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HOW RELIGION MATTERS: ISLAMOPHOBIA, TERRORISM AND TWITTER

Abstract

Twitter, as one of the most used social media tools, helps construction of virtual communities and provides members with opportunity to reflect opinions, thoughts, emotions etc. With respect to the said feature of it, an analysis of public reaction over Twitter was conducted regarding four terrorist attacks in Beirut, Paris of November 2015 and Babil, Brussels of March 2016. The analysis was based on public hashtags created with city name plus the word 'attack(s)' – #ParisAttacks, #BeirutAttacks, #BrusselsAttacks, and #BabilAttack; and 9998 tweets posted following four days from the day of the attack were examined. For the purpose of the set examination, qualitative content analysis method was used and posted tweets were categorized with respect to their general meanings. In order to back up this research, it is also essential to introduce the terms terrorism, perpetrator of the aforementioned attacks, the ISIS, and the concepts of worthy and unworthy victims.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Terrorism, Twitter, Worthy-Unworthy Victims

Introduction

The international system possesses anarchical structure where all individuals are acknowledged as one equal to another and regarding to different theories there are different individuals named as actors; however, states are the main actors regardless of any theory. Globalism and digital age provide global society to connect and to react instantly to certain events; and within a humanistic approach, it would not be wrong to claim that within an international system that

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theorizes equality among the actors, peoples should be equal as parts of global society as well. However, there are certain differences in terms of public reaction and the main identifier that determines the difference is linked with geography and consequently identity and culture.

This research aims to analyze a probable link between public reaction to a certain terrorist attack and its target geography. Public reaction has been examined within the framework of opinions, thoughts, emotions etc. expressed via Twitter with certain public hashtags. To be able to examine the public reaction within an academic approach, it is essential to highlight certain concepts of political science and communication studies. With this intention, Islamophobia, terrorism and the ISIS, perpetrator of these attacks, worthy/unworthy dichotomy of victims alongside Cultivation Theory are introduced as the core concepts for this research study.

Theoretical Framework

Terror, as a word, is originated from the Latin word *'terrere'* which means 'fill with fear, frighten' and is also linked with the French word *'terreur'* with the meaning of 'something that intimidates, an object of fear'.³ Terrorism is originated from French *'terrorisme'* and linked with the Reign of Terror between 1793 and 1794. It has been first recorded in English at the end of the 18th century as 'systematic use of terror as a policy'.⁴

Terrorism has been a significant problem that has the power of affecting domestic and international politics. It can be referred as a transformed and extended version of violence with no difference in religion, ethnicity, geography or any demographical component⁵. Even, an act of terrorism targets a significant population, with its being organized, deliberate and systematic,⁶ it brings about wider impact on a wider population and/or geography than actual target. This mechanism of terrorism has been linked with the statement of Sun Tzu that he made in *The Art of War* (5th century B.D.); 'Kill one, frighten ten thousand.'

The Global Terrorism Index defines terrorism with respect to current international agenda as 'the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation'.⁷ Among the entire acts of terrorism, 51% of deaths resulted by terrorism are caused by attacks of the ISIS and Boko Haram in

3 Online Etymology Dictionary (a), *Terror*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/terror>, (accessed 11.03.2019).

4 Online Etymology Dictionary (b), *Terrorism*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/terrorism>, (accessed 11.03.2019).

5 Gökhan Duman, „Terörü Tanımlamanın Zorluğu Üzerine Bir Analiz”, in: *Siyaset ve Ekonomi Üzerine Yazılar*, Korlu R. Kutlu and Duman Gökhan (eds.), Ekin Yayınevi, Bursa, 2019, pp. 85-104.

6 Bruce Hoffmann, *Inside Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 4.

7 Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index – Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*, 2015, p. 6, <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf>, (accessed 09.03.2019).

2015.⁸ Boko Haram is a terrorist group operating in Nigeria⁹ to overthrow and to create an Islamic State.¹⁰ The ISIS, on the other side, carries out its attacks in a wider geography, and it will be explained in detail since this research study focuses on public reaction among the world to its four attacks.

Motivations of acts of terrorism have been varied throughout history and religion has become one of them for the first time in the 11th century with Islamic Assassins, who are also referred as the ancestors of modern terrorists.¹¹ The differences regarding motivations of modern terrorism have been defined within different historical processes and reference points by Rapoport by Four Waves Theory.¹² In accordance with it, there are four dimensions that occurred chronologically throughout history, and they are, respectively, anarchism, anti-colonialism, new left and religion. In terms of religious motivations, *Al-Qaeda* has become a significant threat with their attacks with Islamic references, in recent decades. The attacks of 11 September 2001, known as 9/11, has been recorded as the most brutal one, which had become a milestone in terms of *combatting against terrorism* within the international system and pointed out as a significant example of the fourth wave of terrorism. Currently, the ISIS has attracted much world-wide attention due to their terrorist attacks targeting a wider geography. It is a Salafi militant organization based in Syria and Iraq. It claims itself as The Islamic State and they declared that they possess the leadership, the caliphate, of the Muslim *ummah*.¹³ Its existence dates back to the early 2000s under the name *Jama'at al Tawhid wa'al-Jihad* as a separate group, then they declared their loyalty to *Al-Qaeda*, and became its branch as *Al-Qaeda in Iraq*. In 2013, it changed its name into the current one and it gained much power due to complicated conjuncture of the region resulted by the Syrian Civil War.¹⁴ Recently, it has become a significant non-state actor of the international system as a result of its terrorist attacks that target both Levant region that they claim to have control and various other cities around the World¹⁵ which have led to discussions of initiating collective security mechanism.¹⁶

In contrast to regional interest, the ISIS has carried out its attacks in different

8 Ibidem, p. 4.

9 Ibidem, p. 2.

10 Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist group?, *BBC News*, 24 November 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501>, (accessed 09.03.2019).

11 Jay M. Shafritz, E.F. Gibbons and Gregory E.J. Scott, *Almanac of Modern Terrorism, Facts on File*, New York, 1991.

12 David C. Rapoport, The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism, *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 650, 2001, pp. 419–424.

13 *Mapping Militant Organizations: The Islamic State*, Stanford University, 20.01.2016, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/1>, (accessed 20.04.2019).

14 Ibidem.

15 Vincent Durac, The Role of Non-State Actors in Arab Countries after the Arab Uprisings, *IEMed Mediterranean Year Book*, IEMed, Barcelona, 2015, pp. 37-41.

16 Gökhan Duman, „Discussing Collective Security over Collective Defence“, in: *Critical Debates in Social Sciences*, Tuncsiper Bedriye and Sayın Ferhan (eds.), Frontpage Publications, London, 2018, pp. 695-703.

territories, mostly in the West. It would not be wrong to claim that with the help of these attacks, it attracted much attention within international system. As the territory varies for the attacks of the ISIS, victims are also varied from one attack targeting an eastern city to another one in the west. E.S. Herman and N. Chomsky state that media coverages possess significant role on propaganda about a victim of a certain incident. They claim that propaganda system has the power to give worthiness to victims and make them worthy or unworthy depending on relations with the target country and the possibility to use victims' worthiness for political goals.¹⁷ Within this aspect, a victim in an enemy country can be demonstrated as a worthy victim, since it can be used to put pressure on that certain country. Within time, assignment of worthiness has been varied for different research cases and the terms' usage has been expanded. For instance, O. Camarillo's notion of worthiness is slightly different from that of what Herman and Chomsky stated. According to him, it would be useful to focus on violence acts held domestically or abroad, rather than focusing just on the enemy state. With this intent, he mentions that 'worthy victims are individuals who have been abused or killed domestically or abroad while unworthy victims are individuals who have been treated with equal or greater severity than abusers or killers by their own government or clients'.¹⁸ The difference in coverage of worthy/unworthy victims revolves around the notion of details and emotions. Readers do not have an emotional connection with unworthy victims thus media does not go into detail of their lives or deaths.¹⁹

A different approach from these two aforementioned ones have been developed by the authors for this research. Being a worthy or unworthy victim is not linked to either relations of states or to perpetrator of the act, but with identity either ethnic or religious one stating belonging to Eastern or Western societies. If one considers the victims of the terrorist attacks of the ISIS, the preliminary results show that there is a significant discrepancy between the tweets that posted after attacks targeting western and eastern cities. The tendency is to divert much value to the victims in western cities and to demonstrate it in Twitter.

States and economic elites have the power to determine worthy and unworthy victims in accordance with their interests. They, together with the media, can decide how individuals think and talk about a specific issue for their own interests. Mass media can be called as a truth-determination center²⁰ since it can form public opinion and direct public attention into issues which are important for the interests of states and economic elites. In this process, framing

17 Edward S. Herman, Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, p. 37.

18 Omar Camarillo, Who are Deemed the 'Worthy' and 'Unworthy' Victims of Mexico's Drug-Related Violence?, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2018, pp. 1-15.

19 Ibidem, p. 12.

20 Diana Anggraeni Entman Framing Analysis of Food Governance in Online Media, *Jurnal the Messenger*, Vol. 10, No.1, 2018, p. 116.

takes a crucial role. According to R.M. Entman, framing is a 'process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation.'²¹ There is a link between how power and framing help to create reference points for individuals; accordingly, the one who gets the power can set the agenda and determine the worthiness. The frames for the determination of worthiness are characterized by stereotypes and media indicates moral judgments about the worthiness of victims.²²

Once the victims are determined as worthy or unworthy, these get legitimized by international media authorities by using cultivation methods. Cultivation Theory examines long-term effects of television and states that people spending more time on watching TV are more likely to believe the social reality portrayed on television.²³ Like planting a seed, television cultivates in people's minds. The theory is in line with cultural resonance, which states that viewers, whose real-life experiences are congruent with television portrayals, will be most affected by television viewing. For instance, television programs consisting of violence and crime specifically resonate for the viewers, who are exposed to violence or direct experience with crime, with a double dose of the television messages and boost cultivation.²⁴ As expressed in Cultivation Theory, media elites, especially gatekeepers, construct the news by giving a special attention to the worthy victims, whereas the unworthy victims are rarely represented in the news. As this biased news is repeated frequently via media, people start to believe unconsciously that some victims are more valuable than others. When people become prosumers via social media, they are likely to treat victims in accordance with the cultivated thoughts of the states and economic elites; and thus, they analyze the event with respect to these opinions.

Twitter, as a social media tool, provides a different environment for its users and let them to compose virtual communities which is defined as a social network composed by individuals via internet in order to state their mutual interests and goals.²⁵ Within these virtual communities, individual Twitter users become *prosumer* as they both produce and consume simultaneously like being user of the internet.²⁶ With a user account, individuals get the chance to produce the contents and to consume them at the same time. The most important point on that is to see what individuals produce with the chance that they get. Individuals' posts on Twitter about the attacks demonstrating their emotions, thoughts, feel-

21 Robert M. Entman, Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power, *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 57, 2007, p. 164.

22 Omar Camarillo, Who are Deemed the 'Worthy' and 'Unworthy' Victims of Mexico's Drug-Related Violence?, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2018, p. 12.

23 George Gerbner, Cultivation Analysis: An Overview, *Mass Communication and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1998, pp. 175-194.

24 *International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, Patrick Rössler (ed.), Vol. 2, Wiley-Blackwell, 2017, p. 300.

25 Howard Rheingold, *Are Virtual Communities Harmful to Civil Society*, 4 September 1995, <http://www.well.com/~hhr/tomorrow/vccivil.html>, (accessed 12.04.2019).

26 Dan Laughey, *Medya Çalışmaları: Teoriler ve Yaklaşımlar*, A. Toprak (Trans.), Kalkedon Yayınları, İstanbul, 2010, pp. 66-67.

ings etc. have been analyzed for the case of this research study. The Cultivation Theory explains that the media coverages on televisions have significant effects on individuals, especially on heavy viewers rather than light viewers, as they tend to believe what they see on TVs and their perception of reality changes.²⁷ The link between media coverages and prejudices against certain groups of societies has been significant for various cases. Islam has been at the center of this type of linkage since the time that Muslims started to share a common public sphere with western people. E. Said, for instance, highlighted this issue in 1981 within the framework of American media and its ability to shape public opinion, which was formed with framing and pointing out stereotypes regarding Muslims.²⁸ Since the 9/11, western-oriented conventional media, within a wider perspective, has significantly increased its influence on public opinion in western world in terms of the perception of Islam. Media coverages about Islam have frequently been linked with terror. In a detailed analysis that J. Esposito²⁹ highlights, a major media monitor named Media Tenor examined 975,000 news stories from BBC, ABC and CBS in the EU and the U.S.A. from. In comparison between 2001 and 2011, results demonstrate that news focusing on extremist militants with Islamic identity was calculated as 2% and news covering Muslims within a general perspective was limited with 0.1% in 2001. In 2011, a dramatic change was observed in news covering militants. It increased to 25% from 2% in a decade, while news covering Muslims was equal to the ratio of 2001, 0.1%. The 9/11 had already brought about significant relevance between Islam and terrorism; consequently, it became a very significant reason for settlement of Islamophobia in western public mind.³⁰ Additionally, aforementioned media coverages *cultivated* the idea in public mind and affected them in negative way in terms of perception of Islam.

In terms of cultivated negative opinions about Islam is not only an outcome of the media coverages. S. Sheehi defines various actors in terms of spreading of pejorative opinions including, think-tanks, policy centers, strategy centers and so on, and he states that it is an ideological campaign against Muslims.³¹ Islamophobia, the term that is used to stress anti-Islamic and/or anti-Muslim attitudes and behaviors with various different forms, is not a new phenomenon in the literature; however, it has recently gained its popularity for its current meaning, which is negative attitudes and/or feelings towards Islam and Muslims.³² Its recent usage

27 George Gerbner, *Cultivation Analysis: An Overview*, *Mass Communication and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1998, pp. 175-194.

28 Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Pantheon Books, New York, 2011.

29 John Esposito, "Islamophobia and Multiculturalism", in: *Tarabya International Conference on Islamophobia: Law and Media*, Yıldız Hüseyin (ed.), Office of the Prime Minister Directorate General of Press and Information, Ankara, 2013, pp. 27-31.

30 Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2005, p. 220.

31 Stephen Sheehi, *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign Against Muslims*, Clarity Press, Atlanta, 2011.

32 Eric Bleich, What is Islamophobia and How Much Is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept, *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 55, No. 12, 2011, p. 1582.

is commonly linked with the renown 1997 Report of the Runnymede Trust,³³ a UK-based think tank, titled as 'Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All,' in which it was defined as dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims, and was referred as unfair. The reason why it has its place on international agenda was the 9/11. It settled in Europe with 11 March 2004 Madrid and 7 July 2005 London bombings, and it would not be wrong to claim that it gained its utmost usage with attacks in Paris in 2015 with several additional international components.

Even though, there is not a clear notion that may define Islamophobia, it includes a wide range of acts including offensive, insulting and/or violation of Muslims' rights.³⁴ These acts, alongside behaviors, can be either attitudinal or behavioral.³⁵ Attitudinal Islamophobia consist of opinion-based discrimination, prejudices etc. whilst behavioral Islamophobia means violence against Muslims and discriminatory actions and/or policies. With respect to that description, it would not be wrong to claim that hate speech (in other words tweets, within the scope of this research) would be a discriminatory act both in attitudinal and behavioral dimensions, since it is originated by opinion-based actions and includes behaviors of prosumers with the help of social media features.

Today, with the help of social media tools, an incident can instantly be spread worldwide; hence, an attack has much power to frighten more people and that serves perfectly to the purpose of any act of terrorism. The attacks of the ISIS in western cities empowered Islamophobia within a wider geography than the actual target of the act. While the information about a certain incident can be spread, reactions and the effects are shared via social media, as well. Account holders of Twitter, the *prosumers*, post tweets about their reaction against terrorist attacks of the ISIS and preliminary results demonstrate that majority of them tend to explain what has been cultivated in their minds about Islam. Besides, like conventional media news, they assign much worthiness to certain victims of attacks perpetrated by the same terrorist group in terms of quantity of posted tweets. Within this frame, posted tweets were analyzed in order to see how people reacted to similar terrorist attacks of the ISIS and to examine these reactions.

Research Design

In this research study, reaction in Twitter against terrorist attacks, which were perpetrated by the ISIS in the West (Paris and Brussels) and the East (Beirut and Babil), is analyzed with qualitative content analysis method. These four

33 Trust Runnymede, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, Runnymede Trust Publication, London, 1997, pp. 1-4.

34 Adis Duderija, Halim Rane, *Islam and Muslims in the West: Major Issues and Debates*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

35 Henk Dekker, Joland Van der Noll, Islamophobia and Its Origins: A Study Among Dutch Youth. *IMISCOE Cross-Cluster Theory Conference: Interethnic Relations: Multidisciplinary Approaches*. Workshop: The Role of Emotions in Interethnic Relationships of Muslims: Feminism and Masculinities, 2009.

attacks were categorized as two sets in accordance with time period. The two attacks of the first set, Beirut and Paris, were perpetrated in November 2015 and the rest two attacks of the second set, Brussels and Babil, were perpetrated in March 2016.

The analysis is based on examination of the public hashtags created with the city name plus the word 'attack(s)' in Twitter. The reason why these hashtags were chosen is to maintain homogeneous representativeness ability of each attack by the logic of its creation. They possess their significance in terms of representing diverse reactions and its worldwide usage. Although there had been certain periods of time that some other hashtags became *trending topics* in Twitter, such as #PrayforParis, popularity of the chosen hashtags lasted longer. With respect to all aforementioned reasons, #ParisAttacks, #BrusselsAttacks, #BeirutAttacks and #BabilAttack hashtags were examined and sampling procedure resulted in a total number (n) of 9998 tweets posted following four days of the determined attack. During the decision-making process within the systematic of sampling, Beirut Attacks played a significant role since there were a small number of tweets posted during first two days following the attacks. However, the Paris Attacks and consequent reaction raised consciousness and prosumers started to react to both attacks alongside. This timing process provided another dimension for the purpose of the research in terms of ignorance of eastern attacks; hence, authors decided to extend the sampling procedure in four days. With respect to enormous number of tweets posted for Paris and Brussels attacks, first thousand tweets of each day were taken into the analysis in order to maintain homogeneity of the sample alongside its representativeness.

Virtual communities, whose parts can discuss and react instantly, form a new interest for scholars who would like to analyze public reaction for certain events, incidents etc. With research engineering, several computer-based methods have been developed, such as Apache Flume, R Programming, Twitter's API for data collection, Python, machine learning or information retrieval. These methods allow researchers to analyze millions of tweets very easily; however, they only provide sentiment analysis, which groups tweets with respect to its being positive, negative or neutral with determined sets of keywords, and/or categorization. Within this analysis, the authors preferred to conduct a comprehensive qualitative content analysis instead of sentiment analysis; therefore, computer-based methods would be ineffective to clarify the themes, emotions and reactions efficiently since the attacks brought about various emotions rather than just affirmation and rejection of certain keywords. Thus, the tweets were examined separately by the two authors in order to secure reliability of the data; hence, they were read chronologically, analyzed and commented one by one and categorized in accordance with their most dominant themes.

The authors made a general view first and with respect to this preliminary examination, they categorized the tweets. As a further step, the preliminary

categories were re-examined in order to achieve final logical categories which would be used during the content analysis. Then, in order to make analysis easy to understand for the reader, they re-gathered categories and labelled them with respect to their general understandings. The determined *labels* become 'Attacks,' 'Politics,' 'Terrorism,' 'Heroism' and 'Irrelevant.' Briefly, there have been five labels consisted of categories with respect to the contents of analyzed tweets. In terms of group composition, both labels and categories, inductive approach has been used since specific categorizations were made first then they were gathered into more general ones. Within this bottom-up approach, there have been no keywords since the entire content of the tweets were analyzed. Additionally, it is essential to express that during categorization, group titles were determined mostly with respect to common meanings while there have been certain categories entitled directly with the hashtags. Within the framework of this content analysis, only the tweets written in English were recorded and they were examined within their primary meanings. Last of all, there has been no correction for any typos that any cited tweet may contain.

The label 'Attacks' consists of four categories covering public reactions and general information about the attacks. The first category of the label is 'Emotional Reactions' under which tweets reflecting emotions of the public in the aftermath of attacks are gathered. The second one is 'Information and Breaking News About the Attacks' covering the general information about how the attack was carried out, who committed, how police reacted in the aftermath, how many injured or deaths etc. The third category is named 'Emphasis to Other Attacks' and is formed in order to find out whether any other attack was mentioned alongside the examined one or not. The last category is 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East' which gathers tweets highlighting complaints and critics about ignorance of the victims of attacks on the East.

The label 'Politics' focuses on any probable reason of the terrorist attacks, situation of refugees, foreigners and Muslim people and attitude of politicians and state officials in the aftermath of the attacks. This label is composed by three categories. The tweets accusing politicians for being responsible for the attacks are gathered under the category 'Policy Critics'. The category 'Islamophobia' is composed by the tweets stressing situation of refugees, foreigners and Muslim people and the tweets underlining xenophobia and racism alongside Islamophobia. Expressions of condolences and reactions of political and opinion leaders, and non-governmental organizations are grouped under the last category, 'Official Reactions.'

The label 'Terrorism' includes the tweets stressing 'The Acts of the ISIS' and referring to the hashtags of #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists and #MuslimsAreTerrorists. Under these hashtags, hashtag users intensely questioned whether there is a link between terrorist attacks of the ISIS and Islam, whether Islam is the cause of terrorism and whether all Muslims are terrorists or not.

The label 'Heroism' covers heroic stories of the attacks. Last of all, off-topic tweets like ads, pictures, trolls etc. were counted and labelled as 'Irrelevant'. As a final note concerning this content analysis, all the categories were divided into two subcategories whether the posted tweets were mentioning criticism or affirmation about Islam. Tweets *criticizing* Islam mainly contains negative perceptions in terms of violence, terrorism, polarization etc. while tweets *affirming* Islam mainly contains positive ones in terms of pacification, unification, providing tolerance etc. Only under 'The Acts of the ISIS' and 'Islamophobia' categories significant outcomes were recorded for this inquiry.

Research Findings

The aforementioned inductive approach was carried out in order to conduct a comprehensive qualitative content analysis of four different attacks in four cities under five labels. Each attack was taken and titled as following and ordered chronologically to facilitate the comparison between each city to the reader. Each label was explained in detail with its own categories under each attack with respect to its descending percentages overall.

Beirut Attacks

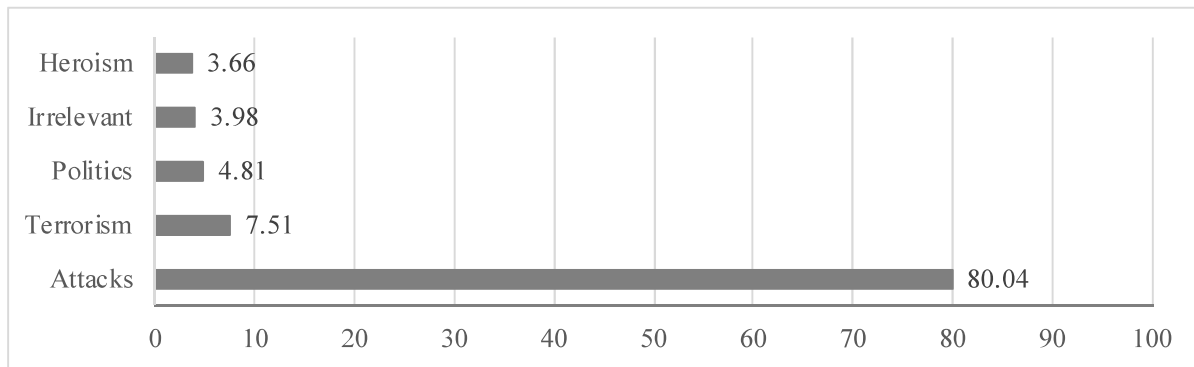
Beirut Attacks were perpetrated on 12 November 2015 in the southern part of the city, a Shia populated district named Burj al-Barajneh by two suicide bombers. Wael Abou Faour, the Minister of Public Health, stated that forty-three were killed and 240 were injured as a result of twin blasts perpetrated by the ISIS.³⁶ It was recorded as the "deadliest suicide bombing" in Beirut since the civil war ended twenty-five years ago.³⁷

Under the #BeirutAttacks (n=1994), while 97.44% of all tweets were neutral in terms of any probable reference to Islam, just 1.81% were opinionated. Only in 0.75% of the tweets, a relevancy between terrorism, which was to refer the acts of the ISIS, and Islam were emphasized whereas in 1.18% of them it was rejected. When all tweets were considered, the most tweet received label was 'Attacks' with 80.04% and the least tweet received label was 'Heroism' with 3.66% (See Graph 1). Apart from these findings, 3.98% of the tweets sent to #BeirutAttacks was labelled as 'Irrelevant'.

36 Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, ISIS Claims Responsibility for Blasts that Killed Dozens in Beirut, *New York Times*, 12 November 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/world/middleeast/lebanon-explosions-southern-beirut-hezbollah.html?_r=1, (accessed 10.10.2019).

37 Beirut Attacks: Suicide bombers kill dozens in Shia suburb, *BBC News* 12 November 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34795797>, (accessed 10.10.2019).

Graph 1: Ratios of Labels of Tweet Under the #BeirutAttacks Hashtag

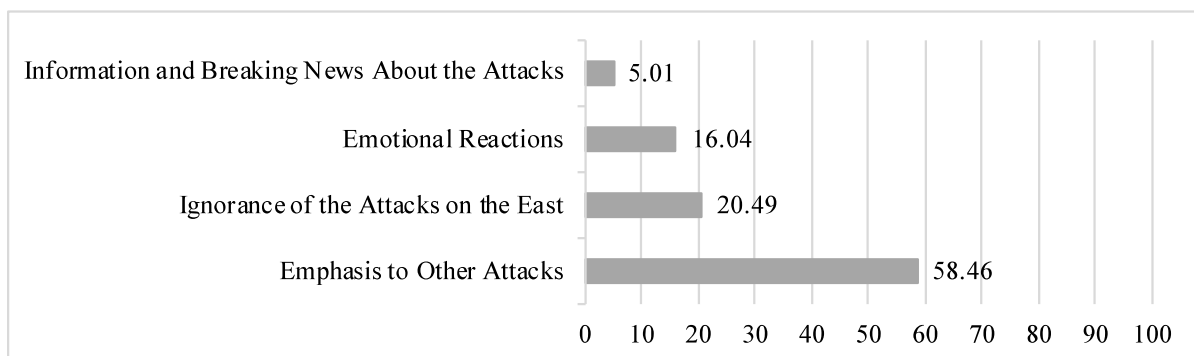


Source: authors

The Label 'Attacks' of #BeirutAttacks

The label was divided into four categories as aforementioned and each percentage was shown in the Graph 2.

Graph 2: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Attacks'



Source: authors

According to findings, 20.49% of the tweets laid emphasis on the fact that the disasters and terrorist attacks carried out in the East were consciously neglected. The most criticized issue was about Facebook's Safety Check button since it had been activated not for Beirut Attacks but for Paris Attacks which was perpetrated a day after:

- *'Facebook is a global platform. Sad to see Safety Check only turned on for western terrorist attacks #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'If we condemn the #ParisAttacks harshly we should condemn also the #BeirutAttacks #BaghdadAttacks taken together means'*
- *Beirut doesn't just FEEL forgotten it WAS forgotten. THAT itself is a tragedy #BeirutAttacks'*

- *'Without #ParisAttacks, most Arabs wouldn't have mentioned #BeirutAttacks. We are just as guilty as the media. Awareness stems from within.'*
- *'People died and we're arguing over which tragedy is worse. Why not show some empathy? #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'Beirut was once known as The Paris of the Middle East; the irony and coincidence for all the wrong reasons now #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'Difference between a Muslim & non Muslim life - People still talking on #ParisAttacks, but nobody remembers #BeirutAttacks, not even Muslims'*

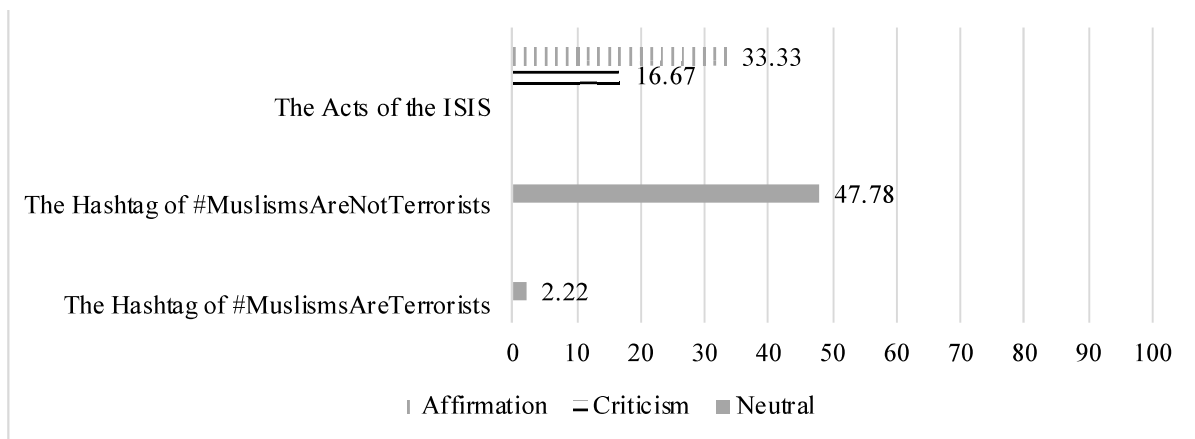
Although the worthiness was assigned by conventional media within general perspective, it was social media in this case since Facebook Safety Check button was activated for those in Paris, these people can be named as *worthy* victims whereas those in Beirut were *unworthy*. Additionally, under this label any relevancy between Islam and terrorism was not found.

Under this label, 58.46% of the tweets were about other attacks and/or disasters which were mainly; #ParisAttacks, #PrayForPalestine, #BaghdadAttacks, #BaghdadBombing, #KenyaAttack, #ParisAttacks, #SilvanUnderAttack, #YolaAttack, #AnkaraAttack, #Baghdad, #egyptcrash, #GarissaAttack, #JapanEarthquake, #KenyaAttack, #MexicoEarthquake, #NigeriaAttack, #NusaybinUnderAttack, #PrayForEgypt, #PrayForKurdistan, #PrayForSyria, #RussianPlain, #SinaiCrash, #SyrianWar, #Tunisiaattack, #TurkeyAttacks, #YemenCrisis, #YemenUnderAttack. One of the most notable findings within the label 'Attacks' was that in 21.05% of the tweets only Beirut Attacks were stressed whereas in 47.93% of them Beirut Attacks were mentioned alongside Paris Attacks. In the first day of the Beirut Attacks hardly any tweets were sent to #BeirutAttacks; however, in the aftermath of the Paris Attacks, the tweets sent to the same hashtag raised noticeably.

The Label 'Terrorism' of #BeirutAttacks

The label 'Attacks' was followed by 'Terrorism' with 7.51%. 16.67% of the tweets laid emphasis on the relevancy between the acts of the ISIS and Islam whereas 33.33% of them rejected the link and affirmed Islam as shown in Graph 3. Moreover, in 47.78% of the tweets #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists and only in 2.22% of them #MuslimsAreTerrorists hashtags were used and that is quite different from findings of #ParisAttacks which will be discussed in following topics.

Graph 3: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Terrorism'



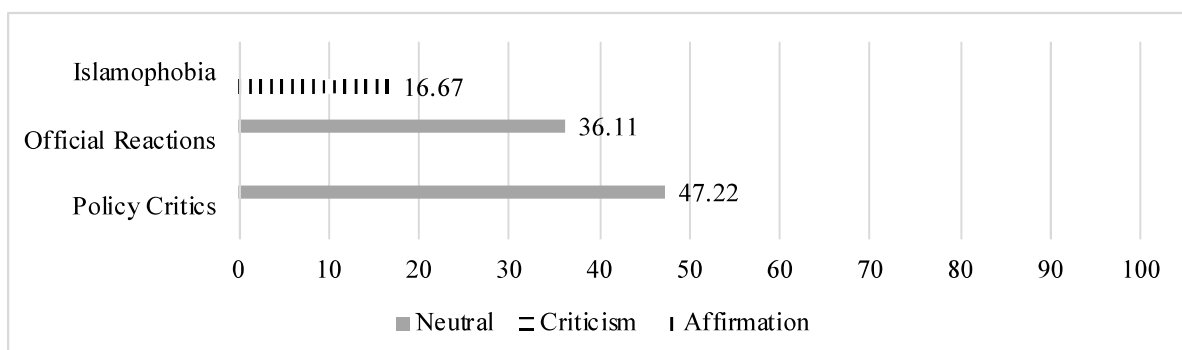
Source: authors

The Label 'Politics' of #BeirutAttacks

The third most tweet received label of #BeirutAttacks was 'Politics' with 4.81%. According to 47.22% of the tweets as shown in the Graph 4, hashtag users considered politicians responsible for terrorist attacks. Among all, western countries and Israel were repeatedly pointed out as responsible:

- *'Question is that will #France continue its financial and Weaponry support for #ISIS after #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'#ParisAttacks and #BeirutAttacks same enemy is behind as #Zionist Israel and its project #ISIS'*
- *Israeli PM Netanyahu must be tried for war crimes. #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks #Prayers4Paris #PakistanWithFrance'*

Graph 4: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Politics'



Source: authors

'Policy Critics' was followed by 'Official Reactions' with 36.11% and then by 'Islamophobia' with 16.67% which was composed by affirmations about Islam:

- *'Let's not pray for Paris, religion won't stop religious fundamentalism. Let's fight against religious ideology. #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'Don't pray for #Paris, #fight against hateful religious ideology! #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'Being a terrorist is a choice. Your skin color or religion doesn't make you a terrorist. Love! #BeirutAttacks'*
- *'It's not immigrants but intolerance. Thanks @MaajidNawaz for your wise words. #ParisAttacks #BeirutAttacks'*

The Label 'Heroism' of #BeirutAttacks

Under the label 'Heroism', there were two different cases that attracted the attention of users. Haidar Moustafa (10.96%) and Adel Termos (89.04%) were the repeatedly mentioned names. Haidar is a three-year-old boy who lost his family during Beirut Attacks. Hashtag users started a campaign via social media, especially via Twitter, in order to make his wish, which was meeting with Cristiano Ronaldo, come true. As a result of the campaign, Real Madrid Football Club invited Moustafa to Madrid and he had the chance to meet with Ronaldo,³⁸ and a similar meeting was held with another victimized Palestinian kid in 2016.³⁹ This can be pointed out as an assigned worthiness by Ronaldo to certain victims. In the other case, Adel Termos, a thirty-two-year-old father, was praised in the tweets since his intervention forced the bomber to detonate his suicide and thus, he has saved dozens of lives.⁴⁰

Paris Attacks

The Paris Attacks were perpetrated as series of coordinated terrorist attacks of the ISIS on 13 November 2015 including suicide bombers around *Stade de France* in Saint-Denis, a suburb in northern Paris, and a mass shooting alongside hostage-taking at the Bataclan Theatre. As a result of the attacks which were perpetrated by the ISIS, 130 people were killed, and hundreds were injured.⁴¹

38 Watch the incredible moment Cristiano Ronaldo meets Lebanese orphan, who left in tears, *Mirror*, 20 December 2015, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/football/news/watch-incredible-moment-cristiano-ronaldo-7045056>, (accessed 10.10.2019).

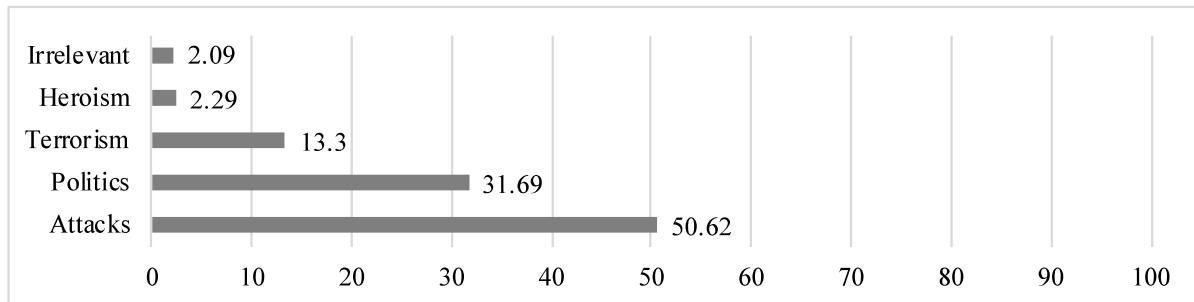
39 Dawabsheh meets his hero Cristiano Ronaldo, *Middle East Monitor*, 18 March 2016, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20160318-dawabsheh-meets-his-hero-cristiano-ronaldo/>, (accessed 15.07.2020).

40 Eleftheriou-Smith, Loulla-Mae, Adel Termos: Hero father 'saved hundreds of lives' by tackling second Beirut suicide bomber, *Independent*, 16 November 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/adel-termos-hero-father-saved-hundreds-of-lives-by-tackling-second-suicide-bomber-in-beirut-a6735776.html>, (accessed 10.10.2019).

41 Claire Toureille, Paris Remains Defiant One Year After ISIS Attacks, *Europe Newsweek*, 13 November 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/paris-attacks-victims-anniversary-bataclan-isis-520041?rm=eu>, (accessed 15.10.2019).

The most and the least tweet received labels of #ParisAttacks (n=4000) were 'Attacks' with 50.62% and 'Irrelevant' with 2.09% (See Graph 5). Among all 'Irrelevant' tweets, the most stressed issue was about 13rd Friday: *'Is all this shit happening 'cause of friday 13 or...? #ParisAttacks'*

Graph 5: Ratios of Labels of Tweet Under the #ParisAttacks Hashtag



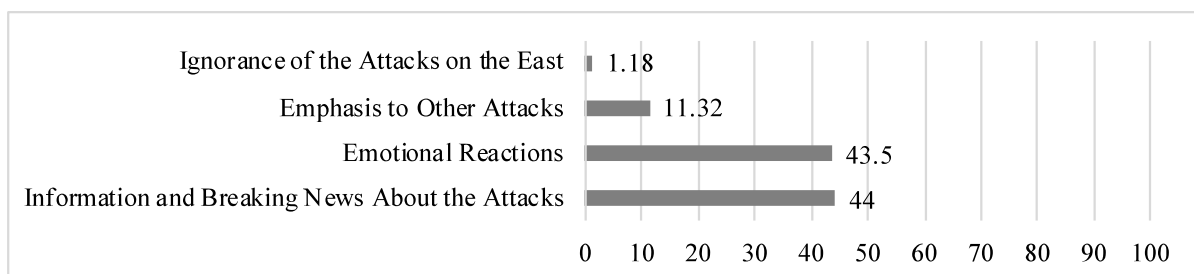
Source: authors

The Label 'Attacks' of #ParisAttacks

The most tweet received label was 'Attacks' with 50.62%. When the categories were considered, the most tweet received one with 44% was 'The Information and the Breaking News About the Attack' and was followed by 'Emotional Reactions' which contained hashtag users' condolences: (See Graph 6)

- *'Shocked how vulnerable and insecure the world has become. Thoughts and prayers with #Paris tonight. #ParisAttacks'*
- *'It's hard to focus on anything when people across the globe are living in a nightmare. #ParisAttacks'*

Graph 6: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Attacks'



Source: authors

It is important to note that only 1.57% of the tweets laid emphasis on Beirut Attacks which was carried out just a day before Paris Attacks: *'Wish the world would have shared Lebanese flags the way Lebanese are sharing French flag. #ParisAttacks'*

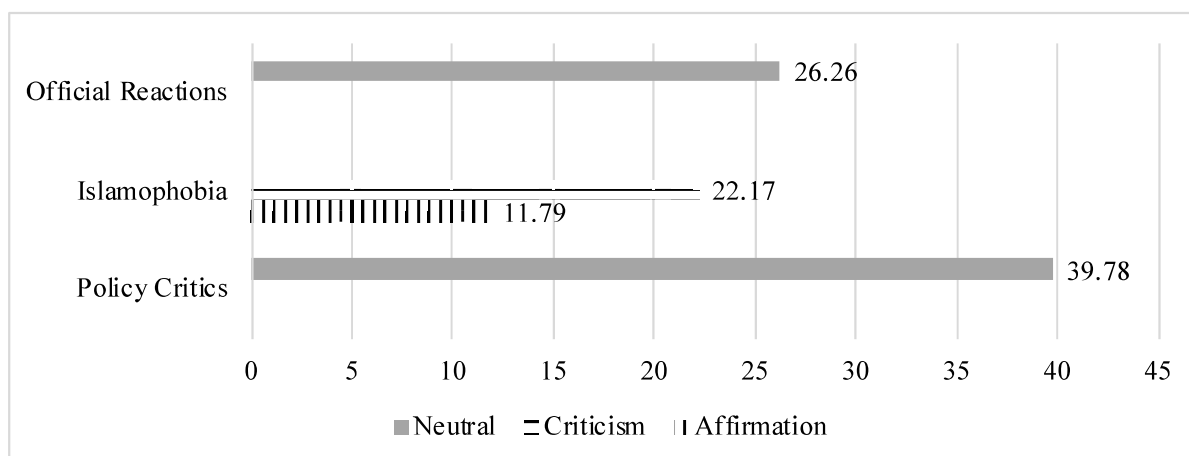
sAttacks’ In this label, 11.32% of the tweets were about other attacks which are mainly: #BeirutAttacks, #PrayforJapan, #PrayforBaghdad. By emphasizing other attacks and underlining the ignorance of the East, the following tweet stressed situation of the *unworthy* victims: *‘If today we are France, then we should also be Syria, Lebanon and Iraq’*.

The Label ‘Politics’ of #ParisAttacks

The second most tweet received label about Paris Attacks was ‘Politics’. Under this label, 39.78% of the tweets was about policy critics as shown in the Graph 7. Hashtag users pointed out politicians as responsible for the attack. Different from Beirut, hashtag users canalized their blame on politicians from a wider geography:

- *‘@SputnikInt France backed and armed ‘moderate’ islamists in syria for 5+ years. What could have POSSIBLY go wrong.... #paris #parisattacks’*
- *‘The fact that that #Hollande & #Cameron are ‘shocked’ at #ISIS #ParisAttacks show how incompetent & impotent they are as Leaders... should #Resign’*
- *‘#ParisAttacks: The Betrayal of #France #Germany & #UK by #Hollande #Merkel & #Cameron. #CloseOurBorders #LeaveEU GB’*
- *‘France is learning a hard lesson re: Strong #Borders, Sovereignty & Assimilation. @realDonaldTrump #ParisAttacks’*
- *‘Let him shut up. Without Erdogan there would be no ISIS. #ParisAttacks’*
- *‘#Erdogan sponsoprs #ISIS to fight #PKK but that not against Kurds only but against all Humanity #ParisAttacks #investogateTurkeyISIS’*

Graph 7: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label ‘Politics’



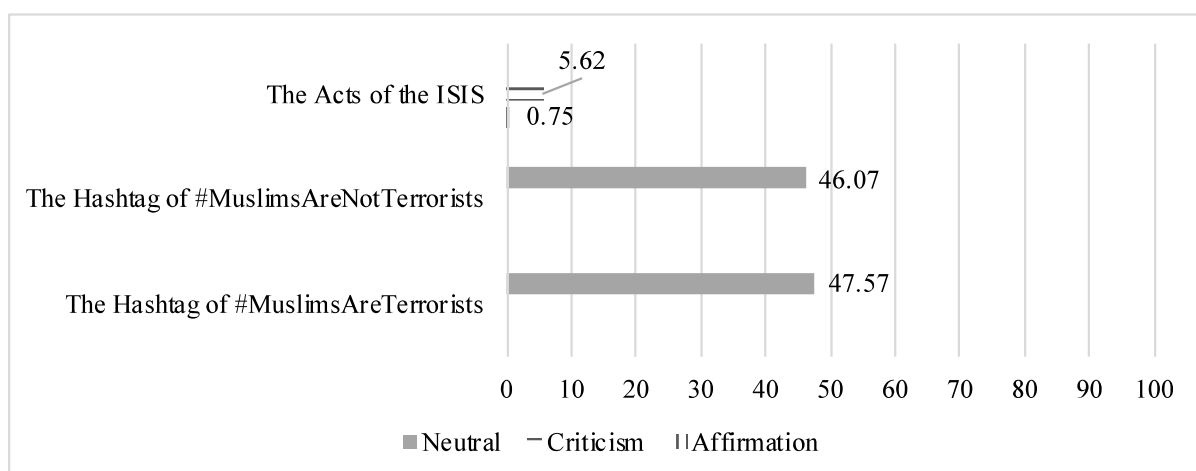
Source: authors

'Policy Critics' was followed by 'Islamophobia' with 22.17% that contains hashtag users' biased thoughts about Muslims and refugees. In 11.79% of the 'Islamophobia' tweets, it was emphasized that there wasn't any relation among Islam, refugees and terrorism: *'I wouldn't doubt if they somehow blame this attack on the "refugees" and start a French vs. Refugees sentiments #ParisAttacks'*. The last category of 'Politics' consisted of the 'Official Reactions' with 26.26% which were mainly condolence messages and acts of politicians, non-governmental organizations and opinion leaders.

The Label 'Terrorism' of #ParisAttacks

Another important label of the #ParisAttacks was 'Terrorism', which mainly consisted of Muslim identity and its link with terrorism. As shown in the Graph 8, in 47.57% of the tweets #MuslimsAreTerrorists and in 46.07% of them #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists hashtags were used, which is quite different from findings of the #BeirutAttacks. Since the target was a non-Muslim society, the cultivated link between Muslimhood and terrorism was awakened. Consequently, while #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists maintained its ratio in a similar proportion, the ratio of #MuslimsAreTerrorists increased dramatically in comparison with Beirut Attacks. In 5.62% of the tweets it was claimed that the ISIS' acts were in relation to Islam whereas in 0.75% of them the relation between them was rejected: *'Before you blame Muslims or Islam for the crimes of ISIS in Paris. Remember ISIS have killed over 100.000 Muslims.'* Furthermore, among all, idea of establishing collective security against the ISIS had significantly attracted the attention: *'This better prompt a multi nation attack on ISIS, ground troops and all, for as long as it takes. #ParisAttacks'*

Graph 8: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Terrorism'



Source: authors

The Label 'Heroism' of #ParisAttacks

When Paris Attacks were examined according to heroic stories, a Muslim security guard named Zouheir stopping a suicide bomber from entering the Stade de France and thus saving hundreds of lives, was mentioned with 2.29%. The story of Zouheir had been mentioned more than 8 thousand times on Twitter, with all of the most popular tweets in reference to the Paris Attacks:⁴²

- *'The bravery of one man who saved many #Zouheir security guard at Stadium #ParisAttacks #PrayForPeace'*
- *'Security guard #Zouheir! blocked the suicide bomber from entering Stade de France #ParisAttacks'*
- *'I think we should make #Zouheir trending to thank him for saving 100's of lives in the #ParisAttacks'*

However soon after, it was realized that the story of Zouheir was a viral heroic story. The source of this false information was a tweet that the Wall Street Journal quoted a day after the attack. In this tweet, a security guard was referred since he didn't let the attacker inside the stadium after noticing his explosive vest.⁴³

- *The Zouheir story is false. He was a security guard at the stadium, but had no contact with the suicide bomber. #Zouheir #ParisAttacks'*
- *'Viral story of a 'Muslim hero' security guard at #French stadium was #fake. #Zouheir #ParisAttacks'*
- *'The myth of #Zouheir, a 'hero Muslim security guard' in Paris #parisattacks'*

This misinterpretation demonstrates the power of social media in spreading the news and information all around the world.

Brussels Attacks

The Brussels Attacks were perpetrated in Brussels Airport in Zaventem and Maalbeek Metro Station in city central, by three coordinated suicide bombers, on 22 March 2016. 32 civilians were killed and more than 300 were injured as a result of the blasts. The ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks.⁴⁴

Under #BrusselsAttacks (n=4000), 68.76% of the tweets were sent to 'Attacks' label in order to express the hashtag users' condolences, and this was followed by 'Politics' with 16.10%, then by 'Terrorism' with 12.31%, as shown in the Graph

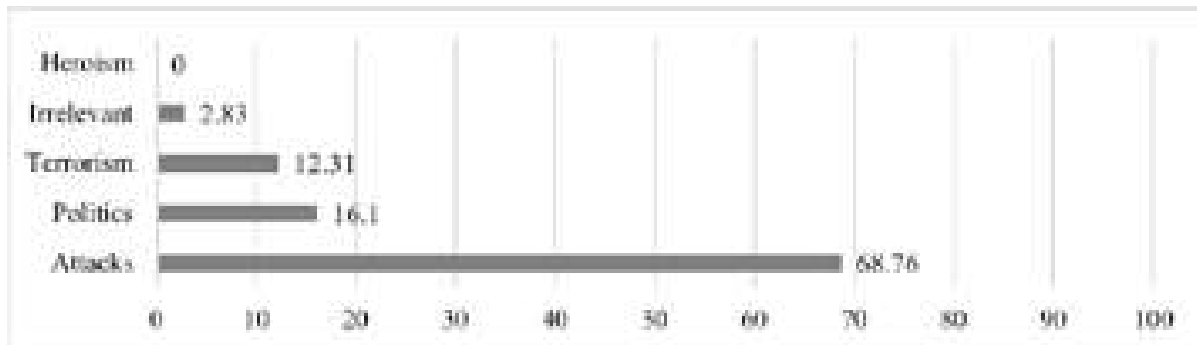
42 The Mith of Zouheir, a 'hero Muslim security guard' in Paris, *BBC News*, 17 November 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-34845882>, (accessed 15.10.2019).

43 Roisin O'Connor, Paris attacks: The truth behind the viral story of Zouheir the 'Muslim hero security guard who stopped suicide bomber at Stade de France', *Independent*, 17 November 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris-attacks-the-truth-behind-viral-story-of-zouheir-the-muslim-hero-security-guard-who-stopped-a6737981.html>, (accessed 15.10.2019).

44 Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks, *BBC News*, 9 April 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35869985>, (accessed 15.10.2019).

9. Any heroic stories were not discovered. Apart from these findings, 2.83% of the tweets sent to #BrusselsAttacks hashtag was labelled as 'Irrelevant', such as 'MariahCarey cancels concert in #Brussels planned for Sunday in the aftermath of the #BrusselsAttacks'.

Graph 9: Ratios of Labels of Tweet Under the #BrusselsAttacks Hashtag

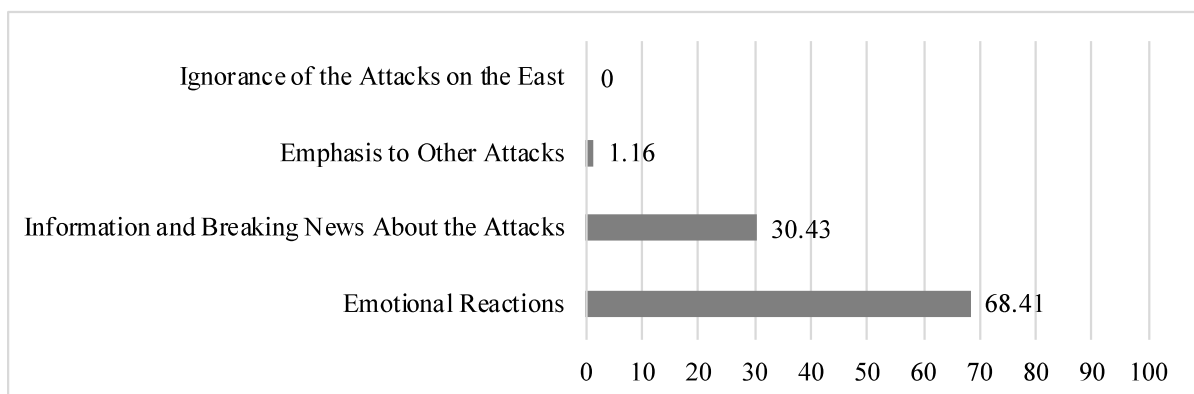


Source: authors

The Label 'Attacks' of #BrusselsAttacks

Within the most tweet received label, 'Attacks', any relevancy between Islam and terrorism was not found. When the categories were considered, most tweet received one was 'Emotional Reactions', which contains hashtag users' condolences, with 68.41% and this was followed by 'Information and the Breaking News about the Attack' with 30.43%. Under 'Attacks' label, only 1.16% of the tweets were about other terrorist attacks, which were #ParisAttacks, #Paris, #London, #BaghdadAttack ve #IraqiAttacks hashtags. Apart from these findings, any tweet mentioning the 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East' was not recorded thus no mention for *unworthy* victims were found (See Graph 10).

Graph 10: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Attacks'



Source: authors

The Label 'Politics' of #BrusselsAttacks

The second tweet received label was 'Politics'. As in Paris Attacks, in Brussels Attacks, with 59.72%, politicians were claimed responsible for giving support to terrorist attacks or for not preventing them:

- *'Sad that we live in a world where a terror attack is used by politicians and presidential candidates for their own agenda. #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'The media & politicians love terrorists, because they use that fear to manipulate the masses of people & the world #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'If Trump is going to kill ISIS and Iran then #AlwaysTrump #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'You know we are screwed when we look to Donald trump as the leader in the fight against Isis #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'Trump is as much an evil as the terrorists & ISIS that perpetrated the Paris & #BrusselsAttacks.'*

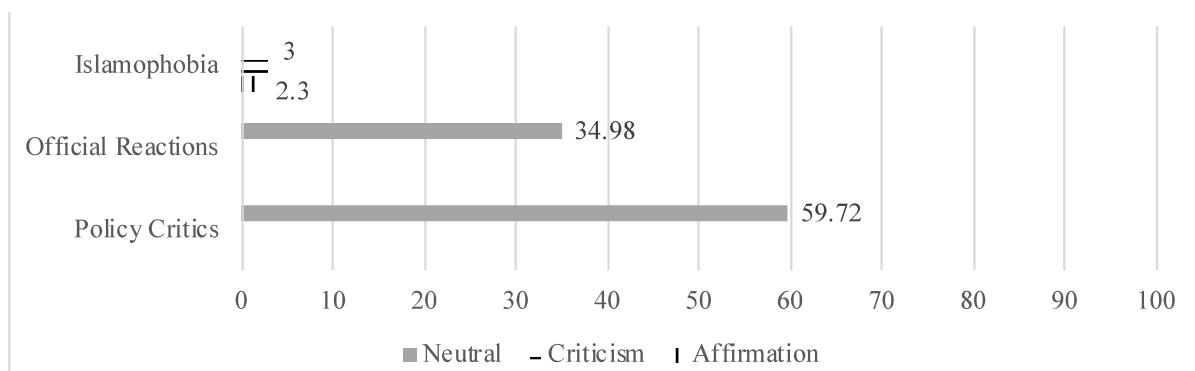
Barack Obama was on target of the criticisms since he was attending a baseball match during the aftermath of the attacks:

- *'Why was @BarackObama at a baseball game instead of back in DC creating a plan to defeat ISIS? #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'#BrusselsAttacks Obama should just resign & go play golf, catch some MLB, visit celebs, travel the world. And let a serious person be POTUS.'*

In the label 'Politics', 'Policy Critics' category was followed by 'Official Reactions' with 34.98% and by 'Islamophobia' with 5.30% both in positive and negative aspects (See Graph 11):

- *Don't use the #BrusselsAttacks as an excuse to display your Islamophobia.'*
- *'Islamophobia is a term created by the Muslim Brotherhood to stifle legit criticism, based off of homophobia's success. #BrusselsAttacks'*
- *'#BrusselsAttacks Europe's borders are TOO FORGIVING for refugees and America shouldn't let Muslims into their Country'*

Graph 11: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Politics'

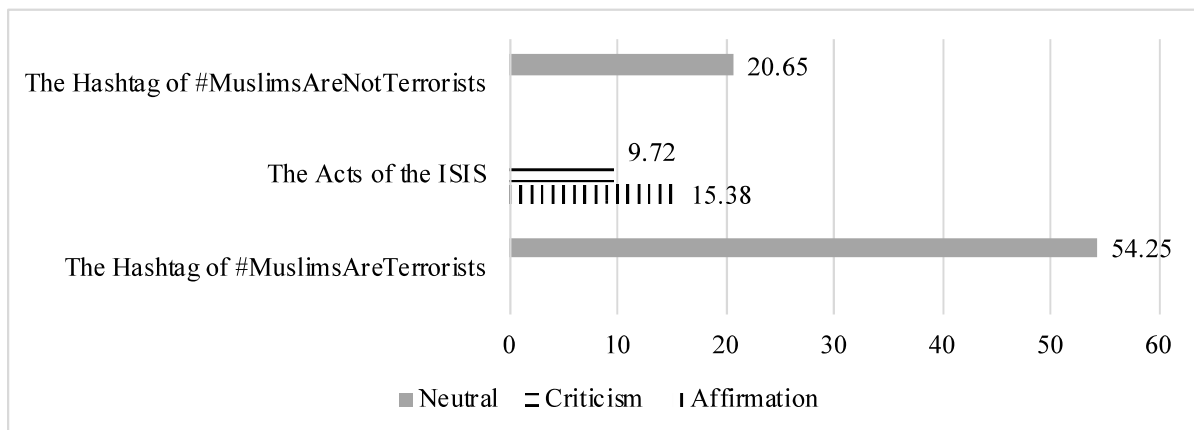


Source: authors

The Label 'Terrorism' of #BrusselsAttacks

The third most tweet received label was 'Terrorism' and in 54.25% of the tweets in it #MuslimsAreTerrorists hashtag was used. This was followed by acts of the ISIS and #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists hashtag in respectively (See Graph 12).

Graph 12: Ratios of Categories of Tweets Under the Label 'Terrorism'



Source: authors

Babil Attack

The Babil Attack was perpetrated by a suicide bomber, who blew himself up in al-Shuhadaa stadium in the village of al-Asriya, near Iskandariya in the Babil Governorate on 25 March 2016. Nearly 40 civilians were killed and more than 150 were injured as a result of the blast. The ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.⁴⁵ There was not a certainty about the exact number of the deaths or injured, meaning that not only this attack was ignored but also its victims were labelled as *unworthy*. To support this claim, it would not be wrong to demonstrate the total number of the tweets posted to hashtag, which was only four (n=4). The search was made for both #BabilAttack and #BabylonAttack, since Iraqis use both Babil Governorate name and Babylon Province, to which just two tweets were posted for each. As a result, this topic of the research is based on the following four tweets:

- *People in #MiddleEast r suffering from #ISIS the most, accusing the victims for what terrorists do is stupid #Iraq #BabilAttack 2/2'* (The Category of Islamophobia)
- *'Hey people , there is a media group supports #ISIS would you attack'm ? @AlJazeera #BrusselsAttacks #BabilAttack #IraqBombings'* (The Category of Policy Critics)

⁴⁵ Iraq buries young victims of football pitch bomb carnage, *Daily Mail*, 26 March 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3509703/Suicide-bomber-kills-25-south-Baghdad-police.html>, (accessed 21.10.2019)

- *'Why? Perhaps because of our death is a normal thing!#PrayForIraaq #PrayForTheWorld #Baghdadattack #babylonattack'* (The Category of Ignorance of the Attacks on the East)
- *'The last match #PrayForIraaq #PrayForBaghdad #Baghdadattack #babylonattack #Terrorism #iraq #baghdad'* (The Category of Emotional Reactions)

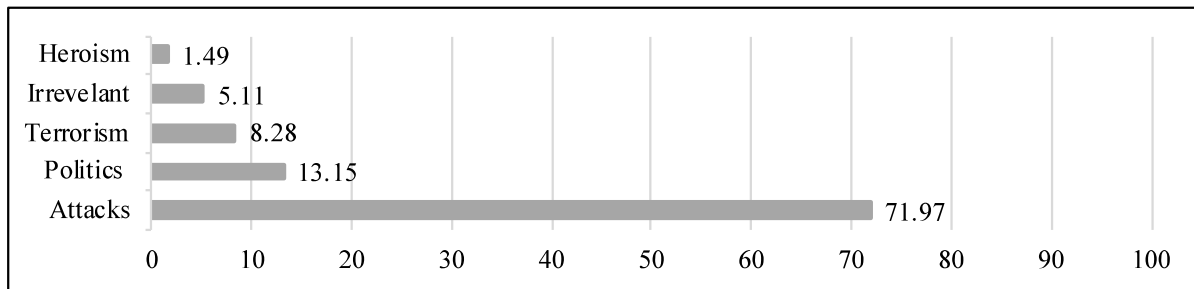
Discussions

Twitter as a social media tool, that provides virtual communities, has become an important focus for worldwide reactions over a certain incident. Alongside the aforementioned one, there are couple of advantages of an analysis over Twitter. For instance, it is possible to analyse instant reactions that form significant public opinion within a very short period of time. As another example, since there are limited characters for one single post, prosumers tend to provide primary meanings of their opinions, emotions, reactions etc. Besides, this character limitation feature of Twitter helps researchers to conduct content analysis with no obligatory requirement for keywords. On the other hand, there are weaknesses of using Twitter for an analysis; because, limited character posts, which was mentioned as an advantage above, become a disadvantage in terms of numbers that should be analyzed. In order to achieve significant results, thousands of them should be taken into account for a research. As another disadvantage, in certain cases, in accordance with changed, conflicted or overlapped interests, prosumers may delete their posts. Additionally, there are troll and/or fake user accounts that may pave the way for misinformation; hence, they should be excluded. To avoid any probable risk that might be resulted by these aspects of Twitter, certain amount of time has been consumed for the content analysis, on which this research is based.

Regarding the results, without referring to a special attack, 3.48% of posted tweets laid emphasis on the relation between the acts of the ISIS and Islam whereas 2.50% of them rejected this relation. When attacks were ignored, the most tweet received label was 'Attacks' with 71.97% and was followed by 'Politics' with 13.15%, 'Terrorism' with 8.28% and 'Heroism' with 1.49% in respectively. Finally, 5.11% of all the tweets were labelled as 'Irrelevant' (See Graph 13).

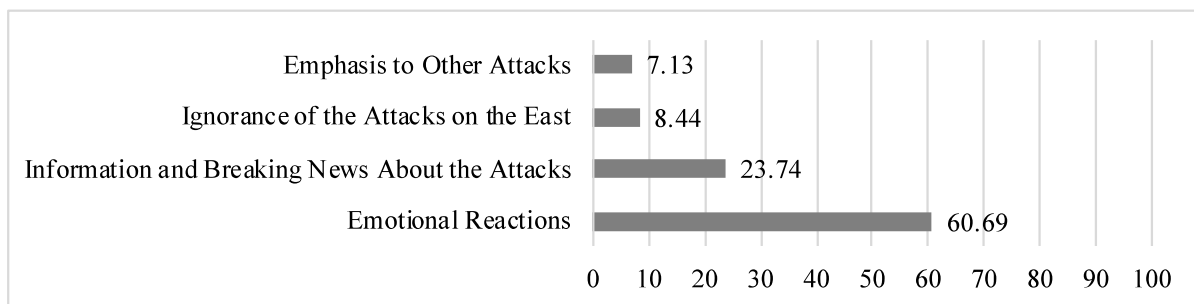
As shown in the Graph 14, the outstanding category of 'Attacks' label was 'Emotional Reactions' with 60.69% and was followed by 'Information and Breaking News about the Attacks' with 23.74%. The last two ranks of the 'Attacks' label belonged to 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East' and 'Emphasis to Other Attacks' demonstrating that terrorist attacks in eastern part of the world were relatively ignored by the Twitter users. This also means that victims of eastern world were seen as *unworthy* to mention. When the other attacks stressed in #BeirutAttacks and #ParisAttacks were compared, it can be said that attacks stressed in Beirut hashtag were more eastern-oriented.

Graph 13: Tweet Ratios of Labels without Referring to Attacks



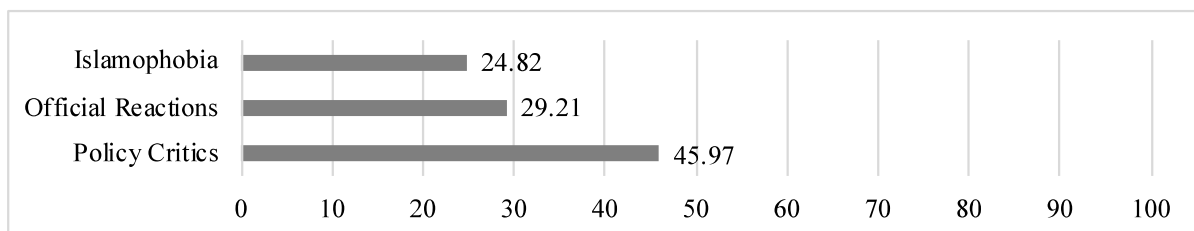
Source: authors

Graph 14: Tweet Ratios of 'Attacks' Label's Categories without Referring to Attacks



Source: authors

Graph 15: Tweet Ratios of 'Politics' Label's Categories without Referring to Attacks



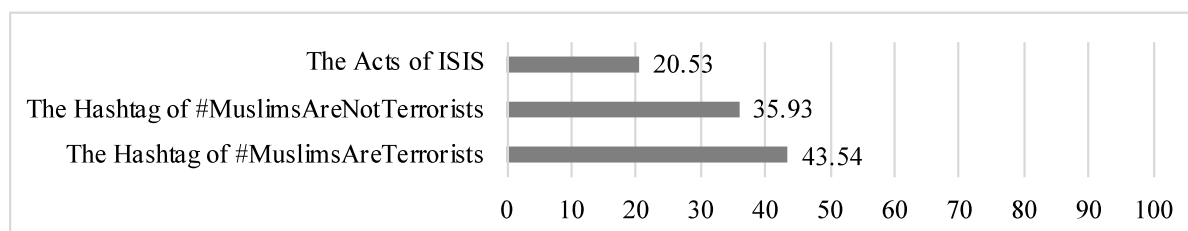
Source: authors

When all the attacks were counted together, 'Attacks' was followed by 'Politics'. In 45.97% of the related tweets, politicians and their policies were criticized for supporting terrorism. The second most tweet received category with 29.21% was 'Official Reactions' and the third one was 'Islamophobia' with 24.82% as shown in the Graph 15. Furthermore, it was found out that tweets stressing the relation between Islam and terrorism was nearly two times more than the tweets rejecting that relation. Apart from these, as Wayin, a social media company, reported more than 200.000 tweets mentioning #StopIslam hashtag were posted following the Brussels Attacks, as in Paris Attacks, in which the debate over a probable link between Islam and terrorism became one of the trending topics

on Twitter.⁴⁶

The third most tweet received label was ‘Terrorism’, regardless of any specific attack. In 43.54% of the tweets #MuslimsAreTerrorists and in 35.93% of them #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists were used. Under this label, although Islam’s effect on terrorism, especially on the acts of the ISIS, was rejected in the 11.59% of the tweets, in 8.94% of them this effect was supported, and Islam was pointed out as the reason of terrorism and the ISIS (See Graph 16). In fact, the rejection was higher than confirmation in terms of ratios; however, when the total number of the tweets is taken into consideration, 8.94% represents considerably significant number of tweets in other words, opinions of the prosumers’.

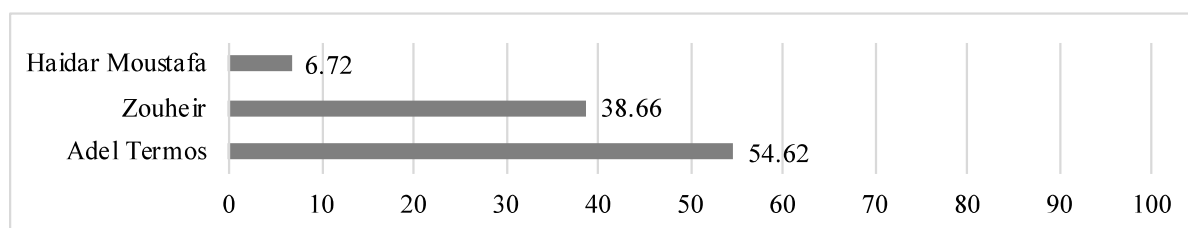
Graph 16: Tweet Ratios of ‘Terrorism’ Label’s Categories without Referring to Attacks



Source: authors

When all the attacks were counted together, the least tweet received label was ‘Heroism’, which was recorded only for Paris and Beirut attacks. The most popular heroic story among these was Adel Termos with 54.62% and his story was followed by Zouheir and Haidar Moustafa in respectively (See Graph 17). Regarding this label, it is essential to highlight that there was no tweet relating ISIS and its attacks with heroism within the scope of the analysis. With or without linkage with Islam, all analyzed tweets blamed the attacks and the perpetrator.

Graph 17: Tweet Ratios of ‘Heroism’ Label’s Categories without Referring to Attacks



Source: authors

46 Imam Jareen, Social media users denounce #StopIslam trend after attack, *CNN*, 22 March 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/22/world/brussels-attacks-stop-islam-irpt/>, (accessed 15.10.2019).

Lastly, when all the tweets were examined according to the categories, without referring to any label or attack, almost half of the tweets were recorded under 'Emotional Reaction' with 42.82% (See Table 1). This ratio is directly proportional with identification of hashtag users with victims and their concrete support. However, sharing posts via social media tools, changing their profile pictures in black or in flag of target country do not mean to support or share feelings of victims and their closed ones. This is a significant outcome of forming virtual communities.

Table 1: Tweet Ratios of Categories without Referring to Attacks and Labels

Categories	Ratios	Categories	Ratios
Emotional Reactions	42.82%	Official Reactions	3.62%
Information and Breaking News About the Attacks	16.79%	The Hashtag of #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists	3.10%
Ignorance of the Attacks on the East	6.62%	Islamophobia	2.93%
Policy Critics	6.60%	The Acts of the ISIS	1.32%
Emphasis to Other Attacks	5.74%	Adel Termos	0.80%
Irrelevant	5.11%	Zouheir	0.56%
The Hashtag of #MuslimsAre-Terrorists	3.86%	Haidar Moustafa	0.13%

Source: authors

It was followed by 'Information and Breaking News About the Attacks'. The most salient characteristic of this category was misinformation on the internet. False information on fake photos about crime scenes, attacks, numbers of death or injured were served on the internet. Although the viral heroic story of Zouheir was recorded under 'Heroism' label, it has been the most significant example for the aforementioned misinformation.

The third most tweet received category was 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East'. This can be seen as a proof how social media prosumers are alike to conventional media producers in terms of their western-oriented attention. In fact, this is the exact outcome of the Cultivation Theory since the prosumers are long-term consumers of conventional media. Hence, they have produced what had been cultivated in their minds.

Conclusion

Before concluding the research findings, there is an argument that should be highlighted within this content analysis, in addition to advantages and disad-

vantages of using Twitter. The dichotomy of worthiness of victims is a fluid concept as stated by O. Camarillo.⁴⁷ Within this research, a victim can be worthy while demonstrating similarity with unworthy victims. For instance, while a person with origin of Lebanon or Iraq victimized in an attack in their home country has been recorded as unworthy, an immigrant in France or in Belgium with the same origin victimized in an attack in his/her emigrated country has been recorded as worthy since assigned worthiness focused on victims of a certain geography but not individual identities. This limitation of this analysis could have been avoided by analyzing the nationalities of victims that might be broadcasted in the news; however, this would be off the limits of this qualitative content analysis focusing on Twitter posts and a different research theme for a further study.

International media authorities have been cultivating some opinions about western and eastern parts of the world, mainly religion-based opinions. The East is mainly constructed by the Muslim identity whereas the West by non-Muslim identity. They have been polarizing this religion-based division strictly especially by using TV programs, news etc. Additionally, news flow of international broadcasting is a one-way flow from the West to the East. The principle focal point of this news is mentioning the successes of the West whereas the East is represented only by problematic frames such as war, terrorism, crime, poverty and chaos. So, this kind of portrayal of the East cultivates the opinion that chaos is the nature of the East and normalizes it in western minds. According to these frames and cultivated negative opinions due to the Islamophobic content of broadcasting, people of the East are seen as unworthy, whereas those of the West as worthy. When social media users become prosumers, they reflect the opinions which had been formerly cultivated in their minds and thus they interpret events/incidents according to these opinions. Besides, regarding the ISIS's so-called Islamist aims, western minds connect perpetrator's identity with chaotic nature of the East, and they start to think that they are victimized by this chaos. Hence the dichotomy between worthy and unworthy gets even more clear. As demonstrated in a quoted tweet for Paris Attacks, number of Muslim victims of ISIS was referred to attract the attention on that direction and in one of the four tweets referring Babil Attacks, Middle Eastern people were pointed out as the ones that have suffered more from the ISIS. In another tweet for the same attack, a prosumer argued that 'their' death was normal, which is the reason why there was no global reaction.

When terrorist attacks are on the agenda, it is expected that global public opinion should have responded collectively regardless of the language, religion, ethnicity, geography etc. however, according to the research findings, extremely small amounts of tweets were posted for the ISIS' attacks perpetrated in Beirut and Babil, mainly just four tweets for the case of Babil Attack. During the first 24 hours of the Beirut Attacks hardly any tweets were posted, as the consciousness

47 Omar Camarillo, Who are Deemed the 'Worthy' and 'Unworthy' Victims of Mexico's Drug-Related Violence?, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2018, p.14.

raised after the Paris Attacks a day after. The reason why the consciousness raised is not the attention in Beirut Attacks. With respect to the research findings, the ratio of 'Emphasis to Other Attacks' is 73.04%, most specifically with Paris Attacks, hence Beirut Attacks were often referred with Paris. An attack on the east has generally been referred alongside an attack on the west, like in the case of Beirut with 58.46%; however, an attack on the west has become the main focus by itself. 11.32% of the tweets posted to 'Attacks' label of #ParisAttacks was categorized under 'Emphasis to Other Attacks' and this ratio was 1.16% for #BrusselsAttacks. These can be explained by the cultivated perception that chaos is the nature of the East and thus eastern people are assigned as unworthy.

Regardless of the attacks, the most tweet received categories were 'Emotional Reactions' with 42.82% and 'Information and Breaking News About the Attacks' with 16.79% which can be claimed as an expected finding with respect to the tendency of demonstrating instant response. Among rest of the categories, the significant one was the third rank, this is to refer the category of 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East', with 6.62%. International media authorities systematically ignored the attacks on the East in the news and that caused uneasiness among prosumers. Findings demonstrate strong distinction in terms of media/news portrayals and public reactions regarding the attacks on the West and on the East. Additionally, if one considers the same category with respect to the attacks, supporting findings would attract the attention. The ratio of *ignorance* for Beirut Attacks was 20.49%, for *already ignored* Babil Attack, one of the entire four tweets was about 'Ignorance of the Attacks on the East', while it was recorded as 1.18% for Paris Attacks and null for Brussels. Besides, this finding has been supported by the Facebook Safety Check Button. Since it was activated for Paris Attacks, but had not been activated for Beirut Attacks, which was perpetrated a day before.

Presence of ISIS, that motivates its terrorist attacks by Islamist contents, raised consciousness about cultivated figure of Muslims and Islam and that paved the way of reawakening of Islamophobia; and this argument has been supported by the research findings. If a terrorist attack targets a western society, the cultivated negative perception dominates the public reaction. Within the analysis, both #MuslimsAreTerrorists and #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists hashtags were taken into consideration and significant findings were recorded. For ISIS attacks targeting western cities, the ratio of #MuslimsAreTerrorists is higher than #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists as shown in the Table 2. As aforementioned in Media Tenor analysis, there was a sharp increase from 2% to 25% about the news focusing on extremist militants with Islamic identity. Within this decade, there have been other terrorist attacks perpetrated by Islamist groups such as Madrid of March 2004 and in London of July 2005, which have become selected traumas for western mind alongside 9/11. Accordingly, cultural resonance and double dose effect emerge. These selected traumas and cultivated opinions lead individuals to react

more actively in terrorist attacks of their own societies. However, when target is an eastern city as Beirut, findings demonstrate distinctiveness in contrast to attacks on the West. The ratio of #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists is higher than #MuslimsAreTerrorists; however, discrepancy can be considered insignificant in terms of percentage. Although the perpetrators and the strategies of the attacks are the same, the public reaction differs just because of the target societies.

Table 2: Tweet Ratios of #MuslimsAreNotTerrorists and #MuslimsAreTerrorists Referring to Attacks

	#MuslimsAreNotTerrorists	#MuslimsAreTerrorists
#BeirutAttacks	47.78%	2.22%
#ParisAttacks	46.07%	47.57%
#BrusselsAttacks	20.65%	54.25%
#BabilAttack	0	0

Source: authors

The worthiness of a victim or a group of victims can be assigned in regards with different occasions in various social movements both in societal and state level. For instance, it can be linked to the status of the state within the international system whether it is a developed one or not, an effective actor or not etc., and in terms of societal level, origin of the current Black Lives Matter movement can be pointed out as a significant example as it started with a police brutality towards a member of a society assigned as unworthy. A similar deduction may be claimed for various other conflicts in societal level, as in Israeli-Palestinian one. Additionally, there are certain examples that worthiness may vary among the victims of a very same attack as in Christchurch Mosque Attacks in New Zealand since there were many victims remained unspotted. With respect to all, assigned worthiness cannot be related to one certain event/accident but a wider range of victimization in accordance with either global or local public opinion, which may be manipulated with cultivated opinions. Prejudices regarding Islam, as the main focus point of this research, is one of the most significant examples.

For almost two decades, people have seen a link between Islam and terrorism via conventional media. This has negatively affected their perception of Islam and Muslims, and unavoidably they reflected these cultivated opinions in virtual communities of social media. This paper analyzed reflections of these cultivated thoughts via posts in Twitter. As a concrete result, ISIS attacks have re-awaken the negative perception related to Islamophobia among certain parts of the society and in terms of global issues, religion, once again, started to matter between eastern and western societies. While significant attention was paid for attacks on the West, attacks on the East have not attracted similar attention. In terms of suf-

ferers, western victims were remained on the international agenda and seemed worthy; however, eastern victims were ignored and assigned as unworthy.

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КАКО ЈЕ РЕЛИГИЈА БИТНА: ИСЛАМОФОБИЈА, ТЕРОРИЗАМ И ТВИТЕР

Сажетак

Твитер, један од најпознатијих друштвених медија, представља место где се формирају виртуалне заједнице и која омогућава својим члановима да деле ставове, мишљења, емоције, итд. У овом раду ми анализирамо јавне реакције на Твитеру после четири терористичка напада у Бејруту, Паризу, Бабилу и Бриселу. Анализа се заснива на јавним таговима који се састоје од имена града и речин "напад" – #ParisAttacks, #BeirutAttacks, #BrusselsAttacks, and #BabilAttack, и 9998 твитова који су постовани четири дана након напада. У раду се користи метод квалитативне анализе садржаја и твитови су категоризовани у складу са њиховим значењем. Због специфичног фокуса овог рада, ми се бавимо и актером ових напада, тј. Исламском државом, и концептом достојних и недостојних жртава.

Кључне речи: исламофобија, тероризам, Твитер, достојне и недостојне жртве

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