the invitations to the homage: ‘four years after the attack, and none of the attack perpetrators has been detained yet.’

[En el texto, el Consejo de Relaciones de la comunidad Judía de Nueva York-que reúne a mas de 60 organizaciones de la colectividad-reproducirá el mensaje de protesta que esgrimió en las invitaciones al homenaje: ‘a cuatro años del atentado, aun no se ha detenido a ninguno de los perpetradores del ataque’]
 (“Acto en,” 1998).

The Argentinean newspapers depict the Jewish community in the U.S. as powerful and angry. As such, it assumes and personalizes the demands of the Argentinean-Jewish community. Both La Nación and Clarín portray the alliance between the United States and Argentinean Jewish communities as a concern for Argentinean authorities. The Argentinean-Jews are a group that might be consulted by the president of Argentina. The Argentinean and United States Jewish communities combined represent enough power to directly intervene and influence over state issues, particularly in the United States, where the Jewish community is portrayed as a lobby with “enormous influence.” Argentinean-Jews, it seems, are a force to be reckoned with and even feared.

5. Summary

The preceding discussion regarding the AMIA bombing reveals the main ways in which “the Jewish” are defined in newspaper accounts. The analysis reveals representation of Argentinean-Jews constructed in four ways: as the sole target of the attack, as inferior to the national ideal of Argentinean, as Israelis, and as a threat to Argentina.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Argentinean-Jewish Community as Scapegoat

The ritual of the Scapegoat begins with the designation of the object (beast, human or thing) to be used as the depository of the “bodily and mental ailments and burdens” of society (Lule, 2001, p.63). According to the myth, the diverse ills afflicting society, its sins, calamities, guilt or other responsibilities, are symbolically transferred onto the designated Scapegoat. In this way, a people would free themselves of these burdens thorough this transference. The Scapegoat becomes the sole bearer of all those ills, burdens and responsibilities related to them. Furthermore, the Scapegoat also becomes a representation of all those ills and, therefore, needs to be expelled from society. The sacrifice of the Scapegoat constitutes an act of physical or symbolic expulsion necessary to keep all of what the Scapegoat represents away from society or, in Frazer’s words, “to rid themselves of the troubles that have harassed them in the past” (p. 666).

In La Nación and Clarín’s coverage of the AMIA bombing and its connected events, the Argentinean-Jewish community is cast in the role of the Scapegoat. Three of the four stages of the Scapegoat myth are clearly invoked in the attempt by the two newspapers to render the tragedy of AMIA’s bombing intelligible to readers. First, the Argentinean-Jews are isolated, depicted as the sole target of the attack. Then, they are

denigrated, portrayed as inferior to the national ideal of Argentina. Finally, expulsion ensues when they are symbolically separated from society as Israelis or foreigners. And, though annihilation – the fourth stage of the Scapegoat – has not occurred, Argentinean-Jews are depicted as a threat to Argentina. Thus, the bombing is rendered intelligible, since who could find fault in an attempt to clean and purify society for the good of all?

1.1. Isolation

In both La Nación and Clarín's coverage, the attack is portrayed as solely against the Argentinean-Jewish community, or rather, the Jewish community living in Argentina. Sympathy, not pain, is felt by non-Jewish Argentines. In this way, pain resulting from the bombing is removed from non-Jewish Argentines and solely assigned to Jews. The coverage seems to imply: "We," the Argentines, are touched by the suffering of the Jews, although the pain does not belong to "us" and the violence was not aimed toward Argentina. When identified as sole sufferer of the attack, the Argentinean-Jewish community is isolated and designated as the Scapegoat, or bearer of society's misfortunes. The sympathy expressed by the rest of Argentinean society toward the Argentinean-Jews is a demonstration of good will and consternation. At the same time, it recognizes the Argentinean-Jewish community as "other," and as the true bearer of the attack.

1.2. Denigration and Transference of the Burden

The symbolic transference of the burden is accomplished when Argentinean non-Jews are represented as innocent victims of the attack. By portraying the Argentinean

non-Jews as “the” innocent victims, a shadow of doubt is cast over the innocence of the Argentinean-Jews. It appears as if Argentinean-Jews are guilty for having perpetuated an unknown action justifying the attack. Jews’ guilt transcends AMIA’s attack and is related to their representation as “people punished” for having killed Jesus. Jews are depicted as historic targets of attacks. Thus, the attack against AMIA is one more on “their” history.

1.3. Expulsion

Once the Argentinean-Jewish community has been designated as Scapegoat and the burden has been ritually transferred, it is symbolically expelled from the larger Argentinean society. In the archetypal stories, the Scapegoat embodies society’s burdens, misfortunes and thoughts. Therefore, expulsion from society is required, either literally or symbolically, to cleanse or purify those left behind. Analysis of the coverage of La Nación and Clarín reveals the construction of Argentinean-Jews as “others,” a group different from the rest of Argentines. In this case, the Argentinean-Jews are also constructed as foreigners living in Argentina. Moreover, they are depicted as commanding an independent secret service run and supported by the Israeli army, and are reputed to possess influence and power capable of pressuring Argentina’s government. In other words, they represent a threat to Argentina. The representation of the Argentinean-Jews as Israelis is established through the repeated portrayal of the bombings against the Israeli embassy and AMIA as “against the same community.” Although the main point in common between the two attacks is that both were allegedly perpetrated by using car-bombs, the portrayal extends these similarities. Since the attack is “against the same community,” Argentinean-Jews are rendered indistinguishable from Israelis. In this way,

the Argentinean-Jewish community is symbolically expelled from Argentina through its representation as a non-Argentinean group. After the attack, the Argentinean-Jews continue to be portrayed as a foreign group.

This is furthered by the depiction of Israeli authorities as representatives of the Argentinean-Jewish community. Clarín and La Nación present their readers with a reconstruction of the bombing as an event primarily concerning Israel. Burdens associated with the attack against AMIA are borne, assimilated by Argentinean-Jews, then disowned by the rest of Argentinean society. In other words, the terrorist act and the responsibilities it carries are not accepted as Argentinean. In this way, the expulsion of the Argentinean-Jews from Argentinean society is symbolically carried out.

The burden, unknowingly assumed by Argentinean-Jews, becomes the dynamic source of a series of “secondary effects.” For example, the Argentinean-Jewish community’s designation as the sole target of the attack generates a situation in which this community is expected to assume responsibility for solving the case. If the Argentinean community as a whole were perceived as the target of the attack, then the Argentinean people would share interest in solving the case. In addition, there is the perception that the attack is a non-Argentinean problem. As an extension of the Middle Eastern conflict, the bombing is a problem external to Argentina. In consequence, the search for and apprehension of the perpetrators becomes the responsibility of the Argentinean-Jewish community and its portrayed representatives, the Israeli authorities.

2. Variations in the Construction and Re-presentations of “The Jewish”

La Nación and Clarín’s representation of Argentinean-Jews remained constant during the period covered in this study. Though the two newspapers may represent different perspectives among Argentines, they construct the “Jewish” in the same ways. La Nación, for example, represents the “elite” press while Clarín represents the “popular” press. La Nación is the “agenda-setting” newspaper of Argentina, more conservative than Clarín and appealing to upper-class segments of the market. Clarín, on the other hand, appeals to a cross section of the class structure. It appears as if ideas and opinions about the “Jewish” are so deeply interwoven in Argentina’s culture that they permeate it transcending the alleged differences between these two newspapers. Argentinean-Jews are consistently portrayed as the sole target of the attack, degraded, defined as foreigners and as a latent threat to Argentina.

Other viewpoints are extremely scarce and exceptional. Though journalists such as Lanata, Goldman and Salinas write books supporting the hypothesis that AMIA’s bombing had a different motivation, their perspective constitutes an exception. The investigation’s failure and the lack of judicial certainty concerning the identity of the perpetrators reinforce earlier perceptions of the attack as targeting Jews only. Argentinean-Jews are constantly depicted as a powerful, unified group acting simultaneously in different nations. The depiction of U.S. Jews jeopardizing President Menem’s trip to the United States reinforces the construction of the “Jewish” as a threat to Argentina’s international image.

The Jewishness of the Argentinean-Jews erases their Argentinean identity. The “Jewish” represents a threat to the government and to the country’s dominant Catholic

culture. In the same vein, Argentinean-Jews are constantly portrayed as foreigners or Israel's agents in Argentina. The Argentinean-Jews become a dual danger, a threat and "the" target of terrorism. They are inherently dangerous and also dangerous to be around. In this sense, their intervention in Argentina's public discourse will hardly be conceived as a contribution to Argentinean society.

3. Contributions and Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis contributes to mass communication theory and research. It also contributes to the field of cultural studies, and representation of minority religious groups in particular. Through the analysis of everyday texts such as the news stories in daily newspapers, particular systems of meanings are revealed. This study unveils ways in which a subgroup within Argentina's society is re-presented and constructed in two major newspapers.

Textual analysis has been the appropriate methodology to use in the study. It allowed me to work with the subtleties present in the texts that would not have been manageable if using other text-based methodologies (i.e. content analysis). Textual analysis remains a useful methodology to approach the study of different cultures such as the Latin American cultures.

Most of the existing research on mass communication and international communication focuses on studying "industrialized societies." More research should be conducted on Latin American countries and about their issues to promote a better understanding of national and regional challenges.

4. Argentina, Argentinean-Jews and the Media

Argentina is going through the longest and deepest crisis of its young history. This crisis is as economic as it is social. Argentina's present heavily contrasts that of four decades ago, when the country was among the tenth strongest economies worldwide. Nowadays, the only thing that is stable in Argentina is crisis itself. Argentineans distrust public institutions due to high levels of corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency. Consequently, chronic economic recession, increasing unemployment and growing crime have become keynotes in Argentineans' everyday conversations. This crisis is deeply affecting the country, destroying social structures, challenging traditional values and forcing the emigration of younger generations in search of better opportunities. However, and most importantly, the crisis also represents an opportunity to incorporate different and new social actors in a much-needed process of renovation. What Argentineans construct during this period of crisis will form the basis for the country's socioeconomic resurgence. Minority groups that have not been traditionally allowed to participate in Argentina's public discourse should be incorporated to the efforts to reconstruct the country. While Argentinean-Jews remain portrayed as suspicious foreigners they will not be welcomed to participate in this re-construction.

Dominant discourses in Argentina reinforce a status quo whose time has past; however, they remain deeply interwoven in the culture and are difficult to perceive and challenge. Sporadic positive images of Jews do not challenge the effects of decades of negative stereotypes in the mass culture, nor do they challenge a society caught up in the difference between "us" and "the other."

Journalists and editors can choose to perpetuate or challenge negative stereotypes present in the dominant culture. The media have an enormous power to influence Argentina's discourse. By representing the different groups acting within Argentina, news stories can empower, challenge or render helpless these different social actors.

In the case of AMIA's bombing, the probabilities of solving this case are going to continue being diminished until the Argentinean media treat it as an Argentinean problem. In the meantime, those who see themselves as victims, either Jewish or non-Jewish, are waiting for justice.

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