

## **Sinister Forces, Goons, and Fanatics: Metaphors of Blame in News Coverage of Church Bombings in India**

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### **Abstract**

Religious clashes, such as those in Ireland and the Middle East, can precipitate violence. This was the case in 2000 when a series of bombings took place in Southern India's Catholic churches. Media reports and explanations of such events vary greatly, but what is consistent is the media's use of framing devices to construct stories for readers and viewers. Using data from two prominent Indian newspapers, we employed a metaphoric analysis to explore attribution of responsibility in stories on the church bombings. We identified metaphors associated with four tenors: the responsible parties, their actions, the results, and the response to accusations. In this ambiguous context, the metaphors played on human fears and vulnerabilities.

When religious beliefs clash, violence can occur, as has been the case in Ireland and the Middle East for example. How the media report and explain these events varies greatly. One such wave of violence occurred in 2000 when Southern India experienced a sequence of bombings of Catholic churches.

Based on the long history of harmonious relations between India's Hindu majority and Catholic minority, the attacks on Catholic property were highly unusual. Thus, the Indian media reported the information almost daily through newspaper, magazine, and television coverage. The stories depicted not only bombings of Catholic churches, but also the subsequent community protests that resulted in damage to public and private property.

Furthermore, the church bombings were ambiguous because they deviated from the previous pattern of Hindu-Muslim conflagrations. When the media are confronted with ambiguous situations, reporting the news becomes more challenging. Often, the circumstances are highly fluid, resisting neat resolutions (Entman, 2004).

For this research study, we conducted a metaphoric analysis to better understand the media description of ongoing events in India. Metaphors are a rich source of data for examining the significant symbols in a body of discourse. Specifically, we analyzed the metaphors in coverage by two leading Indian newspapers. This approach has the potential to inform our understanding of how the media shape perceptions of major news events.

We begin by summarizing the background of the religious violence in India. We then review the literature on metaphors and framing. After describing the methodology, we report our research results. The conclusion discusses the findings and their implications.

### **Violence against Catholics**

In post-independence India, religious stirrings have been common, even to the extent of lethal clashes between members of Muslim and Hindu groups. However, in recent times, a new religious violence flared up—attacks on the Catholic minority in India. Catholics comprise only 2.3% of the Indian population. Other religious minorities include: Sikhs who make up 2% of the population, other religious groups at 3.7%, and Muslims at 12%. The dominant religious group is the Hindus, who comprise 82% of India's population (Census of India as cited in Varshney, 2002). It was against this backdrop that the violent attacks on Catholics in India started. In 1998, a nun was raped and two Catholics were murdered in northern India.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the church bombings that serve as the focal point of this article rocked the southern part of India. At least six churches were bombed in the southern states of Goa, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

The media pointed their reporting fingers at several groups for the violence against the Catholics. But the basis for the rage seems to be non-acceptance of religious diversity by the Hindu fundamentalists and the increasing missionary activity by Catholics. An example of this interplay is the arrest of Dara Singh, who was convicted for the murder of an Australian missionary, Graham Staines, and his children. Singh allegedly committed these murders because he believed that religious conversions were threatening Hinduism (Shourie, 2000). It is not known if Dara Singh was a Hindu nationalist. But one tenet of that philosophy is opposition to Catholic missionary efforts.

Missionary endeavors in India have provoked discussion for some time, but recently these enterprises have prompted more negative responses. Leaders of one Hindu fundamentalist group, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), declared in press releases that “the Pope's declarations at the Asia Bishops' Conference that the whole of Asia be converted to Christian faith clearly exposed the Catholic agenda” (“VHP for Probe,” 2000, p. 7).

An early Hindu nationalist, Savarkar, felt very strongly about other religions. In the 1920s, he presented the Hindu fundamentalist ideology. Arguing that Christians and Muslims cannot be regarded as Hindus because their Holy Land is not India, he said:

Their Holy land is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin. Their love is divided. (Savarkar, 1989, p. 113)

These allegiances to foreign ideas are very disturbing to the Hindu fundamentalist groups, who believe that India is Hindustan, land of Hindus. One such group, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party, was in power during the time of the church bombings in 2000. BJP is the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS, which was founded in 1925, is a nationalist, right wing organization that has chapters throughout all parts of India (Varshney, 2002).

Two other Hindu fundamentalist organizations are the previously mentioned VHP and their militaristic youth faction, Bajrang Dal. These and the other aforementioned groups are united under the term Sangh Parivar, which means joint family. The main philosophy of the groups is “India is Hindu and Hindu is India.” Not surprisingly, the Sangh Parivar believes that those persons in the 20% of the population who are not Hindu are not Indian. “Arguing that India's minorities are anti-national, pampered and aggressive, the Sangh Parivar violently advocated the transformation of secular India into a Hindu state, with minimal minority rights” (Pocha, 2002, p. 71).

The violent events worked to upset the existing communal understandings in India between Hindus and the Christian minority. The bombings raised great uncertainty, not only about the meaning of the immediate events and who was behind them, but also the long-term ramifications for Indian society. These kinds of issues, in part, understandably prompted widespread media attention.

### **Framing and Metaphor**

People frame events to make sense of the world around them. The framing process highlights what the individual considers to be the most meaningful aspects of a situation and thereby displays the person's understanding or definition of the situation (Gitlin, 1980). "Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese, 2001, p. 11). Framing imposes order on experience that is both personal and cultural. A frame structures thought and primes affect, thus giving the individual a meaningful basis for action.

One of the aspects of framing most often investigated is the frames created by journalists. Media framing establishes "the essence" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143) of a news story. "Media frames are persistent patterns ... of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Media frames enable a coherent understanding of a news event, because they call up larger structures of social meaning such as myths, narratives, and metaphors that are widely shared within a culture (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

One widely applied perspective categorizes media frames as episodic or thematic (Iyengar, 1991). Like exemplars, episodic frames focus on one specific event in isolation as an illustration of a phenomenon or issue (Coleman & Thorson, 2002). For example, a news story might use exemplars such as "the plight of a homeless person or a teenage drug user, the bombing of an airliner, or an attempted murder" (Iyengar, 1991, p. 14). Thematic frames, on the other hand, are more analytical and provide a general contextual background. According to Iyengar (1991):

The thematic frame ... takes the form of a "takeout," or "backgrounder," report directed at general outcomes or conditions. Examples of thematic coverage include reports on changes in government welfare expenditures, [or] congressional debates over the funding of employment training programs. (p. 14)

The current study extends a previous analysis of thematic and episodic media framing of the church bombings in India. The study by D'Silva, Berman, Esrock, Hart, and Leichty (2005) found that the bombing incidents were primarily interpreted episodically. The researchers also found that most of the stories discussed responsibility for the bombings. Past research has found that in news stories dealing with violent incidents such attribution of blame is a common story element (Rojecki, 2005). D'Silva et al. (2005) reasoned that stories that were framed episodically would be less prone to attribute responsibility for the bombings because they lacked a wider contextualization of the bombing events. However, there was no relationship between how the story was framed and whether responsibility was attributed (D'Silva et al., 2005).

The episodic/thematic coding of the church bombing coverage was an incomplete analysis of media framing because it did not examine the specific symbolic elements that were employed to frame the news. If frames are indeed socially shared symbolic structures to assist in the process of constructing meaning (Reese, 2001), then an analysis of media framing

must directly examine the symbolic aspects of the news stories. Indeed, some researchers argue that frame analysis should begin by identifying the symbolic vehicles by which a news event is framed (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

### **Metaphors as Framing Devices**

Metaphor is a particularly important framing device because it is fundamental to human understanding and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors use one (or more) discrete, linguistic symbol to present an interpretation of a particular event or experience. Thus metaphors are fundamental to processing in human cognition because the mind can only grasp something unfamiliar by relating it to something that is already known (Gill & Whedbee, 1997). Metaphoric language constructs social reality by using the familiar to link to something that is unfamiliar (Black, 1962).

Metaphors function based on the interaction of two parts. The tenor is the principle subject or focus, and the linguistic symbol(s) used to describe it is (are) the vehicle(s) (Richards, 1936). Typically, a tenor and vehicle reference very different kinds of experience (Foss, 1996) but share a common characteristic or commonplace (Black, 1962), which organizes a unique view of the tenor. For example, "my roommate is a pig" contains "roommate" as the tenor and "pig" as the vehicle. There are no obvious connections between a co-inhabitant in a living arrangement and swine, but "pig" informs our understanding of the roommate as sloppy and dirty (Foss, 1996).

The current study examined the metaphors used to ascribe blame for the church bombings. Toward this goal, we used the rhetorical approach of metaphoric criticism. In metaphoric criticism, metaphors become the unit of analysis with the objective of better understanding how they systematically function to support a particular perspective. Metaphoric criticism examines metaphor as a process by which language is used to apprehend reality, creating a meaningful experience or phenomenon (Ivie, 1982; Osborn & Ehninger, 1962).

Metaphoric analysis was considered to be particularly appropriate because, as previously noted, the bombings represented an unfamiliar and disquieting set of events in the life of the Christian minority in India. To understand this potential new threat to communal peace, various spokespersons and journalists would likely try out a variety of metaphors to account for and explain these events. Indeed, unfamiliar and ambiguous events are the most likely to be framed in purposeful and contested ways (Entman, 2004). Therefore, events such as the church bombings provide a valuable window for exploring how media framing devices emerge and are established. Thus, our primary research question became:

How was the attribution of responsibility for the Indian church bombings symbolized through the use of metaphors?

### **Methods**

While in India at the time of these events, one of the authors collected news stories on the church bombings. This study employs articles from two major Indian newspapers, *The New Indian Express* (which published 51 stories) and *The Times of India* (which published 38 stories). These 89 news stories appeared during a 39-day period, June 6 to July 15, 2000.<sup>2</sup> India's largest English-language daily is *The Times of India*, which is published in six cities and has a circulation of 656,000. *The New Indian Express*, part of *The Indian Express* group,

is published in 17 cities with a daily circulation of 519,000 and covers South India (U.S. Library of Congress, n.d.).

For the rhetorical analysis, we first identified images or “vehicles” (Richards, 1936) associated with the primary referent, attribution of responsibility, and then coded for the vehicles associated with three other aspects of the church bombings (see Results). For each referent, we reviewed the vehicles for common interpretations and grouped them accordingly. Finally, from these metaphor groups we looked for an emergent attitude toward the church bombings, as expressed by the articles in the two newspapers.

### Results

Articles from both newspapers frequently employed metaphors in their coverage of these church bombings. From across the articles, we identified metaphors associated with four tenors (or referents): the responsible parties, their actions, the results, and the response to accusations.

#### The Responsible Parties

Among the metaphors associated with the responsible parties, we identified three categories: invaders, a nefarious faction, and general menace to society. In the first category, an otherwise peaceful and tolerant society was described as disrupted by invaders, either (1) an unknown force, sometimes with extra-human qualities, or (2) insidious foreigners. Unknown, “communal forces” (Mulackal, 2000, p. 6) were named in both papers but the *Times of India* elaborated on “unnamed sinister hidden forces” (“Under Fire,” 2000, p. 1) that took on extra-human qualities. For example, these forces were described as seeping up from the ground (e.g., “the percolation of the attacks on the churches from the north to south,” [Nandagopal, 2000, p. 6]). The invading element was slow and steady, a “dangerous trend that is creeping into the state” (Nandagopal, p. 6). It even took the form of a far-reaching flame: “The embers that claimed the Staines family [Graham Staines, the Australian missionary] had also deeply seared the national conscience” (“No Minor,” 2000, p. 8).

When attribution was made to foreign invaders, the image most often depicted was the general “hand of foreign powers” (“BJP Calls For,” 2000, p. 9) but sometimes it contained specifics (e.g., “the handiwork of Pakistan” [“Under Fire,” 2000, p. 1] or its secret police, the ISI). But “foreign invaders” was also a contested metaphor. It not only symbolized the responsible party, it was also part of a metaphor cluster (two or more metaphors that share a vehicle or referent, Jamieson, 1980) about deflecting blame. In one metaphor, “foreign elements” was a way of drawing attention away from the “real” culprits inside the country, specifically an extremist Hindu faction within India, the Sangh Parivar. Hence the Prime Minister warned against “blaming the ubiquitous foreign hand” (“Behind the Blast,” 2000, p. 12) for the actions of an internal group. In another metaphor, when “foreign elements” was invoked by the ISI (Pakistani special police), it was considered an effort to deflect blame from themselves and make the Sangh Pariva look guilty. BJP floor leader Reddy “appealed to political parties not to *fall into the trap of the ISI activities*’ and blame the Sangh Parivar” (Rao, 2000, p. 8).

In addition to the invaders category, the responsible party was described as a nefarious faction—extremists far from India’s mainstream. The Archbishop of Delhi said, “A few fanatics are causing all the damage” (Kutty, 2000, p. 12). A politician called them “a lunatic fringe” (“Hubli Blast,” 2000, p. 1). They were frequently labeled “fundamentalists,”

("Blasts Leave," 2000, p. 8), depicting an image of persons with an extreme set of beliefs, often linked to a religious group, such as "Hindu fanatics ... in small towns" (Gurumurthy, 2000, p. 2). By inference the criminals were considered a fringe organization. It was pointed out that the country's two main religious groups were not involved: "There has not been a single instance of any rioting between the two communities (Hindus and Christians) to date" (Punj, 2000, p. 5).

In the last of the metaphor categories dealing with accountability for the violence, the responsible party was described as a general menace to the social order. The most frequent metaphors were "miscreants" ("Curfew," 2000, p. 12), "culprits" ("Police," 2000, p. 2), or "mischief makers" ("No Breakthrough," 2000, p. 3). A sociologist labeled a militaristic-leaning Hindu group, the Bajrang Dal-VHP, "goons" who were "usurping the role of the army" (Khan, 2000, p. 8). They also were referred to in vague terms as a "hostile agency" ("AP Police," 2000, p. 6) or "organization" ("Blast Survivor," 2000, p. 1). Related to the first vehicle category of an invader with amorphous qualities, the criminals also were described as "the mystery behind the bomb blasts" ("Kharge," 2000, p. 1).

### The Actions

The actions of the responsible parties were characterized by two categories of metaphors: an orchestrated plan and unconnected episodes of violence. The "well-orchestrated plan" metaphor was the one far more frequently used. Politicians, religious leaders, the news services, and editorial writers all invoked this metaphor. In comparison, the unconnected episodes vehicle was invoked, interestingly, by clergy and Christian religious leaders, as well as politicians and news services. The former metaphor may have more satisfactorily filled the need for attribution and sense making.

The well-crafted plan category had a number of varieties, but the most dominant metaphor was a well-executed action based on a discernable strategy. The attacks were considered "orchestrated" ("Handiwork," 2000, p. 7), a "pattern" ("No Minor," 2000, p. 8), "a series" ("All-party," 2000, p. 9) or they seemed planned by evidence that they were escalating "increasing attacks on the community" ("Christians Protest," 2000, p. 5). Furthermore, the plan had a strategy, "a systematic attempt at harassing the minorities" ("Govt Will," 2000, p. 2), complete with publicity, "the anti-Christian propaganda and attacks" (Philip, 2000, p. 3). Depicting these behaviors almost as a campaign, *The New Indian Express* wrote that "addressing the problem would also mean addressing the tirade of anti-Christian rhetoric" ("Roman," 2000, p. 8).

The well-crafted plan metaphor frequently morphed into a "political conspiracy" ("We Are," 2000, p. 5) rendition. It was this metaphor in particular that carried with it a sense of higher menace involved in the bombings. More than an organized effort, the political version of the well-crafted plan metaphor depicted a sinister plot with power-based motives. The Chief Minister of Bangalore flatly stated, [Saturday's bomb explosions are a] "conspiracy woven in Karnataka to give the government a bad name" ("Hubli Blast," 2000, p. 1). This image of politically motivated violence seemed to imply theories such as: "The country's pluralistic heritage is sought to be destroyed" (Nayar, 2000, p. 6). A burrowing political influence was out to topple a delicately balanced pluralism.

The counterpart to the "well-crafted plan" metaphor was the idea of unconnected episodes, described as "different incidents of violence" ("Christians Present," 2000, p. 2) and "only isolated acts" ("Attacks," 2000, p. 1). The episodes were sometimes thought of as

devoid of a motive or conspiracy element: The Prime Minister stated, “there is no organized campaign against them [the Christian minority]” (“Attacks,” p. 1). Notably, when a Catholic priest was robbed and murdered while riding his motorcycle—an incident that could have easily been attributed to the wave of violence—a fellow priest labeled the incident “a usual case of robbery and murder without any communal motive” (Prasad, 2000, p. 9).

This metaphor of “unconnected episodes” was another site of contested meanings. There were charges that invoking this idea actually served as a cloak, hiding an organized, planned effort against the Christian minority. As stated in an editorial, “Even the home ministry is no longer taking refuge ... in the ‘sporadic crime without motives’ that has been its fig leaf for quite some time now” (“No Minor,” 2000, p. 8). “Unconnected episodes” was thus joined with another vehicle, the fig leaf imagery, to convey the new tenor or meaning of deception about the nature of the attacks.

### **The Results**

The metaphors associated with the third tenor or referent, the results of the bombing, mainly depicted chaos and human suffering: The bombings created “havoc” (“Govt Will,” 2000, p. 2) and brought “atrocities against Dalits and religious minorities” (“Eyewitness,” 2000, p. 9). The destruction was described as widespread with “violence ... all over the country” (“Christians Present,” 2000, p. 2). And the outcomes were more than physical; they produced a virus-like effect, harming the psyche of the citizens, creating “a fear-psychosis among the minorities” (“Police Inching,” 2000, p. 2) and a “tension gripped” (“Temples Attacked,” 2000, p. 1) atmosphere. A sense of disaffection “spread ... among the communities” (Naidu, 2000, p. 2).

### **Response to Accusations**

The topic of the fourth tenor or referent was the response of groups accused of carrying out the bombings. This provided a second case of contested metaphors. The accused described their accusers with metaphors that echoed the images used to depict the parties responsible for the bombings, such as the accusers “spread[ing] ill will and hatred towards another community” (“Probe,” 2000, p. 1) and making an effort to “communalize the atmosphere” (“No Breakthrough,” 2000, p. 3). In describing the action of their accusers, the accused invoked metaphors from the results of the bombing; the accusers were responsible for tearing the peaceful fabric of Indian society. Their actions were willful and strategic—“deliberate branding” (“RSS,” 2000, p. 9)—similar to the “well coordinated plan” metaphors used to describe the responsible party. Finally the accusers attacked the credibility of the news reports about them, calling them “false and fabricated news” (“RSS,” p. 9), an echo of the way that the actions of the bombers were characterized as a conspiracy.

As part of their response, the accused publicly established a standard for defending themselves in the future: “No one, not even the Prime Minister, should bow before the Pope” (Gupta, 2000, p. 3). Thus the image of standing with self-assurance, even before the highest in the Catholic hierarchy, became the goal of the accused factions to clear their names.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Mass media framing helps to create the lens by which many citizens view the world around them. Our hopes and dreams, anxieties and fears, are at least partially shaped by the predominating patterns of emphasis in media news stories. In an increasingly tumultuous time

around the globe, our study continues the process of examining how media shape human perceptions about whom or what to blame for violent incidents.

A previous quantitative analysis of the data in this study (D'Silva et al., 2005) revealed that most of the news stories about the church bombings in Southern India tended to be episodic (61.8%), rather than thematic (38.2%) in nature. That is, the majority of the stories reported on specific incidents instead of providing contextual and historical information. Despite the preponderance of episodic reporting, most news accounts (86.9%) assigned blame (D'Silva et al., 2005). Given these findings, we undertook the metaphoric analysis reported here to determine the vehicles associated with the bombings and the assignments of responsibility.

In both of the newspapers analyzed, the church bombings received extensive coverage (i.e., nearly 90 stories in just over a one month period in 2000). Throughout this coverage, there was considerable conjecture regarding the culprits and their motives. Across the newspaper coverage, we found four categories of metaphors employed to assign blame or responsibility.

Together, the metaphors created a distinctive view. The responsible party was described as an invader, outside of the country's mainstream, with images of an amorphous element, a foreign interest, or an outlying and dangerously menacing faction. "Foreign invaders" was also a contested metaphor. They were portrayed as a foil for the real criminals within India's borders. The criminals' actions, although sometimes depicted as unrelated incidents, were mostly described as a well-crafted plan, heightening the sense of threat and menace to the Christian minority. The bombings' results quickly generated repeat images, creating a sense of a destructive pattern across Southern India.

There were psychological effects as well. The metaphors helped to breed an environment of fear that moved throughout the region as if it were contagious. And if this weren't enough, false accusations swirled around minority groups, producing the same effect as the actual violence: a growing mistrust among the religions and ethnicities. The accused defended themselves using metaphors invoked from the bombings. They said that their accusers had conspired with fabricated information to disrupt the peace. From the combination of these vehicles emerges a metaphorical concept for the attribution of responsibility and the results of the attacks. The concept portrays an intruder who orchestrated a devastating wave of attacks and created a virus-like sense of fear and mistrust with symptoms of contested meanings and accusations. Further, the violent incidents were portrayed as weakening the social fabric of India, a country that prided itself on communal co-existence.

Overwhelmingly, these metaphors played on human vulnerabilities. For example, the stories speculated about conspiracies, invaders, and menacing agents. Additional negative labels such as fanatics, lunatic fringe, and goons were employed to describe the perpetrators. Thus, although perhaps quelling some fears by pointing to the alleged guilty parties, even when they were unknown, these news stories may have raised more questions and fears in citizens by implying that negative forces could rather easily carry out such acts.

Overall, the robustness of these metaphors speaks to the human tendency to find blame or attempt to assign causality and responsibility (Lakoff, & Johnson, 1980). Additionally, these findings illustrate the expectations of consumers of media products—or the degree to which journalists perceive such expectations. In other words, readers and viewers want answers—and often they want them in simple, straightforward accounts. Surely

the story behind these bombings is more complex than the public record that emerges in these newspaper accounts. Journalists conform to allotted space, expected approaches (commonly accepted frames and known metaphors, for example), and assumed consumer preferences; the result is a simplification and speculation of causes that, though perhaps easily comprehensible to the reader, does not adequately represent the complexity of the situation or the actions involved.

Our study of metaphoric framing of an ambiguous news event makes several contributions to the literature. Entman (2004) hypothesized that ambiguous events were much more likely to be contested than events that are either congruent or incongruent with existing schema. Events that are congruent with existing schema tend to be coded with relative ease, requiring little attention or thought. Events that are incongruent with existing schema will tend to be ignored or blocked. The church bombings fit in the category of ambiguous events—ones that were out of the ordinary but could not be blocked or suppressed. We believe that this is why metaphoric framing of events was highly contested, some of the items reaching a kind of resolution or increasing consensus over time, but others not.

The first point of ambiguity was whether the bombing attacks were unconnected events or a systematic campaign. As the press coverage unfolded, there was an emerging consensus that the events were part of a systematic campaign. However, the attribution of responsibility for the bombings remained highly contested throughout. Hindu nationalist-aligned organizations tended to see a foreign hand at work, whereas other parties were more likely to point the accusatory finger of blame at Hindu organizations themselves. Indeed, invoking the "foreign hand" was denounced as an easy attempt to divert attention, and those who accused Hindu nationalist organizations were accused of opportunistic attempts to inflame tensions between the Christian and Hindu communities that have long claimed a peaceful coexistence.

And therein lies another point of ambiguity. Even though anti-Christian rhetoric was part of the Hindutva philosophy, anti-Christian violence was extremely rare. Anti-Muslim sentiment, however, was clearly visible in the communal tension and Hindu-Muslim riots in different parts of India. It is not surprising that in assigning blame for the bombings, Pakistan, generally regarded as a Muslim country, figured quite prominently.

Whether the attribution of responsibility was made to a foreign cause or to a conspiratorial deviant minority, in each case it was metaphorically dissociated from Indian society as a whole. Indeed, the ambiguity of the bombing events seemed to create an anxiety that was invoked in the framing metaphors themselves; something strange, threatening, insidious, and inspiring dread.

Our analysis is descriptive and involves one series of events in a specific timeframe in one country. However, it begins to illustrate how media framing and, more specifically, the use of metaphors ascribe blame in news stories. Through future research investigating media framing and metaphor use, we are hopeful that a clearer understanding of the assignment and interpretation of blame will result. As dynamic societies and the surrounding world become more complex and interlinked, developing such an understanding seems especially vital.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Shourie (2000), however, contends that some of these incidents were misrepresentations and fabrications.

<sup>2</sup> Copies of the articles can be obtained from the second author.

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