People flee from gunfire and grenade blasts 21 September 2013 during a terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. (Photo by Jonathan Kalan, Associated Press)

Tweeting Terror Live

Al-Shabaab's Use of Twitter during the Westgate Attack and Implications for Counterterrorism Communications

Victoria Fassrainer

Wrapped in black scarves and with assault rifles in hand, four gunmen stalked the halls of Nairobi's Westgate Mall the morning of 21 September 2013. "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. We've come to kill you Christians and Kenyans for what you are doing in Somalia," shouted one of the attackers from the rooftop.[1] For the next eight hours, the gunmen of a Somali militant group, al-Shabaab, diligently tossed grenades and shot bullets at frenzied shopkeepers and fleeing customers. By the time Kenyan security forces finally arrived, the terrorist group had murdered sixty-seven people and wounded 175

more. Yet it was not until al-Shabaab took responsibility through an associated Twitter account, tweeting, "The Mujahideen [holy warriors] entered Westgate mall today at around noon and they are still inside the mall, fighting the Kenyan kuffar [infidels] inside their own turf," that the Kenyan government and the international community grasped that a terrorist attack was in progress at the shopping center, and the mainstream media used the tweets to report on the issue.[2] Al-Shabaab's press office proceeded to create and disseminate Twitter content justifying the attack, generating fictional threats, and providing its version of news throughout the days of panic. This was the first time a terrorist group claimed responsibility for an attack using Twitter and microblogged the coverage in real time throughout the entirety of the assault.

Crises and violent attacks today exist in a hyperconnected environment in which the role of information has shifted from subsequently explaining an action to using the information as an action in itself.[3] It follows that the weaponization of social networks as information hubs is a preferred tool amongst terrorist organizations operating in today's battlespace, with roughly 90 percent of organized terrorism on the internet carried out through social media.[4] Twitter, in particular, allows terrorist groups to succinctly disseminate messaging and enables international communications before, during, and after attacks. Terrorist organizations simultaneously harness tendencies in mainstream media—which signal a growing sacrifice of validation and in-depth analysis for the sake of real-time coverage—to methodically exploit such shortcomings for propaganda and recruitment purposes. An offshoot of this

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trend is that it sometimes induces mainstream media to use terrorist tweets as legitimate news sources in cases where mainstream media is sparse.[5] Terrorist organizations that choose to cover their attacks in real time in the digital space thus pose a distinct challenge to policy makers, mainstream media, and the general public today.

This article will analyze the motivations for and use of live-tweets during a terrorist attack. The employment of live-tweets offers terrorist groups the opportunity to adopt the role of a media outlet to exploit the advantages of live coverage typically exercised by mainstream media. This poses a unique challenge to policy makers and international media in the crafting of counterterrorist strategic communications throughout a terrorist attack.

The article will first review existent literature on social networks in crisis situations and then on al-Shabaab's use of social media to paint the scholarly environment in which live-tweeting terror—as a method and research subject—unfolds. Subsequently, it will offer a theoretical framework to analyze a terrorist group's motivations to microblog an attack in real time, positing a hybrid of Jürgen Habermas's theory of the structural transformation of the public sphere, Patrick O'Heffernan's mutual exploitation model of media influence in U.S. foreign policy, and Eytan Gilboa's real-time news coverage model. As the first instance of a terrorist group's use of Twitter to claim responsibility for and cover an attack in real time, al-Shabaab's assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 will serve as the case study upon which the theoretical framework will be tested. To conclude, the article will summarize main findings, draw implications posed by live-tweeting attacks in the development of counterterrorist communications strategies with potential responses thereto, and finally, point to future research directions on the topic.

Literature Review

Researchers have taken a number of approaches to understanding how social networks function in crisis situations. While network scientists have relied on social network analysis, social scientists have employed survey- and content-analysis methodology. Christine Ogan and Onur Varol combine content analysis with the automated techniques of network analysis to determine the roles played by those using Twitter to communicate during the Turkish Gezi Park uprising.[6]

Moreover, literature on emergency and crisis management underscores that communication is key in allowing the public to remain informed and in shaping its understanding of crises. June Park, Hong Choi, and Sung-Min Park signal that issues of propaganda and misinformation are especially acute in crises and present particular challenges to crisis communications groups.[7] John Sorensen and Barbara Sorensen have found that individuals depend on social media today for important information during times of crisis.[8] Moreover, Jay Bernhardt et al. argue that the information may be used to keep crisis management groups abreast of response strategies.[9] Joanna Dunlap and Patrick Lowenthal highlight that during times of crises, however, social media can also act as a facilitator of panic caused by the exchange of misinformation amongst users.[10] The rapid exchange of (mis)information among social media users and the potential for its propagation by mainstream media and policy makers contribute to fear and misunderstanding about terrorist attacks and facilitate the potential exploitation of said fears by terrorist groups.

Existent literature on al-Shabaab's use of social media is relatively sparse. Stewart Bertram and Keith Ellison note that the group was especially active on Twitter in comparison to other African terrorist groups, underscoring al-Shabaab's use of official and semiofficial accounts.[11] Lindsay Pearlman conducted a content analysis of an associated Twitter account, which revealed that the terrorist group used Twitter to target a global audience, generate narratives in the form of news updates and information, and create and distribute propaganda.[12] David Mair, upon whose research this article is based, also uses content analysis to determine how al-Shabaab interacted with Twitter followers during the Westgate attack of 2013; he concludes that the group was primarily concerned with controlling the narrative of the attack and retaining an audience.

A screenshot compilation taken from the al-Shabaab Twitter page (@HSM_PR). The tweets were posted by al-Shabaab during the Westgate Mall terrorist attacks 21–24 September 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. (Photo courtesy of TECH PRESIDENT, http://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24366/western-voices-al-shabaab-twitter)

Kenyan soldiers take cover 23 September 2013 after heavy gunfire near Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. Kenyan Defence troops laid siege to the mall after al-Shabaab militants entered on 21 September and began shooting, throwing grenades, and taking hostages. (Photo by Carl De Souza, Agence France-Presse)

Theoretical Framework

This section offers a theoretical framework that blends the work of Jürgen Habermas, Patrick O'Heffernan, and Eytan Gilboa in order to analyze a terrorist group's motivation to cover an attack through social media in real time.

The public space. Although it is clear that terrorist groups engage with social media to disseminate their ideologies, the benefits of creating and dominating their own public sphere are less evident in the context of attacks. Prime political theories of German sociologist-philosopher Habermas are thus presented in this section to explain a terrorist group's creation of its own public sphere in which it then, arguably, appropriates the role of a media outlet through live microblogging.

Habermas's theory on the structural transformation of the public sphere delineates the structure of the public sphere and its evolution from the Middle Ages, arguing that it checks the illegitimate use of state power.[13] He traces medieval Europe's representative publicity, in which kings constituted the embodiment of the country and the public self—in other words, the private and public spheres were

inseparable—to the emergence of a segment of society that saw the degeneration of the state-society synthesis, a depersonalized body of people, and the congruent development of a separate public sphere able to check the power of the state through public opinion. Habermas further argues that the transformation of the public sphere's political function from the "journalism of private men of letters to the public consumer services of the mass media" serves as another check on state power through its influence on public opinion.[14]

The section on al-Shabaab's attack on Westgate will apply Habermas's theory on the structural transformation of the public sphere to explain a terrorist group's creation of a public space in which it appropriates the role of a media outlet through live microblogging.

The mutual exploitation of the media and policy makers. This section posits O'Heffernan's mutual exploitation model of media influence in U.S. foreign policy. It builds upon a terrorist group's adoption of the role of the press within its self-created public sphere to elucidate the power of such appropriation.[15]

O'Heffernan argues that the government and the media incorporate each other into their own existence, "sometimes for mutual benefit, sometimes for mutual injury, often both at the same time."[16] They exist in a state of interdependent mutual exploita-

- exclude diplomats and experts who have traditionally gathered information and recommended actions to policy makers back home;
- facilitate diplomatic manipulations, worldwide propaganda, and misinformation from the broadcast of deficient reports encouraged by pools of questionable sources outside the normal and regular channels;
- create high expectations for instant results in both warfare and diplomacy; and
- make instant judgments in an ongoing battle for "insight scoops."[19]

> The majority of tweets reveals that al-Shabaab's objectives aimed to further their ideology, justify the attacks, and provide news updates.

tion driven by self-interest; the model sees a dynamic of two "desegregated, aggressive ecosystems constantly bargaining over a series of 'wants' while they manipulate both the structure and output of the other for their own advantage."[17] Today, policy makers and the media operate more so from the same set of perceptions and images—and in some cases, even facts. O'Heffernan further argues that the media exploits the vacuum of policy about live reporting, specifically, to its advantage.

The section on al-Shabaab's attack on Westgate will adapt O'Heffernan's mutual exploitation model to explain the power of a terrorist group's appropriation of such a role.

Constraints of real-time coverage. This section posits Gilboa's real-time news coverage model to explain the strategic advantages of live coverage that may induce a terrorist group to live-tweet during an attack.

Gilboa's study on television news and U.S. foreign policy argues that real-time television coverage imposes significant effects on the process of U.S. foreign policy development.[18] Against the backdrop of high-speed broadcasting and transmission information, the media-foreign policy relationship exists in terms of constraints that

- impose snap decisions that may force hurried responses based on intuition rather than on careful extensive policy deliberation;

Gilboa further relates the constraints of live coverage to crisis situations in which "the effect of the faster pace of diplomatic exchanges on the decision-making process is particularly acute."[20] He argues that "the gap between the promise of media events and the actual results often create[s] dangerous confusion and disappointments" to which the global war against terrorism represents a new major expectation challenge to policy makers.[21]

The section on al-Shabaab's attack on Westgate will apply Gilboa's real-time news coverage model to explain the strategic advantages of live coverage that may induce a terrorist group to live-tweet during an attack.

Case Study: Al-Shabaab's Attack on Westgate Mall in 2013

As the first instance of a terrorist group's use of Twitter to claim responsibility for and cover an attack in real time, al-Shabaab's assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 will serve as the case study upon which the hybrid theoretical framework based on Habermas, Gilboa, and O'Heffernan will be tested.
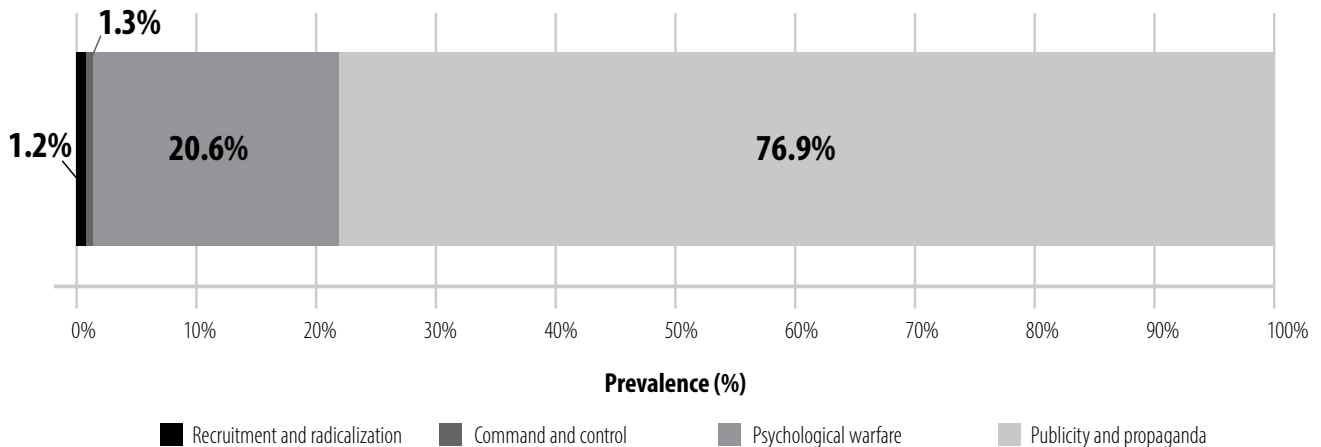
A brief note on militant Islam in Somalia will set the attack in context. Radical Islam in Somalia fortified in 2006 when the Islamic Courts Union—a grassroots movement—took control of the country.[22] After a U.S.-supported invasion by neighboring Ethiopia that same year, the Islamic Courts Union

broke down and gave way to Islamic nationalist insurgency, embodied by *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen* (al-Shabaab), who fought Ethiopians and the African Union. The conflict intensified in 2011 when Kenya sent troops into Somalia to unilaterally establish a buffer zone between the two countries after kidnappings were linked to al-Shabaab. The action only

Findings

The findings are summarized below in further detail, followed by an application of the previous section's theoretical framework.

Composition. The findings reveal that a vast majority of tweets did not link to external websites, as typically employed by terrorist groups Only eight of 556 tweets

1.3%

1.2%   **20.6%**   **76.9%**

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

Prevalence (%)

■ Recruitment and radicalization   ■ Command and control   ■ Psychological warfare   □ Publicity and propaganda

(Figure by author; data from David Mair, "#Westgate: A Case Study: How al-Shabaab Used Twitter during an Ongoing Attack")
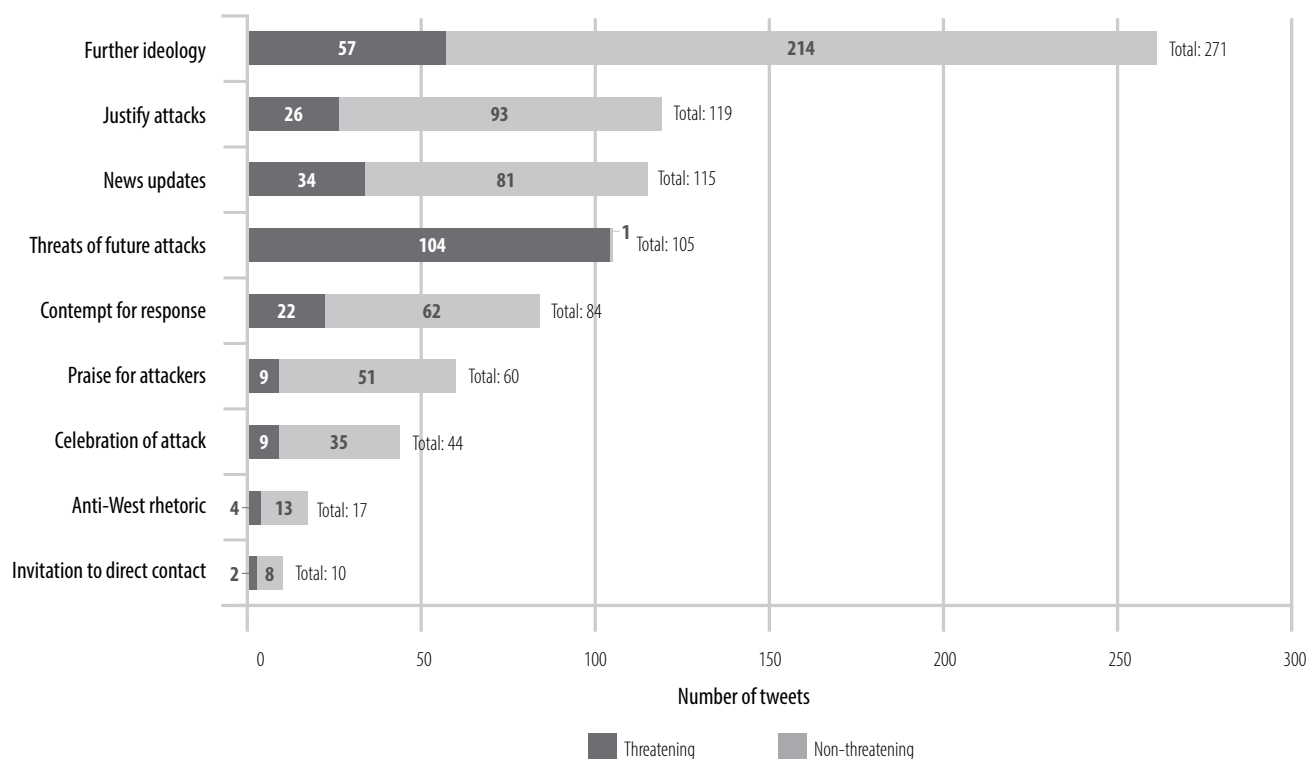
Figure 1. Tweet Content and Function

encouraged the terrorist group's growth in numbers and its swell of ambition.

In his analysis "#Westgate al-Shabaab Used Twitter During an Ongoing Attack," David Mair investigates the real-time use of Twitter by al-Shabaab during the attack on Westgate.[23] Mair analyzes 556 tweets amongst various accounts associated with al-Shabaab to understand the motivation for using Twitter during ongoing terrorist operations. He outlines how al-Shabaab used Twitter to interact with followers throughout the attack and draws comparisons between the motivating factors of terrorist use of Twitter during attack and nonattack phases. Mair employs content analysis of tweets from @HSMPress_ and other variants of the handle @HSM to explore the composition and content of tweets from the attack period between 21 and 24 September 2013. Overall, Mair concludes that al-Shabaab was primarily concerned with controlling the narrative of the attack and retaining an audience rather than the more typical focus on recruitment and anti-West rhetoric.

contained a URL, and only two of eight accounts directed users to external sites. Al-Shabaab showed little engagement and interaction with other Twitter users, preferring instead to communicate widely and negating any opportunities to engage with individuals indirectly:

- @HSM_official1: "The term 'negotiatinn' [sic] was ruled out absolutely, what we are calling for tho [sic] is Kenya to withdraw its troops from Somalia. @account"
- @HSM_Press2: "@account why would they trace us? Free speech bitch"
- @HSM_Press2: "Follow @HSM_PressOffice, @HSMPRESS2 @HSMPRESSOFFIC1 incase [sic] of suspension of any of the above accounts"
- @HSMPRESSOFFICE2: "Earlier tweets on our suspended acc @hsm_press2 we revealed the names of our mujahideen! And well [sic] tweet the rest #Westgateattach [sic] #Westgate"[24]

Only 2 percent of the total dataset included references to specific Twitter users.

Further ideology — 57 | 214 | Total: 271
Justify attacks — 26 | 93 | Total: 119
News updates — 34 | 81 | Total: 115
Threats of future attacks — 104 | 1 Total: 105
Contempt for response — 22 | 62 | Total: 84
Praise for attackers — 9 | 51 | Total: 60
Celebration of attack — 9 | 35 | Total: 44
Anti-West rhetoric — 4 | 13 | Total: 17
Invitation to direct contact — 2 | 8 | Total: 10

Number of tweets

Threatening   Non-threatening

(Figure by author; data from David Mair, "#Westgate: A Case Study: How al-Shabaab Used Twitter during an Ongoing Attack")

Figure 2. Tweets by Function

Regarding visuals, which Mair agrees are intrinsically important in terrorist groups' publicity and propaganda campaigns, al-Shabaab surprisingly broadcast very few images during the attacks.[25] Finally, al-Shabaab used psychological warfare techniques to publish threatening tweets; for example, a tweet from @HSM_PRESSOFFICE2 said, "5th squad enroute to ther [*sic*] undisclosed location to carry our [*sic*] the next attack! Hoaaa-ah! #alshabaab #westgate."[26] Notably, however, over 70 percent of these tweets contained no threatening content whatsoever.

Content. The findings reveal that the majority of the content was related to the functions of "publicity and propaganda" and "psychological warfare"; "command and control" and "recruitment" functions followed (see figure 1, page 90). The function of *recruitment* and *radicalization* denotes a general call to partake in the global jihad rather than an invocation to join al-Shabaab specifically. *Psychological warfare* indicates the use of direct threats related to future attacks and updates on imminent assaults elsewhere in Kenya. The function of *command and control* pertains to messaging from al-Shabaab's highest authorities to begin strikes elsewhere in Nairobi.

The majority of tweets reveals that al-Shabaab's objectives aimed to further their ideology, justify the attacks, and provide news updates (see figure 2). There were few attempts to secure direct contact with individuals—with the notable exception of journalists, to whom they disseminated press releases of the development of the attack—and little engagement in anti-Western rhetoric. Interestingly, the findings reveal equal treatment of religious and political content.

Analysis

As applied to the context of terrorist attacks, Habermas's theories suggest that terrorist groups execute a power shift from the state to themselves in their destabilization of the normal order.[27] In doing so, they disrupt order to appeal to the civil society which it persuades into checking the illegitimate use of the state's power.

Forensics investigators work next to the collapsed upper car park at the Westgate Mall 1 October 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya. The damage was caused by the Islamic extremist group al-Shabaab during its attack on the Westgate Mall 21–24 September 2013 that killed sixty-seven people and wounded 175 more. (Photo by Jason Straziuso, Associated Press)

The Westgate attack itself may thus be understood as an attempt to disrupt the order in Kenyan civil society and government, and to exert specific political demands such as the removal of Kenyan troops from Somalia.

Mair concludes that al-Shabaab restricted the number of links to ensure a captive audience without having to rely on journalists and to provide positive publicity for the group. Arguably, it would have lost whatever sympathy and positive spin was generated by Twitter if the violent acts were celebrated. The lack of wide engagement could be explained as an attempt to preserve the audience's interest in the Twitter account and control the overarching narrative. Among the few cases of direct communications with other users, it could be argued that al-Shabaab contacted individuals for symbolic effect, as opposed to genuine communication purposes. For example, in tweeting user @UKenyata (the president of Kenya), al-Shabaab inflated its own status to that of a source that is as equally reputable and legitimate on the international stage; in the cases of individual interaction with journalists, the group responded to media inquiries to generate positive publicity and fortify its own standing as a legitimate source. Finally, the sparse use of images points to al-Shabaab's implicit understanding that, similar to tweeting violent messages, releasing graphic images would risk losing any positive publicity generated and could turn its Twitter feed audience away.

Mair concludes that the sparse content related to the function of recruitment points to a potential change in recruitment strategy, and particularly, an attempt to signal the group's strength by avoiding a call for new volunteers. Furthermore, the vast majority of the content was related to the function of publicity and content distribution. In this respect, the role of news dissemination throughout the attack signals that

al-Shabaab used Twitter "to practice dynamic propaganda," a communication that "serves the dual purposes of challenging a critic and broadcasting a certain belief."[28] The lack of engagement with other users, the relatively infrequent invocation of anti-Western language, and the equal treatment of political-religious content reveal two important insights. On the one hand, al-Shabaab expressed an interest in preserving the methodical rhetoric of "news updates." On the other hand, it exhibited little desire to intimidate the West through openly antagonistic or radical religious language.

In this vein, this study posits that terrorist groups may exploit the public sphere through what Habermas delineates as the "transmuted function of the principle of publicity."[29] Accordingly, al-Shabaab created its own public sphere in its decision to cover the attack via live tweets. Applying Habermas's concept of the transmuted press as a theoretical filter, the article argues that al-Shabaab limited its interactions with users and maintained a moderate tone throughout the attack to shape the critical public debate. Put simply, the group crafted its own public sphere through the use of social media and assumed the properties of the press in its molding of opinion within that dominated public sphere.

O'Heffernan's mutual exploitation model of media-government reinforces the power that arises when a terrorist group adopts a media role. As argued, in the context of the Westgate attack, al-Shabaab appropriated the role of the media through its live-tweeting during the assault. It subsequently benefited from an environment of mutual exploitation with policy makers. With this reinforcing dynamic, the media not only becomes part of the process of perception-creation, but also is inherent to the policy process itself. This mutual exploitation strengthened al-Shabaab's role as the narrative-shaper during the attack—especially so given the vacuum of live reporting on the topic.

Additionally, this article offers Gilboa's real-time television news coverage model to explain terrorist groups' motivation to adopt a real-time coverage tool during attacks. The model underscores constraints of the relationship between media (in this case, al-Shabaab) and foreign policy (in this case, defined as domestic and international actors), and explains the strengths of al-Shabaab's adoption of real-time coverage through live-tweets of the attack. This study proposes that the very constraints of real coverage

on policy makers during crises serve as benefits for terrorist groups during attacks and may thus explain a terrorist group's motivation for adopting live streaming such as real-time microblogging. In a public sphere in which it appropriates the role of the media, terrorist groups may

- push policy makers to make snap decisions from hurried responses,
- force them to exclude experts in their gathering of information,
- facilitate propaganda and misinformation through deficient reports—or simply "their version" of the attack,
- play upon and create high expectations for further violence or instant resolutions, and
- manipulate the battle for "insight scoops" to legitimize their "scoop" on an attack.

The constraints were, arguably, manipulated by al-Shabaab to its benefit. The group tweeted its version of the development in the mall, frequently sending disdainful messages to the government and Kenyan society at large. Yet it relied predominantly on the dissemination of news updates, facilitating the (mis)information of the attack. This could partially explain why the security response by Kenyan officials was as inconsequential and ineffective as it proved to be. Frequent clashes between the Recce Squad, a special weapons and tactics team trained in counterterrorism operations, and self-appointed armed neighborhood watch units underscore the degree of maladroitness in the security response.[30] What is more, mainstream news outlets, such as the BBC, used al-Shabaab's very tweets as legitimate sources in their own reports, a clear indication of the group's exploitation of tendencies in mainstream media: a growing sacrifice of validation and in-depth analysis for the sake of real-time coverage. Al-Shabaab's advantages in adopting live-tweeting during their attack thus constituted a marriage of factors that exploited vulnerabilities, while harnessing strengths of traditional media.

Conclusion

This article has offered a hybridized approach to analyze motivations for and the use of live-tweets during a terrorist attack. The study first reviewed existent literature on social networks in crisis situations and on al-Shabaab's use of social media to paint

Live-Streaming Attacks

Somewhat mirroring al-Shabaab's use of social media to broadcast its attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, a mass shooter used Facebook to document and publicize his 8 February 2020 attack in northeastern Thailand that resulted in twenty-nine deaths and fifty-seven wounded.

Screenshot of Facebook post

Thai army Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma posted messages, photographs, and videos of his attack that began with the shooting of his commanding officer and ended with his firing at random shoppers and workers at the Terminal 21 Mall in Nakhon Ratchasima, about 155 miles from Bangkok. Thomma was killed by security forces nearly seventeen hours after his shooting spree began.

During the attack, Thomma posted comments such as "No one can escape death" and "Getting rich from cheating, taking advantage from others, they must think that money can be spent in hell," referring to an alleged personal disagreement over debt.

Thomma's Facebook page held numerous photos and videos of himself with various weapons and combat gear posted prior to the attack. Facebook eventually shut down Thomma's site in accordance with its "dangerous individuals and organizations" policy that authorizes removal of content that involves praising, supporting, or representing a shooting or the shooter.

Facebook was previously criticized for allowing Brenton Tarrant to live-stream his 2019 mass shooting of fifty-one people in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The Christchurch massacre led to New Zealand's Arms Amendment Act 2019, which banned semiautomatic firearms, magazines and parts; and to neighboring Australia's The Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act, which mandates penalties for social media companies that do not rapidly remove similarly violent material from their sites.

the scholarly environment in which live-tweeting terror—as a method and research subject—unfolds. Subsequently, it offered a theoretical framework to analyze a terrorist group's motivations to microblog an attack in real-time, positing a hybrid of Habermas's theory on the structural transformation of the public sphere, O'Heffernan's mutual exploitation model of media influence in U.S. foreign policy, and Gilboa's real-time news coverage model. As the first instance of a terrorist group's use of Twitter to claim responsibility for and cover an attack in real time, al-Shabaab's assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 served as a formidable case study upon which the theoretical framework was tested.

The value of the proposed theoretical framework comes in its combination of sociological and media-based theories, and its potential to systemize analyses of terrorist motivations to exploit live coverage in the digital space. For this very reason, what could be perceived as a weakness in the framework—namely, that it does not offer a postattack analysis of a terrorist group's media usage—is thereto responded by an understanding that this study offers a *motivations-* and *operations*-based approach.

In this vein, the scholarship on terrorism and counterterrorism would benefit from future research on

- the impact that live coverage of attacks has on the formation of responses to terrorist attacks by policy makers and mainstream media;
- the relationship between terrorist groups and mainstream media—more specifically, the confluence of shared information and sources and possible misuse thereof; and
- a rigorous analysis of the variations in dynamics of social media usage by terrorist groups in attack and nonattack phases.

The study posits that a terrorist group's use of live-tweets to cover an attack offers it the opportunity to adopt the role of a media outlet and exploit the strengths of live coverage typically exercised by mainstream media. This poses a unique challenge to policy makers and international media. The study contends that counterterrorist strategies specific to crisis communications throughout a terrorist attack must be further analyzed and developed by mainstream media and relevant governmental bodies.

As Gilboa argued, policy makers today deal with attempts from various actors "to undermine their policies and plans through messages delivered on global television, primarily via the 'breaking news' format that further intensifies the pressure for an immediate response."[31] These very constraints are exploited by terrorist organizations in their real-time coverage.

Thus, formulators and implementers of counterterrorist strategies today are challenged to

- avoid policy responses to crises that are immediate or based on deficient informational sources;
- cooperate with regard to live coverage of attacks to better manage public and terrorist expectations for immediate solutions;
- rigorously check sources to ensure that they are not associated with terrorist networks;
- create counterterrorism narratives addressed to intended recipients of terrorist Twitter accounts (Historically, efforts have directly targeted terrorist actors who, as the case of al-Shabaab indicates, are sometimes uninterested in direct contact.); and
- remain cautious of the constraints imposed by real-time coverage of terrorist attacks on their own policymaking and media coverage, and accordingly create proactive responses, such as appeals tailored to real-time attacks.

Sophisticated counterterrorist communications strategies will thus require a sensitive understanding of global and social media constraints, to more cogently address—and feasibly hamper—the dissemination of communicative violence during terrorist attacks. ■

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