City Under Siege: Narrating Mumbai Through Non-Stop Capture

By Yasmin Ibrahim

Abstract

When Mumbai became the target of terror in the 26/11 attack in 2008, the events in that city, like other tragic global events in recent years, were narrated through new media platforms. The increasing convergence of technologies and mobile telephony enabled new forms of gaze and the ability to bear witness through these new media technologies. The non-stop capture of events through recording equipment embedded in mobile phones and their connectivity to the World Wide Web constructed Mumbai through civilian narratives and images, and this phenomenon was described as the "coming of age of Twitter". Conversely the event raised fundamental questions about the role of broadcasting and protocols in live telecasts of terrorist attacks which have consequences for national security. In narrating the city through the civilian gaze and traditional media the spectacle of suffering in postmodernity becomes an open-ended exercise where the city is both a canvas for showcasing the risks of modernity and new forms of visibilities which emerge from social media and the "act of sharing" content on global platforms.

Keywords: Social media, modernity, terrorism, India

Introduction

The attack on Mumbai on the 26th of November 2008 has been described as India's very own 9/11 whilst other press headlines have termed the 60-hour-long siege of the city as nothing short of "the longest running horror show" (Khallur 2008). The terror attack which struck at the heart of the financial and tourist centre claimed at least 172 lives whilst wounding 250 in a series of gun and grenade attacks. A group called Deccan Mujahedeen[1] claimed responsibility for the attack which targeted multiple sites simultaneously including hotels, a Jewish Chabad centre, a café which was popular with foreigners, hospitals and a railway station. Mumbai, after the terror attacks in December 2008, was narrated as a "bleeding city" where hundreds "lit candles to remember the dead and to help deal with the trauma the city suffered" (Dodd 2008).

Suffering, terror and trauma in the urban space, and the non-stop consumption of mediated suffering have become dominant features of postmodernity. Media narratives of suffering have the potential to both personalize and de-personalize suffering to their audiences and in the process they can re-frame proximity and distance, our sense of connection and disconnection as well as temporality. The audience's ability to understand suffering as a phenomenon enacted on a global stage and the media's ability to invite moral gaze and engagement is a recurring phenomenon in postmodernity. The city in postmodern memory becomes a backdrop for terror where the unexpected and volatile can unfold before a global audience. The city since the turbulence of 9/11 in America represents an instable space which contradicts the order, stability and security it is supposed to impose through its form and structure.

Iconic landscapes of a city often function as a symbol of that city. Drawing parallels with 9/11, the Rand study (2009:11) on the 2008 Mumbai attack reiterates that the "the attacks on landmark properties amplified the psychological impact". Additionally, the selection of multiple targets – Americans, Britons and Jews, as well as Indians _ suggests that the terrorists intended the attack to serve multiple objectives that extend beyond the terrorists' previous focus on Kashmir and India and to globalise their struggle and illuminate it through international media coverage (Rand Corporation 2009). These religious, political and cultural values were chosen in order to make a statement. According to the Indian Subcontinent Practice of Risk Advisory, the well-planned operations were carried out with an anti-Western aim with the "deliberate selection" of foreign hostages (The Economic Times 28/11/2008).

The attacks on Mumbai extends tropes of visible trauma inflicted on urban spaces since the iconic images of destruction witnessed by the world with the 9/11 attacks in America. Witnessing trauma in urban spaces through live coverage and instant updates constructs trauma as a space of global spectacle where trauma in urbanity has become a television genre that constructs cities as vulnerable targets

for both terror and spectacle. It reiterates Ulrich Beck's (1992) risk analyses that the events of distant and disconnected places can have consequences in our back-yards where risk is not contained or responsive to the boundaries of the nation state. The anti-Western and anti-Jewish sentiments of the attackers in Mumbai again brought to fore the vulnerabilities of an interconnected world where chaos and carnage can explode without warning in urban cities and spaces of spatial power.

Zygmunt Bauman (2006), in *Liquid Fear,* terms it "negative globalization" where "there is nothing the others do or can't do of which we may be sure that it won't affect our prospects, chances and dreams" (99). He polemically asserts that "we are all in danger, and we are all dangers to each other and there are only three roles to play – perpetrators, victims and collateral casualties" (206:99). Bauman misses out the fourth role the rest of humanity play which is the role of the post-modern spectator who bears witness to mediated trauma and suffering. The live-ness and immediacy of trauma captured through broadcasting and social media (global platforms such as the Internet) seek to democratise suffering and equally construct event creation as an open-ended phenomenon where accuracy of report-ing and authenticity of reporting (or witnessing) may be compromised for imme-diacy characterised by our need to share and locate information in public net-works.

During the 60-hour siege of Mumbai, many of the eyewitness accounts emerged from social media including social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. The explosion of reports in new media networks and the narration of terror as it emerged prompted many media critics to describe it as a "social experimenta-tion" for new media and a coming of age for these new forms of media (See Heussner 2008; D'Amour 2008; Beaumont 2008; Lewis 2008). The event also became a crisis point for traditional broadcasting where there was a public contro-versy over the reporting of the event. The broadcasting media was charged with irresponsible and sensationalist reporting where each network had succumbed to "market tyranny" by trying to outdo each other with exclusives and inside reports without exercising a sense of self-restraint or respect for those killed in these at-tacks. The live reporting by broadcast media was also seen as compromising the national security of the nation and anti-Pakistan sentiments amongst the general public.

Urban studies on Mumbai have profiled the different social and economic prob-lems in the city including the issues of housing, infrastructure, development, glob-alisation, governance, the provision of social amenities, land use and environ-mental issues (See Tiwari et al. 1999; Mehta 2005; Kamini et al. 2006; Weinstein 2008). Whilst technology has a role to play in both enabling better mobility as well as social and economic divides in the city, this paper departs from conven-tional urban studies perspectives to construct the city through an act of terrorism

where the role of technology is both seminal in creating communion and fissure in the city.

This paper examines the ways in which the trauma of Mumbai was captured, constructed and narrated during the attack. In particular it profiles how eyewitness accounts and the civilian gaze constructed the city as the terrorist attacks and the ways in which the local and global community related to the narratives of suffering. Equally, the paper explores how the mainstream broadcast media came under intense criticism and scrutiny after the incident. The public and political backlash against the coverage of terror in the city raised the need to install new protocols in the reporting of terrorism or events which can compromise the national security of the country and the rescue operations of the authorities.

Narrating the City of Mumbai

The city of Mumbai is a financial as well as a tourist centre but more importantly it is a dream factory where its film industry provides escapism from harsh reality for millions of ordinary citizens. In recent years Mumbai has been frequently targeted by terrorist attacks blamed on Islamic extremists and these have included a series of bombings in July 2007 that killed 187 people (Fox News 26/11/ 2008). In the 1993 Mumbai attack 257 died in 13 bomb blasts across the city. The city of Mumbai is not unused to terror. Terror in the urban space is undeniably a space of spectacle and often it becomes a media event where television plays a central role. The act of bearing witness to global events through the broadcasting space has been well documented in media literature (see Dayan & Katz 1992; Scannell 1989). In post-modernity the "media event" captures the ability of the media to construct events, reframe temporality and to consolidate the construction of memory through its televisual spectacle. In our recent past, the new media has become inextricably conjoined with traditional media to construct the media event. The media event, whether it is the 2004 Tsunami, 9/11, the 7/7 bombings, the War in Iraq or the Saffron Revolution in Mynamar has been increasingly constructed not just through the vantage point of traditional media but through new media platforms. As Jan Roscoe (2004: 363) points out, as "interactive media opportunities have arisen, content is now being produced, delivered and consumed in new ways and content can be delivered across various platforms, utilising television, the internet, mobile phones and digital and interactive screen services". Roscoe argues that instead of our viewing being controlled through the flow of schedules, which Raymond Williams envisaged, it is now clustered around events. In Mumbai, mobile telephony and new media platforms such as Twitter provided new ways to bear witness to the events and to disseminate them to the global community moments into the attack.

When the city came under siege in December 2008, new media provided an insight into events as they unfolded in the city. India ranks as the third top country

in Asia (after Japan and China respectively) and is fourth largest in the world in terms of internet penetration rates (at 7.1%) with 81 million users as of November 2008 (www.internetworldstats.com). In terms of the population of users in Asia Indians account for 12.5%. The majority of users in India tend to be between 19 and 40 and there is a digital divide between urban and rural areas as well as male and female users with the latter only comprising 15%. Significantly, the city of Mumbai has the largest number of Internet users at 3.24 million in 2008 with chatting and social networking sites being very popular amongst these users (www.indiabroadband.net). This high degree of internet penetration and media literacy was important in showcasing the role of social media when simultaneous attacks occurred in the city.

In the Mumbai attacks Twitter in fact became a stream of snippets from observers on the ground with details of casualties, sieges, gunfights and even the suspected name of terrorists (Lewis 2008). It is estimated that around 70 "tweets" or messages tagged under the label of "Mumbai" were posted every five seconds when the news of the tragedy first broke, according to some estimates (Beaumont 2008). These minute- by-minute details included an update of events, calls for help, as well as a dissemination of emergency numbers. In this sense these sites, which emerged hours within the attack, provided the public service of diverting users to vital contact information such as foreign offices and helpline numbers. Within hours Google documents were created containing lists of the injured and killed whilst others solicited blood donors for those injured and needing emergency care.

Beyond informing the immediate and global community of the events in the city, spaces such as Twitter and Facebook provided a means for people to convey their situation to friends and family. Mumbai Help, a blog which updated information on the Mumbai attack, offered to locate people in Bombay for friends outside the city (Bell 2008). Besides Facebook and Twitter, blogs and file-sharing sites provided accounts and images from the ground. These conversations in the new media landscape also provided a signposting function providing the best news reports appearing on the web (Lewis 2008). These reports compiled by new media users got to the news more quickly than the television reports and newspaper websites. In many instances these twitter and blog reports actually questioned the veracity of mainstream media accounts.

In addition to discursive accounts on the internet and those disseminated through mobile telephony, images played an important role in conveying the terror of the attacks. The convergence of technologies and the embedding of recording equipment in mobile phones and the ability to upload images onto the internet from personal mobile recording devices meant that events could be captured as they unfolded. Photos on Flickr uploaded 90 minutes after the attacks revealed the bloodied streets of Mumbai and helped to communicate the gravity of

the situation. Some of these were viewed at least 110,000 times in the next 48 hours (CBS 2008; Lewis 2008).

The ability to convene audiences and communities through real events and to create and share information through such events has become a predominant feature of how we engage with mediated events. A few hours into the attack, a Google map was created to show the location of buildings and landmarks at the centre of the incidents with links to news stories and eyewitness accounts (Beaumont 2008). Similarly a Wikipedia page was created within minutes of the news breaking and updated thousands of times, providing a vast amount of background information often in real time about the attack and these were detailed and corrected as the event unfolded (CBS 2008; Beaumont 2008; Lewis 2008). These different sources of information created connections to other stories by providing url links and as such they provided means to navigate the information that emerged on the nebulous internet. Dedicated blogs were created to update the events in Mumbai and these included the *Metroblog* set up by a group of bloggers based in Mumbai. Blogs became a site for information as well as commemoration and as such functioned as therapeutic devices to deal with trauma and terror and to equally share nostalgic accounts of what the city meant to its citizens. The Mumbai Heroes blog, for example was created to honour the victims of the attack (CBS 2008).

In addition to informing the outside world of terror attacks in Mumbai, Twitter also provided people who were trapped inside the affected hotels during the siege to communicate with the outside world. The hotel guests trapped in the affected hotels logged onto Twitter to find out whether they were under attack and to get an idea of the chaos that had engulfed them. Twitter captured the drama through conversations and information exchanged between people affected by the situation and those who were observing and engaging with the trauma through traditional and new media platforms. Event creation in the new media age is a complex exercise where there is an intricate enmeshing of information between traditional and new media sources. Mainstream media (both local and foreign) such as print and broadcasting used information that occurred on the Internet in their reports. News stations including CNN used video clips sent in from people on the ground in Mumbai to illustrate their reports and many traditional media outlets including broadcasting stations and newspapers monitored Twitter and blogs in compiling their reports (Beaumont 2008).

The Mumbai attacks come in a long line of events in which the new media accounts have helped build a mediated event for the public. The eyewitness accounts and images published on new media platforms have become a vital part in composing the media event. They provide new forms of visibility and civilian narratives which are often conjoined to mainstream media narratives both through the links in web pages and also due to the fact that mainstream media are increasingly using these reports and accounts in their event creation often asking civilians

to send in their reports and photos to construct the event. Twitter, Flickr and other file-sharing sites became places to both bear witness and engage with the event. This invariably contributed to the creation of the "media event" where the rituals of narrating, consuming and engaging have a functionalist Durkheimian objective of creating communion, patriotism and nationalism.

The accounting of both natural and man-made calamities has become an open-ended phenomenon enabled by the convergence of technologies and the embedding of a vast array of capturing and communication features in mobile telephony. This enables the civilian gaze, which maps events through its own vantage points, to become part of event creation and then to contribute to the media event. In contrast to the mainstream media it is difficult to underpin this gaze to questions of authenticity or truth. Just as the photograph has been subjected to long-running debates on the validity of representation, the civilian gaze whether enabled through image or words is a problematic device in representing and corroborating an event. The gathering and exchange of information on new media sites during crises or watershed political events from politically engaged or civic-minded citizens or those who want to partake through conversations is a much more intricate process that cannot completely be addressed by the term "citizen journalism". Social media such as Twitter enable the ability to engage with "imagined communities" during crises and materialise these imagined communities through conversations and the exchange of information. Twitter technology was seen as "coming of age" and described as a "social media experiment in action" (D'Amour 2008) mainly due to the fact that people were drawn to produce, gaze, and disseminate information whilst connected with the rest of humanity within the city and outside during a crisis . New media platforms such as websites and blogs function as memorials and as performance where they provide spaces to partake in the event (Helmers 2001).

Like placing flower bouquets and notes at accident sites and places of commemoration of tragic events, new media spaces enable audiences to participate discursively with events and to watch and read events beyond the "liveness" of the media event on television. Video platforms enable audiences to view video images and footages disembedded from the media narrative. This decontextualization of events from live broadcasts and seamless narratives re-negotiates the media event as both a collective and fragmented experience in postmodernity and in the age of convergence. New media spaces, by enabling the creation of content by audiences, broaden event creation and in the process interactive media platforms double up as therapeutic sites for recovery and individual and communal meaning-making.

Beyond the functionalist paradigms of new media, the insatiable trading of information presented various challenges. These blow-by-blow Twitter accounts traded at a rate of 50-100 posts a minute in a message were nevertheless fragmented and sometimes false (CBS 2008). Valid and inaccurate accounts were thus

strung into streams of conversation and information on the event mirroring both new forms of empowerment and vulnerabilities evident in the ways in which Mumbai was narrated during the attack. One report on the internet claimed that the Indian government was trying to shut down the Twitter streams as people were using to spread news and information. This story was picked up and reported by the BBC without verifying the validity of the report. The BBC came under criticism for its use of live reports from Twitter in its coverage of the attacks, prompting its news editor Steve Herrmann to acknowledge that the corporation would have to take more care in how it uses "lightening fast, unsubstantiated citizen posts from Twitter in future" (Guardian.co.uk 5/12/2005). On the Internet information can spread very quickly and this gives people the opportunity to spread sensitive or compromising information (Bell 2008) without pausing to understand the implications of such publicised information. Equally, with a plethora of information flowing through these new media platforms it is often difficult to discern what information is credible and often there is a trade-off of accuracy for immediacy (Leggio 2008).

Ironically, whilst technology helped communicate the events to a global audience in this instance, mobile telephony also played a crucial role in enabling the perpetrators to execute their trail of terror in Mumbai. According to the Rand Study (2009) the attackers reportedly used cell phones and a satellite phone - both their own and others taken from their victims - to co-ordinate their activities. The report found that the perpetrators also carried Blackberries and communicated with each other during the siege to discuss their manoeuvres. They made contact with the news media via cell phones to make demands in return for the release of their hostages and this led to some confusion in the Indian authorities who believed that they were dealing with a hostage situation, posing further challenges for their tactical response (Rand Study 2009). The role of telephony during the 2008 Mumbai attack was inevitably double-edged, presenting new forms of empowerment and vulnerabilities in accelerated modernity. In the aftermath of the attacks in Mumbai, when the public perceived that the situation was mishandled by the government, much of the urban middle class vented their anger against the government in new media sites including blogs, social networking sites such as Orkut and Facebook, and text messages (Lakshmi 2008). These media also became the platforms in which to raise objections against the traditional media's coverage of the events and to protest against the government. Internet-savvy protestors also turned to social media platforms to organise protests against the government in the aftermath of the attack.

Television "Terror"

With the recurrent emergence of terror in the ordered spaces of the city, the live coverage of terror has become a familiar genre in our contemporary conscious-

ness. Menaheim Blondheim & Tamar Liebes (2002: 271) note that "when major debacles occur, television interrupts its schedule for the live, open-ended 'celebration' of the momentous event, featuring the disaster marathon". This "disaster marathon", according to them, is defined by natural disasters, high-profile accidents such as the failed launch of the *Challenger* space shuttle, or purposive public acts of major violence such as terrorist attacks.

Dayan and Katz's conception of the "media event" (1992: 196-7) captured television's ability to mark an event or moment in history through the interruption of routine broadcasting. The suspension of usual routines to carve a moment in time where the nation convenes over the televisual space evokes both the power of mass media to create events but equally the conceptualisation of national spaces to mourn and commemorate. The medium's predominance in a public event, Blondheim and Liebes (2002:274) argue, should be situated through electronic journalism's adoption of the live coverage format which positions it in an intermediary role as a storyteller, negotiator and movable stage on which the drama is enacted.

Live coverage is a significant aspect of narrating terror in our accelerated modernity where the "liveness" creates both immediacy whilst impressing the interconnectivity with the wider world. Often when terror happens it is a ritual for the world to watch the terror as it unfolds. At one point during the siege TV news channels in South Mumbai were blacked out for forty-five minutes following an order by the Deputy Commissioner of Police and this created more panic and unease amongst the people (Khallur 2008) emphasising our insatiable need to watch events live and without disruption. In the case of the Mumabi attack, the live coverage in constructing the media event became an issue of contention. More significantly, the aftermath of the Mumbai attack proved that the televised "media event" is not an unproblematic device in forging a collective consciousness. The construction and narration of the event became a point of contention, adding to the public's loss of faith in the government.

The live telecast of the attacks was 60 hours long and the extended coverage of the events which occurred in different parts of Mumbai posed many challenges for broadcasters. The event became a watershed moment for live broadcasting in the country for various reasons but primarily it was deemed as compromising the security of the nation and inciting passion against its neighbour Pakistan with whom it has a tumultuous historical and political relationship. The Indian government liberalized the broadcasting market in the early 1990s by dismantling state controls, encouraging privatization and relaxing media regulations (Thussu 1999: 126). The liberalization of the market and new communication technologies saw a dramatic growth in the number of television channels and transformed the television landscape radically (See Thussu 2007; Butcher 2003). Daya Thussu points out that this ushered the arrival of global media conglomerates into what used to be one of the most closed broadcasting systems in any democracy. Presently, India has seventy-seven 24-hour news channels on the air fighting for the attention

of 80 million Indian homes and 130 licences approved resulting in extraordinary pressure to sensationalize and claim exclusives (Magnier 2009). India is one of the world's largest television markets with an expanding Westernized, middle-class audience of 300 million and this is an attractive lure for transnational media corporations to gain a slice of the lucrative Indian market (Thussu 2007: 594).

Inevitably, the 60-hour long coverage of the events prompted an intense competition amongst channels to outdo each other's reporting. Television channels were criticised for capitalising on human trauma and turning it into a "reality show" (Gupta 2009; Khallur 2008). Additionally broadcasters were criticised for sensationalising their reports but more importantly sabotaging the rescue operations and the national security of the country by revealing sensitive information without restraint or reflection. A media study undertaken by Newswatch, a media watch-dog based in New Delhi, shortly after the attack, found that the government-run TV channel DD was the least sensational and most restrained compared to commercial stations (cf. Thakuria 2008). It also found that many channels were overtly sensationalist in their coverage. The survey included 9,906 responses and 74% felt that the reporting was theatrical. The TV coverage of the incident, especially by 24-hour news channels, was criticised as "TV terror" (Pepper 2008). The media was also accused of over-simplifying and dichotomising a complex situation by portraying "Pakistan is the enemy" or "politicians are villains" (cf. Chandran 2008).

In the days following the attack there were robust public discussions on the extent to which the media should be regulated in the public interest and the interests of national security (Gupta 2009; Thakuria 2008; Divan 2008). The live reporting came under scrutiny in parliament as well and it was noted that "live feed of air raids on the rooftop of Nariman House (where the Israeli hostages had been held captive) had taken away the element of surprise which is critical and crucial in rescue operations". There was also fear that live coverage could have been used as free intelligence by the planners of the attacks located far away from the incidents and allegedly guiding the attackers by means of satellite and mobile phone communication to take appropriate emergent measures against security forces (cf. Thankuria 2008).

Criticism of mainstream media was evident in blogs and amongst viewers and became a point of national discussion with politicians questioning the role of the media in such situations. The media was also accused of pointing the finger towards Pakistan without understanding the full nature of the attacks. The stations portrayed the commandos sent to rescue the hostages as brave whilst repeatedly showing Indian flags. In the days following the attacks, the Indian flag was often used by broadcasters as a visual backdrop with viewers' text messages expressing anger at politicians or Pakistan scrolling at the bottom of the screen (Chandran 2008). Such cultural references were seen as irresponsible in influencing and inciting public opinion against Pakistan given the state of tension between the two

countries. Prominent film director Mahesh Bhatt criticised the CNN-IBN news channel of encroaching on his territory after the channel played Bollywood songs from movies about wars between India and Pakistan during news updates;

> It's what we do in the movies – whipping up passion – and what was at stake, but a nuclear holocaust (referring to the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan). You use the same tools – you keep the audience on a continuous high (cf. Pepper 2008).

Pakistan's media duly criticised Indian broadcasters of being in a "race for propaganda" and "providing unsubstantiated" charges about the origins of the attackers (D'Amour 2008). With the coverage of the media coming under intense public scrutiny, a parliamentary committee expressed concerns over the repeated display in the media of human corpses during natural calamities, accidents, bomb blasts, arson etc. (Thankuria 2008; Pepper 2008). A few weeks after the attack the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting mooted a proposal to amend the existing Programme Code under the Cable Television Rules of 1994 by introducing 19 new amendments. These included proposals to introduce restrictions amongst other things on live coverage of war or violent law and order situations, disclosures about security operations, live interviews with victims, security personnel or perpetrators of crime (cf. Divan 2008). Additionally, the South Asia Media Commission (SAMC) in its report "South Asia Media Monitor 2008" slammed the media both in India and Pakistan for promoting hysteria (Gupta 2009).

   The broadcast media were not seen as abiding by the self-regulatory code of ethics and standards adopted by the New Broadcasters Association comprising of 14 networks. Whilst the attacks illuminated the role of social media in such a situation, the print and broadcast media were seen as immature and not exercising the kind of self-regulation which was felt to be warranted in a highly explosive environment where they could have incited further violence or communal riots. The media on its part felt that the authorities did not have proper protocols in place in reporting on emergency situations. The Indian Broadcasting Federation and the News Broadcasting Association which represents many of country's top news channels criticised the government for "failing to keep up with the developments in the media industry" and not being proactive in "creating a procedure for the coverage of national emergencies" (cf. D'Amour 2008).

   The authorities were seen as failing to protect the public as they lacked a clear information and communication management strategy. The lack of orchestration in feeding information to the media was raised as another important factor that led to uncontrolled and chaotic reporting. In the post-event discussions about the role of the media it was pointed out that the authorities such as the Navy themselves fed details to the media without restraint. In addition to this, different authorities gave separate and contradictory accounts and versions to the media. The absence of a concerted media management by the authorities was seen as contributing to the chaotic nature of reporting. Besides irresponsible reporting TV stations were also seen as elitist in their reporting where they concentrated on the hostages at

the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi hotels, which are the domains of the country's wealthy and ruling elites, whilst largely ignoring Chhatrapati Shivaji train terminus which was the site of the largest number of casualties and where a total of 58 people were gunned down (Pepper 2008). TV stations were also accused of other forms of bias beyond class divides. For example, the British and American media focused largely on their own citizens.

In response to the criticisms from the general public and from the members of parliament, the National Broadcaster's Association, which represents many of the country's top news channels, announced a new set of rules for the industry in December 2008. These new guidelines ban broadcasting of footage that would reveal security operations and live contact with hostages or attackers (Pepper 2008). The guidelines also request broadcasters to avoid unnecessary repetition of archival footage which might agitate viewers (televisionpoint.com). Many of these guidelines still hinge on self-regulation as the guiding principle. Undoubtedly the effectiveness of these guidelines and their ability to fully resist the "tyranny of the market" may well be tested if another such incident were to occur in India.

The broadcasting of the disaster marathon in Mumbai prompted the public to question the construction of the "media event" by mainly 24-hour news channels. Unlike the new media, which was seen as reaching a new maturation point with the terror attack, the broadcast media was perceived as regressing and failing to observe a role that was ethical or responsible in protecting the national interest of the country.

Conclusion

The city of Mumbai, with its famous film production facilities, is a place for myth- and dream-making. In November 2008, when terror gripped the celluloid city, the urban space of accelerated modernity was transformed into a site of chaos, carnage, suffering and media spectacle. The postmodern city is a vulnerable space prone to violent disruption through acts of terror and where global communities can convene and consume terror through the media space. The 60-hour siege of Mumbai in became a testing ground for new media technologies and their role in responding to long and sustained periods of crises. The potential for both new forms of empowerment and risks were highlighted by the new media technologies where immediacy rather than authenticity became primary. On the other hand, the political economy of news making in India has raised serious concerns about how chasing exclusive deals and sensationalising terror attacks or rescue operations can be detrimental for the country. The broadcast media through its engagement with the Mumbai siege has been forced to review its role in a crisis and to abide by new protocols. More importantly, the siege of Mumbai showed that the "media event" is not an uncontested terrain where broadcast media can tell a story through freeze-framing of images and seamless narratives. In Mumbai

audiences engaged with the mediated accounts of terror provided by the media and duly questioned the media event. The media's power to be the supreme story teller or to appropriate and subsume an event through its production codes came under intense scrutiny. In the process the power of the media was questioned and the will of the audience was reasserted in demanding a more responsible broadcasting space.

Dr Yasmin Ibrahim is a Reader in International Business and Communications at Queen Mary, University of London. Her ongoing research on new media technologies explores the cultural dimensions and social implication of the diffusion of ICTs in different contexts. Beyond new media and digital technologies she writes on political communication and political mobilisation from cultural perspectives. Her other research interests include globalization, visual culture and memory studies.

Notes

1   Evidence suggests that Lashkare-Taiba (LeT), a terrorist group based in Pakistan, was responsible for the attack (Rand Study 2009:11). The Rand study elaborates that the Pakistan-based terrorists see India as part of the "Crusader-Zionist-Hindu" alliance, and therefore the enemy of Islam. "Muslim" Kashmir ruled by majority "Hindu" India, provides a specific cause, but LeT has always considered the struggle in Kashmir as part of the global struggle, hence the specific selection of Americans and Britons as targets for murder, and the inclusion of the Jewish Chabad center as a principal target (2009:11).

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Culture Unbound
Journal of Current Cultural Research

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