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الموقع الإلكتروني للمجلة: <http://jsb.journals.ekb.eg>

البريد الإلكتروني: mediajournal2020@azhar.edu.eg

المراسلات:

العدد السابع والخمسون - الجزء الثاني - شعبان ١٤٤٢هـ - أبريل ٢٠٢١ م

رقم الإيداع بدار الكتب المصرية ٦٥٥٥

الترقيم الدولي للنسخة الإلكترونية: ٢٩٢-٢٦٨٢ X

الترقيم الدولي للنسخة الورقية: ١١١٠-٩٢٩٧

قواعد النشر

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 - تنشر الأبحاث بأسبقية قبولها للنشر.
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DR \ Islam Abdelkader- DR \ M. A. El-dosuky

م	القطاع	اسم المجلة	اسم الجهة / الجامعة	نقاط المجلة (مارس 2020)	نقاط المجلة (يونيو 2020)	ISSN- O	ISSN- P
1	الدراسات الإعلامية	مجلة البحوث الإعلامية	جامعة الأهرام	6.5	7	2682-262X	1110-9297
2	الدراسات الإعلامية	مجلة بحوث العلاقات العامة الشرق الأوسط	الجمعية المصرية للعلاقات العامة	6	7	2314-873X	2314-8721
3	الدراسات الإعلامية	المجلة العربية لبحوث الإعلام و الإتصال	جامعة الأهرام الكندية	5	6	2636-9393	2636-9393
4	الدراسات الإعلامية	مجلة إحداث الجامعات العربية لبحوث الإعلام و تكنولوجيا الإتصال	Cairo University	4	4	2366-9891	2366-9891
5	الدراسات الإعلامية	المجلة العلمية لبحوث الإعلام و تكنولوجيا الإتصال	جامعة جنوب الوادي	3.5	3.6	2636-9237	2636-9237
6	الدراسات الإعلامية	مجلة البحوث و الدراسات الإعلامية	أكاديمية الشرق	3.5	6.6	2367-0407	2367-0407
7	الدراسات الإعلامية	المجلة العلمية لبحوث العلاقات العامة والإعلان	جامعة القاهرة - مركز بحوث الرأي العام	3	6.6	2366-9131	2366-9131
8	الدراسات الإعلامية	المجلة العلمية لبحوث الإذاعة والتلفزيون	جامعة القاهرة - مركز بحوث الرأي العام	3	6.6	2366-914X	2366-914X
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11	الدراسات الإعلامية	المجلة المصرية لبحوث الرأي العام	Cairo University, Center of Public Opinion Research	3	6.6	1110-6844	1110-6844

- يطبق تقييم مارس 2020 للمجلات على كل الأبحاث التي نشرت فيها قبل 1 يوليو 2020
- يطبق تقييم يونيو 2020 للمجلات على كل الأبحاث التي ستشتر فيها بدء من 1 يوليو 2020 و حتى صدور تقييم جديد في يونيو 2021
- المجلات التي لم تتقدم بطلب إعادة تقييم سيظل تقييم مارس 2020 مطبقاً على كل الأبحاث التي ستشتر بها وذلك لحين صدور تقييم جديد في يونيو 2021
- يتم إعادة تقييم المجلات المصرية دورياً في شهر يونيو من كل عام ويكون التقييم الجديد سارياً للسنة التالية للنشر في هذه المجلات

Emotional Public Sphere:

Sentiment Analysis of Audience Tweets after Shootings
at Al-Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in New Zealand

DR \ Islam Abdelkader A. Aboualhuda
Lecturer of Public Relations, Mass Communication Department,
Faculty of Arts, Mansoura University, Egypt
is_aelkader@mans.edu.eg

DR \ M. A. El-dosuky
Associate professor at Faculty of Computer and Info.
Mansoura University, Egypt
mouh_sal_010@mans.edu.eg

المجال العام العاطفي:

تحليل المشاعر لتغريدات الجمهور بعد إطلاق النار في مسجد النور ومركز لينوود الإسلامي في نيوزيلندا

د. إسلام عبد القادر عبد القادر أبو الهدى
مدرس العلاقات العامة بقسم الإعلام، كلية الآداب، جامعة المنصورة، مصر
أ.م.د. محمد أحمد الدسوقي
أستاذ مشارك بكلية الحاسبات والمعلومات، جامعة المنصورة، مصر

Abstract

Two mass shootings took place on 15 March 2019, in Christchurch, New Zealand. Fifty-one Muslims were killed and 40 others were injured. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern addressed the nation and described the attacks as “one of New Zealand’s darkest days”. Ardern’s efforts to reassure Muslims as part of New Zealand and enforcing tougher laws to tackle terrorism are appreciated nationally and internationally. This research aims to examine public sentiments towards the attacks and the political management of the crisis. Western media and politicians are criticized for dehumanizing Muslims and stigmatizing them as terrorists. However, Ardern’s reaction to this terrorist attack was remarkable in reassuring social cohesion and ensuring Muslims as genuine New Zealand citizens. Thus, studying public emotions towards the attacks and their political management can provide us with fruitful insights concerning political management to the emotional public sphere. To achieve the research aims, data collected from the hashtag #ChristChurch from Twitter, one month after the attacks, through Python programming language and analyzed using Meaning Cloud. The results indicated polarised sentiments, mostly, around negative and positive sentiments. In the conclusion, an interpretation provided for the research results and some insights for future research discussed concerning studying public sentiments post terrorist attacks.

Keywords: Sentiment Analysis; Social Networking Sites; Emotional Public Sphere; New Zealand Mosque Shootings.

ملخص الدراسة

وقعت عمليتا إطلاق نار جماعي في 15 مارس/آذار 2019 في كرايستشيرش، نيوزيلندا. قتل 51 مسلماً وجرح 40 آخرون. توجهت رئيسة الوزراء جاسيندا أريدين مخاطبة الأمة ووصفت الهجمات بأنها «أحد أحلك أيام نيوزيلندا». وقد حظيت جهود أريدين لطمأنة المسلمين، والتأكيد على أنهم كجزء أصيل من نيوزيلندا؛ فضلاً عن تطبيق قوانين أكثر صرامة هدفها التصدي للإرهاب بترحيب واسع على الصعيدين الوطني والعالمي. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة مشاعر الجمهور نحو الهجمات الإرهابية التي وقعت ضد مساجد المسلمين في نيوزيلندا؛ فضلاً عن مشاعرهم تجاه الإدارة السياسية الأزمة. هناك دائماً نقد موجه للسياسيين، ولوسائل الإعلام الغربية واصفاً إياهم بتجريد المسلمين من إنسانيتهم ووصمهم بالإرهابيين. وبالرغم من ذلك، يعد رد فعل رئيسة الوزراء جاسيندا أريدين على هذا الهجوم الإرهابي رائعاً في توحيد الصف، والتأكيد على التماسك الاجتماعي؛ وأن المسلمين جزءاً حقيقياً من نيوزيلندا. من شأن دراسة مشاعر الجمهور تجاه الهجمات الإرهابية، وكيفية الإدارة السياسية لما يترتب عليها من نتائج، أن تزودنا برؤى مثمرة فيما يتعلق بالإدارة السياسية للمجال العام العاطفي. لتحقيق أهداف البحث، تم جمع البيانات من (هاشتاج #ChristChurch) عبر موقع تويتر Twitter، بعد شهر واحد من الهجمات، باستخدام لغة برمجة (بايثون Python) وتحليلها باستخدام Meaning Cloud. أشارت النتائج إلى استقطاب غالبية المشاعر حول المشاعر السلبية والإيجابية. تناولت الخاتمة نتائج البحث بالتفسير؛ وقدمت بعض الرؤى لبحث مشاعر الجماهير مستقبلاً بعد الهجمات الإرهابية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل المشاعر؛ مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية؛ المجال العام العاطفي؛ إطلاق النار بمسجدين بنيوزيلندا.

Introduction

Social networking sites (SNS) represent spheres where the public can discuss issues in a deliberate and discursive manner. However, public emotions are not exempt from this mediated human interaction. This research seeks to investigate public emotions expressed on SNS concerning New Zealand's Christchurch mosque shootings (NZ mosque shootings, henceforth).

In March 2019, two massacres took place in Christchurch in New Zealand, in Al-Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre. A gunman opened fire in the two mosques during Friday prayer. These terrorist attacks resulted in, 51 Muslims killed and 40 others injured. The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, described the attacks as “one of New Zealand’s darkest days” (NewstalkZB, 2019).

Politicians’ reactions to them are indicators of the magnitude of influence of these massacres. For example, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, expressed a moral and a firmed ideological standpoint against terrorism, showing solidarity with the New Zealand community after the attacks (Amjad, 2020). also, the New Zealand Prime Minister reassured Muslims as part of New Zealand and strived to show New Zealanders’ co-existence, either Muslims or non-Muslims. President Trump’s discourse, on the contrary, deemed racist, as found “strongly preoccupied with anti-Muslim discourse” (Jalalian Daghigh & Rahim, 2020, p. 179).

Similarly, media representations of the NZ mosque shootings revealed different perspectives in covering the attacks. For instance, on the one hand, the New Zealand media represented Muslim’ victims as part of New Zealand; while, the Australian media acted differently and exploited proximity as “justification” for publishing “extremely graphic content” (Ellis & Muller, 2020, p. 332). Lindén Guíñez(2019)found that four themes dominated media coverage, in

five different countries, to the New Zealand mosque attacks: “lone wolves and maniacs, insufficient legislative system, separation ideology and violence, and racism in Western societies” (p. 2). The study underlined that although “a white supremacist extremist attack”, the media, allegedly, foregrounded Islam as the source of the problem in three out of the four representations, representing it as a source of a dangerous threat of extremism in society (Lindén Guíñez, 2019).

Previous research examined media and politicians' responses to the NZ mosque attacks; revealed, generally, that they have been differed based on the proximity and ideological standpoints of politicians. This research aims to complement this puzzle, by investigating public sentiments concerning the NZ mosque shootings on Twitter. In so doing, the research will undergo a sentiment analysis of the public tweets revealed one month after the NZ mosque shootings. This period includes first the intensity of public reactions to these shootings; in addition to the Prime Minister of New Zealand's political management to the crisis. One feature of this management is showing her condolence to Muslims in public; in addition to the nationally calling for the Friday's Islamic prayer (the Islamic Adhan) in New Zealand (Madani & Reuters, 2019). This research aims to investigate public sentiments revealed on Twitter shortly after the attacks. It is projected that the analysis would indicate overwhelming negative sentiments shortly after the attacks; however, calling political management to the attacks, such as calling for Islamic prayer nationally in New Zealand may shift this paradigm to show positive sentiments. By so doing, the current research seeks to delve into and add to, the scholarly discussion growing concerning the emotional public sphere.

Literature Review and Related Work

Media, Politicians and NZ Mosque Shootings

Previous research highlighted media representations of the attacks; and politicians' reactions to them. Ellis and Muller (2020), for instance, examined the differences in media coverage of New Zealand Christchurch mosque attacks in two different contexts, New Zealand and Australian media. The study revealed that New Zealand media

were more empathetic in covering and representing Muslims as victims. While Australian media were more interested in covering “the alleged perpetrator” and in showing materials prohibited in New Zealand media. The study concluded that a proximity filter was applied in each media coverage of the mosque attacks. While New Zealand media showed the “victims as part of their community”; Australian media acted differently and exploited proximity as “justification” for publishing “extremely graphic content”(Ellis & Muller, 2020, p. 332). Similarly, Lindén Guiñez (2019), examined how the New Zealand attacks represented in five distinct media environments, in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, France, and Sweden. The study focused on how media represented the problem in each country. The study indicated that four themes dominated media coverage of the New Zealand mosque attacks: “lone wolves and maniacs, insufficient legislative system, separation ideology and violence, and racism in Western societies”. The study highlighted that three out of the four representations “reproduce an Islamophobic knowledge regime and that all four problem representations reproduce a white male supremacy knowledge regime”. Although “a white supremacist extremist attack”, the media, allegedly, foregrounded Islam as the source of the problem in three out of the four representations, representing it as a source of a dangerous threat of extremism in society (Lindén Guiñez, 2019, p. 2). Additionally, Budhiono (2019), examined online media representations of social actors in news coverage of New Zealand mosque shootings in two different media contexts, New Zealand Herald and Detikom of Indonesia. Two articles were chosen for the analysis, both represented the same theme “the live streaming of the action” (np). The study used van Leuween's approach to CDA for the analysis. The analysis broke down the social actors into four categories “the shooter, the victims, the government, and the other parties” (np). The initial analysis showed that ideology and media background is fundamental determinants to how social actors will be presented. In representing the main actor, the study found, while the Indonesian media used the generic word 'doer' to describe the actor, the New Zealand media used “categorization by attaching a more accurate word, *gunman* [emphasis in the source]” (np).

Every-Palmer et al.(2020), studied the influence of New Zealand mass shootings as “psychological and societal enablers for legislative reform” as a case study in a country that is not used “gun violence” (p. 1). The study focused on the role of media coverage in sustaining “public support for gun control” (p.7). Instead of focusing on the perpetrator as an individual cause for the shootings, New Zealand media represented the need for gun policy reform as a societal responsibility to prevent gun violence. The study also assured that the New Zealand government's political leaning, as “a left-leaning coalition” (p.7), has been seen as a factor in enforcing gun restriction policies. The study concluded that “the mosque shooting served as a focusing event eliciting strong feelings of shock, sadness and high threat” (p. 10). It is fair to say that all these heightened emotions facilitated gun reformation policies.

Rahman (2020), took a step forward and studied the influence of news feed concerning the New Zealand mosque shootings through personal social media accounts on Muslim identity. The analysis showed four themes for representing the massacre, namely: “Muslim women and hijab; religion and terrorism; media, government democracy and the politics of oppression; and representation of the Muslim voice” (p. 360). The study assured a significant shift in representing Muslims in global media from a negative to a more inclusive tone in New Zealand media. The study indicated that, after the attacks, media represented Muslims from a human angle, showing “peace, love and forgiveness” (p. 380). One aspect that was salient in this coverage is that “the inclusion of Muslims' voices” and then step back from “the normative and culturally insensitive 'newsroom culture” in representing Muslims (p. 380).

Focusing on the public perceptions of Muslims in New Zealand, Greaves et al. (2020), compared attitudes towards Muslims and other faith groups in New Zealand. Using data collected by the International Social Survey Programme module on religion, the study found “greater perceived threat and negativity towards Muslims compared with other religious groups” (p. 260). However, religious identification (being religious) and education (being highly educated) mediated such fear and “predict greater acceptance” (p. 260). The study concluded,

that generally speaking, “the Muslim Acceptance Gap” in New Zealand is evident, and place enormous challenge need to be tackled, especially among “lower-educated, right-wing, older, secular, and male populations” (p. 260). The study argued that classifying attitudes towards Muslims in positive/negative dichotomy might not capture “the higher risk that people attribute to Muslims as a group” (p. 274). The study also argued that the role of media in shaping public attitudes towards religious groups is greater when there is “a lack of knowledge and education on different religions”, where people mainly have their knowledge from media coverage. Similarly, Ash et al.(2020), studied New Zealand’s non-Muslim population view of Muslims to examine whether there is a fear of the Muslim growing population in New Zealand or not. The study conducted interviews with non-Muslim New Zealanders and concluded that two discourses were salient among the interviewees. The first one is the view of New Zealand as peaceful heaven with tolerance to all populations from different religious and cultural backgrounds. However as Muslims are concerned, their acceptance in New Zealand is conditioned to their assimilation into society. The second discourse indicated that Muslims were viewed as not all terrorists, suggesting an obvious link between Islam and terrorism among the respondents. In final remarks, the study argued that although the underlying attitude is that Muslims are accepted in New Zealand, it is still conditioned to their full assimilation and adherent to cultural norms and not threaten them. The study argued that this indicates hidden racism beneath the surface.

Fakhrurroja et al.(2019), investigated the public use of Twitter two days after the New Zealand Christchurch massacre. More than 722 thousand tweets were created after the attacks. The study indicated that an individual might have much more power than official and authoritative entities in spreading knowledge after crises. This might indicate a problematic situation where individuals spread information without understanding whether is it genuine and true or not.

As far as politicians' perceptions of the attacks, and reactions to them are concerned, Amjad (2020), studied the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, discourse on the New Zealand mosque

shootings. The study applied Fairclough's approach to CDA to reveal Trudeau's moral standpoint and deconstruct his ideology and persuasion strategies to show commitment and stand against terrorism. The study concluded that the PM was successful in exposing his moral and ideological standpoint against terrorism. Meanwhile, he showed his solidarity with New Zealand's community amid their shock, by using the best of his "lexical choices" and "linguistic expressions"; also, he was successful in showing "his determination to eradicate worldwide terrorism" (p. 12). Additionally, Jalalian Daghigh and Rahim(2020), studied the discourse characteristics of two politicians, Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's PM, and US President Donald Trump concerning the mosque shootings in Christchurch. The study applied Wodak's historical discourse analysis and Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to CDA. Using two different CDA approaches, the study found while Trump's discourse, on the one hand, is "strongly preoccupied with anti-Muslim discourse"; Ardern's discourse, on the other hand, strived to crack down "dichotomization between Muslims and other New Zealander, embracing co-existing values". (p. 179). The study indicated that Ardern's "anti-orientalist discourse" is an exemplar to deconstruct the orientalist view of Muslims in the West (p. 179).

These studies highlight some important remarks. First, a shift in media negative representations of New Zealand Muslims after the attacks(Rahman, 2020). This might seem like an act of sympathy with Muslims shown through media discourse(Ellis & Muller, 2020). Second, although New Zealanders perceive Muslims, in general, positively, there is an underneath fear of them(Greaves et al., 2020) in comparison to other religious groups(Ash et al., 2020). This research aims to add to this literature by investigating public sentiments of NZ mosque shootings on Twitter. Smith et al.(2018) applied semantic network analysis to examine the public dialogue and emotions about two terrorist attacks, the first one in Paris 2015 and the second in Barcelona 2017. As far as the Paris attack is concerned, the study found that the first and largest dialogue indicated "predominant emotional themes" that featured "hope for peace and resolution and sympathy for attack victims" (p. 569). This research would

complement this effort by studying public sentiments toward terrorist attacks against Muslims.

Research Questions

One outcome of this research can be revealing whether public sentiments to terrorist attacks are homogenous, or they differed based on victims' and perpetrators' backgrounds. Thus, this research seeks to answer the following ultimate questions:

RQ1: What are the most communicated/correlated hashtags on Twitter in response to the NZ mosque shootings in Christchurch?

RQ2: What are the magnitude of tweets, based on geographical distance, in reaction to the NZ mosque shootings in Christchurch?

RQ3: To what extent do tweets communicated in response to NZ mosque shootings are polarised around negative, positive or neutral sentiments?

Theoretical Framework

Public Sphere and Emotional Public Sphere

According to Habermas's view to the public sphere, it can refer to as a spatial or virtual space where the public can discuss rationally and deliberately societal issues, ranging from politics to social and cultural affairs, and come to a consensus (Rosas & Serrano-Puche, 2018). However, this notion of the public sphere has been widely criticized (e.g. Papacharissi, 2002, 2015; Richards, 2007, 2018). Although it holds "theoretical advantages", it has its downsides, such as hypothesizing "the rationality of the public sphere" and idealizing "a communicative rationality" (Rosas & Serrano-Puche, 2018, p. 3032). Furthermore, this Habermasian view took public emotions out of the communicative equation. It hypothesizes that the public is a mere rational entity. Undermining and neglecting the view to the public as individuals, who bring to the public communication not just their reasons and beliefs, but also their emotions or "affective concerns". In recognition of this critique, "the concept of the emotional public sphere has emerged in the past decade as an alternative to the hegemony of rationalist models of the public sphere and the media" (Rosas & Serrano-Puche, 2018, p. 3033).

As an opposite, but, complementary to this 'rational' view to the public sphere, the term emotional public sphere takes into consideration public emotions as a mobilising and connecting power that connect or disconnect people through sentiment or affection (Papacharissi, 2015). Different endeavours have sought to examine emotions disperse in the public sphere. One example is examining the emotions embedded in media representations of the financial crisis in Europe (Capelos et al., 2018). Another study addressed public emotional reactions to terrorist attacks in Paris and Barcelona (B. G. Smith et al., 2018). Seminally, Richards (2007, 2018), identified the term emotional public sphere and highlighted its applications in the domain of media and politics. This research aims to add to this burgeoning, but growing research concerning the emotional public sphere. This research will address public sentiments expressed on Twitter concerning the NZ mosque shootings. According to Richards(2018) the term "public emotions" refers to "the emotions of the public, whether they are publicity expressed or not" (Richards, 2018, p. 2040). Further to this, as Papacharissi (2015) highlighted, affect stands behind and encourages our experience of emotions; it determines the level of our emotional experience of events. As such, affect is both "habitually rhythmic" and "performatively evocative" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 5). According to her understanding, affective publics defined as:

Networked publics that are mobilized and connected, identified, and potentially disconnected through the expression of sentiments" (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 5).

Richards(2007), highlighted that the basic problem of our modern societies is twofold; on the first hand, it is "an intellectual problem". That we lack understanding of what synthesizes our "collective emotional life". On the other hand, it is "a practical problem". That the "destructive emotions" that are tearing our societies apart through hate and terrorism, for instance, are still inflaming around the world (Richards, 2007, p. 1). As he articulated, emotions are usually managed by modern societies through three different ways: "cultural processes"; "institutional structures" and "communications in the public

sphere” (Richards, 2007, p. 1). In his seminal and groundbreaking book *‘emotional governance: politics, media, and terror’*, Richards focused on the third level of this emotion management, i.e. “communications in the public sphere”, the same as for this research. To which, pretty much of the work can focus on the "mediasphere" as an arena for daily life communications. Furthermore, “public communications” where an "ordinary person" can make sense and expresses the experience of “politics and commerce” (Richards, 2007, p. 3). In his own words:

at the ‘upper’ level of mediated communications, we are talking about shared experiences of the symbolic communications produced for public consumption via the broadcast and print media and/or via the web (Richards, 2007, p. 4).

While cultural components are more fixed and reluctant to change, these deliberate communication activities are open for change and adjustment (Richards, 2007).

Public emotionality

Emotions stimulate by our experiences; we feel grief for the death of our beloved ones; and anger when we feel offended, such as knowing that someone has stolen our properties. We feel joy and pride when something pleasant happens to us, such as having a newborn child or receiving a present or a reward for our achievement. Emotions determine how we react to events, objects, or other things as well. They determine how we respond to a stimulus. Therefore, “anger motivates us to seek justice” and sadness motivates us to feel comfortable and to seek help to balance our emotionality (Smith & Lazarus, 1990, p. 609). Although emotions are salient in every human experience, there is some consensus on the nature of some emotion states, such as “anger, fear, and sadness”; and little agreement over others, guilt, is an example (Smith & Lazarus, 1990). This disagreement on emotion classification occurs due to a lack of agreement over the criteria "used to distinguish emotion from nonemotion" (Ibid). Smith and Lazarus (1990, p. 614), used a cognitive approach, namely; “a cognitive relational theory of

emotions”, based on appraisal theory, to define and categorize emotions. According to their view, “*anything* that implies harm or benefit to the person can produce an emotion” (Smith & Lazarus, 1990, p. 615).

Ekman and Cordaro (2011) underlined that, instead of being a single state or affect, emotions are ultimately collective. In other words, each emotion is tied or connected to “a family of related states” (p. 364). Ekman and Cordaro (2011) listed the criteria of 13th characteristics for classifying universal emotions. Abiding by the defined criteria, they classified universal human emotions into seven groups or discrete emotions; these are anger, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, contempt, and happiness. Other emotional states, such as guilt and shame, although could represent universal emotions, it is uncertain whether they have some common signals with sadness or not. An et al. (2017) explored, cross-culturally, the positivity and negativity of six basic emotions defined by Ekman (1992); namely; sadness, fear, disgust, anger, surprise, and happiness. Instead of studying these emotions as either negative or positive, they studied the “perceived negativity and positivity of these emotions in terms of their affective and cognitive components” comparatively between Easterner students (Korean and Chinese) and Westerner students (Canadian and American). The study confirmed that, based on a cross-cultural examination of emotions, that emotion can include both positive and negative signals. However, there are “differences in reported emotions” experienced in each culture (An et al., 2017, p. 1). This research seeks to delve into this outgoing argument concerning the classification of public sentiments. However, the research will focus on sentiment polarisation, whether positive, negative, or neutral emotions in reaction to terrorist attacks.

Methodology

To answer these research questions, Twitter was crawled on the #ChristChurch hashtag in the period from 15th March 2019 to 15th April 2019. One month following the NZ mosque shootings in Christchurch. This was possible using Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) and Python programming language. The

architecture of the proposed methodology is shown in figure 1. API function allows the programmer to use a programming code to access Twitter automatically through the Internet, using Python as a crawler, to collect data. These, collected data, then, were stored in a database. In the next phase, using Python programming code, data was sent to the Meaning cloud for analysis. Using a pre-packaged code for English language analysis, Meaning cloud classified stored tweets into positive, negative, or neutral using its English language patterns.

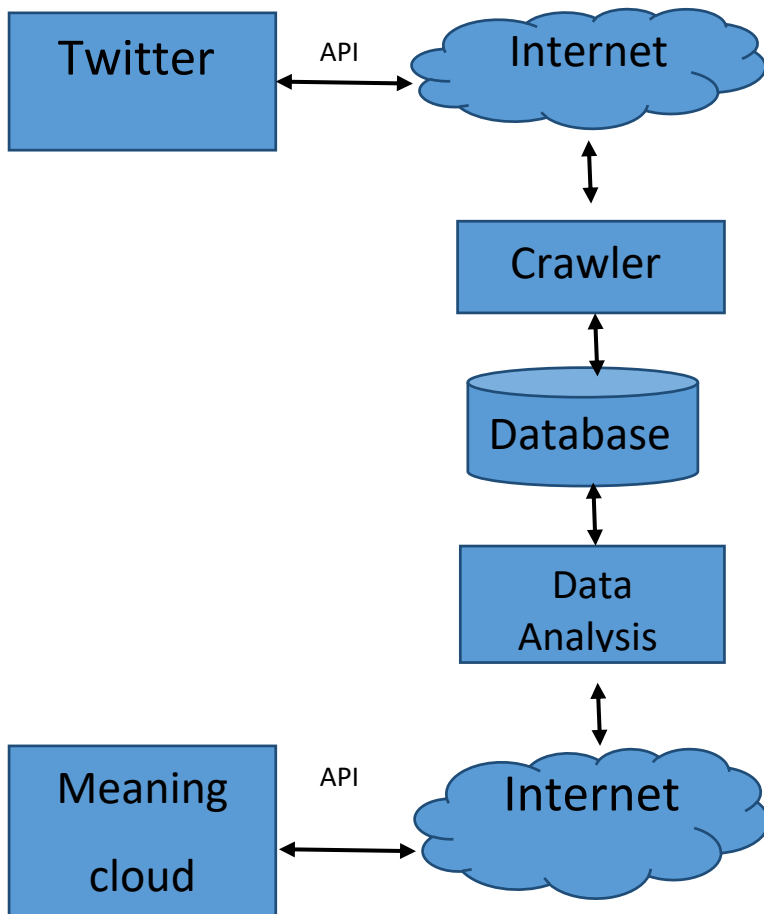


Figure 1: Architecture of the proposed methodology

Sample

Due to the timeframe of this research, we had to access data stored in Twitter archive almost two years ago. With regards to this, Twitter privacy policies may have limited our crawling per session to only 90 tweets. With consideration to these restrictions, data collected on several sessions over almost two weeks. These yielded a meaningful volume of tweets to be analyzed. After collection, data stored in a database sheet and filtered. Only English tweets were kept for the analysis, and other irrelevant data, such as tweets published in other languages, were excluded. These procedures yielded 1440 tweets that are the basis for the analysis in this research. Table 1 shows the possible classification of tweets based on the Meaning cloud.

Table 1: Examples of classification of tweets based on their polarity

Polarity	Tweet	Tweet link
Negative (N)	I AM Muslim, Strongly condemn the Barbaric mosque attacks in #Christchurch, #NewZealand	https://twitter.com/Farmanullahora2/status/1106642864975548417
Negative (N)	#Christchurch #NewZealand Mood: There's so much noise on the Internet, so much being said, and so much that needs to be said. But through all the noise remember to allow yourself to be sad, allow yourself to grieve. Take the time to acknowledge how you feel and reflect.	https://twitter.com/SaadTasleem/status/1106646467677220864
Neutral (NEU)	Janazahsalaah in abstentia was held today at Masjid al-Aqsa for the martyrs of the #NewZealand Masjid attacks #MosqueAttack #ChristChurch	https://twitter.com/firstqiblah/status/1106666356701884416
Positive (P)	A lot of respect for that woman..	https://twitter.com/shbzgul/status/1106655370406232064
Positive (P)	Stay strong New Zealand. We can't let terrorists win. An amazing country that will pull together in devastating times. #Christchurch #NewZealand	https://twitter.com/jason_dobbie/status/1106648231163973637

Analysis

We used sentiment analysis as one sort of opinion mining to make sense of the collected data. As shown in the figure below, figure 2, sentiment classification is one dimension of opinion mining; which is a new field of data mining.

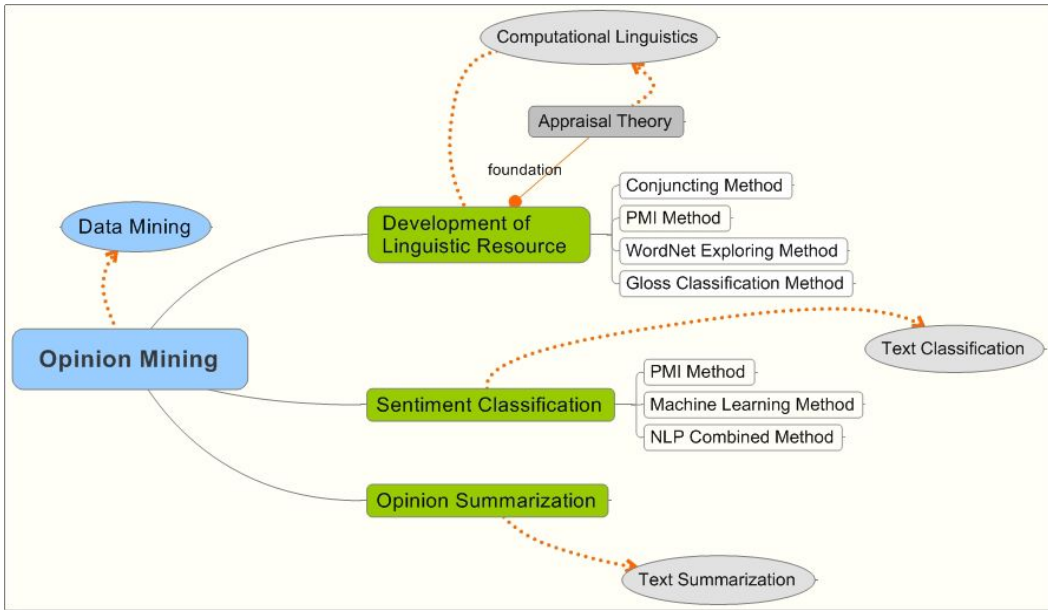


Figure 2: Tasks for opinion mining and its relationship with related area

(El-dosuky et al., 2012)

Thus, meaning cloud is used to classify tweets based on their sentiments, whether positive, negative, or neutral, using machine learning. According to El-dosuky et al.(2012), “sentiment classification is applied to classify the sentiment-orientated documents into positive or negative” (np). Thus, the Meaning cloud was used in this research to classify tweets communicated post-NZ mosque shootings based on their emotional leaning, positive, negative or neutral. This methodology allowed us to have an overview of the public responses, not only to the attacks but also to the political management of them. The following section will proceed to show research results and answer research questions.

Results

Most communicated/correlated hashtags after NZ mosque shootings

First, we used data freely provided by mentionlytics.com, a web-based social network analysis tool, to have an overview of the events, and to understand how the public make sense of them or public perceptions of the NZ mosque shootings. Mentionlytics.com helped in identifying the most frequently communicated hashtags in correlation with the ChristChurch hashtag. Figure three presents the results.



Figure 3: Frequently communicated hashtags correlated with Christchurch hashtag based on mentionlytics.com

As shown in figure 2, it is not surprising that the most frequently communicated hashtag with Christchurch hashtag is #NewZealand hashtag. In the first place, this correlation shows that Twitter users worked hard to show their solidarity and compassion with New Zealand amid these devastating attacks. One way of doing so was specifying the geographical location of the events; given that Christchurch has a sister or twin cities/towns in other places, such as in the UK, US, Australia, or Japan (Wikipedia, 2021). It is fair to say as well that, the Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern, showing compassion with the victims gained a lot of respect and gratitude throughout the world. In a sense that Tweeter users used

#NewZealand hashtag not only to show solidarity with the country but also to show gratitude and pay thanks to the New Zealand Prime Minister. The photo in figure four, shows Prime Minister hugging a Muslim woman to pay compassion and solidarity to here amid these devastating attacks.



Figure 4: New Zealand Prime Minister, JacindaArdern, show solidarity with a Muslim woman (Photo sourced in: *The Irish Times View on the New Zealand Mosque Murders: The World after Christchurch*, 2019)

This condolence was trending in the first two days after the attacks. It is not surprising again that the most retweeted tweet/photo, two weeks after the attacks showed such solidarity with Christchurch victims in Al-Noor masjid, most of them are originally from Pakistan; but also with New Zealand country as a whole. The photo retweeted extensively in the first couple of weeks of April, showing twenty thousand people shaped a human-mosque in Jhang, Pakistan to show solidarity with those who lost their lives in Christchurch mosque shootings.

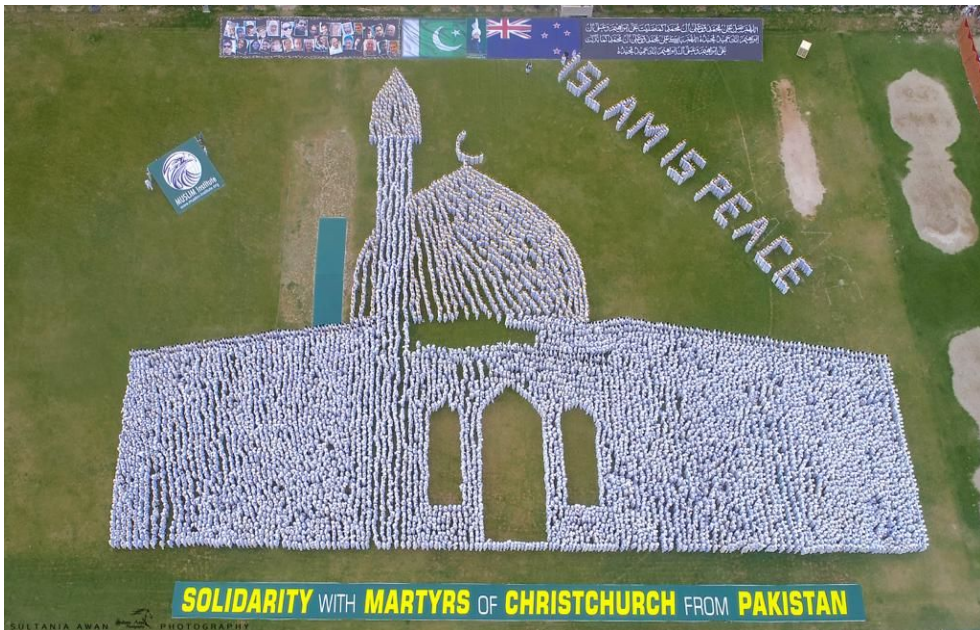


Figure 5: Most frequently communicated photo on Twitter, shows solidarity with Pakistani victims and New Zealand (Photo sourced in: *Thousands Form Human Image of Christchurch Mosque - Newspaper - DAWN.COM, 2019*)

The second and third most relevant and communicated hashtags in correlation with the Christchurch hashtag are #ChristchurchMosqueAttack and #NewZealandShooting. Twitter users to condemn the attacks or shootings in the mosques in New Zealand may use both hashtags. However, both hashtags show this time public interpretation of the events as an "attack" or a "shooting" in Christchurch and New Zealand, respectively. Interestingly though, are the absence of the hashtags' underscores, the underline that used in tweets to separate between words. It could be an indicator that users favourite such hashtags formatting to show the magnitude of influence of these attacks on New Zealand and to show their sadness or solidarity with the country as a whole. Overall, the publicity of these hashtags indicates implicitly their relevance to describe users' feelings in comparison to other hashtags.

Although both hashtags showed some kind of interpretation to the events, they are still using plain or unloaded, words in comparison

to the next frequently communicated hashtag in English #NewZealandTerroristAttack or Arabic #حادث_نيوزيلندا_الإرهابي. Although Arabic tweets were out of the scope of this analysis, the salient of this hashtag among most communicated ten hashtags concerning events indicates two things. First, the magnitude of influence of these events, to the extent that they shaped public reaction in the Arab and Muslim world. Second, it indicates the Arab publics' interpretations of the events as terrorist attacks, not mere shootings or attacks. Similarly, the equivalent hashtag in English to this Arabic one, #NewZealandTerroristAttack, took a step forward to describe the Christchurch terrorist attacks, not just a plain attack or shooting. One can infer that the public used the hashtag technique to impose their interpretation of the attacks may be in the face of media interpretation to them. Perhaps this last argument can be supported by the next most communicated hashtag #Islamophobia. First, it easily comes to mind that Twitter users used this hashtag to show their anger or fear of such attacks on Muslims' worshipping mosques. Besides, it could also be a way to show their frustration of the refrain by media to describe such events as Islamophobic ones. However, most importantly is that Twitter users again used afforded techniques, i.e. hashtag, to communicate and publicise their perceptions of these attacks as terrorist and Islamophobic events.

The magnitude of tweets by country and hashtag hotness

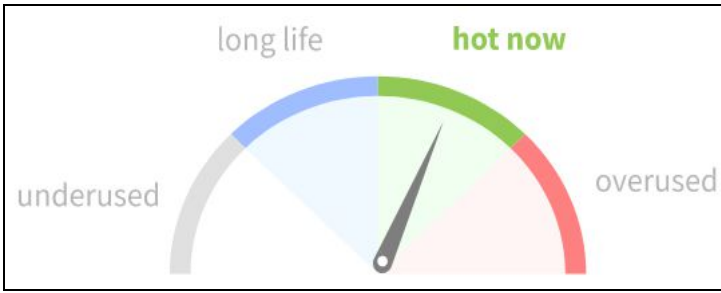


Figure 6: the hotness of the ChristChurch hashtag

The figure above from hashtagify.me indicates the life cycle of the hashtag Christchurch; the figure indicates that although almost two years have passed now since the NZ mosque shootings, the hashtag

status still hot. This means that to the moment, people still share and communicate tweets related to these attacks.

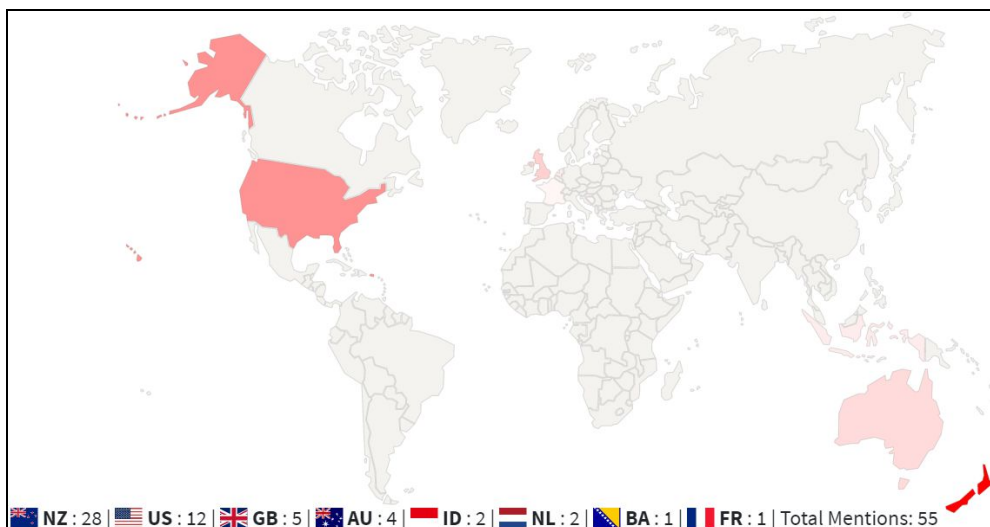


Figure 7: usage of ChristChurch hashtag per country

As represented in the map above, most tweets communicated concerning Christchurch attacks came from New Zealand. This indicates that the proximity filter worked to show that the most affected public by the events was New Zealanders. In other words, although these events have a globalized impact, their heightened influence still affected the local public. In terms of tweeting magnitude in other countries, the US came in second place after New Zealand, followed by The UK, and in fourth place Australia. It makes a lot of sense that all of these countries share the same language, as the official language, which is English. Again this adds additional emphasis on language as a connecting vehicle between nations. It is surprising though that although Australia is closer to New Zealand in terms of special distance in comparison to the US, tweets magnitude show more influence on the US public in comparison to the Australian public. An explanation to this may be as the US and UK have experienced terrorist attacks before, the public there are more vigilant and sensitive to such attacks than other nations.

Public sentiments polarisation over NZ mosque shootings

The figure below shows public emotionality and polarisation a month later after the NZ mosque shootings. As shown from the pie chart the majority of tweets, 48 percent, are negative. Positive tweets followed with 40 percent and neutral tweets came in last order with only 12 percent of analyzed tweets. These findings indicate some important insights.

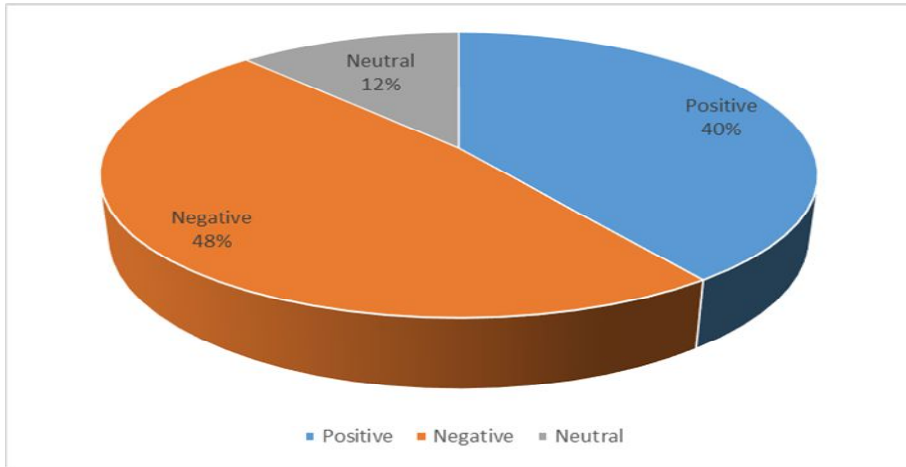


Figure 8: shows the polarity of tweets in a month from the attack

First, NZ mosque shootings heightened emotionality among the public, whether negative or positive altogether 88 percent. It is not surprising though that the majority of tweets were negative, giving that the majority of hashtags showed some interpretations of the events as either attack, shooting, or terrorist or Islamophobic events. Therefore, it is understandable that public emotions were heightened with different emotions, such as sadness for the death of innocents, or fellow Muslims and humans; the anger of such irrational and violent attacks not only on Muslims personas but also on worshipping places. What is interesting though is the magnitude of positive tweets that certainly pertains to positive sentiments communicated after the attacks. Perhaps solidarity or compassion is the most heightened sentiments among all positive ones. These sentiments showed solidarity with Muslims influenced by the attacks, from Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Meanwhile, and perhaps most importantly, the

Prime Minister's management of the attacks and showing solidarity with Muslims evoked not only solidarity with Muslims, but also with New Zealand as a whole.

Conclusion

This research set out to examine public sentiments in reaction to NZ mosque shootings. Python programming language was used to extract data from Twitter one month after those attacks, and the meaning cloud was used to analyze tweets and examine public polarisation. The study found that the most related hashtags communicated concerning the attack is #NewZealand. This indicates public solidarity with affected Muslims, but also with New Zealand as a country in a devastating moment. Other communicated hashtags though showed public interpretation or perceptions of the events as shooting or attack; or using more loaded words such as terrorist attacks or Islamophobia. Most of the tweets came from countries that experienced such terrorist attacks before, such as the US or the UK. Surprisingly enough, Australia, the most closes country to New Zealand in terms of geographic distance came in the fourth-order in the number of communicated tweets concerning the events. This indicates that proximity may not only be based on geographical distance but also cultural and maybe political matters. The majority of tweets, 88 percent, communicated one month after the attacks showed polarisation; whether negative 48 percent or positive 40 percent. The rest of the tweets were neutral. Although, it is understood the communication of negative tweets after such terrorist attacks to show sadness and anger; the huge amount of communicated positive tweets can be interpreted based on admiration to the Prime Minister and New Zealand handling of the crisis.

Limitation and future studies

One of the limitations of this research is the classification of tweets into positive and negative, and the lack of such classification into discrete emotions (such as anger, sadness, or compassion). However, this research aimed to understand public emotionality in response to NZ attacks and political management to them. Concerning this, it is enough to show the magnitude of emotions and

their polarisation around positivity and negativity. Future research may use sentiment analysis to show public discrete emotions in response to other crises, such as Charlie Hebdo's publishing of blasphemous cartoons.

Acknowledgement

The first author would like to thank Prof Dr Osama Abd El Raheem Ali, Professor of Journalism, the Faculty of Specific Education for fruitful discussion at the initial stage of this research. Also, to the reviewer for constructive comments.

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Journal of Mass Communication Research «J M C R»

A scientific journal issued by Al-Azhar University, Faculty of Mass Communication

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● Issue 57 April 2021 - part 2

● Deposit - registration number at Darelkotob almasrya /6555

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