

Any #JesuisIraq planned?*

Claiming affective displays for forgotten places

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The stem *#jesuis* followed by a toponym (e.g. *#jesuisParis*) has proved to be very productive in the gathering of affective publics (Papacharissi 2015) around causes of mourning, after terrorist attacks and other disasters. However, not all attacks have given rise to such massive affective use of *#jesuis* hashtags. Our goal is to examine how Twitter users claim similar displays of affect for these “other” places. We analyze 297 tweets in which the Twitter user utters a condolence speech act while simultaneously contesting the unbalanced affective reactions expressed concerning some places, e.g. “Any #JesuisIraq planned?”. We observe the geographical granularity of the referred place, the structural complexity of the tweet and, if present, the underlying motives for unbalanced reactions suggested by the Twitter users. By doing so, we show how Twitter is used to claim attention for places that are deemed underrepresented, thus confirming the importance of Twitter for expressing solidarity.

Keywords: hashtag, toponym, demonym, affective public, solidarity, Twitter

1. Introduction

Online platforms have become part of our life and, as such, are used to express a variety of contents, including affective ones. These range from happiness, joy and pride to the online expression of grief (see Giaxoglou 2015). Users may express affective stance on these platforms (as they do in other interaction types), whether they align or disalign with certain claims. One of those expressions of affect is the hashtag *#jesuischarlie*, which emerged following the attack on Charlie Hebdo on January 7th 2015 (Bazin 2015; Beech 2015) and immediately became widely used

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(de Lucena Ito 2015; Sumiala et al. 2016; Smyrnaioi and Ratinaud 2017; Giglietto and Lee 2017; Johansson et al. 2018; Giaxoglou 2018).

Hashtags are one of the affordances (Hutchby 2001, 2014) of Twitter, though certainly not limited to this platform. The fact that particularly hashtags are used as a locus for expressing affect and are claimed as an expression of affect, shows that hashtags fulfil functions well beyond the labelling or searchability function (Mancera and Pano 2013; Zappavigna 2012, 2015). Indeed, they also allow for creating networked publics (boyd 2010) and fulfil a variety of other functions related to self-expression and interpersonal relationships (Wikström 2014; Zappavigna 2014, 2015). Particularly when launching a new hashtag, Twitter users by definition do not link their tweet to an existing hashtag (and assorted tweets and metastory). Rather, they express a personal stance, and attempt to create new ad hoc publics (Bruns and Burgess 2015) and a new metastory concerning a specific event (cf. Giaxoglou 2018).

The hashtag *#jesuisCharlie* then serves interpersonal functions, such as expressing condolences or solidarity, and contributes to creating a metastory concerning these attacks (Giaxoglou 2018). Following the initial *#jesuischarlie*, the pattern *#jesuis* proved very productive as a means to express grief or to express support in different languages for a variety of causes, well beyond terrorist attacks (De Cock and Pizarro Pedraza 2018). In all, *#jesuis* seems to have become a more generalized strategy to gather affective publics (Papacharissi 2015). Very soon, also humoristic uses or tweets questioning the uses of *#jesuisCharlie* (Pizarro Pedraza and De Cock 2018) and of other hashtags with *#jesuis* (De Cock and Pizarro Pedraza 2018) emerged. These include critiques concerning the cultural orientation of *#jesuischarlie*, which were formulated already early on (An et al. 2016; Badouard 2015; Giglietto and Lee 2017).

Within the wide range of hashtags starting with *#jesuis*, some of the most frequent formations are those that combine *#jesuis* with a toponym (place name) or a demonym (denoting a person who is native or inhabitant of a certain place), such as *#jesuisparis* or *#jesuisbelge*, in order to refer metonymically to the place where an attack or other disaster has happened. These hashtags created networked publics (boyd 2010) linked to a place and the event associated with it, and which heavily rely on the expression of emotion. They are thus a locus for 'networked affect' (Hillis et al. 2015) or networked emotion (Benski and Fischer 2014; Giaxoglou, Döveling and Pitsillides 2017), where Twitter users who do not necessarily know each other, tie in to a shared display of affect.

In this study, we want to focus on a specific phenomenon, namely on how Twitter users claim affective displays similar to *#jesuischarlie* for places that are not (yet) at the heart of a networked public and that, in the tweeters' opinion, are lacking public attention. Indeed, some attacks seem to elicit more *#jesuis*-hashtags

than others, suggesting that the display of affect differs according to the place where the attack happens. This has led some Twitter users to not only launch a *#jesuis*-hashtag for certain attacks but also to more explicitly comment on the lack of attention for this attack (1). This also implies a claim for displays of affect by other users. Indeed, Twitter users may elaborate on the fact that not all places receive similar attention and may offer underlying motives for the lack of expression of affect in those cases. In (1), the writer makes explicit that he/she considers the lack of attention for attacks in Yemen to be linked to its taking place outside Europe, suggesting a eurocentric orientation in the creation of networked affect.

- (1) RT @X: *Atentado con 71 muertos y más de 90 heridos en Yemen, como no es Europa no pasa nada.... #JeSuisYemen* <https://t.co/6on8SucNKg> (Spanish)
 ‘RT @X: Attack with 71 deaths and more than 90 wounded in Yemen, since it’s not Europe nothing is happening... #JeSuisYemen <https://t.co/6on8SucNKg>’¹

This discussion on Twitter concerning the attention that certain places receive (or not) ties in with an emerging interest for the fact that, while social media allow for transcending spatial restrictions, Twitter users often do have a special link with specific spaces and comment (mainly) upon the space(s) they live in (see also Georgakopoulou 2015; Heyd and Honkanen 2015), or they care about in some way (as in Example (1)).

Through three research questions (Section 2), we will attempt to gain a better insight into how this expression of affect and claim of affect are realized. We will discuss the data used in this study (Section 3) and the method (Section 4) before proceeding to the analyses (Section 5). Finally, we will offer concluding remarks, showing the contribution of our analysis for the study of networked emotion and of stancetaking online (Section 6).

2. Research questions

We aim to account for the ways in which Twitter users claim affective displays for attacks on places around the world and, especially, on how they claim affective displays that are similar to those received for Western targets, for places that seem to receive less attention on Twitter. First, we will look into the geographical granularity in the *#jesuis*-hashtag, namely the specificity of the toponym or the demonym used in the hashtag. We focus on whether some places are treated as

1. We have chosen not to translate *#jesuis* in the examples we comment upon in view of the specific meaning that French *#jesuis* has developed across languages (see also De Cock and Pizarro Pedraza 2018).

more or less easily identifiable than others, with the hypothesis that geographical areas that are better known can be referred to in a higher degree of specificity, for instance by means of a city name versus a country reference.

Second, we will analyse the complexity of the tweet as a whole, looking into which other elements (text, emoji, images, links,...) are used in the tweet apart from the *#jesuis*-hashtag. We will also look into which kind of additional information these elements may offer concerning the claim for affect and how they contribute to it, for instance by showing images of an attack.

Finally, we will analyze which (explicit) underlying motives are suggested by Twitter users for this unequal attention to some places. In doing so, we wish to gain further insight into how Twitter users perceive and interpret different attention for different places where attacks or disasters take place.

3. Data

Our study is based on a database of tweets from 2015 and 2016 containing a *#jesuis*-hashtag. These were collected as described in Naets (2018), namely via a general extraction through the Twitter API, which led to obtaining 8146 tweets starting with *#jesuis*, containing more than 1900 different *#jesuis*-hashtags. This method does not pretend to offer an exhaustive database of *#jesuis*-hashtags but it does allow for harvesting a wide diversity of tweets starting with *#jesuis*, in terms of users, languages and elements included in the hashtag after *#jesuis*, as opposed to methods relying on pre-established lists of *#jesuis*-hashtags (which may lead to an exhaustive database of only those specific hashtags). In view of our interest in the diversity of *#jesuis*-hashtags, this method was the most adequate one, since it gave access to the variety of uses, including many hapaxes, which occur only once. This is particularly important for this study, since we want to focus on *jesuis*-hashtags followed by toponyms or demonyms that are not the dominating ones. Therefore, a method that granted access to variation was highly desirable.

The database is representative of the period in which it was collected, in the sense that it is composed of references to places where certain events happened or were relevant at the time of data collection. While we continue to observe similar uses in subsequent periods, the concrete places being referred to may differ, of course, in view of recent events. Thus, the quantitative results presented in this study should be considered to hold for the period under scrutiny and could be replicated for other periods, in order to observe what places are then mentioned.

As argued elsewhere (De Cock and Pizarro Pedraza 2018), *#jesuis*-hashtags occur across languages, which is a proof of the creativity and globalization of its

use. Our study then deals with tweets occurring in this variety of languages and no language selection has been applied a priori or a posteriori.

We include in our data tweets with different degrees of integration of the toponym (or demonym) in the hashtag. The toponym can appear in the second slot of the *#jesuis*-hashtag (2). Some tweets single out the toponym immediately following the *#jesuis*-hashtag, as *Pakistan* in (3). Finally, in some tweets with *#jesuis* the toponym appears as an entirely separate hashtag, e.g. *#Idomeni* in (4). Occasionally, combinations of these strategies appear. We manually coded the tweets for toponyms and demonyms, since automatic techniques to do so failed. This manual selection resulted in a 297 tweet dataset with 129 different hashtags, referring to 88 different places. Indeed, various places are being referred to by means of different language and orthographic variants of the same place. Brussels is for instance being referred to be means of *#jesuisbruxelles*, *#jesuisbruxelle*, *#jesuisbruxell*, *#jesuisbrux*, *#jesuisbruxe*, *#jesuisbruselles* or *#jesuisBx*.

- (2) RT @X: Oye! Una cosita...nada, una chorrada. Veo pocas banderas de Pakistán o pocos #JeSuisPakistanNada, una reflexión tonta.
 ‘RT @X: Listen! Just a small thing... nothing, a little something. I see few flags of Pakistan or few #JeSuisPakistan... Nothing, a stupid reflection.’
- (3) #JeSuis Pakistan, no? is anyone changing their Facebook pic to Pakistani flag? hmm, why not?
- (4) RT @X: #JeSuis de gasear a quienes huyen del terrorismo. #Idomeni (Spanish)
 ‘RT @X: #JeSuis all for gasifying those who flee terrorism. #Idomeni’

While the tweets included in our database were all posted publicly, most tweeters are not public persons. Therefore, taking into account the ethics guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR 2012) and the sometimes sensitive nature of the content of the tweets, we have decided to anonymize references to Twitter handles by replacing them with X, in order to respect the users’ privacy, except when the account pertained to a public person or an official institution.

4. Method

In view of our research questions, we coded the tweets for geographic granularity, structural complexity and claim for affect, as laid out in the following paragraphs.

We coded all the tweets with a toponym or demonym for the granularity of the place referred to. We distinguish the following categories: world (e.g. *#jesuisAlltheworld*), continent (e.g. *#jesuisEurope*), country (e.g. *#jesuisRDC* [République Démocratique du Congo]), region (e.g. *#jesuisBretagne*), city/town

(e.g. *#jesuisBxl* [Bruxelles]), district (e.g. *#jesuisProvi*), establishment/institution (e.g. *#jesuislepontdeMiomu* (Miomu's bridge)). In addition to coding for geographical granularity, we also coded for the continent where the toponym or demonym is situated.

In some cases, it was impossible to determine the specificity of the toponym or demonym, which was coded as undetermined. This holds among others for tweets where the Twitter user plays with the idea of a blank after the *jesuis*-hashtag where any Western place can be added, as in (5). The specification *occidental* 'Western' points again at a geographical orientation in a specific part of the world and contains a judgment concerning the use of these hashtags. The suggested interchangeability of the toponym that follows *#jesuis* implies moreover a comment concerning the use of such *#jesuis*-hashtags and those who use it: it is an easy way of protesting online that a particular kind of people use (Pizarro Pedraza and De Cock 2018). In that sense, the *#jesuis*-hashtag has become emblematic for that certain type of Twitter user (De Cock and Pizarro Pedraza 2018).

- (5) *Los que hablan d #IIIGuerraMundial quieren que ocurra para poder twitear acerca d ella y de #JeSuis("inserte ubicación occi... (Spanish)*
 'Those who speak about #3WorldWar want it to happen so that they can tweet about it and about #jesuis("insert west[ern] location")'

We then coded for the structural complexity of the tweet, indicating whether the tweet contained text, links, emoji or a combination of those, in addition to the *jesuis*-hashtag.

Finally, we zoomed in on the tweets that include an explicit claim for attention and/or underline the lack of affective displays for a particular place. We coded whether the tweet contained not only a toponym or demonym, but also a claim for (digital media) attention for a particular place that seems to be ignored, as in (6). In this example, through the rhetorical questions *Who is Haiti? Nobody?* the Twitter user points to the lack of concern shown on Twitter regarding the impact of a hurricane in Haiti. The user then closes the tweet with the hashtag *#JeSuisHaiti* and, by doing so, tries to increase the attention for this cause (note the opposition *nobody (is Haiti)* versus *je suis Haiti*).

- (6) *L'image du jour... Who is Haiti ? Nobody ? #JeSuisHaiti* (image of a lonely child suffering) (French)
 'The image of the day... Who is Haiti ? Nobody? #JeSuisHaiti'

This group of tweets are central to this paper, since we are interested in observing how Twitter users claim affective displays. Some tweets included a more or less explicit reason for the lack of attention given to a particular place. We have carried out a qualitative analysis of the reasons given for the lack of attention for particu-

lar places in the world in order to establish whether there is a systematicity in the reasons mentioned by Twitter users.

5. Analysis

5.1 Geographical granularity

Our first research question concerns the geographical granularity in the *#jesuis*-hashtag. We focus on how specific the toponym or demonym used is, with a view to analysing whether some places are presented as more or less easy to identify. When looking at the data, the very vast majority of the *#jesuis*-hashtags with a toponym or a demonym refer to a country, followed by a city (see Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of the toponyms and demonyms according to their geographical granularity

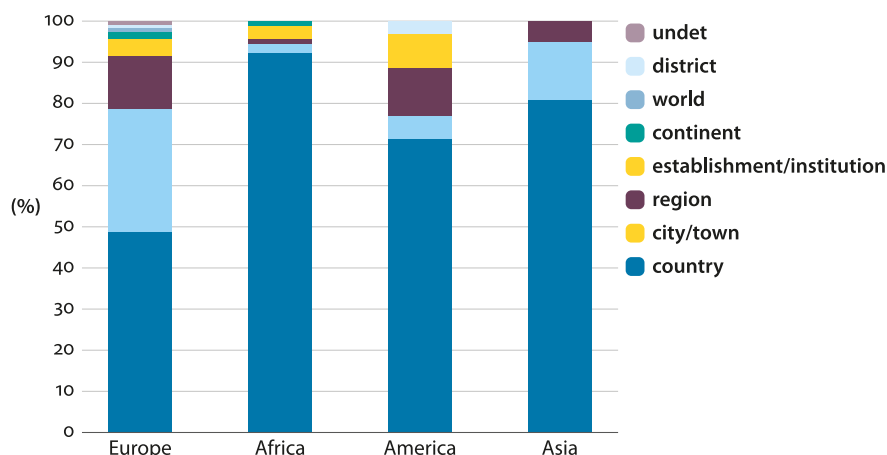
Levels	Total
Country	198
City/town	51
Region	24
Establishment/institution	12
Continent	5
World	4
District	2
Undetermined	1
Total	297

However, when we look into the granularity in view of the continent where the place the toponym or demonym refers to is situated, considerable differences appear (see Table 2 and Figure 1).² Indeed, almost half (47.2%) of the hashtags concerning Europe are rather granular and include mention of a city/town (7), a region (8) or concrete establishments and buildings (9) such as the supermarket where people were kept hostage. This holds for over 28% of the toponyms situated in America.

2. Note that the zone Asia/Europe refers to a mention to Turkey (as a country). The figure only includes the zones for which there is variation in granularity in the hashtags, in order to visualize the proportional differences. Therefore, the zones World and Asia/Europe are not represented.

Table 2. Distribution of the toponyms and demonyms according to geographical granularity per world zone

	Europe	Africa	America	Asia	World	Asia/Europe	Total
Country	70	85	25	17	0	1	198
City/town	44	2	2	3	0	0	51
Region	18	1	4	1	0	0	24
Establishment/institution	6	3	3	0	0	0	12
Continent	4	1	0	0	0	0	5
World	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
District	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Undetermined	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	144	92	35	21	4	1	297

**Figure 1.** Distribution of toponyms and demonyms according to geographical granularity per world zone (Asia, Europe, Africa and America) (in percentages)

- (7) *RT @X: Francesi una vignetta così vi avrebbe fatto ridere? #CharlieHedbo #terremoto #jesuisAmatrice @X @X ht...* (Italian)
 ‘RT @X: French would a label like this have made you laugh? #CharlieHedbo #earthquake #jesuisAmatrice @X @X ht...’
- (8) *RT @X: Mon ptit cœur d’alsacienne pleure #SNCF #JeSuisAlsace https://t.co/o1fEJmGjyH* (French)
 ‘RT @X: My little heart as an Alsacian cries #SNCF #JeSuisAlsace https://t.co/o1fEJmGjyH’
- (9) *RT @X: 11 janvier 2015 Marche républicaine, 4 millions de personnes manifestent pour dire #JeSuisCharlie #JeSuisHyperCacher #JeSu...* (French)
 ‘RT @X: 11 January 2015 Republican march, 4 million people protest to say #JeSuisCharlie #JeSuisHyperCacher #JeSu...’

Also around 20% of the toponyms situated in Asia are more granular than a mention of a country, but these are limited to cities (10) and regions (11). Highly specific references such as districts or establishments do not occur.

- (10) *Vedo tante bandiere e tanti #jesuis per Aleppo.* (Italian)
 ‘I see so many flags and so many #jesuis for Aleppo.’
- (11) #JeSuisKashmir Further terrorism attacks targeted at Indian camps. We stand up to terrorism. #JeSuisJammu #IndiaStrikesBack @X (English)

For the hashtags referring to Africa, almost 95% of the toponyms refer to a country, such as Burundi (12), Yemen, Gabon or Morocco. Only 5% of the toponyms are more specific than the name of a country, for instance, in a reference to the terrorist attacks in the Bardo Museum in Tunis (13).

- (12) *RT @X: Une gifle à @UNHumanRights Le rapport tissé de faux témoignages a pour effet d’unir les burundais. #JeSuisBurundi. https:...* (French)
 ‘RT @X : A slap to @UNHumanRights The report woven of false testimonies has the effect of uniting the Burundians.’
- (13) *RT @X: #JeSuisTunisien #JeSuisBardo* (French)
La Tunisie ne meurt jamais 🙌🙌 <http://t.co/TUIIodTmlo>
 ‘RT @X : #JeSuisTunisien #JeSuisBardo Tunisia never dies 🙌🙌 <http://t.co/TUIIodTmlo>’

In some cases, like in (12), the reference to a country is pertinent since the event mentioned in the tweet affects the whole country (in this case, a UN report about human rights violations in Burundi). However, in other cases, when an event has happened in a particular city, some tweets use the name of the city while others use the name of the country, preferring therefore a lower level of granularity. This is the case of (14), where the Twitter user mentions vaguely the place where the attacks took place (near a school) and constructs the *jesuis*-hashtag with reference to the country (*#JeSuisYemen*) rather than to the region or city. The same goes for (15), where the mention to the specific place of the attack is present in the tweet (Sinai), whereas the hashtag refers more generally to the country (*#jesuisEgypt*).

- (14) *RT @X: 🟡 !ÚLTIMA HORA! 🟡*
Explosión en Yemen cerca de un colegio esta misma mañana.
#JeSuisYemen <https://t.co/RwgUGISFqh> (Spanish)
 ‘RT @X : 🟡 !Last moments! 🟡
 Explosion in Yemen close to a college this very morning.
 #JeSuisYemen <https://t.co/RwgUGISFqh>’
- (15) RT @X: Meanwhile in Sinai. <https://t.co/liXupGah9K> #JeSuisEgypt (English)

The higher granularity of the reference to Europe may be due to the fact that the period under scrutiny featured some attacks in Europe. However, since there were also attacks in other parts of the world, the higher geographical granularity for tweets considering Europe also seems to be linked to a better knowledge of (the events related to) places in Europe, leading the Twitter user to express empathy and condolences for very specific places (Amatrice, HyperCacher), rather than for a country in general (Italy or France, respectively), as opposed to what happens for African places. In that respect, we interpret that the higher mention of specific European places (as opposed to less specificity when mentioning places in other parts of the world) shows a dominance of a Western point of view in *jesuis*-hashtags.”

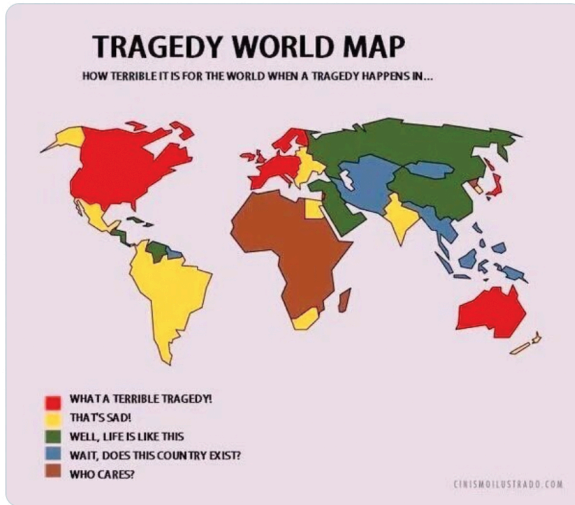
5.2 Structural complexity of the tweets

Our second research question concerns the structural complexity of the tweets, that is, which (multimodal) resources are used in the tweet to add extra information (if any), in addition to the hashtag. This is relevant in that those additional elements (emoji, for instance) often contribute to building the affective stance by bringing informative or emotional content to the tweet. In fact, the simplest tweet – structurally speaking – would consist only of the *jesuis*-hashtag, whereas other tweets may combine different sorts of multimodal content into what we would consider a structurally complex tweet. In our data, besides the hashtag, tweets may include text, links (to text, videos or images) and emoji.

The most common structure includes, besides the hashtag, a text and a link. The link leads to extra text or audiovisual material. Examples concern a link to a video where a man tries to sell *#jesuisbrussels* vs. *#jesuisankara* t-shirts, the former having much more success than the latter. He thus refers not only to the offline existence of hashtags (cf. also Heyd and Puschmann 2017) but also shows through this video that people seem to be willing to sympathize more openly with Brussels than with Ankara. Links to visual material include among others a link to a tragic world map (Figure 2), coloured according to the attitude towards tragedies. Here again, the author suggests through the visual element that attitudes concerning tragedies may differ depending on where the tragedy takes places. While this map does not seem to be based on any scientific data or method and aims at criticizing varying degrees of empathy through a humoristic device, it is noteworthy that the distinctions proposed in it are quite in line with the geographical granularity differences we have shown in the previous paragraph. Indeed, the places that tend to be represented in the most granular way are those that elicited the strongest reactions, whereas continents that are represented in a less granular way, evoke less strong reactions or even indifference. The qualification on the map “Wait, does

this country exist?” even explicitly refers to the lack of geographical knowledge concerning certain places as related to a lack of empathy.

RT @maiolsanauja
 -Is everybody tweeting #JeSuisPakistan?
 -No!
 -Why not?
 -Let me explain it to you...
 #LahoreBlast



11:38 PM · Mar 27, 2016 · Twitter for Android

Figure 2. Tweet with *Tragedy world map*

Finally, links may lead to more extensive texts, such as newspaper articles. These may contain expert opinions, such as (16) leading to an opinion text in *The Guardian* in which more attention is asked for Muslim victims or (17), which includes an expert’s analysis of our selective empathy and elaborates on the reasons for which the Ankara bombings lead to less manifestations of support on Twitter in the US than the Brussels attacks. The link allows for circumventing the character limit of Twitter and leading the reader to a much more developed argumentation (in this case a 1000 word text).

- (16) #JeSuisBruxelles is trending while #JeSuisAnkara struggles to be heard. Allan Hennessy <http://gu.com/p/4hzcj/stw> (English)
- (17) Want to know why you see #JeSuisBruxelles and not #JeSuisAnkara? Read on... <http://inhomelandsecurity.com/reasons-america-specific-terror-attacks/> ... via @InHomelandBlog (English)

Tweets may consist of text only (without links or emoji). This text can be rather varied and may point at a claim for affect through rhetorical questions as in the title example. Twitter users may also use qualifying terms to make explicit their attitude concerning the different treatment of places, as in (18), where the lack of #jesuisYémen is qualified as ‘weird’ (*bizarrement*), thus suggesting this behaviour is not normal. In addition, the text includes the word *indifférence* ‘indifference’, suggesting again a lack of attention that is qualified in a negative way. The text is furthermore an opportunity to bring in a more personal perspective and explicitly voice one’s emotion and support, such as the message of condolence and sympathy in (19).

- (18) *Bizarrement, on n'a pas eu #jeSuisYémen. 10.000 morts : les Saoudiens écrasent le Yémen dans l'indifférence.* (French)
 ‘Strangely we did not get any #jesuisYemen. 10.000 dead: Saudis crush Yemen in the indifference.’
- (19) *RT @X: Mon cœur est avec les victimes des attentats et leurs familles. Toute l'Europe est avec vous en ce jour très triste #JeSuisBruxelles* (French)
 ‘RT @X: My heart is with the victims of the attacks and their families. The whole of Europe is with you on this very sad day #JeSuisBruxelles.’

Emoji, by their very nature, typically aim at adding information concerning the emotions the Twitter user wishes to convey though they may also fulfil illocutionary functions (Dresner and Herring 2010). As such, they carry out important affective labor in the on-going interaction (Stark and Crawford 2015, 5). While some tweets consist of only a hashtag and an emoji (20), most combine emoji with text or text and links. Given the specific topic, emoji often express sadness (20, 21), horror (21) or anger. The emoji in our data do not only represent facial expressions associated with certain emotions, however (21) contains a broken heart, which refers to the sadness of the author without mimicking a facial expression. The emoji following #JesuisBerlin in (21) represent the act of praying and tie in with the hashtags starting by #prayfor, which have been very frequent following violent attacks. As such, this particular emoji does not directly express an emotion but rather has a performative value, in the sense that the tweet – by means of the emoji – performs a prayer or calls for it. It moreover refers to other hashtags and specific actions in reaction to violent attacks. Finally, heart-shaped emoji appear, as in (22). These do not express a stance concerning the violent event itself but rather the will to spread positive feelings and love in the face of violence. This is also expressed in one of the hashtags in this post, namely #VenezOnSAime ‘Come we love each other’.

- (20) #jesuisallemand 🥲 (French)
 ‘#jesuisgerman’

- (21) *Ce monde me fait de plus en plus peur!* 🤪🤪🤪🤪💔
 #Bruxelles #Brussels #Belgique
 #BerlinAttack #jesuisallemand #JesuisBerlin 🙏🙏🙏 je suis de france!!!(French)
 ‘This world makes me ever more scared ! 🤪🤪🤪🤪💔
 #Bruxelles #Brussels #Belgium
 #BerlinAttack #jesuisgerman #jesuisBerlin 🙏🙏🙏 I am from France!!! FR’
- (22) #JeSuisBruxelles #JeSuisBelge #BrusselsAttacks #VenezOnSAime ❤️ (French)
 ‘#JeSuisBruxelles #JeSuisBelgian #BrusselsAttacks #ComeWeLoveEachother ❤️’

The structural complexity of the tweet allows the users to reinforce either the expression of their emotion (by means of emoji or personal text), but also to strengthen the argumentation for a claim of affect by means of links to objective or expert information.

5.3 Defining underlying motives

Our third research question concerns which motives Twitter users suggest for the unequal attention to some places. Indeed, some messages simply contain an incitation to start a *#jesuis*-hashtag with an implicit argumentation, such as the high number of civilians killed and wounded in December in Iraq mentioned in (23).

- (23) RT @X: Take note, in December 2016 alone, at least 386 civilians were killed &1,066 wounded in #Iraq. Any #JeSuisIraq planned? http... (English)

In other cases, users formulate sometimes implicitly, sometimes very explicitly, the rationale behind the lack of attention, if compared to other places. These comments allow us to gain insight into how Twitter users try to explain unequal attention. Needless to say, by making such underlying motives explicit, the users often also criticize the mechanisms they consider to be at the origin of this unequal attention.

Table 3. Claims for attention in our database per continent

	Africa	Europe	Asia	Asia/Europe	America	Undefined	Total
Claim for affect	34	18	20	1	14	7	94

As shown in Table 3, 94 tweets in our dataset include an explicit claim for attention. More than half of these concern a claim for attention for a place in Africa, with much less claims concerning places in Asia, Europe and America. This ties in with the considerable amount of attacks or disasters in Africa that receive relatively little attention. Some of these tweets do not mention motives, but merely denounce the media silence. Thus, in (24), the user expresses empathy and soli-

clarity (*je souffre avec lui* ‘I suffer with it [my people]’), points out the death toll (31 dead) and contrasts this with the lack of media attention (*o flash Info* ‘o breaking news’). The contrast is reinforced by contrasting the numbers in a coordination without nexus: *31 morts o flash info* (‘31 dead o breaking news’). However, the author does not give a possible reason for the lack of (media) attention.

- (24) *RT @X: Mon peuple souffre je souffre avec lui 31 morts o flash Info.*
#JeSuisLAfrique (French)
 ‘RT @X: My people suffer I suffer with it 31 dead o breaking news
 #JeSuisAfrica’

Other users do formulate possible motives in an implicit way, typically by means of rhetorical questions that suggest that there are specific motives or mechanisms at stake, yet leaving it to the reader to answer which these may be. In (25), the user asks why there is no use of *#jesuis* for Haiti. The author does not give an answer for why no one is Haiti, except for *#reflections*, which could both refer to the author’s own reflections and incite others to reflect upon their behavior on Twitter. While these reflections are not elaborated upon, they do lead to a conclusion, introduced by *Doncs* ‘so’, namely *#JeSuisHaiti*. The Twitter user presents his/her using *#JeSuisHaiti* then as the result of a reasoning concerning the lack of attention for Haiti, which is found to be unjustified.

- (25) *Tothom era #Paris #JeSuisParis... I ara ningú és #Haiti. Pq serà? #reflexions*
Doncs #JeSocHaiti #JeSuisHaiti. (accompanied by a drawing of a lonely child suffering) (Catalan)
 ‘Everybody was #Paris #JeSuisParis... And now no one is #Haiti. Why would that be? #reflections So #IAmHaiti #JeSuisHaiti.’

In addition to these implicit claims, various tweets contain a very explicit formulation of possible motives for oblivion. These are mainly linked to a perceived inequality of victims or to media/institutional manipulation. In (26), the author links the lack of attention to the country’s socioeconomic situation, suggesting that the lack of interest is due to the poverty in Haiti. In (27), the author rather points at the victims’ ethnic origin as the reason for less attention or concern. Following the crash of an airplane with a Russian choir that went to sing on a Russian military base in Syria, it is suggested in (28) that the political stance in the conflict influences in our expression of empathy, that is, that we sympathize more with the deaths of people who share our views than with those who do not have the same political opinions. Thus, Russia’s support of the Syrian government is given as a reason for not sympathizing with the numerous victims of the crash. While the reason suggested in these previous examples is linked to characteristics of the victims, the author of (29) suggests that the cause of fatalities, in this case an earth-

quake rather than a terrorist attack, may be a reason for less attention and for the lack of a corresponding hashtag. This may be a valid analysis, yet the user's adding *Pff* shows his/her disapproval of this different reaction to victims depending on the cause of their death.

- (26) RT @X: *No obervé #JeSuisHaiti por ningún lado. Qué raro che... más de mil muertos y nada. En fin, esos países pobres a nadie le intere[san]* (Spanish)
 'RT @X: I didn't observe #JeSuisHaiti anywhere. How strange that... more than 1000 dead and nothing. Anyway, nobody is interested in those poor countries.'
- (27) Funny how I NEVER saw a trending hashtag that says #WeAreIraq or #JeSuisIraq, but I guess white lives matter more. (English)
- (28) Why is there no #JeSuisChoir?...because the victims in #Tu154 were going to sing for the "wrong" side in #Syria? (English)
- (29) *247 morts suite au tremblement de terre en Italie, s'n'est pas une attaque terroriste, on en parle pas partout et pas de #JeSuisItalie ? Pff* (French)
 '247 dead persons following the earthquake in Italie, it's not a terrorist attack, it is not talked about everywhere and now #JeSuisItalie ? Pff'

Finally, tweets including images such as Image 1 mentioned previously link the degree of attention for a tragedy with the place where an attack happens. While intended as a creative and ironizing way to claim equal attention, this map does take up the idea of different geographical granularity discussed in this paper as a cause for unequal attention.

The tweets discussed in this section up till now link the unequal public and media attention to a perceived inequality of the victims. However, some users explicitly hold the media responsible for this unequal attention, as in (30). The author points at the local and international press as culprits (of whom Burundi is a victim). Indeed, as pointed out by Johansson et al. (2017, 1), social media have made it possible for participants to publicly position themselves with respect to journalists or mainstream media.

The link included in this tweet leads to an article concerning the Pope's criticism of journalism based on rumours or gossips. The Twitter user's plea for prayers from the pope (@Pontifex) highlights again that he/she expects a more equal attention and treatment from the Pope than from newspapers.

- (30) RT @x: #Burundi is a victim of this type of journalism locally n int'lly!We ask 4 prayers from @Pontifex #JeSuisBurundi BI🙏 ht... (English)

The lack of media attention is also at the heart of the collage in Figure 3. This contrasts the covers of major Spanish newspapers following the attacks in Belgium

(when all covers refer to these attacks), with the covers following bombings in Pakistan (when no cover mentions these attacks). The author adds the number of victims of both attacks. Since there were more victims in the Pakistan attack, this reinforces the idea that this attack should have received at least the same attention as the Brussels attack. This rather visual contrast is moreover preceded by a message that adds a more subjective appreciation, namely *las portadas de la vergüenza* ‘the covers of shame’. The fact that the newspapers are also tagged in the message via their Twitter accounts reinforces the focus on the newspapers’ role and makes sure that they are notified of this tweet. By expressing the contrast by means of an image, the author manages to transmit a clear image and more content than would be possible in a tweet with mere text. Indeed, typing the newspaper headlines in full and adding the information concerning the number of victims would not have been possible in one tweet.

@elpais_espana
 @elmundoes
 @abc_es
 @larazon_es
 Las portadas de la vergüenza
 #JeSuisPakistan



10:52 PM · Mar 28, 2016 · Twitter Web Client

Figure 3. Tweet with newspaper covers
 ‘@elpais_espana @elmundoes @abc_es @larazon_es The covers of shame
 #JeSuisPakistan
 [in the image] Covers after the attack in Belgium (35 dead and 200 wounded)
 Covers after the attack in Pakistan
 (72 dead and 350 wounded)’

Thus, we have shown that Twitter users not only claim attention for certain attacks or disasters but also explicitly reflect upon what causes this unequal treatment. They mention motives linked to the victims, such as their race, political or religious conviction or socioeconomic situations, but also motives linked to the location or the cause of the deaths. Some of these motives are clearly presented as being more widely circulating reasons and/or as reasons formulated by experts (see (16) and (17)). Others express the possible motive rather as a personal stance, e.g. *I guess* in (27). Finally, specific actors in the media landscape are blamed for the unequal attention given to some causes and as such held accountable in their professional capacity.

6. Conclusion

Networked affection is realized through the hashtag *#jesuisCharlie* and many other subsequent hashtags. In this study, we have analysed the ways in which affective stance is created on Twitter and, especially, the way in which Twitter users claim affective displays for causes that in their view do not receive sufficient attention. In other words, when no networked public is already constructed concerning a certain cause, some users try to create it and build a metastory concerning an attack or disaster by claiming affective displays for the place where the attack took place.

In order to account for the creation of such networked publics, we first looked into the geographical granularity in the *#jesuis*-hashtag. We have shown that places closer to Europe are presented in a much more specific way than locations in Africa, with America and Asia occupying intermediate positions. Indeed, we find a much higher proportion of references to specific buildings, towns or regions for Europe than for other continents, where references are mainly to the country as a whole.

Second, we have shown that tweets concerning the expression of affect are often structurally complex, including – in addition to the hashtag – text, emoji, images and links (or a combination of these). Crucially, this complexity can play a role in claiming affect in that the link or text often contains information that highlights the need for affect. This can be an image of suffering or links to longer texts discussing particular situations. Also emoji reinforce the expression of emotional stance. Thus, an analysis beyond the mere textual content of the tweet is necessary to fully account for the claim for affect. Finally, we have shown that Twitter users sometimes explicitly mention potentially underlying motives for this unequal attention to some places, offering us an insight into their view on this distribution. The motives mentioned by users concern the ethnic, religious

or socioeconomic identity of the victims, but also the location or the cause of suffering. Other users only implicitly suggest an unequal treatment of victims, for instance by means of a rhetorical question. In their criticism, Twitter users regularly hold traditional media accountable for the lack of attention for certain attacks or disasters, and seem to use Twitter as an alternative platform to claim this affect and spread information. Through these more explicit reasonings, we see that more than a mere hashtag is at stake for the Twitter users. Their messages claiming for affect also wish to denounce certain biases in our expressions of affect.

In all, we have shown that Twitter is not only used to express affect but also to claim affective displays and to question existing expressions of affect. In doing so, Twitter users question eurocentric or ethnocentric behavior. Interestingly, by claiming a *#jesuis*-hashtag for forgotten causes, these users indirectly confirm the importance of Twitter as a platform for expressing affect and creating networked publics.

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