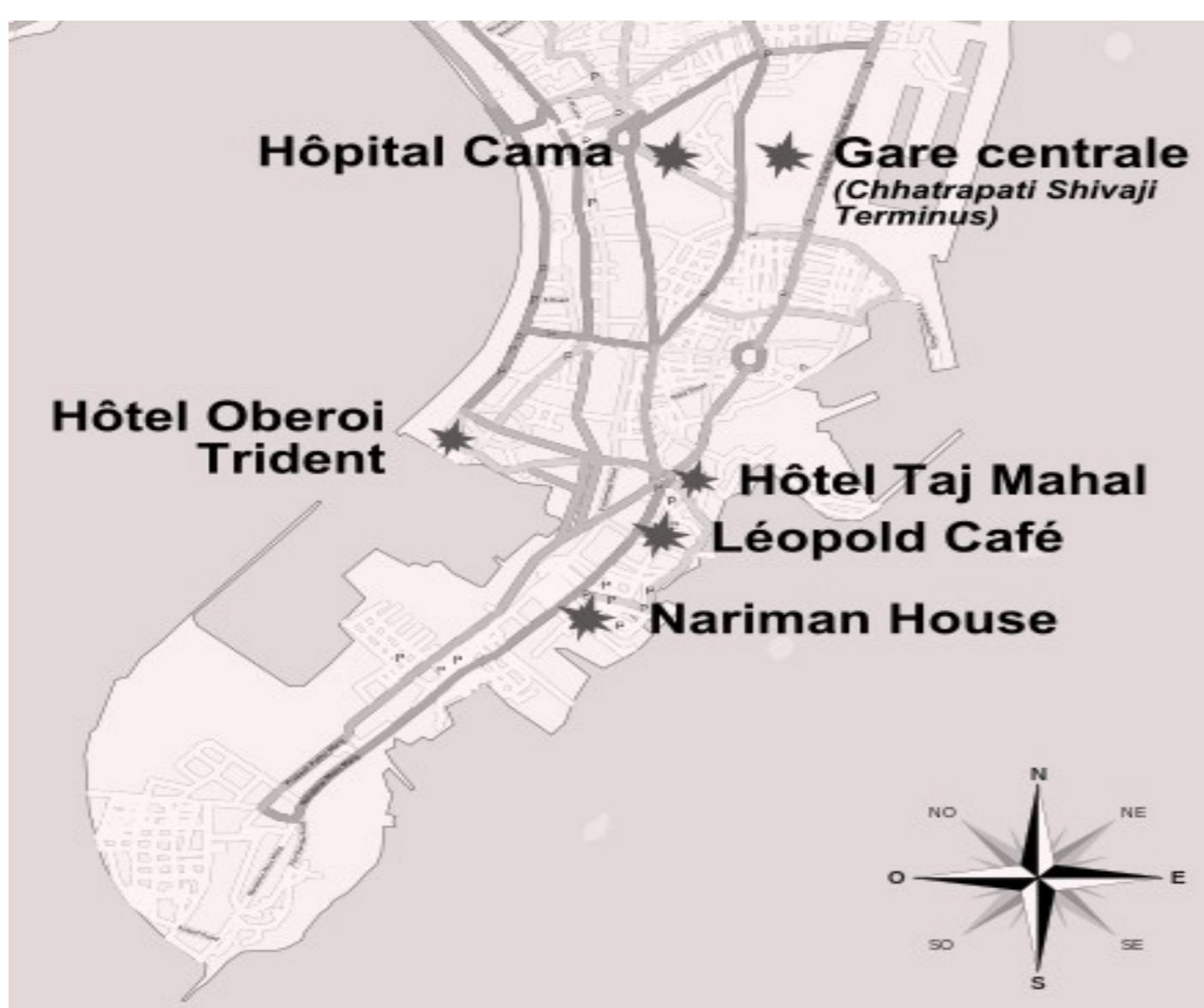


(Un)Anticipated effects of the spectacle of terror Mumbai 2008 from the point of view of the terrorists explained within the case study of the HBO documentary „Terror in Mumbai“

Spectacles of terror

Douglas Kellner introduced the term *media spectacle* whilst debating media events, among them spectacles of terror. He described them as „disruptive events carried out by oppositional groups or individuals who are carrying out politics or war by other means.“. Effects of terror spectacles after Kellner are the reduction of individuals to passive objects and the manipulation of institutions and public figures. From the point of view of the terrorists, Kellner stated that their actions are designed to produce fear and demoralization within the targets of the attacks. Furthermore, spectacles of terror contain dramatic images and montages by the media that catch attention and provoke unanticipated events, which will cause even more terror. All these aspects can be discovered within the terror attacks in Mumbai 2008.

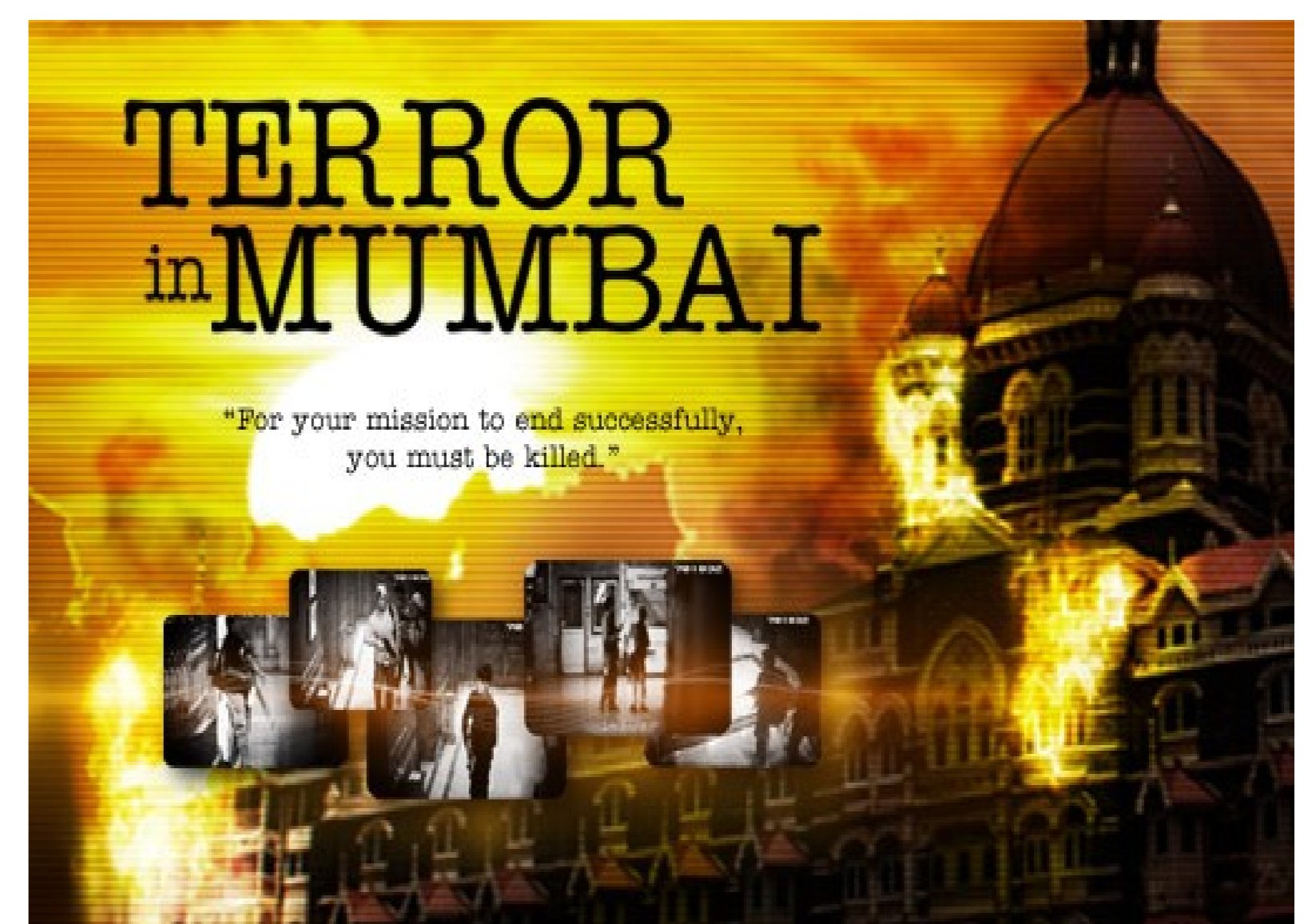


Terrorism and the media – A social change

An extended use of new media by terrorist groups is often understood as a form of social change. It is important to understand however that this change was accompanied by a higher education, better IT knowledge and the necessary capital to acquire the former. Only these changes made it possible for terrorist organizations to grasp the possibilities of the Internet and implement that knowledge into practice. Another result of this was a change in communication among terrorist groups, with the outside world, the media and potential new members. This was accompanied by the development of a symbiotic relationship of terrorist groups with the media. As the mass-media is always searching for new, exciting stories, not hesitating to broadcast live from scenes of war and destruction, they are a perfect medium for terrorists to gain the attention of vast groups of people and spread their messages. For the media, terrorist actions supply them with the much needed spectacle to acquire a big audience.

The documentary „Terror in Mumbai“

With the 2009 HBO documentary „Terror in Mumbai“ producer/director Dan Reed offered the audience a detailed insight into the terror attacks that hit Mumbai from November 26th-28th. Video material, audio tapes, intercepted phone calls, as well as statements of survivors of the attacks and the inquiry of a captured terrorist created a reconstruction of the attacks. This reconstruction enables us to understand the attacks from a different point of view, as we hear about the terrorists goals and thoughts as well as parts of the organization that lies behind them, from themselves. The intercepted phone calls and dialogues of the terrorists with their masterminds enable us to draw connections to the previously mentioned phenomenons of social change and media strategy. Looking at spectacles of terror from this angle can open our minds to better understand the goals of terrorist groups. Putting ourselves in their shoes could help to reshape a unilateral discourse and maybe foster a larger and more diverse understanding of the issue terrorism and the media, which could be beneficial on many levels.



Pictures: http://www.google.de/imgres?q=mumbai+2008&start=81&hl=de&sa=X&gbv=2&biw=1280&bih=646&tbs=isz:m&tbn=isch&tbnid=431oT-zrE8z1GM:&imgrefurl=https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2008_Mumbai_attacks-fr.svg&docid=jv42h-dRPwdjJM&imgurl=https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/96/2008_Mumbai_attacks-fr.svg/439px-2008_Mumbai_attacks-fr.svg.png&w=439&h=480&ei=_Ox2T9PjPOOj4gS0g4XmDg&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=450&vpy=180&dur=4888&hovh=235&hovw=215&tx=111&ty=127&sig=108899778673056236660&page=5&tbnh=147&tbnw=134&ndsp=24&ved=1t:429,r:14,s:81 and http://www.google.com/imgres?q=terror+in+mumbai&um=1&hl=de&client=ubuntu&channel=fs&biw=1280&bih=646&tbn=isch&tbnid=_p4j2pbnSYEDIM:&imgrefurl=http://www.allthingscnn.com/2009/11/fareed-zakaria-terror-in-mumbai.html&docid=CS4YJEJfXWqXJM&imgurl=http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_pYovFsEL26U/SwlufXPdAI/AAAAAAAAI2Y/fUircWpAsWU/s1600/TerrorInMumbai_HBO_20091119.JPG&w=1012&h=632&ei=A2i7T_Ra6KHIBMKMmYgE&zoom=1&iact=rc&dur=234&sig=108608222469024811829&page=1&tbnh=115&tbnw=184&start=0&ndsp=15&ved=1t:429,r:6,s:0&tx=131&ty=22